

Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I think I have . . . I realize I have been carried away, but I have so much faith in Canada. And why am I sitting here as a Member? And why is the Minister here in his capacity as a Minister responsible for protecting, sponsoring culture? I want to help him not to fight the Government, for fighting achieves nothing, but to convince the Government that culture is different from agriculture. The Minister has referred to onions and other things. Culture is important for its art, its influence. This must be understood by the Cabinet, by this House and by Hon. Members. If not, why are we fighting to build a country?

[English]

Why am I so proud to have voted for the Canadian flag which was raised for the first time on February 15, 1964? My first vote as a young Member of Parliament was on the Flag in 1964. I was proud because it was a Canadian flag. I am proud of the Canadian identity. When Mr. Pearson was Prime Minister, I sat on the committee to choose a national anthem. We recommended *O Canada*. The Hon. Member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) and I are the only two survivors of that committee. We recommended that in 1965-66. It was proclaimed in 1980. Why did we fight vigorously and democratically under the British parliamentary system, which I like, respect and will defend? Together we defended a new Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the right of having our Constitution amended in Canada. I wish the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) good luck in getting Quebec in.

● (1220)

Why are we doing all that? Because we believe we are Canadian. I am not here as a French Canadian or an English Canadian. I am a Canadian.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prud'homme: However, I am proud of my French culture.

[Translation]

I am French-Canadian, but here I am a Canadian. And what is in my view the first duty of a Canadian? It is to have an identity. How can we have an identity? By having a culture. And how can we have a culture? By protecting it, fostering it, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore, it is my hope—

[English]

Mr. Crosby: There are 1.5 million unemployed.

Mr. Prud'homme: My friend says there are 1.5 million unemployed. If he does not understand that we have to protect the arts, we will have more unemployed because these people create the most. The facts are there to prove that. These people cost less—

Mr. Crosby: Put the facts on the table.

Mr. Prud'homme: I do not want to quarrel with the Hon. Member. I want to try and convince him. If I yell at him, I will not convince him. I will try kindly to convince him that he and I should join our efforts to convince this Minister to be the champion, and not the Minister of Finance. We should convince him that he will have our support. He will have my support, and my colleagues in the Liberal Party better follow me on that or they will have to find another critic on culture. He will have my support if he wants to become the champion and tell his colleagues that the little bit of money that it costs for keeping our Canadian identity is nothing compared to the good it will create to save these people.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments. The Hon. the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse).

Mr. Masse: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to comment briefly and say at the outset that I thank the Liberal Party critic for his support and co-operation. I hope both of us will be able to look favourably upon certain aspects of the cultural policy so as to improve this sector of our national and economic activities, and even to a certain extent, of our civilization.

I should like to remind him that, on February 5, 1957, the House was considering the creation of the Canada Council and I said earlier that our Party then had supported Prime Minister Saint-Laurent's proposed establishment of the Canada Council. The Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party at the time was also Leader of the Opposition—he became Prime Minister a few months later—and he had this to say:

[English]

I certainly am in favour of the setting up of this council. It is needed. The work it will do is necessary for Canada and its prestige; but there is no need, however beneficial the organization may be and will be, to set aside parliamentary control.

This is very important.

[Translation]

Then as now, the Conservative Party gave its full support to the creation of one agency among many others, namely the Canada Council. I might remind the House that the same Party had also created the CBC. But we do not see parliamentary control in the same light as the Liberal Party.

The Liberal Party now has words of praise for the agencies, but perhaps it has no more faith in its future than memories of its past, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, the same Party was then under the direction of Prime Minister Trudeau who, not at all pleased by certain remarks made by the CBC, had publicly threatened to lock up the place and show a Chinese urn on TV screens as the symbol of the CBC.

I have the impression that the Hon. Member forgets the history of his Party. He forgets that, last June, the most vicious attack against cultural agencies was launched by the