

Broadcasting House Proceedings

suggest that the amendment may permit the committee to which it is referred totally to reject the principle of broadcasting. This is, in fact, negating the basic purpose of the motion. I gather that Your Honour's second point is that you feel the paragraph referring to an experiment may be a totally new proposal which is incompatible with the motion.

On the first point I should like to suggest that the principle of broadcasting is specifically not touched by the amendment which, as you know, does not amend the first paragraph of the motion. It is the intention and direction of the amendment to set the committee to work, with the clear knowledge that the principle has been discussed and approved by this House. Nowhere in the body of the amendment does it say that the committee may examine the fundamental question of whether televising and broadcasting are to be allowed.

Hon. members may have noted that most of the amendment is a direct quotation from the 1972 report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization. As the government House leader noted in his speech, this report approved the principle of broadcasting. Actually, the amendment specifically asks for the cost of and technical study of buildings, equipment, personnel and other requirements consequent upon the introduction of radio and television broadcasting. There is no mention in the amendment of the advisability of broadcasting. That particular proposition, as I view the amendment, is accepted for better or worse by the motion if it is amended in this way. I simply want to make it clear that the material tabled could well be supplemented by other material which I am sure has already been prepared, or may have been prepared. I would be surprised if it had not been prepared.

● (1510)

The last paragraph of the proposed amendment goes further than the 1972 report which suggested that the committee may make further recommendations for ultimate decision. I moved in my amendment that the committee should be authorized, in light of such studies and experiments, to make further recommendations to the House before permanent broadcasting facilities are installed. That is the point of my argument. If I had intended my amendment to permit a rejection of broadcasting, I would have said that there should be further recommendations as to whether permanent broadcasting facilities should be installed. In the context of the motion, the word "before" means ahead of, or prior to, in time. I suggest that is how the matter ought to be interpreted.

May I now speak to the middle paragraph dealing with privilege. That paragraph openly gives the committee the reference which the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) said was intended for it during his speech. It is always possible that the committee, despite the motion, could produce a hostile report. I suppose that theoretically could happen to a bill in committee. Theoretically, it is always possible for a committee to do something unexpected or procedurally incorrect. If and when that happens, the Chair must examine the report and make a ruling at that time. I suggest, however, that such report is not contemplated by the

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

amendment I proposed yesterday and would, indeed, be contrary to its explicit acceptance of the principle of the motion. The amendment lacks any wording which would justify the reopening by the committee of the fundamental question. That is the argument I advance to justify my position. However, with respect to the second point—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May I interrupt the hon. member in order to clarify one point. There is not merely the concern that the committee may steer the matter in a direction such as the hon. member has just described. My difficulty goes beyond that and it is this: The committee may make a report which is not inconsistent with the view taken by the House now; but if the committee is to report, in my opinion that presumes that when the committee reports the House must make a decision on the basis of the report. If there is no basis on which the House can take a decision, presumably there is not much point in having the committee make a report. On the other hand, if there is to be some basis on which the House can take some future decision, my difficulty becomes apparent, and it is this: the procedure set out by the amendment would leave it open to the House at a future time either to fail to concur in the report, to reject the report, or in some way to take a negative position with respect to the report of the committee. That would mean that the House says it approves the televising of its proceedings, but may in the future disapprove. That is the fundamental difficulty of the amendment.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Sir, I suggest that is neither implicit nor explicit in the words of the amendment, an amendment to a motion which approves in principle the broadcasting of the proceedings of the House. That is what I meant when I said that the Chair would have to examine the report and make a ruling with respect to it after it had been brought forward. With respect, I do not think that ruling ought to be made now. I specifically do not think it ought to be made, in light of the wording of the motion proposed. As I have said, such a report is not contemplated by the amendment. Frankly, I think such a report would be contrary to the explicit acceptance of the principle of the motion. There is, as I have said, a lack of words in the amendment which would justify the committee's reopening the fundamental question of the motion.

The second point which I understand is troubling the Chair concerns the reference to an experiment. That suggestion, I admit, was also taken from the 1972 report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization. That committee favoured only a closed circuit experiment. I brought forward that suggestion because I intended the term "experiment" to be part of my elaboration, for the committee's benefit, of the word "implementation" in the original motion. If the reference to that experiment stood alone as an amendment, or if that term were read in the context of a paragraph giving the committee permission to examine the whole principle of the question and bring in a report contrary to the principle of the motion, then I would agree that there would be a substantial alteration in the direction of the motion. However, if Your