

Routine Proceedings

the committee. If there was to be a change it was our view that the publicity television generates in committees would more than offset the disadvantages. In other words, the advantage to Canadians in seeing what was going on was more important than the thought that perhaps we would act differently in committees than we now do. I do not think it will make a radical change in our approach.

I commend this recommendation to the House. It has not changed the committees where we have had television. In my view they have worked quite satisfactorily. I have no reason to believe that televising all the committees, should the media wish to have them televised, would change that.

I stress the recommendation. Committees are masters of their own procedure in this regard. If a committee chooses to have its meetings without the television cameras present, each committee will be free to make that decision. I think that is an important part of the recommendation.

The second major recommendation of the committee was to establish a programming director. I will read recommendation No. 3. It says that the programming director should be responsible for the production and direction of the broadcasting of the House of Commons subject to the over-all direction of the monitoring committee of the House. The Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections recommended that it be the monitoring committee, at least for the time being.

• (1140)

The significance of this recommendation was to change from the guidelines that now restrict the television cameras and their operations in this House to allow for a more general and fairer representation of what is happening in the House on camera.

People who are watching now will see that I am standing here in my place and will not see anything else in the chamber. I think it is unfortunate that they are unable to see the other members from a wider angle. I am sorry they are unable to see some of the empty seats.

I do not consider the absence of members today different from any other day, but certainly I do not consider it unusual. I am not surprised that many members are not here. There are committees meeting

this morning. There are other meetings and businesses to which members have to attend. I think Canadians should not be surprised to know that there are a lot of empty seats in the Chamber. I think that is a normal feature of parliamentary life. If that is the reason for not widening the angle on the camera lens that is now facing me, then I do not think it is a good reason and I think we should abandon it.

The proposal we made was based on the experience in the Ontario legislature. I urge hon. members to tune in to the Ontario legislature to see how its proceedings are televised because in our view as a committee the televising there is more interesting than our television. It is not because their speeches are necessarily better, although heaven knows there are many very capable speakers in the Ontario legislature, particularly on the government side. We know that they are extremely capable. I would not in any way suggest that watching the Ontario legislature would be any less interesting than watching this House. With all respect to my colleagues there, they do a better television job in making a speaker's presence in the House more obvious. There is a wide-angle shot normally when the speaker stands up, either from behind the speaker or from in front of him, that shows how he is standing, where he is standing in the House, and where he is in relation to the Speaker.

Ms. Clancy: Or she.

Mr. Milliken: Or she. I am sorry. I am just shortening my remarks because of the time. I recognize the hon. member for Halifax is very right. I am using he in its generic sense, including members of both sexes.

Once the speech commences the camera then normally moves in on the speaker and follows the speaker very closely.

I am not suggesting that we have wholesale reaction shots. The Ontario legislature has difficulty with that, as the programming director there told us. There may be a speech going on. I might have been the first speaker and I might be addressing my remarks to the parliamentary secretary across the way and making direct reference to the parliamentary secretary. In Ontario the cameras are very reluctant to go to the parliamentary secretary in case he is having a discussion with the chief Whip and is laughing uproariously while I am making a serious comment. It is not fair to the parliamentary secretary, nor would it be fair to my speech.