

*Adjournment Debate*

staff and inmates. Under the revised construction program it is only the number of such living units per institution that will be increased. The size of each living unit will remain unchanged.

Having assured themselves that there is no evidence that program quality is solely or even primarily dependent on over-all inmate capacity, the CCS examined the economic implications of building smaller institutions. Comparative data, holding level of service constant, indicated that the annual operating and maintenance costs in a medium security penitentiary containing 160 inmates are 40 per cent higher than in a penitentiary containing 420 inmates. Similar comparisons with maximum security institutions indicated that the smaller institutions cost approximately 65 per cent more per inmate than the larger institutions. On this basis it was decided that if new institutions are to be built at all they should be designed in such a way that the living unit concept can be introduced in order to maintain program quality, and that inmate capacity could be expanded, should the need arise, to a maximum of 450 inmates.

As a result of restricting the revised capital construction program to these objectives, a number of previously planned institutions were cancelled at a capital cost saving to the taxpayer of \$225 million. Even this greatly restricted construction program will be subject to annual review in order to respond to unexpected increases or decreases in inmate population. Furthermore, in response to the specific concern that the building of more maximum security cells leads inevitably to their occupancy, it is our intention to avoid just this danger by taking steps to reduce the proportion of inmates held in maximum custody through such actions as the development of a new classification policy.

It is our hope that many initiatives such as community programming, crime prevention, diversion, alternatives to incarceration, and better classification and preparation for release within our institutions, will bear fruit and enable us to restrict the construction of new capacity even further.

STATISTICS CANADA—VOLUNTARY RESPONSES TO STATSCAN SURVEYS

**Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, the issue I bring forward tonight is based upon the most fundamental of democratic government principles. It revolves around the relationship of the individual and the state, touching individual liberty, freedom of information, citizens' rights, and the privilege of members of parliament.

● (2215)

Democratic governments evolved originally to protect and to serve individual citizens and their rights and privileges, as opposed to totalitarian regimes which suppress individual liberties.

A recent Gallup poll asked Canadians: "Do you think business, labour or governments constitute the greatest danger to Canada's future?" The new and changed response of Canadians was to identify government as the threat instead of

[Mr. Young.]

as a protection and service device. Unfortunately the Government of Canada has moved beyond protection and service toward totalitarian suppression of information and legislated compulsion that, rather than protecting, suppresses and persecutes individual liberty and freedom of choice. In this recent poll the public has recognized a reality that has long been recognized by even the most moderate civil libertarians. Individuals are shouting, the majority is no longer silent, but the government is deaf. This phrase is the motto adopted by one of my constituents who has been pursued by the federal government for the last two and a half years for refusing to answer some questions on the 1976 census form. When viewed in the light of her single plight to make this government face the reality that it cannot continue to practise statistical voyeurism at census or any other time, her adage capsulizes much of what I wish to underline here this evening.

Let me now refer specifically to the ominous section 29 of the Statistics Act. It states that any individual who, without lawful excuse, refuses or neglects to fill in, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, any form distributed under the Statistics Act, may be charged with a summary conviction offence and fined or jailed.

Let us look at some of the questions for which a refusal to answer may bring such a penalty. From the 1976 census form we take this question: "How many visitors or other persons who have a usual home elsewhere in Canada stayed overnight on May 31, June 1?", or "Do you enter your living quarters: by a private entrance from outside; through a common hall or passageway through someone else's living quarters?" Personally, I have no objection to answering these questions, but if I refuse should I be sent to jail or fined?

We in this House have heard many of the questions now being posed to Canadians by the Statistics Canada survey of family expenditures in 1978, in respect of which many people may be charged for refusing to answer, that is, of course, only if the minister responsible is not feeling as benevolent as he was yesterday during the question period when he described his authoritarian concept of selective persecution through selective prosecution.

In order to determine if she was being persecuted or prosecuted, or a little bit of both, and in order to determine whether there was the legal precedence and court transcripts that might have been available to build her defence, Mrs. Sheremeta, who is not a lawyer and in fact does not have the resources to pay a lawyer, attempted to find the answers to some very simple and basic questions. She asked: How many Canadian citizens refused to complete their 1976 census forms fully? Of these, how many refused to give only some information and how many refused to give any answers at all? How many Canadians have been prosecuted under Section 29 of the Statistics Act, and how many have had proceedings started against them as a result of refusing to answer all questions on the 1976 census forms?

As an individual she was denied access to this information even though the information was not considered classified or