

Oral Questions

legally, however, I will; and then it will be their decision what to do about it—whether to take action, and when to take action. That is their responsibility, and I want to support them in their discharge of it.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, of course, the reason that the evidence is largely oral reconstruction is that the files were in fact destroyed. My supplementary is to the Minister of Justice. Yesterday, the Prime Minister told this House that evidence of breaches of federal statutes by the RCMP would be turned over to provincial attorneys general for possible prosecution.

Will the Minister of Justice now confirm that, in fact, the responsibility for prosecutions under the Post Office Act and the Income Tax Act lies with himself, the federal attorney general, and not with the provincial attorneys general, as the Prime Minister suggested yesterday. In view of this, will the Minister of Justice tell this House what action he intends to take to ensure that there will be prosecution where there has been evidence of criminal wrongdoing by the RCMP?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Madam Speaker, I do not think that the Prime Minister indicated yesterday that any violation should be turned over to provincial attorneys general. As Attorney General of Canada, I will take my responsibilities if it is necessary to prosecute under my mandate. However, under criminal law, it rests with provincial attorneys general to lodge proceedings and we will provide the necessary information. At this time, Madam Speaker, no decision has been taken. We are studying the records and it will be probably advisable to wait until the McDonald commission winds up.

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[English]

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

FUNDING OF VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State concerning the Vancouver art gallery. Since provincial government commitments and private pledges totalling almost \$4.5 million are dependent on federal funding, is it the minister's intention to honour the commitment made by his predecessor to provide \$4 million toward the conversion of the old court house into Vancouver's art gallery?

Hon. Francis Fox (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question. I should like to add my congratulations on her appointment as official opposition critic on matters concerning the Secretary of State.

I should like to point out that there were a number of campaign promises—I really mean campaign promises—made by my immediate predecessor during the election campaign. I

do not believe they were really commitments made by the previous government; I think, in fact, they were campaign promises, and in that sense I am reviewing all of them.

The hon. member has mentioned one, but if I looked at the whole series of campaign promises made by my immediate predecessor in the months of January and February, 1980, there would not be any revenue left in my department to honour any other intentions of funding in the arts and cultural communities.

I should also like to point out to the hon. member that there would be a great deal more money available to the cultural and artistic communities had not the previous government entered that sweetheart deal with the provinces by which they reduced, by a number of millions of dollars, the moneys available to those communities in Canada.

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INDUSTRY

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO CHRYSLER OF CANADA

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. A number of estimates have been given about the size of the possible support to Chrysler (Canada) Limited—\$250 million, \$500 million, \$750 million. I ask the minister if he could give some indication to the House today of the level the government is considering for this support. Also, could he advise the House under what authority the aid would be provided?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, the matter is still under negotiation and is being considered by ministers, so I do not think it would be appropriate to indicate a figure. As to the program in question, if it involves—as it may primarily, or perhaps even totally—loan guarantees, then there would be the provision whereby Parliament approves the loan guarantee activity by the government.

Mr. Stevens: When?

Mr. Wilson: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Last week, a motion was made by the hon. member for Halton asking that the government place this matter before a standing committee of the House for consideration. Is it the intention of the minister to follow through on that motion, or will a decision be taken prior to any consideration of the matter by the House?

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, the matter of committee consideration of the operations of the auto industry and the auto pact is something I certainly want to discuss with the House leaders.

Mr. Wilson: Prior to a decision?