

The Committee recommends that the electronic media should be permitted access to all committee meetings, subject to the consent of the committee. We note that many legislative bodies have allowed media cameras to film committee proceedings, and that the legislators involved have generally not had problems with their presence.

A number of witnesses who appeared before the Committee advocated opening committees to the media. The Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Parliamentary Press Gallery and the Centre for Investigative Journalism all argued for enhanced media access: as the Press Gallery said in its written submission, "the House should immediately permit all gallery members to cover the public business of Parliament in an orderly and equitable fashion."

As several witnesses have pointed out, print media have the right to attend public meetings, take notes, and report of what is being said or done. On the basis of equity, it is argued that the electronic media should be entitled to use the tools of their trade. There is already an audio feed in all committee rooms, and there appear to be few objections to allowing the media to record off this. It is a small step from there to allow cameras free access to committee proceedings.

The Canadian Parliamentary Press Gallery indicated that Gallery members are prepared to cover committees from fixed camera positions, using existing room lights, and the existing audio system, and respecting the spirit of electronic Hansard. Moreover, they have indicated that they are prepared to arrange pooling agreements among themselves where space limitations dictate this. It has also been suggested that cameras could be required not to enter or leave the room except during suitable breaks in the meeting. As Mr. Daniel J. Henry, Chairman of the Media and Communications Law section of the Canadian Bar Association told the Committee: "You may have seen royal commissions of inquiry that have been televised during recent years. They have one or two pool television cameras that the media themselves provide and that are in a fixed position, generally at the side or front of the public gallery. They use no additional light, but only the light in the room, and they tap into the room's sound system, so they are extremely unobtrusive." (*Minutes of Proceedings* 12:31) All of these considerations are designed to preserve the decorum of the meeting, and to ensure that there is no interference. The Committee believes that the members of the press are responsible, and that adequate safeguards can be devised.

The televising of committees will assist the press in terms of news-gathering. Rather than requiring witnesses and Members to repeat themselves after the meeting, or having scrums outside committee rooms, the press will be able to show what actually happened. It will also benefit particular interest groups; it would be possible to televise or film the testimony of a particular witness, or on a specific topic. It was suggested, for instance, that