

Oral Questions

still in power. It has suspended a cable station in Calgary allegedly because it played Christian music. Will the Minister look into this and ascertain why the CRTC is so opposed to Christian programs and Christian music?

Hon. Walter McLean (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Communications I will take the question as notice. I can assure my hon. colleague that I will raise this matter with him personally as I have a special interest in that subject.

* * *

FISHERIESWEST COAST TRAGEDY INQUIRY—WEATHER SERVICE
RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Last night we learned that the investigation into the tragic loss of life on the B.C. coast on October 11 concluded that the federal Government weather services on the coast of British Columbia are inadequate. Will the Prime Minister give his commitment that the necessary funds and personnel to implement the recommendations made in that report will be forthcoming immediately?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, this is a case in which the Hon. Member has more than one Minister who is quite prepared to deal with the question. It is part of the openness of this Government.

I can answer the Hon. Member. I have read the report. As he knows, I made that report available to him yesterday. I know of his concern.

● (1200)

I made it quite clear yesterday in this House, and to the media afterwards, that there would be no cut of expenditures that would impair the efficiency of weather reporting. The recommendations in that report will be studied, and where there has to be improvement, funds will be found. There is nothing more important to this Government than the safety of the people on the ships and the boats on the west coast of British Columbia.

PERSONNEL AND FUNDING

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. It is quite clear what the Minister of Fisheries is saying. It is very nice that there will be no cuts. But what the report concludes is that weather services in British Columbia are inadequate. We are talking about a question of life and death.

Mr. Speaker: What is the question, please?

Mr. Fulton: Will the Prime Minister give his personal commitment that the necessary personnel and funds will be

made available immediately so that more lives are not lost off the coast of British Columbia?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will make this clear statement. Obviously the health and safety of people take precedence over everything else. In the light of that, I will be happy to meet with my colleagues in Transport and Fisheries in an attempt to resolve the matter, and respond favourably to my hon. friend as soon as I can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before I have a couple of other things to say, might I remind the House—I did not want to interrupt Question Period today to do it—that it is a tradition, and in fact a rule, of the House that questions be put and answered through the Chair. We are getting a long way away from that practice. I just want to remind Members that that is the rule of the House.

* * *

FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRSSECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE RULED OUT OF
ORDER

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs presented its second report. It is recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings* as Sessional Paper No. 331-8/4. The operative paragraph, after the Committee explains that while it was studying the Annual Report of the Economic Council of Canada, reads as follows:

During its consideration of this Order of Reference, your Committee discussed the issues relating to the television and radio broadcasting of its proceedings and has agreed to recommend that the Special Committee on the Reform of the House of Commons be instructed by the House to examine in detail the matter of radio and television broadcasting of the proceedings of all standing and special committees of the House of Commons.

Standing Order 69 lists the standing committees of the House and sets out their powers. These powers are generally discussed in citations 620 and 621 of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition. There it is pointed out that committees often have to report to the House to seek the widening of an order of reference or to ask for some additional authority. It is also pointed out in Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, Citation 621, that a committee "... can only consider those matters which have been committed to it by the House." There are numerous rulings on this subject by my predecessors, and Bourinot's Fourth Edition at page 469 is to the point:

A committee is bound by, and is not at liberty to depart from, the Order of Reference.

On June 13, 1984, Mr. Speaker Francis made exactly the same point, as did also Madam Speaker Sauvé on June 29, 1983. May's Twentieth Edition at page 644 is no less clear.

In the present case the Finance Committee recommends that another committee be instructed to do something, namely to study the radio and television broadcasting of the committees of the House. It is certain that the Finance Committee is