

Supply

I feel, therefore, that this motion of the opposition goes far beyond its objectives, and probably like most of my colleagues, I am not prepared to support this proposal.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, may I say that state patronage in the area of arts and culture is highly desirable, but it will have to be critically examined in the best interests of those men and women it is meant to support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions and comments. The Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps).

● (1650)

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Charlevoix (Mr. Hamelin) said that the artists have insatiable needs. Could he tell us whether an artist who, according to what he said himself, earns about \$7,000 has insatiable needs or makes insatiable demands? Considering how much we earn in this House, it is ridiculous to tell the public that an artist is insatiable if he wants to make \$8,000 or \$9,000 instead of \$7,000. I would ask him to explain what he means.

Mr. Hamelin: Mr. Speaker, of course, I said: when the needs are insatiable. I would like, my dear colleague, to tell you about the dozens of grant applications I personally receive from cultural groups of all kinds and from artists who ask my Government and the Department for all kinds of subsidies. I certainly do not think that \$7,000 is enough for a writer, a poet, a musician, or another artist who tries to live on his work. That is not what I meant. What I want to say is that, in this field, like in any other, in spite of the best of intentions, we are short of resources. If we keep on borrowing on the future at interest rates of 12, 15, 20 or 22 per cent, as you did yourselves, we shall be mortgaging the future of tomorrow's artists, writers and other Canadian workers.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Charlevoix would also have us believe that he understands the problem of anglophones in Canada. As an English Canadian, I would not presume to say that I understand completely the language problem in Quebec. However, I can tell the Hon. Member that the province of Quebec, its culture, the French Canadian culture has a major advantage over English Canadian culture which the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) does not seem to understand. Our problem is that we are so close to the United States. I myself live about 45 kilometers from the border. There are six million people living around what is called the Golden Horseshoe in southwestern Ontario. These people are bombarded day and night with the so-called American culture. I do not know whether William Shatner and Lorne Greene are true culture symbols, but people like them have gone to the United States to work on television, on radio, and so on. Because of the unique situation of Quebec, of which the Minister of Communications and the Quebec Members are aware, it is much easier to promote French culture and language throughout Canada because you are a tight-knit group,

and linguistically, you are the only ones who can protect yourselves in North America. English-speaking Canadians, however, have to fight not only to protect their language, but also to put some distance between themselves and the United States. I would like to ask the Hon. Member for Charlevoix how he can claim to understand the situation of English-speaking Canadians who live so close to the United States when his situation is quite different.

Mr. Hamelin: Mr. Speaker, I feel the same as you do. You know our problems as a French-speaking community. In Quebec, I would point out that we are just as much invaded. We are a just a tiny community of six or seven million people as against 200 or 250 million giants, and our own Quebec also is invaded by American programs because of the cable communication explosion, a normal and desirable phenomenon in itself. We have in Montreal, in Quebec City and elsewhere dozens of TV stations which night after night are bearing down on us and foisting a culture that is foreign to us. I easily relate the problems that are experienced, even though our language is helping us protect our culture—

[*English*]

I know that our language protects us against this powerful mass of an English community.

[*Translation*]

But you will admit that I can also claim to appreciate the difficulties faced by Canadians living very close to American cities, near the 40th parallel, and who are constantly under American influence. I also appreciate the importance to the English-speaking community of maintaining close links with the French-speaking and other communities because Canada is a mosaic and of course we should stick together. This attempt at rationalizing must also obtain on the fiscal level, so that Government agencies can redirect their objectives, reconsider their actions and ensure that they maximize the objectives we both share.

Mr. Keeper: The Hon. Member has suggested that the arts and culture sector is less affected by cuts than other areas of the economy. Is he aware that on the average, there are 5 per cent cuts in the arts, while in other areas, the figure is 3 per cent? How can he say that the arts are less affected than other sectors, when they have to cope with heavier cuts?

Mr. Hamelin: Mr. Speaker, I think that an analysis of the figures and the new budget that should be tabled . . . because actually, reference is made to a number of rationalizations that are forced upon some departments, I think the next budget will clearly establish the extent of the effort that will be requested from each department, in every area, and we can then make comparisons, favourable or otherwise, with the arts and culture sector.