

INTRODUCTION

Television cameras, operating in the House of Commons, have given viewers a glimpse of Parliament in session for the past twelve years.

The task of presenting "live" coverage of any situation is a challenging one. Not only does a broadcaster have the responsibility of providing a logical and comprehensive sequence of events to the home viewer, but must do so under conditions which offer no opportunity for corrections or repeats.

The television directors of the Broadcasting Branch have been faced with this kind of challenge. Guidelines, based on the concept of an "Electronic Hansard" and set out by the Special Committee on Television and Radio Broadcasting, have set the parameters. These guidelines and a familiarity with House procedures, have aided the directors in an attempt to portray an objective and accurate view of the proceedings.

In 1977, traditional techniques such as wide-angle, over-the-shoulder, close-up, cutaway, and reaction shots were used to capture the flow of debate. This was done under the watchful eye of the Speaker of the House. Whenever an incident occurred which was not covered by the guidelines, the Speaker would make a ruling regarding future coverage.

Since that time, Members have become increasingly sensitive to television in the House. At various times all Parties have brought pressure to bear upon the Speaker to restrict the coverage of the proceedings.

Such restrictions have produced a distorted picture of the proceedings. The television viewer sees only isolated shots of Members speaking in an unseen void. There are quick cuts to the Speaker when an interjection occurs.

What follows are a number of options for changes to existing guidelines governing the televising of House proceedings. They are intended only to assist in focusing discussion on alternatives for change and are not intended as specific recommendations.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

This is a period of normal debate. While the camera is maintained principally on the Member speaking, the director would be allowed some variation in shooting angles.