

and expenses may go to them. As I said, I do not like to discuss individual cases. I am prepared to check the matter out today and I will get an answer to the hon. member today.

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[Translation]

FINANCE

REQUEST FOR INCREASED SUBSIDIES FOR FRANCOPHONES OUTSIDE QUEBEC FOR BILINGUAL TRAINING

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. In the light of the most recent scandal regarding the distribution of bilingualism subsidies, can the Minister of Finance tell the House whether he seriously considers correcting the unfair formulas which enable the province of Quebec to get the lion's share of subsidies for official language teaching, and whether he will correct that procedure so that such subsidies will be used to support, develop and help the French-speaking minorities outside Quebec to survive?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I take due notice of the hon. member's question. This program is administered by the Secretary of State, and I shall discuss the matter with him.

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[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

ALLEGATION CONTROL PROCEDURES LACKING—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO RECOVER OVERPAYMENTS

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The Auditor General in his report produced yesterday indicates that the Unemployment Insurance Commission lacks sufficient control procedures and often even those are not followed, resulting in overpayment of some \$100 million. I would like to refresh the minister's memory of what was actually said because in an answer earlier today, the minister indicated that it was not an actual but possible overpayment. The Auditor General said and I quote:

Based on a statistical sample of claimants to whom benefits were paid in 1976, the amount of overpayments not previously identified by the Commission's regular control activities is approximately \$95 million.

That is in addition to the \$5 million in overpayment identified by the department. What steps have been taken to improve the procedures and when will an adequate system be in place?

● (1152)

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): First of all, I would commend a careful reading of that section. The Auditor General says "based upon"; that is why I indicated it was not an actual figure.

Oral Questions

We have put in place many control mechanisms but we have to balance the application of those mechanisms against the fact that people pay unemployment insurance premiums and they are entitled to get their cheques as quickly as it is possible for us to make them available. This is important because very often individuals who are unemployed have no money in reserve. So we must concentrate on making every effort to get these cheques out to those who are entitled to them while keeping a protective mechanism in place. I would point out that we deal with between two and three million people each year involving an expenditure of some \$3.6 billion. This will give the hon. member some idea of the scope of the problem with which we have to deal.

Mr. Clarke: I quite understand the minister's problem and I certainly agree that the cheques have to go out to the people who are entitled to them. I should like to ask now what steps are taken once it has been determined that there was an overpayment, and, in this instance, what steps will be taken to recover the \$95 million or whatever the figure is?

Mr. Cullen: Those steps have been taken. We in the department, using our own resources, did find there had been an over-expenditure of about \$65 million and \$60 million of that has already been recovered. So the recovery mechanism is already in place. What we want to do is head off this situation in advance, thus obviating the collection procedure. Those who are ripping-off the system are representing only a small minority of the claimants concerned—I ask the hon. member to check the media, to check the newspapers, for reports of the number we are catching and the fines which are being imposed. I might add that we are now getting much more co-operation from members of the public who are prepared to tell us who is working while still collecting unemployment insurance. With the co-operation of all, we shall have a better system.

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CANADA COUNCIL

PROPOSAL THAT COMMITTEE REVIEW MANDATE

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Secretary of State. In view of the fact that the Canada Council acts under a legislative mandate from the Parliament of Canada and in the light of the concern expressed by the Auditor General regarding inadequate financial documentation, and having regard to the unfortunate pornographic documentation you have in front of you associated with a grant by the Canada Council—and I wish, Mr. Speaker, that I could quote this—

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Wenman: I am sorry. Will the minister recommend that the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts review the mandate of the Canada Council