

that is the case. It is not simply an idle opinion; it is a judgment coming from the Speaker of the House of Commons.

It is a specious argument of the worst kind for the government House leader to come before us and try to pass off the view that a letter written by the Speaker of the House of Commons saying that it is her opinion simply means an informal suggestion.

A person sentenced to jail for five years should try that when the judge says, "It is my opinion that you should go to jail for five years." A person receiving such a sentence would not, to understate it a wee bit, have very sound legal grounds for appealing the case by saying that the judge was merely expressing an opinion. That is exactly analogous to the kind of phony argument the government House leader tried to pass off in the House of Commons today. That is my first point.

The people in the committee clearly understood when they received this letter which mysteriously appeared from some interesting source. We do not know the ultimate source. I am not questioning at all the honesty of the chairman of the committee as to the time he got the letter and who actually put it in his hands, but certainly I am dubious about the person who originally had the letter transmitted. We would like to know very much who had that letter sent on. The argument of the government House leader that this letter constituted a mere passing judgment without significance, is totally spurious. It was a sound, considered judgment, and the government House leader knows it very well.

My second point deals directly with the phony arguments we have heard in the House of Commons for the past ten days that somehow members of committees do not vote as their parties wish them to vote. The committees of the House of Commons are structured in party terms because it is well understood that members of a committee will not vote as isolated individuals, somehow making up their own minds independently of their considered party positions. It is quite the contrary. In a parliamentary democracy the committees are structured by party members because party members are expected to vote, as a rule, as their party caucuses decide is appropriate for them to vote. That is a well-understood and well-accepted democratic practice in the parliamentary system.

What do we have on the substance of the issue? I will be interested in hearing what the government announces later today. On this issue, and even after a ruling was made about the letter, a motion was put forward requesting the House of Commons, based on the decision of Madam Speaker, to authorize this committee to establish televising. What arguments did Liberal members make, not as isolated individuals making up their own minds, but reflecting government policy? Some said the lights would be too strong.

**Mr. Lalonde:** Oh, come on.

**Mr. Broadbent:** "Come on" is right, but these are the arguments used against television. The lights would bother members. Some said there would be grandstanding.

**An hon. Member:** What are you doing now?

*Privilege—Mr. Knowles*

**Mr. Broadbent:** Some said the people would use the opportunity to grandstand. The third argument was that some people would be afraid to appear, some members of Parliament would be afraid to be here because of the television cameras.

**Mr. Knowles:** Members of the public.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Excuse me, members of the public would be afraid.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) is quoting quite extensively from proceedings of that committee. I think he knows the rule that the proceedings of another committee should not be discussed in the House. I would remind him of that rule, and allow him to continue.

**Mr. Broadbent:** That is a fair comment, Madam Speaker. I was just making passing comment about what was going on in the committee which showed the intellectual levels reflected by Liberal members.

**Some hon. Members:** It was just an opinion.

**Mr. Broadbent:** I will be watching if the government shifts its policy, as it seems about to do. For a week the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) were evasive on this. Suddenly they are under heat, they feel some pressure. The only time a Liberal acts with any sense of justice is if he is forced into it. Perhaps that is what we will see this afternoon. I wonder whether all those Liberal members who voted against this in committee, when there is a resolution before the House, will stand up and vote against it now. It will be interesting to see, or will they act with the same degree of independence in the House as they acted in committee?

In conclusion, this is not a light matter. The matter before us is one of great concern. We are debating a measure in this Parliament. It is a resolution which, if it carries, will change the Constitution of Canada. It will bring the constitution home to Canada. The matters are of profound importance. Therefore, in the view of both parties in the opposition, at least, they are matters which the people of Canada ought to have the right to witness through television.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** Let there be no illusion. For a week the government, the Liberal party, decided that the people were to be shut out. Then they voted that way in committee and they thought they had their way. But today they felt some heat in the House, so perhaps they are about to change their minds. They had better change their minds, if they want to have any support and reasonable consideration by members of all parties in the committee; that is all I can say. If they continue with their anti-democratic attitude in the process of constitutional change, they will do irreparable harm to the country, which is something members on this side will not tolerate.

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