



Bulletin

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INFORMATION CANADA BORN

The Prime Minister made the following statement on information policy in the House of Commons on February 10:

On November 4, I tabled the report of the Task Force on Information which had been asked to examine federal information services and to recommend how the Federal Government might improve its communications with the Canadian people. I now propose to outline briefly the Government's plans.

The Task Force made 17 major recommendations. We accept these recommendations in principle, with two exceptions.

Recommendation Number 5 proposed the establishment of citizens' advisory bureaux and neighborhood councils. The Government is sympathetic to this proposal but feels that it warrants further study.

Recommendation number ten suggests that a government agency undertake a role of public advocate that we feel more properly belongs to Parliament.

The Task Force found that the information responsibilities of the Federal Government have not

been discharged effectively despite considerable expenditure. It was our suspicion of this which moved us to ask for the Task Force study.

As a step toward correcting this situation, we have accepted the recommendation for a small new unit called Information Canada, which will be established at the beginning of April as part of the Department of Supply and Services. The unit will report direct to a Minister....

MAIN OBJECTS

This organization is proposed mainly for three reasons. First, Information Canada will promote cooperation among federal information offices now operating in mutual isolation. The object will be to increase effectiveness as well as to save money by reducing duplication in the use of staff and equipment and by better joint use of the Government's information resources. A similar approach was recommended by the Glassco Royal Commission on Government Organization. We expect that co-ordination will result in more coherent information, clearer and more understandable to Canadians than it has been in the past.

The second reason for establishing Information Canada is that there are many information offices in the Federal Government, but each now speaks for its own particular departmental concern. There is no machinery to deal with information on broad governmental concerns affecting more than one department.

The third reason is to be able to learn better the views of the Canadian people. The unit is, therefore, designed not merely as a vehicle for dissemination of information but to provide better systems for Canadians to make known their viewpoints to their Government.

I pause at this juncture to emphasize that the Government recognizes the fact that the primary responsibility for conveying to the Government the views and attitudes of Canadians has always remained and always should remain with Members of

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