

*Routine Proceedings*

House to change and accommodate itself to the new rules that he was proposing.

Of course, we all know now it did not work. The members of his own party have rebelled against the changes and so we are now going back to the previous arrangements and that will probably get passed some other time.

In the meantime, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has called this particular motion for concurrence in this report dealing with television in committees. I want to say that in the course of the changes that he rammed through the House a year ago, there was a negotiated change made with respect to committees. In fact, there were a whole lot of changes with respect to committees.

One of the things that I insisted on in the negotiations as a price for agreement on some of the changes to the committees was the televising of committees. The television was to be allowed at the discretion of the committee itself. The agreement was embodied in a change to Standing Order 119(1). I would like to read to the House the terms of the Standing Order which we agreed to and which the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader specifically agreed to as part of those negotiations and which Standing Order change was incorporated in the government motion that proposed those changes to the House. Standing Order 119.1(2) states:

The Standing Committee on House Management shall establish, by report to the House of Commons, experimental guidelines governing the broadcasting of committee meetings. After concurrence by the House in such a report, any committee may permit the presence of the electronic media at its meetings, subject to the said guidelines.

It is perfectly clear. The purpose of the new Standing Order was to allow the house management committee to draft a set of guidelines by committees which, on adoption by the House, allowed any committee to make a decision to allow the electronic media into its meetings subject to the guidelines.

• (1400)

This report falls far short of that undertaking given by the parliamentary secretary to the government House

leader on behalf of his boss, the government House leader. In fact, this report is a complete change from the provisions of that Standing Order. That Standing Order, in effect, is being left as a meaningless piece of English.

It was a firm commitment made by this government in the course of the negotiations as a price for our agreement to certain other changes to the Standing Orders and then rammed through this House and is now being reneged upon after the House has passed an order adopting the agreement. That is what this is. It is a breach of undertaking, it is a breach of obligation and it is a flagrant abuse of trust.

I say that the report that we are left to deal with today, while it has its strengths, is not what the Standing Orders called for. It is not what the government promised as a price for our concurrence to some of the more odious rule changes that it adopted.

Of course, we ended up having to fight the rule changes in their entirety because they were not in accordance with the agreement, but that particular one was. That agreement was obtained because of the request put forward by me, on behalf of our party. I believe it was fully concurred in by the hon. member for Kamloops who was involved in those negotiations on behalf of the New Democratic Party.

I regret that the government cannot live up to an undertaking. I think it is a shocking way to proceed and I am very sorry that has happened.

Having said that, what has the government proposed in exchange? I wish the chairman of the committee had come on these committee meetings to Toronto and to Quebec City, but the chairman saw fit to do neither. As a result, I suggest he has got himself into trouble with this report.

Had he come he might have seen how systems have worked in these other two legislatures. In Toronto they had a system similar to that described in this report. There is a single room established for committee hearings that are to be televised. Committees apply for leave to sit in that committee room where the proceedings will be televised. As long as there is no conflict they may go and use the room. If two or more committees apply to sit in the room at the same time there is a decision-making