

Routine Proceedings

The arrangement intended by the committee is quite clear. If a committee of which he is a member applies to sit in the room and no other committee is sitting at that time, his committee will sit in the room and will be televised.

It is a decision of his own committee to decide to go there. If his committee applies to sit in the room at, say ten o'clock next Tuesday morning and no other committee is sitting at ten o'clock next Tuesday morning, then no doubt his committee will sit in the room at ten o'clock next Tuesday morning.

• (1410)

That is just the way it will operate. It is intended to go to the House leaders only when the committees do not agree. It is intended that way, but I agree the wording is not the way it should be and that is cause for concern. For instance, if two committees apply at ten o'clock, the chairmen would be expected to get together and resolve the matter.

They would have a discussion. One would say: "We can move our meeting to 11.30 a.m. to accommodate you. Let's do it that way. The slot is open at 11.30 a.m." That is what would happen. If the committee chairmen are unable to agree, they would apply to the House leaders, and if agreement could not be obtained there, then there would be a decision made in the management committee.

Clearly, with its majority on that committee, the government would control the management committee decision. That is the last resort. The idea is it would be settled elsewhere.

I agree that the wording of the committee recommendation leaves the decision in the hands of the House leaders. But it was not intended that the decision, as I understood it and as the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader can clarify in his remarks, as to which committees sit be made by them. It was only in the event of a dispute that the decision was to be made by them. Perhaps that was his intention all along.

It was clear that all committees could sit there, but in addition, any committee could apply to have all its

proceedings or part of its proceedings televised. It could obtain that consent by order of the House.

For example, if he, as a member of the employment and immigration committee, and his committee were to undertake a study of the ruinous effects of Bill C-21 on unemployment insurance in Canada, which I suggest it do, it might apply to the House for an order seeking the televising of its proceedings in respect of that undertaking.

So all committee meetings dealing with the ruinous effects of Bill C-21 which the government introduced a couple of years ago and forced through this House, if the committee undertook that kind of hearing, then obviously he could apply through the committee structure to the House for an order for the televising of those proceedings.

I think that much is clear. That is still permitted both under the Standing Orders of the House, of course, and under the committee recommendations. There is no problem with that arrangement.

The special room deals only with those committees that seek to be televised for only one or two of their meetings because many committees, of course, will not want to be televised.

I should say in fairness that the experience in the Ontario Legislature is that the room is in fact not used all the time. After an initial flurry of interest, many committees have decided against proceeding with the televising of most of their proceedings. Accordingly, the room is not used 24 hours a day or anything like that. It is not used even 12 hours a day. The use has dwindled off. There is some interest, but it is not overwhelming on the part of all committees. I strongly suspect that the experience in this Chamber would be similar to that.

While we have profound regrets about what this report does not contain, we are prepared to support what is here. I am pleased to have had this opportunity to add a few words to the debate on this important subject.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member can clarify in terms of whether the proceedings of committees that participate in what he refers to as the special room will go live to the nation.