

were modest, but positive. The linking of the increase in arts funding to the GNP, for example, would not break the private banks, nor would it break the Government's bank.

● (1250)

Let us look at what has actually happened since the Conservative Party won the election and formed the Government. Let us look at the present spending estimates for the cultural agencies which the Government has under its direct control and see how many of them received increases for the coming year equal to the projected rate of increase in the Gross National Product as promised. The Canada Council budget increase is close to the GNP projected growth. The Canadian Film Development Corporation's increase is well above the GNP projected growth. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation had its budget decreased from the 1985-86 GNP growth rate. But we know that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was cut by \$75 million and I think another \$10 million for a special fund. So instead of getting the same money plus the increase in GNP, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation received a very substantial cut. The National Film Board, the National Museums, the National Arts Centre and the CRTC received decreases. So in fact, Mr. Speaker, of the eight agencies which the federal Government funds directly, five will have either cuts or very small increases in their 1985-1986 budget. This is hardly what the Canadian Council of the Arts had been led to believe would happen and, further, it sets the example for small increases or cuts to other arts activities.

I know the Government tells us it has a huge deficit and we cannot afford that but, Mr. Speaker, the deficit was not unknown at that time. The Conservative Party knew that the Government of Canada had a deficit. The Conservative Party had task forces working in all of these fields and if it believed that the deficit, which it knew about, was so serious that funding for arts and culture would have to be cut or its increases minimized, then I say that it had no right, and it was, to say the least, less than honest, to make the kind of promises and commitments which it did in every part of this country.

The second commitment made by the Conservative Party was that it, as the Government, would not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the cultural agencies. That is a worthy principle. The Conservatives were right in espousing that principle along with Hon. Members of the New Democratic Party when both of our Parties were in opposition. We attacked the former Government very strenuously with respect to a Bill which was going to change the system so that Crown Corporations and agencies were administered much more closely by the Government, along with the Canada Council. When representatives of the arts and cultural community mounted a very strenuous attack on that proposal by the then Liberal Government, they were joined in that criticism by Hon. Members of both the Conservative and New Democratic Opposition. They were right and we were right then, Mr. Speaker. But what has happened now? What has happened to the principle espoused by the Conservatives now that they are in government? As I have said, the Conservatives joined in

### Supply

opposition to Liberal attempts to control more directly those Crown Corporations which were involved in cultural activities. But that was when they were in opposition. It has proven more difficult for the Conservatives to keep to that commitment now that they are in government.

There is scarcely a day goes by where there is not another example of the Government's interference. Today we learned that the Government no longer consults with the head of the Canada Council on senior appointments. This has already been roundly condemned by those in the arts community and by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood (Ms. McDonald). We have as Chairman of the Canada Council one of the most distinguished artists in this country, Maureen Forrester, who has an international reputation. She has been acclaimed in almost every part of the world, not just for her ability to sing but for the work she has done in support of artistic endeavours and for teaching younger people. Does Miss Forrester deserve the kind of treatment she is apparently receiving? I am told that her advice is not only ignored but is no longer even sought. I don't know what words I could use which would adequately convey the feelings of so many Canadians, particularly those who are involved in the arts in this country, when they learn that such a wonderful human being is being treated in the way in which she is by the Minister in charge of culture. I say that that is a disgraceful situation.

We might ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker, what this means, because the snubbing of Miss Forrester is not the only example with which we are dealing here. We have seen questionable appointments which dramatically shorten the arm's length relationship which was promised by the Conservatives when they were in opposition and which should exist between the Minister and the cultural agencies. We are seeing grants being made out of the Department of Communication's cultural budget which would be much better handled by the Canada Council. For example, the grants for the Stratford Festival tour of the United States is a perfect example of the Department of Communications serving as the patron to the company when really this should be a function of the Canada Council.

What this says to me, Mr. Speaker, is that the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) really wants to do exactly what he suggested and implied we would do if we were the Government. He suggested that we would want to control the arts and communications efforts. But it is pretty obvious to me that what the Minister wants is to be the czar of culture in this country. It seems to me that it is no accident that the cultural affairs budget was increased by more than 4 per cent, and I suspect that it will be much larger by the time the supplementary estimates for 1985-86 are in. He will then have the personal power and resources to fund the cultural causes in which he happens to believe, not what the arts and cultural community believe in and desire.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Questions or comments?