

Supply

Liberal Party and that, thanks to our current Speaker, to the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Beatty), the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) and others, the Government was forced to backtrack, and we now have a system which remains independent while still being accountable to Parliament. It is within this framework that, as Minister of Communications, I intend to make sure that agencies will be accountable to Parliament while remaining autonomous, Mr. Speaker.

I might also add, if need be, that the Minister of Communications is the person responsible for and, whichever way you want to put it, the defender of the cultural sector.

[*English*]

Ms. McDonald: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand that this period for questions and comments is to allow a number of Members to take part. It seems that we are getting another speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When the Minister rose there was only one other Member that I could see.

Ms. McDonald: I rose.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. The Parliamentary Secretary rose at the same time. I recognized the Minister because I thought the exchange would be proper. I will recognize other Members. There are still three or four minutes remaining. I am sure the Minister will allow questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, the fact is you said that when you recognized the Member, only the Minister of Communications and the Parliamentary Secretary had risen, but I want to confirm that I had risen and the NDP Member—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is not a point of order. The Minister has the floor. If he would like to complete his comments and ask a question, I will recognize him.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Masse: I am trying to come to a speedy conclusion, Mr. Speaker, and in doing so I will ask a question as provided for in the rules.

Does the Hon. Member not believe that a Government is first and foremost a team rather than a coalition of interests? In that spirit, as Minister of Communications, I am just like the Minister of Finance, of the same team, and in that sense we decide on Government policy and we implement it in our respective departments. We are a Government working as a team rather than a coalition, and does he not agree that this is the way any Government should do? Within that mandate, I can give the Hon. Member the assurance that I have acted and that I will act to the end of my responsibilities as a champion,

the champion of those I have a responsibility to serve in my portfolio.

[*English*]

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss, and I know that all Members of this House share the feeling I am about to express, if I did not state that I have just witnessed the most eloquent and passionate speech by my colleague, the critic for the Liberal Party on communications, that I have ever heard in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: I have not been here that long, only five years. What was particularly appealing about the Hon. Member's speech is that somebody spoke to us not from a script, but from his heart. We had somebody talk about the importance of the arts not from an economic point of view. That is where the whole matter has got off the rails. The artists themselves, perhaps with good intentions, tried to communicate with this Minister and this Government and talked about their value from an economic point of view, \$7 billion in 1981; but that is not the issue. It was refreshing to hear somebody speak in this House of his passion and his identity as a Canadian, his love of this country and his appreciation for the people who communicate what we are as Canadians, those who do it every day of their lives, those who work eight hours so they have enough money to live and then work eight hours at night so they can portray and paint the image of this country. Those are the artists of this nation. Their value cannot be measured purely in dollars and cents. That is why we rise today in their defence.

● (1230)

I would like to say to the Hon. Member that I appreciated his comments. They indeed moved this debate beyond a debate regarding dollars and cents and beyond a debate regarding how many jobs will be created, to a debate regarding the fundamental understanding that if we do not have a vibrant, healthy, alive artistic community in this country, then we do not have the kind of identity and pride in being Canadian that will allow us to distinguish that border that runs from the Maritimes all the way to Vancouver. We do not deserve to feel the pride that comes with being a citizen, the pride that comes when we see the flag going up and hear the singing of our national anthem. That is what our artistic community means to us. The Hon. Member has said that in such an eloquent and passionate way that I myself, seldom eloquent and passionate, was moved to rise to express my thanks.

Mr. Duguay: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to react to the concept of national reconciliation. I am a Manitoban and a Franco-Manitoban. I would like to point out to my colleagues opposite that their constant reference to the appointment of Bud Sherman does very, very little for national reconciliation.

Mr. Keeper: What did Bud Sherman do for national reconciliation in Manitoba?