

*Science Council*

We are not here considering the possible harmful effects full disclosure might have on the attitudes and work of high-ranking advisers, an aspect to be dealt with later.

Since ministers are ambitious and rival each other, any tendency to invite inspection of inner cabinet workings by outsiders would bring cabinet divisions out into the open.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** So what's new?

**Mr. Baldwin:** Page Mackasey and Kierans.

**Mr. Forest:** While this might be manna from heaven for news reporters and commentators, it would harm the effectiveness of government, might well slow up administrative efficiency and hardly work for the good of the country. In times of crisis when some cabinet members would be looking ahead to the next election rather than devoting all their attention to the policy matter at issue, there would be an inevitable temptation for them to hint that they themselves did not agree with the views expressed in one or another document made public. It would be a short step from this to admission by such ministers that they personally were opposed to policies adopted. Thus, collective responsibility would begin to crumble. Those who foresaw that a policy decision, however wise, would be unpopular and likely to damage their political standing might be tempted to lay the blame for it on their colleagues. It is hard to see that such consequences could further the laudable aims of those who urge an open disclosure approach to public business.

Under our system it is the task of the administration to govern and not that of Parliament. If an administration is not to be paralyzed by exposure to constant public scrutiny, the government would be wise to retain some discretion as to which documents and reports it publishes. There should, it appears, be a compromise between constant, total exposure—and undue, harmful secrecy.

John Stuart Mill saw a "radical distinction between controlling the business of government and actually doing it". He believed that:

The proper duty of a representative assembly in regard to matters of administration is not to decide them by its own vote, but to take care that the persons who have to decide them shall be the proper persons.

Gladstone told the House of Commons:

Your business is not to govern the country, but it is, if you think fit, to call to account those who do govern it.

Lord Morrison of Lambeth commented in evidence given to the Select Committee on Procedure, in 1946:

I say it is the government that is responsible (for executive current administration). It is responsible to parliament, but if parliament is going to set up another duplicating set of administrative experts to take an interest in current administration, there is going to be a clash between parliament and government which I think would be bad. Parliament's business is to check the government, throw it out if it wants to, go for it, attack it, criticize it by all means; but parliament is not a body organized for current administration, not in this country—

Professor of Government at the University of Exeter, H. V. Wiseman, notes in his introduction to "Parliament and the Executive":

Our general conclusion is, simply, that parliament does not and should not 'govern' the country: that the increasing power of the cabinet vis-à-vis the House of Commons is necessary and inevitable and should not be measured against a probably mythical and certainly short-lived golden age of 'parliamentary supremacy'; that, none the less, the dice have become too loaded against the House of Commons and that it is possible to restore the House to a more balanced position in the constitution without undermining executive responsibility and even without destroying the essential basis of party discipline upon which such responsibility rests.

Sir Ivor Jennings, in his "Cabinet Government" says:

It is, in short, the function of the government to govern and of the House of Commons to criticize; but there are limits to the scope of criticism; and if the government asserts that discussion is not in the public interest the House can do no more than accept the decision. Even where publication of information is not inimical, the powers of the House are limited in fact. It is a deliberative assembly, not a governing body.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Would the hon. member permit a question? In all those quotations, does the hon. member have one from Pierre Elliott Trudeau on participatory democracy?

**Mr. Forest:** I explained at the beginning what participatory democracy meant, and I said there were certain limits to it, especially when questions of state secrecy and things like that are concerned. Some documents must remain secret. I recognize that this might not satisfy the hon. member—

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** What has this to do with state security?

**Mr. Forest:** I am saying that some advice must remain confidential. To be effective, complete, impartial and candid, advice papers prepared for cabinet and memoranda for ministers should be confidential. Otherwise, the advisers will have their minds on the conse-