

*Routine Proceedings*

As the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and others have indicated, it is not only members of Parliament who participate at committees. We have very distinguished Canadians who appear before various committees. The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell pointed out that the Chief Electoral Officer, just to give an example, was present at the special joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons looking into the conflict of interest piece of legislation. The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and I are members of that committee. Over the course of the last months, we have met every Tuesday and Thursday morning for two or three hours hearing witnesses. We have had a lot of excellent witnesses before committee. The news media has not had access to that committee. If the proceedings of that committee were televised and that information shared with Canadians, Canadians could listen to officers of Parliament and other Canadians who come to committee to give evidence.

• (1450)

I urge the House management committee to reconsider its position on report No. 23. Rather than restricting it to a single room, whether it be the railway committee room or the reading room, it ought to open up the entire committee process to the parliamentary press gallery. It ought to let it bear the cost and it will bear the cost because that is part of its responsibility. Its mandate is to disseminate information from Parliament Hill.

If you allow committees to be open, they will fill the void. They will be there. Taxpayers will be spared considerable expense because it will be the national news media that will pay the cost of installing the pool cameras in each of the committee rooms.

Then, the House of Commons can use that feed, the video, to fill in the gaps on the parliamentary channel which is on every television set in the country that has cable TV. You know as well as I do, Mr. Speaker, that when you return to your riding in Edmonton you may be watching TV on a weekend and you may be flicking through the channels. When you hit the parliamentary channel, you get this soft music and these words that continually appear on the channel.

Would you not rather see the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell questioning some important witness at an important committee than dead time? When you do

not see anything on the parliamentary channel, Canadians are not benefiting. They are not being educated as to what goes on here on Parliament Hill.

The House could use the feed from committee to fill in that parliamentary channel continuously, 24 hours a day. People may not want to watch, they do not have to watch, but at least the opportunity would be there on a 24-hour basis for the information and activity that goes on in committee to be disseminated to Canadians.

Those are my submissions. I hope that the distinguished members of the House management committee, the chosen ones, the fortunate ones, those on the A team, the élite of the House of Commons, will reconsider the report, go back to the bargaining table and open up Parliament to the public.

**Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis):** Mr. Speaker, some of us are accused of being the chosen ones. So be it. Someone has to do the job. We were assigned to do a job.

I want to thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for chairing the members and management committee. I want to pay homage to the hon. member for York—Simcoe who has been very patient, especially with this 23rd report.

I would like to have answered in detail the comments of my esteemed colleague from Toronto, but call on him to realize that the progress toward what he has mentioned with passion, and with knowledge most likely is an immense step. It is a good step in the right direction, this 23rd report.

I am committed publicly. I wish to pass this report today, this one and a couple of others if we can get enough agreement. I was under that impression and I would like to say it openly. We worked very long on this report that the House of Commons and our colleagues gave us the mandate for on April 1, 1991.

My colleague must realize that we spent a lot of money on this report. I have no anger toward his comments. I listened to his comments. We have had witnesses who came to the committee and made the points that my hon. colleague just did. Therefore, we offer the best now. I ask him to let this bill go. Why? Because he will be surprised at the immense difficulty that we will encounter just to start having a full room.