

eastern provinces, but the North and all the other regions, will be together to celebrate that day.

Mr. Speaker, we referred earlier to information sent out to our fellow citizens across Canada, and I would like to say a few words about the campaign launched by the Canada Unity Information Office.

● (1640)

[English]

Most of the advertising of the Canadian Unity Information Office has been utilized by the opposition as a means to develop criticisms about federal government advertising and also to imply that the Canadian Unity Information Office is rapidly being transformed into the propaganda arm of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Blenkarn: It is.

Mr. Parent: I reject that completely. I wish my hon. colleagues opposite would listen to me relating some of the things we have been doing, rather than criticizing without even listening.

Mr. Blenkarn: We watched your geese.

Mr. Parent: Examples of some advertising in the last year included television advertising aired at different times during the year describing federal government programs and services. That is going to be an arm of the Liberal Party, is it? Those are services the Government of Canada provides to all the people of Canada. One of the commercials in that campaign was entitled "The Environment", and it described areas in which the federal government is actively involved, including the management of national parks, the management of forest resources and water management. Do those belong only to the Liberal Party? I hear no answer from hon. members opposite. No, they belong to all of us. They belong to Canadians. It is a shame hon. members opposite would even suggest otherwise.

Another example of a television campaign was the national unity message entitled "Contributions". This commercial described the wealth and potential of Canada and gave examples of each province's contributions to our national wealth. So much for the propaganda arm of the Liberal Party.

Probably the most controversial campaign to which the hon. member referred was the series of ads run last year in the "Report on Business" section of *The Globe and Mail*. The theme of the campaign was "Canada—we have a lot to offer each other", and the ads described the wealth and potential of Canada. The hon. member's argument was that there was no service and no program being sold in those ads except the image of the Liberal government. I must say that as a Member of Parliament I take strong exception to such allegations.

The following quotation might help to refute allegations. It is a quotation from the Breau report, the report of the all-party committee on fiscal arrangements in 1981:

Federal spending without federal presence or participation in provincial programs without visibility in the provinces, is not just frustration for the

Supply

politician, it is also a denial of the citizen's right to see the government's work and to judge it. When the federal role is not evident, it cannot be assessed.

Therefore:

—government that is not visible cannot be answerable.

In addition, the need to achieve understanding of Canada's evolution, the integrity of the federal system of government, the realization of Canada's vast potential and the future security and wellbeing of its citizens may ultimately depend on the government's ability to communicate its role, policies, programs and services.

Advertising is but one means of communicating to the public. Its intent is not to replace the traditional information role of the media or that of Members of Parliament but to complement it. To quote the hon. member for Willowdale (Mr. Peterson) during a media interview:

We have to use twentieth century techniques for communicating with Canadians to try to show the advantages of staying together. The threat of separation in Quebec has not yet gone away. We now see separatism rearing its head in the west with the Western Canada Concept. We are also in the business of delivering services to Canadians and if Canadians are not aware of what those services are, what is available to them, then we have failed as a government. Unless the people know what we're doing, they won't know where to hold accountable.

There are 57 different publications currently produced by the Canadian Unity Information Office, and over 7.6 million copies have been distributed since May of 1981, mostly in response to requests from parliamentarians, the general public and order forms from our counter-top displays in post offices. For example, in a one-week period from March 14 to March 19, 1982, we received 1,611 letters from the general public, for a total of 19,378 items distributed. Over 2,200 requests for materials were received by members of Parliament and senators last year, and approximately 32 per cent of responses from our post offices countertop displays are from the western provinces.

Since the Canadian Unity Information Office was established in 1977 we have distributed well over 80 million brochures. Examples of some of these include brochures such as "The Government of Canada and the Construction Industry," "How Canadians Govern Themselves" and "The Government of Canada at Your Service." And still hon. members opposite say this is a propaganda arm of the Liberal government!

Mr. Blenkarn: It is.

Mr. Parent: Was it the propaganda arm of the Conservative government when hon. members opposite were in power and the former minister advertised the things his government was doing at that time? Was it ever said at that time that the Canadian Unity Information Office was the propaganda arm of the Conservative government? No, and I will tell the House why. At that time the Conservative Party made up the Government of Canada. Hon. members opposite were the Canadian government, just as we are today. It is true they did not like to govern very much because at the end of nine months they simply packed it up and went off and hid their tails someplace.

Miss MacDonald: Look at what went on.