

*Broadcasting of House of Commons Debates*

on this matter, because votes have not always been as free as the members would have liked.

**Mr. Horner:** Oh! oh!

**Mr. Lachance:** I have carefully weighed every word. I am afraid members have not always had all the freedom they would have wished for, but that does not mean there has not been any freedom at all.

I am happy the Government has introduced this motion, because it can be passed quicker than if it had been introduced by an ordinary member.

I know that the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) made a detailed study about this question. He submitted reports. I had the honour to sit on the standing committee on procedure which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Center mentioned earlier and that was presided over by the Speaker of the time.

In my opinion, the debates might be broadcast twice a week at a time when serious people, those who are really interested in the commonwealth would be able to look at those programs which might be scheduled for 11.30 p.m., so that the viewers might choose between more or less interesting moving pictures and the broadcasting of the debates in the House which, that goes without saying, would be given all the appropriate publicity.

Furthermore, after such a program, just like after a hockey or football game, the parliamentary reporters or the representatives of the electronic media could discuss the bill after the spokesmen of the government and of the opposition had set forth their viewpoints. We could even then choose the three stars and select the best speakers.

There is surely some way of rousing the interest of a certain part of the population for public affairs.

● (9:40 p.m.)

[English]

**Mr. Horner:** You have not scored any goals tonight.

[Translation]

**Mr. Lachance:** Mr. Speaker, I have no illusions as to the rating such programs will achieve, for they will certainly never have the rating enjoyed by hockey and football games. They will be information programs rather than public entertainment programs on which the tremendous publicity is subsidized by Canadian taxpayers.

[Mr. Lachance.]

I am not against this practice but one must nevertheless give the facts and recognize that those magnates who own the hockey or football clubs are the ones who get the profits. And even if that is a part of the game of democracy, with which I agree to a certain extent, I suggest that when it comes to informing the public about the nation's business or public affairs, we should be concerned about the cost.

I do not think that we could get sponsors who would be ready to pay large sums of money for the broadcasting of the debates of the House of Commons. We would have to know whether such advertising would be shown. Would it be after the speech made by the head of the government, after that of the leader of the opposition, or after those of the leaders of the various political parties?

With regard to the premises which could be used for the television broadcasting of our proceedings, we must admit that this House has no such facilities. It is possible to set them up. We could easily reduce the size of the public galleries which, sometimes, are not even large enough to accommodate all the people who wish to come in. However, it is possible. I have had the opportunity to visit other more modern parliaments where special rooms have been set up in order to facilitate the television broadcasting of the proceedings.

I am thinking, for instance, of the Parliament in Vienna which is equipped with wonderful broadcasting studios. However, they are not much used because it has been realized that it was not very easy to televise the debates.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of televising our proceedings as an experiment which would become permanent only if all hon. members were willing to co-operate.

I am also in favour of a scientific experiment. I think that we should show Canadians that we observe the proprieties.

The House of Commons is not a theatre, but a place where the representatives of the people gather to express their opinions. They are not bound, however, by the opinions of their constituents.

We have all noticed that the committees sometimes sit at the same time as the House. There are times when we play hosts to delegations, represent the government or the House of Commons at interparliamentary meetings abroad; it is not always possible for us to be present in the House of Commons.

It is not easy to reconcile all interests when, for instance, a certain bill is to be introduced