

*Routine Proceedings*

It was agreed with CPaC that in the event of official televising of any House of Commons committees, the proceedings of those committees would be shown on the parliamentary channel after the day's proceedings in this House were complete. Then Canadians would have an opportunity to watch committees in action. Particularly we felt this would be of interest in local communities where a local mayor or other representative of a community was appearing before a committee in Ottawa and making representations. The proceedings of that committee would be of particular interest in the community from which the witness had come to make his appearance. We felt it only fair that those proceedings be available by television and possibly radio in the local areas. On certain national issues it was our view that the work in committees is important. Witnesses come from across Canada to give testimony, for example, on national issues. We think Canadians should be able to see what goes on in those committees.

In watching this House the public is able to see members of Parliament from all regions of Canada discuss various issues. However, in committees it is more than members of Parliament who are appearing. We have Canadians who come from their communities to give evidence. Experts in all fields come to give evidence. Canadians could see that evidence being given. They could hear many of the arguments that help shape our views as members of Parliament.

As a committee we felt that this was extremely important and that therefore the televising of committees was in effect televising the other half of the work of this House. I urge members to consider this issue. The government might have some reservations. I understand there may be reservations on the part of hon. members on all sides.

I want to deal with the reservations briefly at this point. I may say quite frankly that when television was introduced in this House many years ago, as an outside observer of Parliament I had my reservations about how effective it would be. I was afraid that television would undermine the spirit of co-operation that existed in the House and perhaps make relations among the parties more difficult.

It may be that it has done that; I don't know. Some members think it has; some members think it has not. In any event the thing that has changed—and I think it is a

fundamental change in the way Parliament works—is that it has brought Parliament into the living rooms of Canadians. I am surprised how many people in my riding of Kingston and the Islands watch the proceedings of Parliament. I get comments on it repeatedly from members of the public who come to visit me here and to whom I talk on visits to my riding.

**An hon. member:** Who are they watching?

**Mr. Milliken:** They may be watching me. They are watching all members. I am sure the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie is well watched, he is such an eloquent speaker. I am sure his constituents enjoy his speeches to no end. Certainly those of us here in the House do. The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie was a member of the committee. He is well versed in his arguments. Perhaps that is why he is being a little loquacious this morning. I know he will make a speech later.

The important thing was that television brought the House to Canadians in a way that was never done before. On the whole I think therefore it is better for Parliament. It has brought Canadians closer to this institution. It has given them considerable appreciation of the way it works. For that I am glad. I realize that it may have caused changes in the way we deal with one another in the Chamber. It may have brought about increased partisanship in the Chamber. I regret that. I am not sure that it is so. I am not sure that that would not have happened whether or not television was admitted to this place. But it is here and the committee recognized that it is here to stay. We feel as a group that the logical extension of that kind of publicity for Parliament is that committees also be televised.

While it may present the opportunity for members to act in a more partisan and less fair or less objective way in dealing with committee matters, we feel that given the amount of televising that goes on in this House already and given the lack of partisanship on many issues that exist, it is not going to change the approach in the committees. Where hon. members want to be partisan in committee because there is a genuine fight about a principle of legislation that the government is proceeding with, they will be partisan whether or not the television cameras are present.

In my view television cameras are not going to alter radically the way we conduct business in committee. Certainly, I think, that was the view of the members of