

here, and I am very upset about almost anybody being given the right to look into matters as personal as income tax files. That is all I have to say about that particular provision.

I am also upset over the change in the name. We have had the name "Dominion Bureau of Statistics" ever since the act was passed. DBS are initials that are understood by people in all parts of the world. The government now wants to drop the "Dominion" and rename the bureau "Statistics Canada". I think this is the only reason this bill has been brought in, since very few other changes are proposed in it. I am concerned about relinquishing this old, reliable, well-understood nomenclature, one that will be missed, I am sure, by most Canadians.

I also hope that the changes provided here will mean better co-ordination and co-operation with the provinces so that small businesses and corporations will be asked to provide less material than is the case at the present. Like the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Harkness), who has had many letters on this point, I too have received complaints from small businessmen about the great amount of work and effort they have to put into supplying DBS with figures.

One last point about reports made by DBS. Some of them are three or four years old when published, and in this computer age there is no excuse for this. I suggest that unless reports are reasonably current we might just as well forget about them.

I will not take any further time of the House. May I reiterate what I said at the beginning, that I am very concerned about inroads being made into people's privacy, particularly in the area of personal income tax returns.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to bring to the attention of the Parliamentary Secretary and the House that the Parliamentary Secretary has already spoken in this debate. The Standing Order provides that the mover of a substantive motion may speak a second time, thus closing the debate. The hon. member is not the mover of the motion, and while this may be a technicality; perhaps it would be better to obtain the consent of the House to allow the hon. member to close the debate. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, in closing the debate, I want to make a few comments on some of the excellent points that have been made by hon. members thus far. The points made pose the kind of problems that the government faces so often, where members of the opposition take an extreme view on the one side, and other members of the opposition take an extreme view the other way. Then, the government must somehow find a position between the two that is satisfactory to all Canadians.

I think the question of secrecy is an excellent example of this. The hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. Saltsman) suggested that we have far too much secrecy, whereas

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the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Hales) and the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Harkness) declared that under the new arrangements we will not have enough secrecy. I want to say a few words about the particular subject of access to income tax returns. If I can describe the process that is envisioned, it might serve to reassure members of the Conservative party with regard to this point.

The proposal is that members of Statistics Canada who will be concerned with this particular aspect of the operation will go to the Department of National Revenue which will set up a special department under secrecy provisions more rigid than exist in that department at the present time. Data will be gathered on computer tapes and transferred in bulk to Statistics Canada for use at that centre as bulk information. The likelihood of an individual's return ever being made public is almost non-existent. The conditions of secrecy under which personnel from Statistics Canada will operate will be, if anything, more rigid than the conditions under which personnel in the Department of National Revenue now operate.

• (4:00 p.m.)

In examining this bill for the first time, I was as equally concerned as are other hon. members over this point. I examined it very carefully before assuring myself that the provisions of secrecy which Canadians enjoy at the present time would be preserved. I feel I can assure hon. members that this important provision is being considered very carefully and that satisfactory action is being taken in that regard.

The hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Harkness) made a point about the constantly increasing burden on businessmen in Canada to provide statistical information to the nation. I share his concern over this. I have talked to many businessmen who have experienced this burden and are concerned about the cost to themselves and their businesses of supplying this information, and I want to suggest to him that some of the most important provisions of this bill are designed to improve that situation. That is exactly what a good part of the bill is all about, to make it easier and cheaper for Canadian businessmen to fulfil the obligations they have to provide that information, which they use as well as governments, for the benefit of all Canadians. I think that is an important improvement accomplished by this bill.

The hon. member also suggested that there have been cost increases. I suppose there will be cost increases in the future as the nation grows, as business grows, as the gross national product grows and as the necessity to provide additional services grows. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics is doing everything it can to modernize and to use advanced methods such as computers wherever possible to simplify the gathering process in order that costs will be kept down and the greatest value for the dollar will be obtained. On the other hand, the hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. Saltsman) suggested that perhaps we do not have adequate statistics in Canada. He went on to say that the quality of statistics we have is not adequate.