

vised or only parts of them? Who would do the editing of the debates if not all sittings were televised? Who would decide of the time and the day when such debates would be televised?

In Great Britain, this problem has been widely discussed. No final decision has yet been reached in that connection. I have been told by some hon. members at Westminster that the debates will probably never be televised. Others are more optimistic and hope that part of the discussions will be televised. However, I did not have the opportunity, during my brief stays in London to meet the members who were in favour of the complete television broadcasting of the debates.

As for the broadcasting of the committee proceedings, I would answer in the negative. Instead, we should televise the proceedings of the House of Commons.

I believe it is technically possible to televise some debates of the House. For instance, I can imagine quite well, while a bill on air and water pollution is under consideration, a one hour program in the course of which the minister or his representative, and the leaders of the opposition parties, or their spokesmen, could express their opinions.

I would like to share the optimism shown by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) about the Grey Cup and the Stanley Cup games, but I very much fear that the viewers would not take as much interest in the debates of the House of Commons. I would be agreeable to have, in the course of one week, two periods of televised debates previously recorded in the House at a given time.

On the other hand, I would view with a critical eye the live broadcasting of debates, on account of the high costs involved. As a matter of fact, one channel would have to be set aside for that purpose, since our debates usually go on from 2 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.

In addition, I do not see how we would get the housekeepers interested, in the afternoon, in the broadcasting of the House debates, when other programs are scheduled and when ladies have other things to do. I do not see either who would be interested in watching the House proceedings at 7 p.m.

I think there should be, at least at the beginning, some—

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member allow a question?

**Mr. Lachance:** Certainly—

*Broadcasting of House of Commons Debates*

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** In English—

[*English*]

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, has the hon. member considered the possibility that just as we now provide *Hansard*, in particular the blues, for the whole day to the press, and the press makes a decision concerning what to publish, maybe we should provide a television tape of the whole day and let the television people decide what to broadcast?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Lachance:** Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting suggestion, but I do not think that we should always leave it to reporters to decide what should be televised.

I feel that if tomorrow we televised the Oral Question Period, there would be at least 200 members—the Prime Minister and the other Cabinet members being unable to do so—who would rise to ask questions. Some of these questions would certainly be important and urgent, but I am afraid that, on the other hand, there would be a run for publicity.

In my opinion, it is up to the hon. members to decide what should be telecast, and I will say to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that I do not object in principle to have all debates telecast. After all, it is purely a technical matter of operating costs and publishing.

I think that hon. members would agree to have debates televised were the government to reach that decision, but the spending of some \$100 million to telecast all our debates and all the meetings of our committees would surely be criticized.

[*English*]

**Mr. Horner:** I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would permit another question. He just said he is sure hon. members would agree with him if the government put it forward. I wonder if he would be prepared to declare a free vote on the question and let everybody decide according to their own wishes, rather than having a government motion to this effect.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Agreed.

**Mr. Lachance:** Mr. Speaker, it is, of course, an excellent suggestion. I believe that if a free vote was taken in the House, it should be