

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CULTURE

INQUIRY IF MR. REISMAN REQUESTED AUTHORITY TO
NEGOTIATE CULTURAL SECTOR WITH MR. MURPHY

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Communications.

Can he confirm that Mr. Reisman has requested authority to negotiate the cultural sector with Mr. Murphy, as indicated by Canadian Conference of Cultural Industries President André Noreau?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm this question.

[English]

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ASSURANCE

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, it is comments like that and the lack of confirmation which tell us this is the first step in the sell-out that we have foreseen right from the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Langdon: Will the Minister or his colleague, the Minister for International Trade, assure this House that our cultural industries are not going to be placed on the bargaining table, despite this demand by Mr. Reisman? Will he tell Mr. Reisman to respect that promise instead of trying to lead us Lord knows where?

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I can only confirm what I said. The negotiator did not request authority to negotiate cultural industries.

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[English]

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Science and Technology. The Government seems to be telling Canadians that for Canada to be active in outer space we have to leave our small and medium-sized companies in a vacuum. I would like to ask the Minister why has the Government cut the Industrial Research Assistance Program which provided vital research support to small and medium-sized companies? Why has the Government rejected the unanimous advice of the private sector, which can best be described in two words from the Nielsen report, namely, that IRAP works?

● (1430)

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Hon. Member for recognizing that IRAP is a good program and has been very helpful. Indeed, we are looking at the IRAP experience to bring to the space-related activities the same kind of expertise and government assistance that the high-tech sector has experienced as a result of that program. There are no cuts in the program. There is a reallocation of priorities that the NRC has reassigned itself.

Mr. Berger: This is an unacceptable trade-off and every person from the private sector has said so.

FUNDING OF SPACE-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister telling us that it is the Government's policy to participate in outer space because it is fashionable and that we have to rob Peter to pay Paul? How many other programs will be cut, regardless of merit, in order to provide the Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet with photo opportunities?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, it would not matter how often the Hon. Member repeats what he believes to be the fact that there are massive cuts in the IRAP program. The IRAP program has already financed space-related activities. These activities will obviously accelerate over the next few years and the IRAP program is exceptionally suited for that kind of activity. The National Research Council, in accordance with Government priorities, has rearranged its own priorities to coincide.

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REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION—OCCUPATION OF
OFFICES BY UNIONIZED WORKERS

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Last Friday unionized workers at Cape Breton Development Corporation were driven to the desperate measure of occupying the company offices over the loss of 1,200 jobs and the refusal of both the company and the Government to take steps which will guarantee continued employment. Next spring 500 jobs will be lost when the bridges program ends. Will the Deputy Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government, give a commitment that those programs will not end and the Government will do something to preserve those jobs?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reply to the Hon. Member that a task force has been established between management and representatives of the union to work out those very problems. I think that is the most appropriate course of action to follow.