

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 23, 1970

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

INFORMATION CANADA

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL IDENTITY PROGRAM

Hon. Robert Stanbury (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce the adoption of a federal identity program for all operations of the federal government and administration.

The main purpose of this program is to provide a co-ordinated and readily recognizable means of identifying federal activities. We believe that the interests of Canadian confederation are served when the people of Canada understand the realms of responsibility of the governments which serve them, and when they are able to identify the source of government services available to them. For this reason, it seems desirable to have a simple system of distinguishing designs, familiar to all Canadians, to identify federal activities. The program which we are adopting does not supplant any existing emblem of Canada. There has never been an emblem which represents the Canadian government as an entity within the Canadian nation. This program is intended to fill that need.

• (11:10 a.m.)

[English]

Mr. Speaker, the design consists of two devices from the flag; a red bar with a red maple leaf on a white square to its right, followed on the right by the bilingual identification in black of the Canadian government, the department, agency or other unit or function of the federal government. The bar and leaf may, on occasion, be rendered in black when use of colour is not practical.

Members may be aware that, in the absence of an identification system designed for all federal activities, departments have increasingly adopted their own designs so that, at the moment, there are more than two dozen different identifying designs in use by federal departments, to say nothing of boards and agencies. Many of them contain no element suggesting a relationship with the government of Canada. The new federal identity program will replace this multiplicity of designs in everyday use.

The coat of arms and the flag, of course, will continue to be used and honoured as emblems of Canada, the

nation. Indeed, we believe that the adoption of a distinct design for identifying federal government activities will enhance the prestige and dignity of those symbols representing the nation as a whole.

The new program will be implemented gradually, starting on a limited basis immediately. During the next three months, a careful evaluation will be made of its application to stationery, signs, advertising, and so on. General introduction will commence early in the new year and continue until the end of 1973, as existing stationery stocks are exhausted and signs or vehicles need repainting or replacement.

When the new design has come into full use, Canadians will be able to identify more readily the activities of their federal government and its role in our nation. In this respect the program should be a significant means of strengthening Canadian confederation itself.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the minister for his courtesy in providing us with a copy of this two-page document half an hour ago. I will be equally as brief in my comments as he was in making the announcement because, quite frankly, the substance of the document deserves brevity, to say the least.

I must say I believe that statement made by the minister today is a sad reflection of the priorities of this government which seems to be preoccupied with pomp, circumstance and symbols rather than with the substance of nation-building. The bread and butter issues seem to go out the window and we are supposed to have symbols and cake in our bellies rather than policies of this government. As all hon. members know, this is an unprecedented time in our history; yet the minister stands up in this House and puts forward a mouse that the mountain has produced, a policy on symbols for this land which makes me wonder whether the situation in Canada is as serious as we have been led to believe, or is it a sham? Are the minister and the government completely insulting and showing no respect for the intelligence of the Canadian people and displaying their usual nerve in bringing forward this statement, or is it just naïveté on the part of this minister? We want statements on policy, not symbols on paper, and it is high time we got them.

Is this symbol of the government of Canada another step on the road to big brother in 1984? This country has had a symbol for Canada which we have all respected, a coat of arms which spells out Canada. Are the House of Commons and the people to have a government of Canada symbol, which right now should be in black or are they to continue with the coat of arms? There are many questions we could ask, but I shall not take the time of the House today in insulting the intelligence of the people of Canada any more than they have been