

Oral Questions

advised my officials to begin a comprehensive review of this system.

We are now in the process of consulting with interested individuals and organizations across the country, with a view to eliminating the abuse and coming down with the bottom line objective to make the system fairer, simpler and better for the majority of legitimate charitable organizations in this country.

Changes will take place. They will be very effective and powerful to make the system better and fairer.

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Communications, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Since 1984 this government has presided over \$280 million in budget cuts to the CBC. Now the minister is presiding over the dismantling of the national headquarters.

Can the minister give the assurance that those regions of Canada other than Montreal and Toronto will have sufficient resources to fulfil their national mandate?

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very clear that the government has shown its support for the CBC by granting it numerous increases in the past few years.

In 1987–1988 the government granted an annual increase of \$20 million over a 10-year period in order to enable the CBC to replace its outdated equipment.

In 1988–1989 the government gave the CBC some \$65.5 million in new appropriations for the carrying out of its broadcasting centre project in Toronto, and in 1988–1989 the government gave the CBC nearly \$130 million for the period from 1989 to 1990 and 1992 to 1993. Then of course there was a new appropriation of \$81 million to meet unanticipated costs.

The member's question relates to the regions outside Toronto and Montreal.

In answer to that question, that is a matter for determination by the CBC's board of directors that directs an arm's length organization.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Edwards: The announcements made today decentralize the decision-making processes of the CBC so that the needs of the regions can be recognized.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the member.

Mr. McDermid: You are a centralist.

Mr. Mills: Yes, I am somebody who believes in strong national institutions.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mills: I must say that this member cannot stand up and give us an assurance that there will be no CBC budget cuts in western Canada, in Atlantic Canada and in northern Canada.

Can he stand up and give us assurances that there will be no budget cuts?

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, lest there be some misapprehension on the part of the House and the nation, the budget cuts that were dealt with today by the CBC president were the result of the April 1989 budget announcements.

They impact largely upon the administrative overburden of the CBC. President Veilleux went to some length to stress that he is trying to preserve the core programming, and especially the regional strengths of the CBC.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is right. I am afraid my colleague over there is wrong.

The parliamentary secretary was chairman of the communications committee. The fact is that the government's goal of 95 per cent Canadian content in broadcasting is fundamentally at odds with the \$20 million cut-backs today, to be followed by another \$15 million in programming. The government cannot have it both ways, can it?

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I should stress to the hon. member that there were no new cuts today. The