

individual taxpayer. However, I will take the Hon. Member's representations as notice.

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### METRIC CONVERSION

#### GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Last week I asked the Minister to give us the Government's policy on metric. His answer was unclear, indecisive and, in that sense, indefensible. What is the Government's position on metric? Is metric in or out? Consumers want to know, and producers want to know. Would he make the Government's position on metric clear?

[Translation]

**Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I announced last week that we were in the midst of a period of intensive consultation and study. We are waiting to receive comments from all interested parties that want to air their views on the subject, and I think this Government will want to have all these opinions so that it can prepare recommendations for submission to Cabinet in due course.

● (1440)

[English]

#### REQUEST FOR RESIGNATION OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

**Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador):** Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, last week the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary did make a very clear and definite statement that metric was out.

**Mr. Dick:** Never.

**Mr. Rompkey:** The Parliamentary Secretary and the Minister are both part of the Government. The Parliamentary Secretary is not a member of the Government but he is a part of the Government. If the Parliamentary Secretary is not speaking for the Government, is the Minister going to call upon the Parliamentary Secretary to resign?

[Translation]

**Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, it is customary for the Minister who is responsible for a given department to announce policies after consultation with Cabinet and caucus members, and that is how I intend to proceed.

### Oral Questions

#### CULTURAL AFFAIRS

##### BUDGETARY CUT-BACKS

**Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Why has his Government decided that our cultural agencies will suffer budgetary cutbacks that are twice as high as cuts made in other federal areas?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, all Government agencies will be subject to budgetary cutbacks, and as far as I know, a general attempt has been made to proceed equitably throughout the Government, perhaps with a few variations. Basically, however, our purpose has been to clean up our public finances, but in a manner that is fair to all. If the Hon. Member would like to indicate some specific examples, perhaps I could look into this with her.

[English]

##### LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING

**Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, it is hard to see what is equitable about twice as strong budget cuts. Are they twice as less worthy as other agencies for government support? Would the Prime Minister explain how this can be justified in view of the very specific promises in the course of the election campaign that funding would be maintained at present levels, with cost of living increases? Would he not agree that there has been profound reversal of policy from the time his party was in opposition to coming into government?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, it would be helpful if I knew the case to which the Hon. Member refers. There has not been any precision at all in her allegations. I can only repeat what I think is widely acknowledged, that while reductions in public expenditures are always difficult and painful, I know that she will agree with the fact that indeed a colossal mess was inherited by us and we had to deal with it fairly and objectively across the board. We have tried to do that.

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#### NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

##### PETROLEUM GAS REVENUE TAX—STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH PROVINCES

**Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary East):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It relates to the National Energy Program that was introduced by the Liberal Government with the help of our friends, the NDP.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Deans:** That is wrong.