

to the committee, but I believe that in essence this is an extremely good report and that it will result in an improvement to the operation of Information Canada.

Let me say at once that I believe in Information Canada, regardless of what anyone in this country might say to the contrary. I know that some people are opposed to even the concept of Information Canada. I should like at this point to establish a parallel between a situation that existed some years ago in my province and that which existed for many years in the country as a whole. Until the mid-sixties there was no such service in my province. There was no such service in Canada until, I believe, 1970. It has now been created.

When such a service was created in New Brunswick for the purpose of diffusing information, not political propaganda, I and my party were accused of creating an instrument that would disseminate political propaganda. We were blamed for it. We created the service regardless. It has expanded over the years. It is still in operation, and a different political party is taking advantage of it, diffusing information, not political propaganda, and I would be the last one to oppose what we then called the Central Information Bureau in New Brunswick.

The same is true of Information Canada. There is opposition in some quarters because it is said to be an agency that uses its facilities for spreading political ideas or political propaganda. I do not believe this to be the case. If the political party that at the present time opposes Information Canada should, maybe 10 or 20 years from now, form the government of this country, I am sure they would retain Information Canada, maybe in a different form, maybe functioning differently, and maybe by making some changes. Some changes, and good changes, are recommended in this report. Information Canada is not perfect, but it is an agency that is essential to the people of Canada. I believe that as much information as possible should be given to the Canadian people.

I listened with great interest to the speech made the other day by the Leader of the Government in the Senate supporting the recommendations in this report. I also listened with deep interest to my distinguished and esteemed friend Senator O'Leary. I usually agree with Senator O'Leary, but in this instance I cannot agree with him. At one point he complained that he has on his desk such a pile of documents and papers that he cannot read them all. I took it from what he said that all the documents delivered to him emanated from Information Canada. This morning I picked up my mail from the mailbox and found that I had, excluding the correspondence, a total of 32 documents; the mailbox was full. I checked them, but not one of them came from Information Canada. They all came from various departments of government, but not from Information Canada.

Information Canada rarely issues or distributes communiqués. For books, booklets and federal documents, Information Canada is only the publisher, not the distributor. Maybe they should distribute more information throughout the country, because I believe the people in a free country such as ours should be informed. I believe, as Senator O'Leary does, in a free press. I believe in freedom of speech. I believe that people, whether they live in the Northwest Territories, New Brunswick or Prince Edward

Island, whether they live in the country or in urban areas, are just as much entitled to information about what is going on in the country as are professional people who are supposed to know practically everything. Even professional people, such as lawyers, engineers and doctors very often do not always know what is going on. We should make recommendations for the improvement of the operations of Information Canada. Instead of abolishing it we should expand it and make sure that everyone in the country has access to all the information possible, be they rural or urban people.

There are so many things that could be said about it. I have certain reservations though concerning the recommendations of the committee, to which I have signed my name, concerning the mobile information officers. As Senator O'Leary pointed out the other day, one of the conclusions of our committee is that the mobile information officer program appears to the committee to have developed into a social welfare service. And that is a situation which somehow or other must be corrected.

● (1440)

We have all been politicians. We are politicians. We all know what those people were trying to do and what they were trying to accomplish with this mobile information officer plan; but today they are abusing it. For example, not that long ago I had a long-distance telephone call at 2 o'clock in the morning from someone wanting to know how come his neighbour paid only \$2 for a dog licence when he had to pay \$2.50. A long distance call!

**Hon. Mr. Buckwold:** Was it collect?

**Hon. Mr. Robichaud:** And I had to answer it at 2 o'clock in the morning. The simple answer was, of course, that one dog was a male and the other was a female. Well, I am sure that these mobile information officers have to face that same sort of situation once in a while. Maybe it is the price we have to pay for being public servants.

In any event, I am not going to say I am either in favour of or against the mobile information officer plan. I have not studied it thoroughly enough to do so. Although I have my reservations about this particular point, I do subscribe to the rest of the content of the report and I fully support it, and I hope that the Senate will support all of the recommendations of the committee with respect to Information Canada.

On motion of Senator Buckwold, debate adjourned.

## SCIENCE POLICY

SPECIAL COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO MEET DURING  
ADJOURNMENTS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Leopold Langlois,** with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(h), moved:

That the Special Committee of the Senate on Science Policy have power to sit during adjournments of the Senate.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Hon. Mr. Flynn:** Honourable senators, in view of the important program of this committee, can either the chairman of the committee or the Acting Leader of the Govern-