

Oral Questions

• (1435)

The Speaker: The question, please.

Mr. Fillion: Of course, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister have to ask cabinet to change this decision, as provided under Section 18(1) of the Broadcasting Act?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, the answer is substantially what I said in reply to a question from the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata.

I read the papers, of course, including the article that attracted the attention of the hon. member. I said that I was waiting for the Quebec Minister of Culture and Communications to get in touch with me. Yesterday, I mentioned that I had asked for an analysis of the CRTC's decisions. Once I have heard from the minister and the analysis is ready, I will be able to make some decisions.

The Speaker: The question, please!

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary. Does the Minister of Canadian Heritage think it is acceptable and fair for the CRTC to have granted eight licences out of ten, all to English-language channels, which means that once again, Francophones will have to pay for channels whose programming does not reflect their cultural interests?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I trust that I expressed myself clearly in French. I said that as soon as the minister is approached for his views on changing the CRTC's decision, the minister becomes a judge and it is therefore inappropriate for the minister who may have to act as a judge to give his views before hearing all sides of the case. That is where the matter stands now, and I hope I made myself sufficiently clear in my answers to previous questions and to the question that was just put.

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[English]

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

At a time when social programs are being reviewed because of a lack of funds and health care transfers are being cut back because of a lack of funds, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council is still dishing out ridiculous grants like \$94,000 to study the resolution of unfinished emotional business with a significant other.

When will the government take action to put an end to this sort of nonsensical waste of taxpayers' money?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think it would be highly unethical for the federal government to be making granting decisions about an independent body like the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, it is tough to stay cool.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council has a staff of 100 and a budget of \$100.1 million, equivalent to a year's worth of taxes for 22,871 taxpayers and certainly symbolic of government waste to most Canadians.

How can the government continue to support \$16,000 to investigate attacks on aristocratic behaviour in 18th century Britain and \$59,800 to study ecology and history in the insular Quoddy region?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think there is a very important principle here that seems to escape the hon. member.

Under the budget of the Parliament of Canada there are certain moneys allocated to the Reform Party for research. There may be certain people in Parliament who think that research money is wasted. The fact is that is your choice.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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• (1440)

[Translation]

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Yesterday, in the House, the minister said that he understood the disappointment felt by the francophone and Acadian communities, and he added that he could not be both a judge and a party at the same time, which he repeated again today. He suggested instead that the francophone and Acadian communities appeal the CRTC's decision regarding the French-language all-news channel.

Does the minister share the opinion expressed by the ACFO President to the effect that, once again, a CRTC decision places the francophone and Acadian communities at the mercy of local cable companies? Does he agree with the ACFO president who said that, once again, our rights are being infringed upon?