

Supply

Blais). However, time will not permit that. There are points which came out of that report. First, the Minister of Supply and Services has no control whatsoever over the moneys which he has to spend for advertising. He will be advised by his client, a department of government, as to what is to be spent, what the program is to be for and who is to be used. That means the Minister of Supply and Services has no latitude in seeking competence or economy in the administration of the budget approaching \$70 million. That is something to be frightened of as well. We find ourselves in the position where he does not know how much we will spend this year. At the moment it is approaching \$70 million—\$66 million, \$67 million, something like that. In his answers to questions he acknowledges that he has no idea what may come down the pipe to him from the advertising wishes of the department promoting our Constitution.

The problem is that the government has ignored its responsibilities. The place to do this kind of work is on the hustings. It should be done before the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, the political meeting, the fund-raising dinner. It should be done by means of press conferences and press releases. There should be good relations with the press and the electronic media. That is the way this must be done. The hon. member for Welland quoted from a document which, I believe, although I am not sure, was presented to the minister in the other place, Senator Olson, whereby the government was advised that it should be very careful in how it spent its money and should attempt to achieve the highest possible profile. There should be as few as possible cost-sharing ideas. That was when the hon. member across the way suggested we were not getting any credit for the money we spend. I suppose we will have to advertise to get that credit. It is probably because the profile is not there that the Government of Canada is reducing its payments to the provinces for health, welfare education and social services. Are we now going to see advertising in which the Government of Canada says it just paid 50 per cent of your last tonsillectomy? Is that the next thing to come down the pipe because the government thinks it is not getting enough publicity?

● (1750)

I fear, Mr. Speaker, and I fear seriously, for the wellbeing of the total political structure of this nation, if this government can get away scotfree with using as a propaganda weapon the advertising facilities of this nation, whether they be printed or electronic. No one has found any quarrel with the advertising for the promotion of business abroad; no one has found any quarrel with the advertising of business in exhibitions, worldwide or otherwise; no one has found any fault with the advertising for the armed services; no one has found any fault with calling for tenders or advertising positions. The criticism by the press as read in the House today, and the fault that is being found by members of this House in both opposition parties lies in the propaganda aspect of trying to sell to the

people of Canada what they know would not otherwise be bought.

An hon. Member: Right on!

Mr. McCain: You are taking advantage of a democratic structure to propagandize the people of Canada. You are using the press to do things that neither of the opposition parties can do. One member had the unadulterated nerve to say that because a union spent a sum of money for advertising its particular cause, the government must respond. Are we then to assume, Mr. Speaker, that every time an alien or a dissident or a provocative or proposition type of advertisement appears in the papers of Canada the Government of Canada is going to spend public money to oppose a union advertisement?

It is incredible, Mr. Speaker, that the conscience of this government would drop to a level even to imply that a union advertisement must be answered by a government advertisement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I have to inform the hon. gentleman that his time has expired. He may continue, if there is unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker: There is not unanimous consent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Lapierre (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, after listening to a few opposition speeches, I must admit that I am frankly shocked at the narrow-mindedness and shortsighted attitude shown by the member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty) in asking to have the Canadian Unity Information Office dismantled. He seems to think that after the Quebec referendum results and the defeat of the Western Canada Concept in Saskatchewan, all our national unity problems are over. While the opposition is suggesting that we phase out the office, the Premier of Quebec has announced that the next election will be tantamount to a referendum settling the separation question once and for all.

It seems obvious then that the Government of Canada has an obligation to publicize the advantages of the Canadian federation, and at the same time, to inform Canadian citizens of their rights and programs available to them. I have seldom heard a proposal as devoid of common sense as the one voiced by the member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe. His proposal is so laughable that he is the only member who has dared formulate it. I do not know whether that party has a common position, but we have heard three or four hon. members, and they all had different requests to make. The hon. member's insistence on dismantling the Canadian Unity Information Office is part of their craze for abolishing. Earlier, my colleague for Welland (Mr. Parent), in referring to the Katimavik