

As an FSO, I think I have shown that I believe in information work, that I am interested in it. But, what is even more significant and the real point I am anxious to make, is that my case is like that of every other officer in my service; while there may be some differences in the amount of information work we have to do in the course of our career, such work is very much part and parcel of our lives.

Yes, like you I am sure, and very often, I have wondered over the years why information work, being so important for Canada, seems not to have achieved adequate recognition. The opportunities seem to be considerable and yet, as you know, we are forever short of personnel and money to take advantage of them.

A certain number of explanations for this situation have occurred to me. They will, I am sure, as well as better ones, have occurred to you. They may not all be equally important, but I think that they are relevant to our problem and I suggest that they must be borne in mind if we want to understand what has been happening to government information work in the past and what is likely to continue to happen to it in the future.

The first and the most important factor in this field, I think, is the very nature of our political system.

We have parliamentary democracy and, in such a régime, Ministers are called upon to play a very special role in the formulation and presentation of policies. Yet, at the same time, it seems that they are denied most carefully the kind of machine which they would need to publicize such policies, for fear that such a machine could be exploited for personal or partisan purposes. Under our system, Ministers themselves personally, and not a machine, must devise policies and promote support for them. Ministers must, if they want a certain policy to be adopted, sell it first to their colleagues in Cabinet, then to their colleagues in the party, then to Parliament and to the public in general; and they must do this almost single-handed. Under our system, they personally have to perform the key role in obtaining and retaining support for any policy with which they become identified. It is generally believed that, if Ministers play their role well, in our free society the media of information will assist them and that, together, they will keep the public both in Canada and abroad fully in the picture. Furthermore, anyone with experience in the field of information well knows that Parliament is very jealous of its privileges. Policies must not be announced just anywhere and by anyone. I may add that the private news agencies do not enjoy either being scooped by officials. As a result of all this, and, to complicate matters further, officials and government publications must be very careful in their presentations of government policy. You all know here the very strict limitations which must at all times be adhered to.

Our political system, therefore, has some inhibiting effects on the amount of information work which can be undertaken by officials. The situation is further complicated as a result of the philosophy which we Canadians have developed in regard to information work.

Above all, it seems, we do not want a central information machine. We had one during the war, but, as soon as the war was over, it was very quickly dismantled. Apparently, we do not want government to tell us what to think and because of this, we do not want any central government agency to give us the facts which