

Oral Questions

Trans-Canada Highway. With increased traffic, there is a critical need for twin-laning of this highway.

Mr. Fulton: It goes to Prince Rupert.

Mr. Gormley: In light of this, is the minister planning to designate the Yellowhead Highway as a national highway route? Will there be federal assistance for twin-laning of this particular highway?

An Hon. Member: It goes to Prince Rupert. Tell him where it goes.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, my NDP friends across the way wanted to remind the House that this route goes to Prince Rupert as well.

I share the views of the Hon. Member. The Yellowhead is indeed a very important artery. I also agree that it is a highway which carries a tremendous amount of traffic, and a mixture of traffic.

The Member will probably be aware that in 1979 the Government undertook a cost-sharing arrangement with the provinces whereby the federal Government and the provinces would have shared in the upgrading of the Yellowhead. Unfortunately the Liberal Government chose to cancel that particular agreement. At the present time there is not in existence a provincial-federal highway agreement. The highway agreements which are in place are currently under review. I am sure that I will have an opportunity to explore this issue with the Yellowhead Highway Association.

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[Translation]

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

BUDGETARY CUT-BACKS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications, but first I would like to congratulate him on his appointment. My question relates to drastic cuts imposed on some of Canada's cultural organizations, and I refer of course to the CBC which will have to manage with \$75 million less, but also to other entities such as the National Arts Centre, the CRTC and the Canada Council. Many people who work in that field are concerned and want to know whether those cuts apply only to fiscal year 1985-86, or whether they will be maintained throughout the Progressive Conservative mandate. Would the Minister therefore assure the House that the reduced budgets for fiscal year 1985-86 will not be the basis for the preparation of those cultural organizations' budgets in subsequent years? Can the Minister answer that question?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the budgetary cutbacks, which have prompted a review of certain bureaucratic practices so as to enable us to

allocate more funds to creation and production, will of course be a permanent feature.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing some difficulty because the Hon. Member has put two questions at the same time. They ought to be put separately. For the time being, the Hon. Member may put a supplementary. However, Hon. Members should indeed keep in mind the fact that they are not allowed to ask two different questions in the first question and then rise for a supplementary. This time, the Chair will allow a supplementary question.

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): I appreciate your tolerance, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION—IMPACT OF CUT-BACKS

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): My supplementary question is for the same Minister. It appears that the CBC cuts would affect mainly the outlying areas. In other words, the hardest hit would be the regions of this country. Is the Minister able to tell us whether he will be ready to intervene to ensure that regional programming and jobs in far away regions of the country will be protected when the axe falls?

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I have been informed by the CBC management that they have issued a denial today concerning press reports alleging that decisions have been made as to how they will cut their budget for the year 1985-86. The CBC President himself has stated that no decision has yet been made and that the results of that exercise will not be known until the Department of Communications and the CBC have had consultations on the impact of budget cuts on the corporation's services.

The management has also indicated that, at head office as well as at the Montreal and Toronto network headquarters and in the regions, various scenarios are being studied to find a way to reduce the CBC budget by \$75 million in 1985-86. As announced in the House, the priority in the decision-making process is to eliminate the less productive expenditures first and to maintain program services as much as possible.

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[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

ALLEGED ABUSE BY OLDER WORKERS

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. When the Minister was in the Opposition she developed a reputation for being concerned about the aged and the unemployed. Indeed, she became known as a red Tory.