

Oral Questions

Parliament, will the Prime Minister assure this House that the government will provide stable, multi-year funding for the CBC? And will he stop abdicating his responsibility toward the people of Canada and stand up for the CBC?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people standing up for the CBC, all of us who have come to respect and appreciate the work that it has been doing. Yes, it has been receiving more money, not less, constantly since 1985.

One might want to reflect that there is certainly an awful lot of public money that is going into the production of some of the work that the CBC is showing on its channels. One should not forget other organizations like Telefilm, the National Film Board and indeed other public money that is available from other levels of government.

Certainly there has been a very serious significant contribution that has been constantly available to the CBC.

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BELANGER-CAMPEAU COMMISSION

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. Canadians want desperately our Prime Minister to speak with one voice and they want that statement to be the same in both official languages and in all regions of the country.

Would the Prime Minister, tell Canadians why he instructed or refused to instruct his colleague on the Belanger-Campeau Commission to abstain from this very important vote in this very important report. Why has the Prime Minister failed to seize the opportunity and to exercise real judgment not only in Quebec, but throughout Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I know that it is the duty of the opposition to score as many political points as it can, but I think Canadians would hope that it would try to avoid scoring cheap points at the cost of national unity.

I have already explained to the colleagues of my hon. friend that there were a number of votes. At all times, particularly in regard to the specific vote that came

forward, I believe it was some time during the late evening or early morning when they were called upon to vote on whether the proper orientation for Quebec would be a sovereign one, that some 17 members, including Mr. Hogue, voted solidly against. That was a strong statement of commitment to the unity of Canada.

Inasmuch as Mr. Hogue is the only member of that group who is also a member of the Government of Canada which must play an important part in negotiations, it is important that he not be associated with or seek to denigrate the work of those with whom he will be called upon to dialogue. That is the entirely legitimate reason why Mr. Hogue made a very, very strong commitment to the unity of Canada and yet, as a procedural matter, indicated that because we will be called upon to initiate these discussions, he did not want to place a yea or a nay on the document that comes from the Government of the Province of Quebec.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is trying to have it both ways.

I ask the Prime Minister, through you Mr. Speaker, as to why the Prime Minister has failed to seize this opportunity to show real leadership in the province of Quebec and throughout Canada? Why has he abdicated his responsibility to Canadians from coast to coast? Why has he refused to instruct his member of Parliament to vote again this report or is it because the minister of industry—

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I should remind my hon. friend that the best way that I could show leadership in the province of Quebec, as Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and this government, was to enter the province of Quebec as a candidate in the last election and get myself elected by Quebecers to the House of Commons.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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• (1450)

BILL C-80

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Today we presented in Parliament 25 boxes of petitions organized by the students at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal containing over 500,000 signatures asking the