

*Government Administrative Policies*

House on June 8, the federal government remains determined to break the back of inflation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Benson:** We are hopeful that the guidelines policy proposed by the Prices and Incomes Commission, together with other policies, will enable us to achieve that goal. How quickly we achieve it and at what cost to the economy in terms of slow growth, of loss of income and of unemployment, in no small measure lies in the hands of organized labour to determine. In conclusion, I should like to add that we have used fiscal and monetary measures as much as I should like to see us use them. We should like to ease up fiscal and monetary measures, but we can only do so if we have co-operation and if people not only in labour but in government and business do not try to take more out of the economy than they are putting into it by way of increased productivity.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Orlikow:** May I ask the minister a question?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member may ask a question if the minister is prepared to reply.

**Mr. Orlikow:** The minister has been talking about guidelines and restraint on the part of the workers. I ask whether he has devised policies which would impose some restraint on salary increases of senior professional people, including government officials. I would point out that the salary of the minister's own deputy has increased by about 30 per cent in the last three years.

**Mr. Benson:** As the hon. member knows very well, executive salaries follow the salaries granted to employees after collective bargaining. He knows this as well as I do. As those salaries increase, executive salaries increase proportionately. Until organized labour accepts reasonable settlements, we shall not find reasonable increases in executive and similar salaries. I would add that in the public service the salaries of executives, except at the highest level, are determined by collective bargaining and in very few cases has this question gone to arbitration. The fixing of salaries through collective bargaining agreements has determined the raises necessary for the top public servants who would otherwise be getting less than the

people who are supposedly working under them. I would be glad to give the hon. member evidence of this.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Is it not true that the salaries of Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers have gone up by an average of 10 per cent or more in each of the last two or three years, which is more than the ordinary—

**Mr. Benson:** I should be glad to talk to the hon. member and show him the evidence. The increases were the result of collective bargaining on behalf of senior officials directly below the Deputy Minister level. Their salaries have been squeezed much closer to the salaries of Deputy Ministers. I would be glad to illustrate this for the hon. member.

**Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, if Canadians have any obsession, it appears to be over a national identity. The latest episode of this self-indulgence is in the CRTC ruling that more Canadian content is required in both the CBC and private networks. All the clichés since confederation have been dusted off and our new jingoistic nationalism about Canadian culture is once again to the fore. No one would deny that intelligent appraisal of Canadian culture and policies is wrong and much good may come out of a scrutiny of our entertainment. But any thinking person would question the wisdom of engineering Canadian culture by decree as a matter of national policy. The present CRTC ruling is an infringement of our right to see, read and hear what we choose, and thereby does more to damage than promote the development of the arts in Canada.

The CRTC has proposed that the CBC and private broadcasters serve the purpose of moulding national character. But surely the assertion that a distinct and excellent culture can be manufactured by reducing foreign competition on private national networks is wrong. If Canadian culture is to transcend mediocrity, it can only do so by meeting the challenge of free and open competition. There must be a free market of creativity; artists cannot flourish in servitude to a national policy. One of the most dangerous indications, as far as the survival of democracy is concerned, is the extent to which the CRTC is now dominating the industry and the extent to which the broadcasters are grovelling before its power. No one dares to speak up against this commission which has taken on all the trappings of a cultural bloody assizes.