

Control of Government Expenditures

could scrutinize on an annual basis. By April 1, 1970, Information Canada was in operation.

• (1750)

The annual report of Information Canada was filed today. We know it went into operation, without any parliamentary approval, in 1969-70. In the estimates for that year there appeared a supplementary estimate of \$1 million. The first item that appeared before the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee relating to Information Canada was an estimate of \$2.1 million. I have tried to trace the estimates year by year following that, but the picture is confusing because there were two revolving accounts affecting the exhibition commission.

However, as shown in the estimates, Information Canada, having started with a \$1 million supplementary estimate followed by a \$2 million budget at the end of the first fiscal year 1969-70, grew in 1970-71 to an approved estimate of \$7,910,000, and in 1971-72 to a proposed expenditure of \$8,700,000 with a supplementary estimate of \$456,000, for a total approved budget of \$9,156,000. Then in the current year the estimate shows a growth to \$10,354,000.

Meanwhile, the number of employees grew—from 377 in 1970-71 to 403 in 1971-72; and for 1972-73 the number is close to 500. While this growth was taking place, the duplication that was supposed to have been avoided and the savings that were supposed to have been made proved baseless. In other departments informational agencies also increased in size. So from the answer in the return given the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Mather), it appears that on November 16, 1970, the number of employees engaged on informational services work prior to Information Canada was 950, and since Information Canada was formed has grown to 978.

Following all this growth, the House of Commons and people of Canada have been exposed to the confidential memo of the deputy director-general outlining the present lack of policy, purpose and direction of Information Canada. I could refer to many quotations in support of this, but it is clear there is no policy. As reported in the *Globe and Mail* of March 2, Mr. Phillips stated in his confidential memo:

The record of the past six months . . . leads one to conclude that it is urgent to consider some projects to justify our budget and existence.

He then refers to a policy vacuum and says that planning has come "to a virtual standstill." Not even preliminary work has begun, he said, nor can it begin without guidelines relating to organization and other policies. Then he talked about many other gaps existing in planning and direction. I think the most interesting statement is this, and it relates to the estimates. He said:

With only about six working days left for the submission of our financial forecast—

As I have indicated, this already shows a substantial increase in amount.

—not even preliminary work has begun, nor can it begin without guidelines relating to organization and other policies. This should ordinarily be a job lasting at least one month.

I do not have time to refer to other quotations, but it is clear there has been a growth in expenditure and in

[Mr. Nowlan.]

personnel, while other informational agencies of the government have also been growing. Let me quote the two laws of Parkinson which I hope the minister responsible will heed. The first is that work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion. I think the memo of Mr. Phillips to Mr. Gagnon supports that first law of Mr. Parkinson. The second law of Mr. Parkinson is that expenditure rises to meet income. Certainly, when the deputy director-general of Information Canada says that they have to get plans in order to spend money to justify their existence, you wonder what is happening to the expenditure of public funds in Canada. If this is happening with Information Canada, the pet hobby of the Prime Minister, what is happening in other Crown agencies where millions of dollars are being expended?

Let me read more about the second law of Parkinson, and I trust the director general and the minister responsible will take note of it:

It is the paradox of administration that fewer people have less to do and more time, therefore, in which to think about what they are doing. When funds are limitless, the only economy made is in thinking. The worst inefficiencies do not stem from a lack of funds but from an initial failure to decide exactly what the object is. It is this muddled thinking that leads to waste, and often to waste on a colossal scale. Towards eliminating public waste an essential step is to reduce the total revenue. Officials are less inclined to squander what is not there.

I commend the two laws of Parkinson to those in Information Canada who, on their own admission in the internal memo of Mr. Phillips to the director-general, do not really know how properly to spend the taxpayers' dollars. If there was any question that Information Canada has a purpose, why has it not been delegated to deal with the advertising campaigns of various departments of government? The government campaigned to tell Canadians how to fill out a census return, and this cost \$798,000. The government campaigned for the Manpower Department, at a cost of \$392,000; and to tell Canadians that they would have a new Unemployment Insurance Act it spent \$585,000.

These advertising campaigns, which are not political but are more of a functional and administrative nature, should come within the ambit of Information Canada if this body is to have any basic design for its existence. Instead of this, the money was doled out to friends of the government in a complete violation of recommendation No. 13 of the task force report which stated there should be established, amongst other things, an independent board composed of advertisers and representatives of the media to deal with government advertising campaigns.

My time is limited, but there are many recommendations I could make of a positive nature. However, I leave this thought with the House: Let us do something different. Instead of squandering millions of dollars on Information Canada—\$10.3 million to date—let us look at some real participatory democracy, in which the Prime Minister says he believes, to say nothing of parliamentary democracy. The Prime Minister proved this when he established research funds for the opposition parties. In the speech from the Throne in September, 1968, and in the statement he made on November 15 of that year he said, somewhat fleetingly, that he believed in parliamentary and participatory democracy.