

Oral Questions

We in the federal government have done that and it will be done very shortly by the government of Ontario. I am sure it is not due to any bad faith on anybody's part. It takes a little bit of time. I authorized ours recently and I am sure Mr. MacKenzie will do the same soon.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that these workers are in a community where some 15 per cent of the work force is facing welfare this coming winter.

Would the minister be willing to meet later this week with the Ontario Minister of Labour to make an arrangement so that cheques could be sent out next month and these workers will not have to go on welfare as many others face in that community and in that district.

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would be ready to meet with the Ontario Minister of Labour at any time he would choose.

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CULTURAL IDENTITY

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications. Yesterday in committee the president of the CBC warned that any further government cuts would severely harm the CBC's ability to do its job reflecting Canada's cultural identity.

I would like to ask the minister whether he can tell us why he has not replied or responded to the serious funding proposals put forward to him by the CBC. I wonder if he can advise us as to when a final decision on this funding will be made and whether he could advise whether such a decision will in fact involve CBC's request for long-term and stable funding.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, we are very sensitive on this side of the need to ensure that the CBC can discharge the mandate given to it by Parliament.

Unlike members on the other side who daily get up in the House and make dire predictions for the CBC and the requirement for them to close stations and so on, that is not going to take place. The government continues to work with the CBC on the issue of long-term funding and in ensuring that the whole of the broadcast-

ing system in Canada is well managed and is soundly financed.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question also deals with our cultural identity and is directed to the same minister. During Tuesday's committee meeting, the member for North Vancouver mused that not enough Canadians read books to justify federal assistance to the book publishing industry.

Does the minister support his colleague's opinion that federal assistance to Canada's book publishers should be discontinued? Does he agree with his colleague that Canadian publications are just not good enough? Does he not recognize that such—

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member can ask if it is government policy to do something, but I do not think it is in order to ask whether the minister agrees with something that somebody else has said.

The hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap may wish to put his question directly in an appropriate way.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question in regard to those comments to the minister was simply this. Was the member from North Vancouver speaking for the government when he voiced those particular opinions?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should know, the government has done a great deal in order to support the cultural industries in Canada. It is our full intention to continue to do so.

One of the things which this government did was to bring in systematic parliamentary reform in order to ensure that individual members of Parliament were able to express their personal points of view and to play an important role in the conduct of Parliament.

I might say that in doing that, our members have brought greater distinction to our party and to this Parliament than one of his colleagues did last night.

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TRADE

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, the media coverage of the government's competitiveness and prosperity initiative has many Canadians confused as