

*Point of Order—Mr. Gauthier*

I am sorry to have to say this, Mr. Speaker, but I must ask you again to rule on my question of privilege of December 4. I am therefore providing you with an opportunity to cover two questions at the same time.

Again, today, a motion was moved by the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) calling on the House to go to the next item, a motion which has been deemed by the Chair to be in order and put to the vote. At 12.35 p.m., the bell started to ring and the vote was to be taken at 1.05 p.m. At 1 p.m., the Chair declared that the motion had lapsed and the House took recess for the lunch break.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to repeat the arguments which I put forward on December 4, 1986, because it is time consuming and I do not want to abuse the time of the House. But may I remind you of the clear and definite provisions of Clause 49 of the Constitution, which states that questions arising in the House shall be decided by a majority of voices. Mr. Speaker, may I ask you to enlighten me and the other Hon. Members on the reason why you, who are neither a judge nor a person eager to order people around, but who must preside over all proceedings, feel that it is your responsibility to lapse a motion before this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is not the first time that the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier raises this issue. Of course, the matter is very important. For the time being, I will delay my ruling, but sometime next week, the Chair will probably be in a position to rule on this very important point.

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## PRIVILEGE

### TELEVISED BROADCASTS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege of which I gave you notice. This is a matter I raised again some time ago in this House. It concerns the authority of committees to allow television cameras in committee rooms, thereby allowing televised broadcasts of committee's proceedings.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Human Rights voted to allow the televised media to film part of the Committee's proceedings. Although the intentions are good and the reasons quite honourable, I submit that the Committee went beyond its powers, and I wish that my question of privilege be put before the House because I seriously believe this seriously involves the privileges of every Member in this House, as I would like to demonstrate with the following remarks.

It is known, Mr. Speaker, and I already have gone on record on this, that I personally support radio and TV broadcasts of committee meetings. It has always been my view that it might

be in the public interest to allow television and radio to record and transmit the work, the proceedings of our committees, because I believe this would add to the committees and to public awareness of what is going on in this House.

Mr. Speaker, raising this question is a matter of some difficulty to me because the witness this morning is a witness for whom I have a lot of respect—a very important witness, someone who has set very high standards of what it means to fight for human rights, but I do so because there must be rules, rules must be put in place soon to provide for televised broadcasts of committee meetings. I believe that, and I expect action on this. I raised this before in this House, but there has been no move yet from the Government, so I invite, I urge, I plead with the Government to find the courage needed to bring in a solution to that problem and to allow committees to broadcast their proceedings along principles similar to those under which the official record of *Debates* is published, as is being done in this House. No public or commercial TV cameras would be allowed to come here and broadcast our proceedings here. What goes on here, Mr. Speaker, is controlled by you. The image given to private and public broadcasters is controlled by the Chair, following a decision of the House made in January 1977, if I am not mistaken. To maintain order, we need rules and, in committees, if a majority of Members, including me, want the proceedings to be televised, we will have to make arrangements, establish a set of rules and, under the authority of the Chair, proceed with broadcasting.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the members of the committee were well intentioned, their motives were honourable. However, there are problems. First, committees of the House, even with such honourable motives, do not have the authority to allow broadcasting of their proceedings. It is the duty of Committee Clerks to inform chairmen and members that there is no authority, no rules which, at the present time, allow for broadcasting of the proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, I raised this question in the House on October 28, 1986, after I attended a committee where the chairman tried to authorize . . . I will read the proposal of the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Research, Science and Technology: "I have given permission to the press to record this meeting and for the television cameras to be in the room behind the press table."

I immediately intervened, Mr. Speaker, and said to the chairman: "I think the ruling you have just made is beyond your powers." The committee sided with me and the proceedings were not televised.

This time, the Committee voted and it is my understanding that it allowed the television cameras to record the proceedings and to broadcast picture and sound.