

Cultural Assistance Policies

volunteer their time as organizers. That is approximately 100 people associated with this cultural endeavour, this band from St. Jérôme, Québec. I talked to Mr. Norman Lalonde who works with the band. He is from St. Jérôme. He told me how the band raises money. For example, a few weeks ago on a Saturday it had a benefit day and raised money from approximately 3,000 towns people who came to this fund-raising occasion. I guess the Hillsborough Girls Choir raises money in a similar manner.

[Translation]

I may add that Mr. Bill Clay, the New Democratic Party's candidate for Laurentides and, I hope, the new Member for Laurentides after the next election, introduced me to Mr. Normand Lalonde . . .

[English]

I am grateful to him for that introduction so that I could learn a little about the local band, and today I also learned a little from the Hon. Member from Nova Scotia who talked about his problem. I wish to deal with some of the remarks in his speech. Let me try to distil his speech down and he can correct me if I am wrong. What he is basically saying is that if you go for cultural funding in Canada you can only get it from the cultural initiatives program if you are a professional group. You cannot get it if you are amateur. If you are multicultural, you might be able to get the money from the multicultural program. If you are not multicultural, then forget it, you are not going to get it from that program.

● (1440)

He also said in his speech, I think, if you are a professional or amateur athlete, you can get funds. So amateur athletes get funding but amateur cultural initiatives do not get funding. I see what the Member was saying.

It is very interesting to note that the Member seems to support—and I agree with him—state initiatives and financing for the athletic sector, which, in his words, “produce class amateur athletes”. If I might say so, as a socialist, it is good use of the state's power and money to produce a good in the end. I am glad that the Hon. Member agreed with that principle. He does not always agree with those particular principles and neither does his Party.

Let us talk a little bit about getting funding for cultural programs. I have also run into this with respect to professional groups from Vancouver, specifically a program called “The May Works” which is a cultural festival that is put in on May Day in Vancouver to celebrate with theatre, musical performances and so on. It is a workers' day, a May Day. We did get some money from the cultural program, the initiatives program, and I am very grateful that we got it. I think it was about \$7,000.

I will tell the Hon. Member what I found out in pursuing that grant. There are two funds; the Canada Council and the cultural initiatives program. The cultural initiatives program gives about \$17 million, I believe, in funds. I am talking off the

top of my head but I believe these figures are right. I was told by people who are administering the fund, when I tried to get money from them, that in fact they have about \$100 million in applications. So there is quite a big demand out there, and there are limited resources. It is a profession, and I agree that they do fund professional groups.

We should look at this situation in the light of why we have a Canada Council and why we have a cultural initiative fund. As to why we have both, as far as I could determine, the Canada Council gave money equally to groups across the country. I am not sure I could say the same thing, although this is disputed, for the local initiatives fund. It is very open to being a political slush fund, where the Ministers can deal out grants.

We had evidence with the previous Minister that there was some mal-distribution, if you like, where some areas of the country got more than others. So I say that it is right in the sense that we have to look at the role of those two funds. Why do we have those two funds? Should we only have one fund, a Canada Council rather than a special initiatives fund? Could the Canada Council administrate that? Why should the Minister's office administer it? We should look into all of that.

The second thing we should look into is, should the fund, whether it is Canada Council or the cultural initiatives fund, or both funds, be giving money to amateurs as well as professionals? That is a good question, and I am not sure that I have the full answer for that. One of the problems that the amateur cultural initiatives have in getting funds is that they used to be able to get money from the federal Government. There used to be lots of money in the federal Government because the federal Government had the lottery funds.

I think in 1979 the Conservative Government gave over the money from the lotteries to the provinces. We might want to have another look to see whether we can get some of that back. Are the provinces funding properly? The band in St. Jérôme were saying that they were having difficulty getting money from the province. Are the provinces using these lottery funds in the way that they are supposed to be using them? Are they just using them for sports and not for cultural initiatives? It follows from what the Member raised that we should look into that as well. So we should look into why there are two funds, should it fund amateur as well as professional, and what is the role of the provinces in terms of lottery funds and money that has been turned over to them?

Now, with respect to multicultural aspects, I would not want to say to those groups, “We are going to cut you off because you are getting an advantage that the others are not getting”. I would prefer to put the multicultural aspect out here, if you like, to separate it, and to say, “We do need funding for multicultural groups”, and that may include cultural funding, like a Ukrainian choir, a Sikh dance group and so on. I believe that there have been grants—you might correct me if I am wrong—I hope that there have been grants in the multiculturalism area. I trust that the Member is saying that. We would