

still going at approximately 12.45, and even then it adjourned to meet again at 3.30, and I do not know how long it will last.

There is a lot of good will around here. Even my friends to the right, who sometimes sound as though they are contentious and cantankerous over the issue, I believe are approaching this matter with a degree of good will, certainly good faith. But the good will is being dried up by virtue of the kind of performance we had at a simple organization meeting of that committee which is still not over. I think it is a serious matter which should be gone into.

If the matter cannot be resolved in any other way and you find that I have a prima facie case of privilege, Madam Speaker, related to the misleading statements made by the Prime Minister, I would be prepared to make the appropriate motion to the effect that the question of the way in which a committee can get radio and television coverage, in light of the motion which is on the books of the House of Commons, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

**Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has advanced a case for Parliament. In supporting him in that case, I think it is important that we recount the history of this matter. First, there has been a history of stifling of debate and discussion in this House of Commons. That has been the underpinning of the history of this matter. Standing Order 33, closure was invoked before all members of Parliament had a chance to answer the invitation of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) that all members should have an opportunity to speak.

Second, there was a refusal to increase the time during which the committee could respond to the matter. Third, we now have the issue that was raised today, namely, that the Prime Minister is further attempting to stifle, submerge, hide under the rug, put away or put aside the right of the public to view what is happening in this House of Commons, by playing games with the rules. If ever the government House leader had a duty as a parliamentarian, it is to rise in his place now and say, as a member of the government, that if that is the opinion of the Chair—and I think the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has correctly characterized that opinion—then the government accedes to it on the grounds of openness. If it is necessary for this House to move, then the government House leader ought to bring in such a motion.

● (1530)

I say to him, Madam Speaker, and I repeat what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) said, that if such a motion is brought in today—and apparently that is what is required according to your ruling on the question of procedure—it will go through without debate.

**Mr. Knowles:** Hear, hear!

*Privilege—Mr. Knowles*

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre agrees with me. The government knows, therefore, that it is not going to lose precious time.

I ask the government House leader, through you, Madam Speaker, in support of the position taken by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and in an effort to preserve something of respectability and the sense of openness in this institution, given the importance of the discussion before that committee, to stand in his place now and say that he will bring forward the appropriate motion in light of the assurances that I have given.

I think this is important, Madam Speaker. I think it is very relevant to the operation of this place that he, as leader of the House of Commons, clear up this mess, a mess created by his leader and a situation that is absolutely intolerable to the appropriate operation of this House.

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

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Madam Speaker, as someone who was at that committee this morning, I should like to say a few words on the subject.

Earlier the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said that your letter does not really mean that a ruling was made. I want to say to you very clearly, Madam Speaker, that the feeling of all members at that committee this morning was that a ruling had been made. The letter was hanging over the heads of the members of the committee and was taken as a ruling by all those present.

Someone has already said that we had an indication by the Prime Minister on an earlier occasion in the House that we would be free to choose whichever path we wanted in regard to broadcasting the proceedings of the committee on radio and television.

We also had the statement of the government House leader that the committee was free to determine its own course and make its own decision. That is the understanding we had in committee this morning. The co-chairman of the committee is my good friend, the hon. member for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (Mr. Joyal)—

[*Translation*]

—and I have a great deal of admiration for him. He has, for a very long time, been one of my best friends in the House. I find he deals honestly with all hon. members.

[*English*]

He had drawn to his attention during the proceedings, I gather—and perhaps he could enlighten the House on this in detail for a few moments—the letter from yourself to the chairman of the Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped. He had to read that letter to the members of the committee. It was our clear impression at that time that if we were to decide that the committee's proceedings should be televised, that would go against your ruling, Madam Speaker. With that type of information before the committee, I am sure that a number of members felt somewhat intimidated.