

*Point of Order—Mr. Clark*

[Translation]

**Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, this enables me to remind the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark) that we have shown every regard for Parliament because we could have introduced a resolution before the House without the committee stage. Instead we gave the House of Commons an opportunity to debate a preliminary formal motion aimed at referring the proposed resolution to a committee. We spent three weeks of the House's time on the formal debate. The committee is now being struck and we do not want to get involved in the business of the Senate. Here in the House of Commons we have selected our own members to sit on that committee. The Senate is doing the same thing. I presume that the final make-up of the joint committee will be known shortly later today or tomorrow morning. But I think the committee has enough maturity and is fully cognizant of parliamentary practices to realize that it is up to the members to set their rules, schedule their hours and sittings, and I have every confidence in hon. members on both sides of the House who sit on the committee as well as in the senators who will be designated, if that has not already been done earlier today. I am sure they will dutifully carry out the work of the committee. Now then, as the Leader of the Official Opposition knows, between now and December 9 the committee's task will be to scrutinize the technical aspects of the bill, hear a few witnesses and consider any serious amendments.

Madam Speaker, the government has indicated its willingness to entertain constructive amendments and once the committee reports on December 9 there will be a third stage, and this shows just how courteous we are, and Parliament will have every opportunity to launch a serious but non-dilatory debate on the report drafted by the committee. Again today we have extended every courtesy by replying to a question of the Leader of the Official Opposition, a query which he could have raised during question period but which cannot in any way be regarded as a point of order.

[English]

**Mr. Clark:** Madam Speaker, I rise again further to my point of order having to do with the business of the House.

**An hon. Member:** That is no point of order.

**Mr. Clark:** I notice, and this is a matter of great concern to all members of the House who are interested in a genuine debate on the constitutional question, that the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy), presuming to speak for women in the country, said that women do not want television in the committee hearings. I wonder if the minister was also speaking for the government and whether the government has taken a decision to instruct its members—once it can find some members in the Senate to participate in the joint committee—not to support the televising and live radio broadcasting of the sessions.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pinard:** Madam Speaker, not so long ago, I had occasion to explain to the Leader of the Opposition our attitude and the procedure with regard to the televising of the sittings of committees. I did so, and can do so again: we leave it to that committee to make recommendations to us. We have no instructions to give to it on whether or not its debates should be televised or not. The members of the committee—and again, we cannot speak on behalf of the Senate—will decide whether or not it must be done. I say this: they now have the power to so decide under the terms of the decision reached by this House in January of 1977, subject, of course, to the agreement of the Senate, on the one hand, and that of the Speaker and the commissioners of internal economy with regard to costs, on the other. I can assure the House that I, for one, will not oppose televising the debates just because of the cost involved.

Now, I do not want to anticipate the decision of the committee in that regard. It is entirely free to consider whether, first, it can do so while respecting the concept of the electronic *Hansard*; second, it is desirable, under the circumstances; and, third, it wants, without being influenced by anyone, to televise its sittings. Madam Speaker, in reply to the questions of the Leader of the Opposition, I have no intention, as government House leader, to tell the committee what to do in the matter of televising its hearings. The committee has enough experience to make its own decisions on any procedure, including that of televising its debates, if it so decides.

[English]

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order concerning the timing of the committee's activities and the House business. The government House leader has referred to the December 9 deadline and the fact that there will be a few witnesses called before that committee. I should like to ask him whether or not he would consider extending the deadline of that committee now because of what has happened in the other place, given the fact that we have many dozens of witnesses who want to appear, many dozens of groups which want to appear before that committee, and especially in light of his statement that the committee should determine its own timetable in terms of broadcasting. Would he also give the same undertaking to us that the committee can determine its own timetable as to when we will hear witnesses and when we will complete the report? We have allowed here in the House some four years for the public to make representations on the Bank Act. Surely to goodness we must allow more than one month for the public to make representations on the constitution of this country.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nystrom:** I wonder whether or not the minister can give us a positive response to this. He said the committee should control its own rules so far as broadcasting of its deliberations by radio and television is concerned. Will he not exhibit the