

*Broadcasting of House of Commons Debates*

about a change in the way we perform in Parliament, and that is all to the good. As a matter of fact, it may do something which all of us want to happen: it may put Parliament back into an important place in Canadian life.

There is a lot of talk today about Parliament not being relevant, not being concerned about the people, and it is said the people no longer consider it to be important. Maybe one of the reasons is this: the public sees sports events, panel discussions, events in the international field, church services, wars and tragedies—people see all these things on television but they do not see us. One of my hon. friends says this is the funniest show of all, the best in town. But they do not see us. I suggest that once they do it will put Parliament back into the centre of Canadian life. They may turn us off, but that will be a challenge to us to do something about the kind of performance we give in this chamber.

We have lately made an attempt to reorganize the work of this House so that more of the detailed work is done in committees, leaving this place as a debating forum for the important and major issues. We have moved a long way in this direction by sending virtually all bills to standing committees instead of dealing with them here in committee of the whole. It is true that an exception was made tonight. But it still seems to me that too much unimportant detail is discussed here amid the trappings of this building and this institution. Put in television terms, it would look better if details were dealt with in a small committee room where men and women were working on the particular items before them at the time.

This proposed innovation would involve not only changes in the way in which we perform, in how we speak, in how we look, and all the rest of it—including, perhaps, even the way in which we dress—but it would produce changes in our rules, in particular, changes in the relationship between the House of Commons and its various committees. I am not afraid of this. I hope none of us is afraid of it. Parliament may change so greatly that if Mackenzie King were to come back he would not recognize the place. Some of us may not recognize it as the kind of place it was when we first came here. But it is not important simply to keep things as they are. What is important is that we should make this institution responsive to the needs of the Canadian people. What is important is that it should serve the Canadian people and make them feel there is some affinity, some relationship,

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

some understanding between them and ourselves as their Members of Parliament.

Maybe I am being too hopeful; maybe I am reading too much into the possibilities of the use of the electronic media. But we can certainly go a long way. We cannot go downhill any more; we can only go up. I like the idea that if this motion carries, the people are to have the chance to see their Parliament in action and to become more a part of it than at the present time. I therefore have much pleasure in supporting the motion now before the House.

[Translation]

**Mr. Georges-C. Lachance (Lafontaine):** Mr. Speaker, I am very glad tonight to say a few words on this motion of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald). I believe that coming from the government, as it does, this motion will certainly bring more rapid results than if it came, say, from a private member of any party.

I certainly think that the Committee on Procedure and Organization, which includes government and opposition members will seriously consider the matter and report to the House which, after considering the report and possibly amending it, will make some excellent recommendations to the government.

Of course, I would like to share the enthusiasm of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) as regards the results this measure might bring. I do not readily see those effects, because several problems arise. This evening, I should like to express my opinion on that subject. As I said, I am in favour of this motion. It is possible to provide the Canadian people with better information while prompting hon. members to make the debates more interesting.

● (9:30 p.m.)

Having said a few words in favour of this motion, I intend to make some comments so that the Committee on Procedure and Organization might become aware of the views of hon. members. In my opinion, it would not be easy to arrange for the television broadcasting of the proceedings of the House.

Mr. Speaker, my remarks may be desultory because I do not want to take too much of the time of the House. Besides I would like to give my colleagues who are concerned about that matter an opportunity to make suggestions.

I believe that some purely technical problems will not be easily dealt with. Indeed, who will choose the speakers on the matters to be discussed? Would all sittings be tele-