

directed to the Prime Minister and not to the Minister of Communications.

#### ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West):** Madam Speaker, following the question raised by my colleague about freedom of information, I should like to address a question to the Deputy Prime Minister.

In view of the ringing endorsement of freedom of information contained in the Speech from the Throne and the commitment of this government, I wonder how the Deputy Prime Minister can justify the statement in the Speech from the Throne with the fact that the government is now shutting off access to government information, particularly with respect to the list of order in council appointments. Will the Deputy Prime Minister now reverse that unfortunate decision, and continue the practice started by my leader of giving that information to the public?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I have no hesitation in assuring the hon. member that the information to which he refers can, and will, be made available. There will be no effort to keep it confidential or secret.

As I understand his question, it relates to vacancies which occur in various bodies of the federal government. That information will be made available and open to the public.

**Mr. Clark:** The composition of cabinet committees?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Madam Speaker, I hope the Deputy Prime Minister will extend that as well to cabinet committees, as requested by my colleague, the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe.

In view of the commitment to freedom of information, and also the statement in the Speech from the Throne, that section 41(2) of the Federal Court Act would be removed, how can the Deputy Prime Minister justify the fact that on March 13, 1980, the Secretary of State for External Affairs used this particular section to withhold documents from an inquiry being held by Mr. Justice Gibson of the Federal Court with respect to Canadian Dairy Commission policies? Also, will the Deputy Prime Minister indicate tomorrow to this House, or table a list of other instances in which this government has used the provisions of section 41(2)?

**Mr. MacEachen:** Madam Speaker, I am not aware of the particular case to which the hon. member refers. It would certainly be my wish, even before the legislation which is to come forward, to have the government act in accordance with the spirit of that legislation. But in the meantime we will attempt to do that and I will look into the point with respect to the particular case raised.

#### Oral Questions

### ARTS, LETTERS AND SCIENCES

#### FUNDING OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State. The Canadian Conference of the Arts is meeting in Ottawa this week: a meeting, incidentally, which the minister has declined to attend, I understand.

Can the minister tell the House what immediate plans he has to meet the crisis in arts funding and to meet the needs of major cultural institutions such as ballets, symphonies and even the Stratford Festival which now find themselves desperate for funds?

**Hon. Francis Fox (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications):** Madam Speaker, I simply want to reply in part to the preamble of the hon. member's question. I was unable to accept the very kind invitation from the conference to address it tomorrow evening, for the simple reason that there happens to be a referendum campaign in the province of Quebec. Maybe the hon. member has not heard about it. The future of the country is at stake, and if there is to be a conference of the arts next year, there will have to be a country. It also happens that on Thursday evening I will be addressing a number of people in the province of Quebec and all day Friday I will be engaged in the referendum debate.

I would, of course, very much like to attend the meeting of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, and I hope to have the opportunity of meeting with the executive of that conference in the immediate future to review some of the problems the hon. member has raised.

● (1440)

**Mr. Rose:** I have a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I hope the minister is not suggesting that no questions should be put on any subject other than the referendum while it is in progress. I am not suggesting the referendum is unimportant—but surely we are entitled to raise other questions during the referendum!

Since the minister appears, at the moment at least, to have no firm plans to protect and expand Canadian cultural institutions, can he tell the House whether or not he intends to follow the commitment of the previous government and follow the Applebaum preliminary blue paper on cultural development, with a parliamentary committee, to examine and review the whole matter and come up with a comprehensive cultural policy for Canadians?

**Mr. Fox:** I thank the hon. member for his question. Unfortunately, he was not in the House last week when I responded to the very question he is putting which was put then by the hon. member for Rosemont. I would suggest to the hon. member that he refer to *Hansard*.

However, I would like to respond to the question in detail. I have already indicated that it was my intention, and that of the government, to pursue the work of the Applebaum com-