

restrictions on people with skills and crafts and make it difficult for them to work in this country as skilled tradesmen.

Parliament and the people of this country ought to look very carefully at any private agency which sets restrictions on people. The interests of a particular professional group or trade union may not be the same as the interests of the community as a whole. I do not say that in any critical way. I do not say this is so, but it may be that doctors feel it will be better for them if the number of doctors entering this country could be restricted. Dentists, architects and engineers may feel the same way. I can understand it if they feel that way, but what is good for them is not necessarily good for the country. The standards of skills in a particular profession ought to be closely supervised. They should be set in a general way by the government rather than by the group concerned.

The Department of Manpower and Immigration commissioned the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada to undertake a study regarding development of guidelines by which Canadian equivalence can be established for degrees and diplomas in foreign countries. I am sure this is a very valuable document. It can be of use to the government and other people. The people of Canada have a right to know who enters Canada, their qualifications, what they want to do, what they are permitted to do by private organizations and what they are not permitted to do.

I have frequently stated that I find it strange that a government which prides itself on participatory democracy should, on every possible occasion, tell Members of Parliament, the Canadian people and the press that information ought to be confidential and withheld from the public. I cannot understand why the government, with regard to the matter under discussion and almost every question, frequently says that the study is either private, confidential or interdepartmental, that they have made a commitment to those who have made the study that it will not be released, or that the department feels that it is not in the public interest.

It would take me an hour to relate the various excuses which have been given by one department or another as to why they cannot table a study or document which is prepared at the request of the government. All the excuses add up to the same thing. The government always gives the same answer. The answer can be expressed in one simple word. Nine times out of ten the answer is "No, you cannot have this information. No, the press cannot have this information. This is information restricted for government use and we say nobody else can have it."

• (5:10 p.m.)

I say, as I have said before, that there is no reason this particular study should not be made available to Members of Parliament, the press and the public generally. I say this without much hope the government will change its mind in the present case. Nevertheless, it is the provision of information of this kind which would help the

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people of Canada to reach decisions in the extremely complex society in which they live. Should we make it easier for doctors coming to Canada from foreign countries to practice? Should we make it easier for dentists, architects, nurses, physio-therapists to do so? Or, leaving the professions, should we make it easier for carpenters, millwrights, machinists, electricians to come to work here? Unless we know what kind of training they have received we cannot make reasoned judgments on these questions. One of the ways we could be assisted to do so would be by the government making public documents of the kind referred to in the motion before the House.

Mr. Jack Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Once again the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) is berating the government and, I would say, overstating his case. He is trying to give the impression that this is a secretive government, one which is not prepared to give out information, answer questions or accede to notices of motions for papers which are placed on the order paper.

Mr. Speaker, only today the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Jerome) rose to indicate that certain notices of motion were acceptable to the government. Many of these notices of motion are, in fact, accepted. Only two or three days ago the same hon. member announced that of some 1,500 questions on the order paper this session alone, 85 per cent had been answered and action was being taken to see what could be done to answer the remaining 15 per cent. Hardly the mark of a secretive government. Then again, one of the highlights of the parliamentary day, both for members of the opposition and for the press gallery, is the question period. Day after day it has run beyond the time allotted for it in order that the government might answer the questions which are put forward. Hardly what one might expect from a secretive government.

There comes a time when a government has a good reason for not producing a particular document. The hon. member will, of course, approach all the reasons which will be given from this side of the House with suspicion and say they don't amount to a hill of beans, the government is really trying to hide under a veil of secrecy. This is simply not the case. There are occasions when the government, requesting certain information or studies, will say to the individuals concerned. We undertake that the information you give us, the opinions you express, the material you bring to our attention, will not be made a matter of public disclosure. This is done in order that a report may be a better one, a more honest one. I suppose that in many cases it would, quite frankly, be of little consequence whether they were published or not. But the undertaking with respect to confidentiality which has been given is still the reason that, in many cases, some of these papers cannot be made public.

There are areas in which an individual reporting to the government might express an opinion which could be considered as "way out" or reflecting 21st century thinking. Some of us might regard it as being a little weird. The government has then to decide in its own mind whether such a report should be released without it