

Government Administration

safeguard of citizens. They have other safeguards which have lost a lot of their clout during the last two years.

I have suggested that the talk about participation is simply talk. After all, there is a big difference between genuine participatory democracy which is, on the one hand, to send up trial balloons to sample public opinion and, on the other hand, an exercise in public relations designed to condition the public to a change that the government has already decided to make. There is also a difference between participatory discussions and shouting matches with extremists; the latter may very well be designed to suggest that all of those who disagree with the government are also extremists.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: This is a well known technique which was not invented by the Prime Minister, (Mr. Trudeau) but employed to a considerable extent by him.

During the 1960's, governments representing both parties established various new agencies and new programs genuinely designed to broaden the base of government and participation in government, to broaden the opportunity for citizens to express their views or draw attention to their demands. These were genuine examples of participatory democracy. It is very interesting and noteworthy to consider that their fate is in the hands of this government.

The ARDA program, with its emphasis on community involvement in decision making, is certainly being pushed out. Perhaps the best example of its replacement was the Prince Edward Island development plan where the effective control is highly centralized here in Ottawa.

Then there is the Company of Young Canadians. Certainly, it has been "co-opted" and turned into what looks like a tamed creature of the government. We all agree about the government's role as an agent. We, on this side of the House, would have wished the government to start afresh. Certainly, Sir, we never agreed to an agency designed to be participatory being simply taken over and operated by the government. The mandate of this agency now is to be an agent of the government among the young, and not an agency of youth in governmental matters. This distinction is generically the same as the distinction between propaganda and information.

There are other examples. It is clear that at the same time the government is talking about making democracy work, it is changing or restricting or closing down those few federal agencies which have allowed some form of genuine participation. These programs have been replaced by tokenism; for example, naming regional representatives of the poor and flying them occasionally to Ottawa for discussion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: I suggest there has been quite an alarming increase in the recourse of this government to arbitrary procedures. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) has left the House, and I am sorry he has. According to reports, that minister directly threatened to impose or continue certain policies against copper companies unless they agreed to limitations on price increases. We can all understand the desire to curb price increases or to limit them if they cannot be avoided. The suggestion is that the minister concerned boasted of the big stick he holds over the producers by way of copper export permits.

There is also the whole question of sanctions and the government's proposed voluntary restraint program. I favour this program and I have been advocating the use of guidelines. I must say that I am concerned about the cloak and dagger methods the government seems to be resorting to in order to obtain compliance with this program. It is one thing to have a law which prohibits something and to provide penalties which are to be suffered by those convicted of a violation of that law. That is part of what we consider to be the rule of law. It is a very different thing when you try to attain a very valid aim—an aim we can all support—through very vague threats. It is a different thing when you ask provincial governments, for example, to be prepared not to buy from a company because the Prices and Incomes Commission says that the company has violated this program. The government seems to feel that the end justifies the means and that this sort of thing has to be done in the national interest.

I do not think it is any exaggeration to say that most of the atrocities in history actually have been committed in the name of the public or the national interest. I say our democratic system requires more specific safeguards, and that we must take the rule of law seriously if we are going to preserve respect for the law, and if we are going to