

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as most Canadians are aware, the copyright law was written in 1924 and it has not been revised since that time. Since 1984, when this Government was elected to office, we have introduced a discussion paper on copyright. We have listened to presentations from groups and organizations, including song writers, from all across the country. We have listened to the subcommittee's report on copyright. However, what I want to emphasize is that we are taking action, whereas the Liberal Party, for 50 of the years since 1924, did absolutely nothing about revision of the copyright law.

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THE CONSTITUTION

REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. Jim Jepson (London East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. As the Minister knows, the former Liberal Government failed to enshrine property rights in the Charter. I raised the same question back in September, 1985. Again I ask the Minister when will he be discussing this very important oversight with his provincial counterparts in an effort to correct this grave injustice?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member, having a great and abiding interest in this important topic, will know that the Conservative Party has long supported property rights. Indeed, the late Right Hon. John Diefenbaker's Bill of Rights specifically provides for the right to enjoyment of property. There is in fact a group of Attorneys General working on this particular situation now. It is on the second tranche of constitutional matters which will be discussed after we conclude our discussions in respect of the Quebec matter. We will be pursuing the matter, and I thank the Hon. Member for his continuing interest.

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CONTENT OF PROPOSED AMENDING LEGISLATION

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications. It also deals with the very long-standing injustice to composers over royalties. Will the Minister tell song writers and all other Canadians that in the copyright legislation she will be bringing into the House this long-standing injustice will be remedied? Will she tell them that it will be in that first lot of legislation, given that there is a great deal of anxiety that she will bring in only some technicalities, not important bread and butter issues such as compulsory licensing?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, in response to the subcommittee report the Government agreed with that recommendation. All I can say to her now and to those who are interested in this point is that the Government will be dealing with that issue when it revises the copyright law.

Ms. McDonald: That is rather sad news, indeed. It is nice to know about the principles, but the Government's response to the copyright report was equivocal.

COMPULSORY LICENSING QUERY

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am asking for a very clear answer from the Minister. Will the abolition of compulsory licensing be in the first lot of legislation which she brings in? Will important bread and butter issues, such as exhibition rights, performers' performances, stiffer penalties for pirates, dealing with blank tapes and cassettes, and the need to get more money from those directions, be in that first important lot of copyright legislation?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, what I am very impressed by is the interest of the Hon. Member in so many of these issues. We have been trying to further this revision of legislation. I want to ensure that she is as adamant in committee and in the House when the legislation is introduced as she is now. I look forward to the support of her Party.

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HEALTH

AIDS DISEASE ADVERTISEMENTS

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It concerns his lack of leadership on the AIDS advertising issue. Why did the Minister not tell the House yesterday that his Department received a Telex on February 28 which made quite clear that advertisers and private broadcasters had no intention of running those ads? Why did he not seize the opportunity at that time to meet personally with private broadcasters to let them know the importance of getting out a public message on the killer disease, AIDS?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I believe I have shown leadership on this question. I do not accept the charge which the Hon. Member makes. I think it is pretty ridiculous that in January of this year the CPHA put forward ad examples when, for example, we were told that a female actor in an ad could not use exercise clothes but that they must be sweat-suits. If that is the level to which we must come down in terms of this killer disease, if that is lack of leadership, and if the kind of allegation she is throwing around is that I have not looked at it