

*Inquiries of the Ministry***NATIONAL FILM BOARD**

LAY-OFFS OF EMPLOYEES

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the superb work which the National Film Board has done in promoting national unity and a better understanding among the people of the different regions of Canada, I should like to ask the Secretary of State whether there have been lay-offs in this agency, including 31 already laid off and 73 under notice as well as some 50 National Film Board distributors who have been informed that they will be laid off unless they can obtain sufficient revenue from the newly imposed user fees to pay their salaries? I understand this would make a total of some 154 staff reductions in the National Film Board. Is this being reconsidered and has the minister reached any decision in respect of the matter?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, although I do not confirm the figures quoted by the hon. member, I must admit that because of budget limits and restrictions the National Film Board, together with almost all other government agencies, has to make cuts in certain budget items.

The Commissioner of the National Film Board, in view of the unrest apparent to him among the personnel and more specifically the film makers of the National Film Board, has asked me to appoint someone who, during the course of January, will review the appropriateness of these decisions and report thereon. I have decided to take up this suggestion, which I received yesterday, and therefore none of the dismissals scheduled for December 15 will take place at any rate before January 15.

[*English*]

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that Parliament passed legislation giving government employees the right to collective bargaining, I should like to ask whether there were any consultations with the employees of the National Film Board prior to these lay-offs and whether the delay of one month in respect of the 73 who have been on notice as of December 15 is going to be extended in order that such consultations can take place if they have not already taken place?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pelletier: Mr. Speaker, consultations have obviously taken place. The independent

[Mr. Speaker.]

person who will be appointed will have to determine whether those consultations have been adequate. I cannot make any statement on that matter before that person has completed the study which I have just mentioned.

[*English*]

[*Later:*]

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, in view of the massive lay-offs in the production staff of the National Film Board, will the Secretary of State indicate whether the government plans to have the CBC absorb the National Film Board?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to one previously asked and relates to an earlier series of questions about the National Film Board. In view of the recent CRTC ruling promoting Canadian identity, especially in rural Canada, would the minister indicate to the House whether he would consider requesting the CBC to contract more of its general programming and ETV work through the National Film Board rather than increase our dependence on imported films or contracts with outside private firms?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has made a representation and must assume it will be considered by the government.

PUBLIC SERVICE

EFFECT OF CUTBACKS ON WAR AMPUTEES

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, in view of the answer by the President of the Treasury Board yesterday in reference to veterans and amputees, will the Prime Minister now exercise the prestige of his office by intervening in these layoffs—not transfers—of veterans and amputees?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I did look into this matter several days ago after the hon. member raised the question. I am completely in accord with the statement made yesterday or the day before by the President of the Treasury Board. I looked in particular at the two cases which were brought to the attention of the House by the hon. member. I am satisfied that in both cases the recommendations followed the line of the Public Service Commission and were based on equitable facts and opinions.