

7. A Monitoring Committee of the House of Commons should be given the mandate to review and report upon the broadcasting of the House of Commons and its committees, and to deal with complaints from members regarding such broadcasting or the operations of CPaC generally. While it would be possible to set up a special Monitoring Committee, we recommend that this responsibility be assigned to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedure and Private Members' Business.

"I think it is up to the House of Commons to establish guidelines for the channel's programming. More specifically, I think the matter should be referred to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedure and Private Members' Business."

Jean-Pierre Blackburn, M.P.

It is extremely important that there be clearly defined procedures for dealing with complaints related to the broadcasting of the House of Commons or its committees. Currently, the broadcasting operations of the House are entirely under the control of the Speaker. From an administrative point of view, the House Broadcasting Service will continue to report to the Speaker, but we consider it advisable that a committee of the House be assigned the general responsibility for supervising the broadcasting of the House and its committees, and dealing with complaints. It is appropriate for a committee of Members to be involved.

We anticipate that this "Monitoring Committee" would be an all-party, non-partisan committee, that would act as a control mechanism. It would be able to start investigations on its own initiative, or at the request of any Member. It would deal with problems, and consider whether corrective measures were required. Members need to have confidence in the system, and they need the assurance that their concerns will be considered, and their complaints investigated fairly. Communication is a key to the success of any broadcasting enterprise where politicians are involved.

Rather than requiring the Speaker to deal with complaints, it would be preferable to have a committee of Members involved. It is recommended that this Monitoring Committee should judge complaints on the basis of a fairness doctrine involving not only the Member, but the general course of programming.

The Monitoring Committee could also deal with complaints from Members regarding the wrap-around programming on CPaC, although its primary focus will be the broadcasting originating from the House of Commons. It is important to note that if the CPaC proposal is licensed by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), certain matters will come under the authority of the Commission,