

Government Orders

I suggest that we should listen to Dr. Paule Leduc who appeared before the Senate finance committee in June and said that we cannot as an advanced and civilized country afford to neglect the arts. We must provide vigorous support and promote creative endeavour. With all my energies, therefore, I will try to convey to government the importance of the stake the country has in the healthy support of artistic creation. As a competent and effective director of the science council, her respected administrative skills will be thoroughly tested and certainly needed as she helps and heads this merger of the staff and the new board to take place.

I would like to finish by saying that this whole matter needs to be very carefully examined. It does not match any of the tests that were supposedly the tests for the measure of why we were undertaking this action. Therefore, when this goes to committee I would hope there would be effective time given so that we can study this and make an enlightened decision.

Before I sit down I would move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "that" and by substituting the following:

That Bill C-93, an act to implement certain government organization provisions of the budget tabled in the House of Commons on February 25, 1992, be not now read a second time but be read a second time this day six months hence.

It is seconded by the member who was very busy giving me instructions, the member for Saint-Laurent—Carrierville.

• (1350)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The amendment is in order. The debate is on the amendment. Does the hon. member have a question or a comment?

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I have a question. I would like to compliment my colleague from Mount Royal who so eloquently spoke on behalf the SSHRC.

I do not know whether she was aware that the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada has issued a very poignant press release. In fact, it says that abolition of the SSHRC is turning back the clock. That is how it is described.

It talks about the research in the social sciences and humanities and how crucial it is for our understanding of and adaptation to the rapid social and technological change inherent in our emerging service and information oriented society. It is very concerned.

The member mentioned in her speech that the government had not given any prior study to this and did not provide any public rationale for this takeover other than talking about cost savings.

The association goes on to talk about the importance of what SSHRC has done in its over-all research project, about the multi-disciplinary research and over the past 10 years how many research projects they have funded. In fact, it has funded 3,398 researchers in the social sciences and humanities in the past fiscal year. That is an incredible number of research scientists. It goes on to list any number of areas where it shows concern. This is what I would like the member to address.

It is concerned about the integrity of the SSHRC granting programs. As one of the key players in Canada's over-all science and technology efforts, they are concerned it will be diminished. It is concerned that the links to other research granting councils could be threatened. It goes on and list many concerns. I would love to be able to read this wonderful communique from the Association of Universities and Colleges and have a response from my colleague from Mount Royal. Unfortunately, the time does not permit me to do that. I am sure she can get the tone of its concern. I would like to hear the member's response to those.

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, I think the reason for this hoist motion, which I believe is fundamentally sound, is precisely to answer the serious allegations that have been made by the universities and colleges and leaders in the field of scientific research in all three of the government bodies that are involved in the funding mechanisms. As well, the mandate that has been given to the Canada Council may have become too disparate to be handled properly at this given moment.

I would say that the whole question of staffing has not been answered. What happens when some are Public Service Alliance, PSAC, and fall under unions, and some are totally outside because they fall under a different sector now of the the Financial Administration Act?