

*Oral Questions*

move, seconded by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent):

That this House, noting that certain Senators feel that they cannot live on the \$31,100 a year they now receive, recommends that they be relieved of their positions so that they can spend their full time dealing in stock options, sitting on boards of directors and in other pursuits that will enable them to make the kind of money they feel they must have, and that no one be appointed to fill the vacancies created by their removal from the other place, thus hastening the day when the Senate will be extinct.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have some very severe reservations about the urgent and pressing necessity of that motion.

\* \* \*

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

## PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF CAMEROON

**Mr. Speaker:** I know all hon. members would want to join with me in calling attention to the presence in our gallery of a very distinguished visitor in the person of the Honourable Tandeng Muna, President of the National Assembly of Cameroon.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

## CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

## PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH PRESS COUNCIL TO IMPROVE ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUTOMATIC REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE OF ANNUAL REPORT

**Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal):** Mr. Speaker, I thought that the House and perhaps even the country would be edified if we had another go at the pejorative CRTC report. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he would respond to the suggestion of the president of the CBC that, as a way of improving the CBC's accountability, and presumably that of the, as they say, electronic media, a press council be set up. Would the Prime Minister respond to this suggestion of the president of the CBC?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** I will certainly study it, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Fairweather:** That is good news. I have a second suggestion which I hope will be studied, too. I am being assisted by certain others who are would be speakers, Mr. Speaker. As a suggestion, would the government led by the Prime Minister consider the automatic referral of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation annual report to the standing committee on broadcasting so that its tattered accountability might be remedied?

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I believe I have dealt with this question before, simply by responding that automatic referrals would put a burden on the committees and that perhaps members of parliament themselves would find it took time from them to which they might spend going into other matters, such as departmental estimates, in detail. The House leader on this side in specific cases, perhaps like that of the CBC, would be prepared to discuss with the opposition House leaders the conduct of business in committees, which would permit this committee to start such a report; but the hon. member for Fundy-Royal knows that in the past two or three weeks we have had many suggestions for referral of all kinds of annual reports, and my answer was that obviously we cannot refer them all, otherwise the committees will not have time to do their other business.

**Mr. Fairweather:** A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. How does the Prime Minister expect that the reorganization of the CBC, as suggested by the president of the CRTC, will affect those verging on subversion in the other electronic media who are also indicted by Mr. Boyle's report?

**Mr. Trudeau:** I do not know, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps that is what Mr. Johnston and the hon. member have in mind when they talk of a press council. Certainly it is a good course to be taken if the media, electronic or otherwise, could have some form of self-discipline. That is always the preferred course, failing which, of course, discipline has to be imposed upon them, which nobody likes.

\* \* \*

## INFORMATION

## PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH NEW INFORMATION SERVICE—REQUEST FOR NAMES OF PERSONNEL AND COST

**Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Prime Minister as well. In another classic case of the government wanting to shoot the messenger, the Prime Minister's Secretary of State on Saturday is reported to have reacted to instructions from the right hon. gentleman in regard to setting up a task force so that there may be a new study done on setting up a new mini Information Canada. He is reported as saying that the reason for setting one up would be that the only news about the government these days is bad news.

I wonder if the Prime Minister would mind telling the House what has changed in the last year to permit the reviving of a new form of Information Canada only one year after it was killed off. The reason it was terminated at that time was to save taxpayers \$7 million a year. What has happened in the last year to change the Prime Minister's mind?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, this is not so much a question of shooting the messenger as making sure there are enough messengers around so that all messages can be conveyed by the Canadian government.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!