

Oral Questions

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage show some leadership for a change and untie the hands of the president of the CBC and allow him to go ahead and make some fundamental cuts to the CBC, including allowing private broadcasters to start to deliver some of the services the CBC currently delivers?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleague should be aware that today the president of the CBC announced very important re-engineering within the CBC. This is in keeping with reduction of the deficit and reduction of budgets. He has the support of the government in his effort to turn the CBC into a modern, forward looking agency.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I just explained that to the minister. I am glad he was listening so carefully. The problem is he is \$120 million short. Surely the minister picked that up when he read the newspaper this morning.

The CBC is at a watershed today. Will the minister show some leadership and give the president of the CBC the mandate he needs to go ahead and make further cuts so he can achieve the \$120 million in savings and the scope he needs to fundamentally rethink the CBC, including allowing private broadcasters to play a larger role in delivering those services?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is precisely to enable the president of the CBC to rethink the CBC that the government has formed a committee to examine the mandate. The mandate is the heart of the CBC. The reports of the mandate committee will be available at the end of this month. In the meantime, our colleagues may hold their breath.

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[Translation]

INFORMATION HIGHWAY

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Recently, the Information Highway Advisory Council tabled its final report. This report completely trivializes Quebec culture, since it calls for an information highway serving a single so-called Canadian identity and culture. As well, various elements of this report are likely to result in further federal intrusion into areas in which Quebec is already fully exercising its responsibilities, health and education for instance.

Does the minister commit to rejecting these recommendations, which invite the federal government to interfere in areas that are exclusively Quebec's jurisdiction, such as health and education?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a committee has indeed made recommendations. I would like to point out to my colleague that, among the recommendations made by one of the working groups created by this committee, there are some that are content-related, that is to say culture and all of those elements which may make up content. This is the specific area I shall address.

We will be bringing forward a series of recommendations following up on the work of these committees and of the advisory council, and I trust that our colleague will be able to see that our decisions are judicious ones and link Canada up to the world information highway.

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[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister said in the House this week that his new \$50 million tax grab, which he calls access fees, will be applied in a fair and equitable manner. Reform profoundly disagrees with this intolerable tax, and now we find that native commercial fishermen will pay only half the access fee that non-natives pay.

Will the minister now admit this policy is essentially discriminatory at its core, commit here and now in the House to equality of treatment for all Canadians and stop treating non-native fishermen as second class citizens in their own country?

● (1500)

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member, who comes from Prince Rupert and who has within his constituency both native and non-native fishermen, would not want to get up in the House and inadvertently or carelessly, which would not be in his nature, cause a division between the native community and the non-native community.

Mr. Abbott: You are causing the division.

Mr. Silye: It is your rule.

Mr. Tobin: I have a bad throat so you will have to be quiet if you want to hear the answer. I am not used to yelling.

As the hon. member knows, people with native backgrounds occupy 40 per cent of the commercial sector of the industry. Coming from Prince Rupert I am sure he knows that. The commercial fleet, the people who speak on behalf of the aboriginal fisheries, the sports sector, in fact all sectors, are attending a round table process. The purpose of this process is to bring the industry together to produce a plan for the proper management of the fishery.