

Supply

tourism. Travel and tourism represent 5 per cent of Canada's gross national product. Tourism generates 1,130,000 jobs in Canada annually. There are well over 100,000 small businesses whose livelihood and profitability depend on tourism. Total receipts last year were \$16.5 billion. When you use the most accepted multiplier effect formula, you are talking about total personal incomes of \$28.2 billion last year. To support that important industry and to make it grow, we will invest a total of \$11,838,000 this year in advertising that works. That is a pretty tiny investment in such a vast industry which brings such returns.

What about energy? Do hon. members think that we should be advertising the importance of conserving energy and the various government programs that exist? That is something else that is done. I have talked about the Canadian Armed Forces. To honour our commitments to our allies we have to maintain our shelled manpower strength at appropriate levels. To do this, armed forces recruiters have to interview a considerable number of young men and women before one recruit is accepted and processed.

Mr. Huntington: Right now it is the only place they can find a job.

Mr. Regan: What about public works? Is it fair that Canadians in every part of the country have an equal opportunity to tender? Or is it only those who happen to be in the immediate Ottawa area or the immediate area of an undertaking who have that opportunity?

Mr. Beatty: Or friends of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Regan: For this government, it is a matter of considerable pride and achievement that the Canadian Unity Information Office is able to perform as effectively as it does in the service of this complex and sometimes difficult confederation of provinces. Keep in mind that threats to our unity continue to exist. Indeed, hon. members opposite will tell us on certain days that they consider the Western Canada Concept to be a threat similar to the Parti Québécois. Unity is certainly a subject which needs to be pursued in our advertising.

I could talk about other areas, but I want to outline clearly and rather proudly the principles that I adhere to and which I think are important in relation to communications by a government. There are principles which will guide the government's communications policies and activities, and which we have conveyed to the public service so that it can understand its role in the non-partisan provision of information.

The first principle has to do with the basic reason for good communications, which is that Canadians have the right to full, accurate and timely information, in compliance with the Official Languages Act, about their government so that they can exercise their rights of citizenship and take part in the democratic process fully, responsibly and in an informed manner.

The second is an expression of the government's policy on open government. Canadians have a right of access to government records, with exceptions to be legally defined and interpreted by the courts, designed to protect essential public and private interests.

● (1600)

The third principle makes clear that in addition to explaining programs and legislation which have been approved by Parliament, the government has a duty to inform the public of its proposals before they are decided by Parliament. This confirms my position which caused the charge of the hon. member that this principle was wrong. I think it was the right principle. It recognizes that without factual information about government proposals and the issues being addressed, the public does not have the opportunity to make its views fully known to legislators, based on good information, to write to their members and to effect through public opinion the shape of changes which may be made to bills. The government has the responsibility to provide the public with full, accurate and timely information about the policies, programs and legislation approved by Parliament. It also has the responsibility to inform the public of the factual content of its policy proposals and of facts, as it is aware of them regarding the public issues addressed by its policies.

The fourth principle emphasizes the duty of government to pay attention to the public in every region. It reads:

Government has a corresponding responsibility to make every reasonable effort to learn of the concerns and views of Canadians, with particular attention to difference of views in different regions of the country, so as better to inform itself in establishing priorities, in developing policies, and in implementing programs which serve the interests of Canada.

Let me say that I think this last one touches a bit upon the subject of polling. It is highly justifiable for government to undertake to know public attitudes on matters so that policy can reflect public attitudes. If we are to have a democratic, responsible government then that is quite important. I agree with the hon. member opposite that the result of those polls should be made public. That is the policy, as outlined by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien).

Mr. Beatty: When?

Mr. Regan: The policy is that these are used and then made available to the public.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): What about the McDonald commission?

Mr. Regan: I will come to the points of hon. members opposite later. The fifth and last basic principle recognizes that good government and good citizenship require earnest effort. Effective communications between citizens and government imply a reasonable effort on the part of citizens to seek the information they require to exercise their rights of citizenship and an obligation on the part of government to make every reasonable effort to provide access to information on an equal basis in all regions of Canada.

I believe we have approached the subject of advertising in the best way. I do not like to be critical, but I would tend to be