

"The danger need not be overstated. It is not a matter of the deliberate misuse of the information process to manipulate public opinion for political purposes. Even if this were tried - and there is no evidence that it has been - the attempt would founder on the independence of the news media and the safeguards inherent in the political process itself."

For officials of External Affairs engaged in back-up activities for the Minister's programme of public information this is a consideration not to be lost sight of but scarcely a problem of formidable proportions.

- (2) Departmental press relations. (A detailed description and discussion of the requirements and operations of departmental press activities is found in a memorandum of February 8 from Press and Liaison Division.)

Although the general objectives and purposes of departmental press relations are recognized and approved, it is fair to say that the Department in past years has often been laggard in providing the necessary system and machinery to achieve these purposes. At certain periods a press office has been active and useful - although always undermanned - and at others it has suffered from almost total inaction. The nadir of its history was the rather protracted time when the sole staff consisted of a Clerk Grade 4 who was responsible for the distribution of press releases and little else.