

areas, the provinces are suppliers, users and producers of statistics. The Statistics Act specifically calls for federal-provincial co-operation. Within the past few years, a central focal point has been established in the bureau for over-all liaison and consultation with provincial government departments, and regional officers are being appointed. Under the bill now before this house, D.B.S. would undertake a new duty—namely, the promotion of the avoidance of duplication in the information collected by provincial and federal Government departments. I have specifically referred to this as an important change, because a number of the changes incorporated in the bill have been proposed to help achieve this general objective.

I would now like to refer to other changes in the bill. A number of changes have been made concerning the census of population and agriculture. The existing act requires the taking of a census of population and a census of agriculture in all of Canada every ten years, and in the Prairie provinces alone every five years. Changes in the characteristics of the population are rapid, and a decade now is too long a period between censuses in the light of present-day information needs. Thus, in 1956 and 1966, censuses covering all Canada were taken rather than merely of the Prairie provinces, and it is proposed to incorporate this practice into the act by specifying that censuses of population of all of Canada shall be taken every five years. It is further proposed that the census of agriculture be taken for all of Canada every ten years, and every fifth year unless the Governor-in-Council specifically decides otherwise. A number of other changes are proposed in the sections on censuses, the most important of which is the requirement that prior publication of the census questionnaire be made in the *Canada Gazette*.

The existing act provides for the right of access by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, for statistical purposes, to provincial, municipal and corporation records. In order to provide all public and private officials with an explicit legal justification for the provision of information to D.B.S., the Chief Statistician will also have right of access to records relevant to statistics in federal departments and agencies and unincorporated businesses and organizations.

The fines under the offences and punishment clauses of the act would generally be increased to bring them into line with current price levels. A proposed new offence has been added to cover impersonation of a D.B.S. officer or enumerator.

Most of the remaining changes in the bill are "housekeeping changes," whereby obsolete sections have been removed, language reworded, and so on. A thorough review has been made of the entire act, and this is the reason for repealing the present act and introducing a new statistics bill.

A reconsideration of the Statistics Act provides an opportunity to consider the title of the agency, as well as

the conditions under which the organization is to operate. The present title has been in use for some 50 years and is considered by the Government to be out of line with modern terminology for Government departments. The Government is, therefore, proposing, as honourable senators will find in clause 3 of the new act, that the agency will be known henceforth as Statistics Canada, ce qui se traduit très bien en français par "Statistiques Canada". I commend this new name to honourable senators, believing that it more accurately reflects the agency's role at the centre of the national statistical system, and that it will better portray the compilation, analysis and publication of information in the years ahead.

[Translation]

In closing, I might mention that a conference of Commonwealth statisticians will be held in India in November next. The Canadian Government has expressed its intention to delegate to the conference the federal statistician who, following the passing of this bill, will have the status of head statistician under the terms of section 4 of the bill under consideration. It is important to note that such meetings are held every five years.

[English]

In conclusion, I would like to commend this bill to honourable senators, and after it receives second reading I will propose that it be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce.

Hon. Lionel Choquette: Honourable senators, it is my intention to adjourn this debate but before doing so I should like to ask the sponsor a question. I refer to clause 29 which deals with false or unlawful information, and in that clause I read as follows:

29. Every person who, without lawful excuse,
(a) refuses or neglects to answer, or wilfully answers falsely, any question requisite for obtaining any information—

And then it goes on:

—is, for every such refusal or neglect, or false answer or deception, guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or to both.

Do I understand that if I receive some communication or questionnaire from a department or from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and I throw it in the waste basket, such as I do with much of the paper that comes to my office or to my home, I would be liable to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months or both? How can you enforce this? Furthermore, do you know if this existed in the act we are now amending and do you know of any prosecutions that were brought or commenced under such a section?

Hon. Mr. Robichaud: My information is that this section is to be found in the present act. The only difference