

Broadcasting of House of Commons Debates

HOUSE OF COMMONS

BROADCASTING OF DEBATES BY RADIO AND TELEVISION

The House resumed from Wednesday, March 11, consideration of the motion of Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization, in consultation with Mr. Speaker, be directed to study the question of radio and television broadcasting of the proceedings of the House and its committees, including the legal, procedural and technical aspects thereof, and the question of arrangements made for reporters for the electronic media in the Parliament buildings.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, on March 11, before calling it ten o'clock, I was saying that I supported the recommendation of the government. It is obvious the government is seeking, by all possible means and as quickly as possible to reach the people and keep them in touch with what goes on in the House of Commons.

I also stated at the end of my speech, in connection with the broadcasting of information on radio and television and especially on television—if I refer to the resolution—that it was difficult for many people to sit in front of their T.V. set to watch the debates of the House.

Indeed, it is not always easy for someone who is working to see those programs. Nor is it easy for the housewife. On the other hand, it is said sometimes that housewives complain that they cannot do their ironing or their darning, because their T.V. set is out of order, but it is nevertheless the minority which is in such a situation.

In my opinion, to try to reach the people through this means would be costly in the first place for the taxpayer, because a sizeable investment would be needed to telecast the proceedings of the House, and it would be undoubtedly necessary to telecast the proceedings of the Senate as long as it lasts. It would also be needed to telecast the committee proceedings, so that the population could be fully informed of what goes on in Parliament.

I would like at this time to offer a suggestion, which I would ask the government to consider.

All those of my electors who have the chance to read the official report of the debates of the House are most happy to do so, and I suggest that the government should offer a free copy to all those who request one this could also apply to the report of the

Mr. Broadbent: Before the minister resumes his seat would he permit one further question? If I understood his last argument, he was saying there are certain spin-off benefits from military research which do have civilian benefits. If this is his argument, I completely agree with him; but that seems not to be his argument. If he were completely interested in the civilian benefits obtained as a result of this research, that should in fact be his initial object.

Does he not agree that if you are going to put so much money into "x" which is military, and so much into "y" which is civilian, your objectives would be best met if you put more money into civilian projects, and that the reasonable result would be that you would have more benefit from civilian than from military research? Is that not correct?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that people reading *Hansard* tomorrow will ask themselves why these two members argued when they seemed to agree on essentials.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, if I may I should like to announce a change in the business for this evening which has been discussed with all sides. It has been decided not to go ahead with Government Order No. 47 with regard to the Standards Council of Canada, but rather to proceed first with consideration of Government Order No. 65 with regard to television in the House, then with Government Order No. 83 in respect of the Representation Commission Act, and lastly with Government Order No. 85 in respect of the Transport and Communications Committee.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, may I just say that there have been discussions at the usual high level and we have computerized these three measures. We have come to the conclusion that they will be finished very close to ten o'clock, and that Your Honour might well then call it ten o'clock if we have completed them on the right side of that hour. Am I right in that?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Agreed.