

Oral Questions

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, all of the areas mentioned by the Hon. Member are obviously of deep interest to the Government. I think that the Applebaum-Hébert Report does indeed call for a thrust into that direction. I believe that when one talks about broadcasting, in view of its real importance to a country like Canada, and in view of the past history of broadcasting policy in Canada which has developed with the very wide ranging support from all political parties in the House, that it would indeed be more appropriate to have public debate on the Applebaum-Hébert Report. It is an avenue that they suggested themselves. They suggest that the Report is the beginning of a public debate on the major directions of cultural policy in this country over the years to come.

All that I can add is what I have said before, that, as far as I am concerned, public broadcasting will, of course, remain an important part of the broadcasting system in Canada.

AUSTRALIAN MODEL

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, what the Report indicated to me was a concern for jobs, training, employment and culture. We want to know when the Government will stop its dilettante type of approach to our cultural industries and begin doing something more than throwing money at potential investors. Has the Government considered the Australian model which has produced such outstanding feature films recently as "Gallipoli" and "Breaker Moran"?

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Yes, Madam Speaker.

CABINET COMMITTEE STUDY

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, I have one supplementary question for the Minister. Not only was there an earlier leaked document on general policy, but it was a leaked document with regard to the preparation of a green paper on broadcasting policy. Will the Minister first tell the House what he plans to do with the entire Applebaum-Hébert Report and, second, is the news report of today that the Minister has asked Senator Jack Austin to head a group of Ministers to review cultural policy true? Who are the members of the group and is it intended to delay Government action on culture as the Government plans to delay action on economic affairs?

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): The Hon. Member has a great deal of experience with leaked documents, Madam Speaker, but I hope that he will take the trouble to read this one as soon as I table it in the House. My first intention is to table the document in the House so that Hon. Members can then read it.

As for the other question, the Government has indeed decided to set up a special committee of Cabinet because of the importance we give to culture, to consider the Applebaum-Hébert Report and whatever measures that will develop from

the Report and which will be recommended to Cabinet following wide-ranging consultations with the Canadian public.

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THE ECONOMY

PREMIER'S CALL FOR HOLDING OF FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. I am sure he is aware of the constructive speech made by the Premier of Nova Scotia before the Canadian Club in Toronto yesterday when John Buchanan, Premier of Nova Scotia, a fellow Nova Scotian and a fellow ex-Cape Bretoner, renewed the provincial call for a federal-provincial conference. Since conditions are much worse now than they were when this was first advanced in August, and knowing the Deputy Prime Minister's concern for unemployment in his own riding, let alone for the million and a half unemployed Canadians across the country, will this request of Premier John Buchanan, that the Premiers of Canada hold a federal-provincial conference to deal with problems now, receive a favourable, positive response?

● (1430)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I cannot predict what the response will be because the matter has not yet been considered by the Government, but I do remember that following the August conference of the Premiers, which Premier Buchanan chaired, we had requested that the Premiers put some flesh on the rather vague proposals they had advanced at that time.

There were a number of very vague ideas asking for changes in this policy and that policy, without any explanation as to what all the changes were to be. At that time the Prime Minister and myself both requested the Premiers to really tell us what they proposed, as once we had that it might help us decide whether a First Ministers' conference would be useful. I have read reports of Premier Buchanan's speech, and I do not think it added a single thing to the rhetoric which came out of the Halifax conference.

Mr. Nowlan: Madam Speaker, speaking about flesh, as the Deputy Prime Minister did, the only flesh which has been advanced in this equation of conference and/or Royal Commission is the flesh of one Donald Macdonald, and that is the only new ingredient which has entered into the situation.

POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that not so long ago the Prime Minister wanted Canadians to trust Canadians, so that we could start down a new road of economy recovery, does the Deputy Prime