

*CRTC Act*

length. It is an important issue which needs to be clarified. There is too much at stake for it to remain fluid.

With respect to the question of consultation, one response to the questionnaire in August, 1984, was, "We will continue to consult with groups and individuals in the cultural sector on all aspects of policy development". However, the national Director of the Canada Council told reporters that the arts community was never consulted about budget reductions.

With regard to the CBC, three private sector consultants were hired by the Government and sent there to advise. Again, this is another fundamental change between August and December.

Let me return to the Parliamentary Secretary, who was quoted last June as saying that his Party wanted "to get away from the mentality of hand-outs symbolized by the Canada Council". Perhaps the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary was not quoted accurately, he will be able to explain that, but it is very puzzling that, on the one hand, there is a commitment to funding in the response to the questionnaire from the Canadian Conference of the Arts while, on the other hand, there is the statement that the Party is against "hand-outs".

In January of this year, a Conservative Member of Parliament asked the Minister of State for Youth (Mrs. Champagne) if it was correct to assume that one of the priorities for spending in the International Year of Youth would be cultural organizations. The Minister's reply was, "The Hon. Member would be mistaken in saying that it is a priority". Surely in the International Year of Youth, one must ask what is more important as an expression of youthful idealism and concern for the country than the cultural and artistic expressions of our youth? If such organizations are not a priority, how does that fit in with the election promises?

The previous Liberal Government sought to foster the cultural and artistic expression of Canadians and worked to ensure that this expression was transmitted to all Canadians. Since my own constituency is one where many people have low incomes, many of whom are struggling artists, I keep returning not only to the inherent value of cultural and artistic expression but also to the fact that many of the people involved are young and earn very little, even in good times and with considerable government support for the arts. In terms of people employed, the Canadian arts industry is the fourth largest in Canada, with 145,000 full-time employees. The arts industry is the sixth largest in Canada in terms of salaries and wages, which total approximately \$2.5 billion.

In 1983, artistic revenues amounted to 2.4 per cent of the GNP. In the year 1983 to 1984, under a Liberal Government, the total appropriation for the cultural portfolio, exclusive of museum construction, was \$1.2 billion. The estimated value of the cultural sector to the Gross National Product in 1981 was \$11 billion. This is larger than textiles, chemicals and aviation combined.

The Liberal Government adopted recommendations of the Applebaum Committee, among others, into a framework for federal cultural policy, which included recognition that an

appropriation role for the federal Government is the creation of a climate of creativity; that strong cultural industry be encouraged; and that this be accomplished through a partnership of effort with the creative community, other levels of government and the private sector.

In 1983 to 1984, several new policies were announced by the Liberal Government to promote further the cultural community in Canada. A broadcasting program production fund was created, which produced \$250 million of federal funds to generate some \$750 million worth of programs from the independent production sector over five years.

The CBC was to have 80 per cent Canadian programming and prime time programming by 1988, and 50 per cent of that program was to be purchased from independents. In May, 1984, a new role for the National Film Board was defined and a number of new forms of assistance for the marketing and promotion of Canadian films was announced.

In June, 1984, Revenue Canada announced acceptance of important recommendations made by a parliamentary committee regarding the application of tax law to artists and writers. The measures included making refunds to certain eligible artists and writers by limiting the effects of reassessments of their tax returns, allowing self-employed performing artists to deduct the cost of music, acting or other lessons to develop their talents.

Up to June, 1984, we saw consistent growth in the cultural industries in Canada, encouraged by successive Liberal Governments. Now we see the new Conservative Government making severe cuts in all of those programs, as well as introducing a Bill to amend the CRTC in such a way that it will allow for much more political direction.

These are very serious matters, particularly in view of high unemployment in this country. I hope that they will be addressed, and if the decisions have not been engraved in stone I hope the Minister will reconsider them as a result of this debate.

We have seen an interesting development in the last few weeks when, in an unprecedented show of unanimity, 21 organizations representing French and English Canada unveiled a collective statement urging the Minister of Communications to act swiftly in dealing with what they regard as a deepening crisis, which they say affects the very life and soul of Canada. In their statement, the group suggests that the future of Canadian programming with the CBC is in jeopardy. They have a number of very broad recommendations, many of which would return us to the situation that existed with the Liberal Government prior to the last election. They say that the central cultural organization in Canada is the CBC, which does not exist for itself but for all Canadians. "The institution is in crisis and thus the crisis touches us all". Their recommendation is that the Minister of Communications recommend that Parliament vote a special envelope of moneys of the CBC earmarked exclusively for independently-produced Canadian programming.