

Broadcasting House Proceedings

House of Commons. My constituents will not see me bobbing up to put the government on its toes. Because of my workload as parliamentary secretary, and because my constituency is very large, I often miss debates in this House in which I would otherwise like to participate. I am not worried about how I will appear. I can do my homework, and so can all other members of this House. I will find my moments to rise in debate, though as a government backbencher I probably will not hit the television screen very often, nor the radio stations.

The fact remains, however, that Canadians may begin to understand what this country is all about. They may begin, by hearing voices from different parts of the country, by listening to different ministers posed with different dilemmas—because what is good for one part of the country may not be good for another—to understand just how this nation works and how parliament must be understanding and make compromises if this country is to survive.

Certainly, when the government House leader spoke of the first step as placing the debates of parliament over television and radio under the Speaker so that a totally objective recording can be made and, in turn, the media, without influence, editing and deciding what they want to use, and then, as a second step, having some means of making available broadly to Canadians the ongoing events of the House of Commons on a daily basis, I very much support that thrust.

I would also like to put in a plug to the government House leader, through you, Mr. Speaker, that we consider at the earliest possible responsible date the televising and broadcasting of committees of the House of Commons, or at least, at the first stage, making available the visual and audio transcripts of those meetings. I cannot think of a better way of showing the Canadian public how members of all parties and on all sides thoughtfully try to improve laws and fight for the rights of their constituents. This is an ongoing procedure and it would show the expertise members bring with them from their constituents or their own professional backgrounds. I hope the covering of committees will not be too far off if, indeed, this motion is successful.

I heard in the speech of the House leader for the official opposition some considerable doubt and fear of this whole issue. I must say that for one who is as active as he is in making speeches in the House of Commons and putting forth his faith in the Canadian system, I was very disappointed to hear him take the thrust he did today. It seems to me to be as mad, in the sense of insane, to oppose the televising and broadcasting of the proceedings of the House of Commons as it would have been for the civilizations of thousands of years ago to have opposed the wheel or, indeed, to oppose the learning of language so that they could communicate with one another.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fleming: The civilization we live in today, and the pressures of our society, make it fundamental that we try to ease the pressures, burdens and confusion of the public here in Canada by bringing to them directly the issues of our country

[Mr. Fleming.]

from its various parts and also the attitude of the government and the opposition. I would like to claim, and I believe it to be true, that it is not being done under the present system.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Smith)—Indian Affairs—Relocation of departmental offices in Hull; the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall)—Search and Rescue; the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens)—Finance.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

[English]

HEALTH AND WELFARE

SUGGESTED ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIVERSAL COST OF
BLINDNESS ALLOWANCE

Mr. Paproski: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a disposition to allow motions Nos. 4 and 7 to stand so that we could go on with motion No. 8 in the name of the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Whiteway).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Dean Whiteway (Selkirk) moved:

That in the opinion of this House the government should consider the advisability of establishing a universal cost of blindness allowance for the legally blind of not less than \$200 per month and to be indexed to the consumer price index annually.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of honour that I introduce this motion, a motion which almost on the surface would suggest that it needs no debate and that it would certainly meet with the acceptance of the government even if over the years it might have been reluctant even to consider a blind allowance or a negative income tax or a minimum subsistence level for those who are legally blind in Canada.

● (1700)

To set the stage for the background to this problem I want to read three preliminary clauses which I did not include in my original motion. I put forward the following as a preamble: