

Business of Supply

people of Canada would be interested. These are not the details that should be sent across the networks. The people of Canada are interested in what we say, how we say it, the behaviour of the house, the relationship and the seriousness of our work. That is the first concern, that what goes over the air and on to the screen be relevant and important information, not the kind of titillating detail that a smart cameramen or a smart reporter might consider it clever to get across.

● (3:50 p.m.)

The second concern we would have with the system is that what goes across the air and goes on the screen be fairly representative of this chamber. Not only the government's views should be reported to the people of Canada, as in some instances is too often the case, and not only one party's views should go over the air, but all the various views represented in this chamber should be presented through the media of television and radio to the people of Canada.

The third matter that concerns us is that every broadcast ought to have some entertainment value—

An hon. Member: No problem there.

Mr. Lewis: You know, Mr. Speaker, I was a member of a committee that pranced all over Europe having its brains washed about NATO. My brain was washed so thoroughly I was afraid I could not find what was left of it when I came back home, but I did find what was left. Since we came back, we have been sitting in camera writing a report with which I thoroughly and violently disagree. But since I learned about this motion today, I have been wracking my brains to find out how we can give the broadcasts some entertainment value. The only thing I could think of was to get the Minister of Defence Production (Mr. Jamieson) to sing some songs which I once heard him sing—those that would not get the networks into trouble, I might add. Perhaps we can find other things that could be done by some members of the house with acting and entertaining capacities to make the presentation a little lighter than it might otherwise be.

Seriously, however, I speak of the entertainment value in the sense that what is presented on the screen and over the airwaves about the issues have some dramatic impact. This means the right choice of issues to get the full dramatic impact from an exchange of views; it means the right choice of spokesmen

[Mr. Lewis.]

exchanging those views. That is part of the entertainment value of these things.

One is concerned about these three aspects of the problem, Mr. Speaker. It is obvious that the House of Commons, indeed any part of parliament, should not set itself up as a censor. Therefore, we have to take it for granted that the choice of whether or not something is of news value, including the information and entertainment value as I have called it, must be left to the media. We do not want to set ourselves up as censors of what they do.

We do not want the people of Canada to get the impression that the members of parliament are so worried about what they say, and how they say it, that they are going to make sure they pick every word and every image that goes across. But, Mr. Speaker, I think that the question of the propriety in which this job is done, the way in which it is imposed upon our debates, and the way in which spokesmen are chosen for presentation to the people so that there is a fair reflection of the various representative views in this house, justifies the establishment of a small committee of spokesmen for the parties under the leadership and direction of Mr. Speaker. In this way, the broadcasting which can be done from the chamber can be organized. We can order where the cameras and radio receivers are to be located, at what hour they are to be used and what debates are to be used for the purpose of broadcasting. We can make sure that what goes across the air is fair, just, and representative of this house.

I, therefore conclude, Mr. Speaker, well within my 15 minutes, by saying that I am not quite satisfied with the suggestion that we discuss this matter and that we be cautious about it. I would like to urge parliament, to urge Mr. Speaker, to urge representatives of all the parties to get going on this thing right away. I urge the setting up of the necessary committee to discuss the details of doing it, to decide as quickly as possible that this will be done, and as quickly as possible set up the machinery for having it done always—and I emphasize this—always so far as the fairness of distribution is concerned under the aegis, direction and control of Mr. Speaker, with the assistance of a committee representative of all parties in the house. This to make sure that what does go across the air is not merely a matter of entertainment in the lowest sense of the term, not merely a matter of titillating the people of Canada, of poking fun at parliament which can easily be done as all of us