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many polls it had commissioned which were paid for out of public funds. Shortly after that, the executive director of CUIO left and went to work for the new leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Surely an agency such as the Canadian Unity Information Office must not be allowed to have a budget of up to \$30 million which is designed to promote the image of one political party and to gain intelligence only for one political party. When one questions this sort of advertising, the response from the government is that it is essential that the federal government explain to Canadians what their rights are, what services are available and what can be done for them. If it was serious about all that, surely in two years we would have seen a tough and comprehensive freedom of information act such as that which was introduced by my colleague just a few days after Parliament met during the Clark regime.

What we have today is the most secretive government in the history of Canada. It is secretive about how it spends taxpayers' dollars, it is secretive about public opinion polling, it is secretive about its activities and it is secretive about how decisions are made.

According to officials in the Privy Council Office when this party was in government, the cost of a comprehensive freedom of information act would have been about \$10 million per year. Mr. Speaker, the cost of federal advertising this year will be about \$80 million. I think Canadians are entitled to ask if the \$10 million would not be better spent. Surely it would be infinitely preferable to open up this information for Canadians so that they can get the information they want instead of being propagandized with their own tax dollars and a message promoted by the Liberal Party.

A number of things can and should be done to clean up the federal government's advertising. The first thing would be to wind up the Canadian Unity Information Office. Massive savings could be made in that way. It is becoming a dangerous rogue elephant which operates on behalf of the Liberal Party. Those elements of its publications which are non-partisan or beneficial could be provided elsewhere. We should not have a central agency doing public opinion polling on behalf of the Liberal Party and financing advertising which is designed to promote the image of one political party.

Second, we should scrap federal advocacy advertising. The time has come to draw the line and to say that this must stop.

Third, we could save money for Canadian taxpayers by reducing the level of federal advertising by at least one third. A good place to begin would be to scrap CUIO and advocacy advertising.

Fourth, every public opinion poll commissioned by the Government of Canada should be made public. It should be commissioned only on the understanding that when the results are in they will be made available to Parliament and the people of Canada. We must do away with the secrecy that attends public opinion polling in Canada.

Fifth, when individual Canadians have concerns about the truthfulness of government advertising there should be an independent body whose decision would be binding on the federal government. Complaints could be made to it and

claims adjudicated and it could decide whether the federal government is using tax dollars to disseminate information that is plainly false. There is no such body today.

Sixth, what we need desperately in Canada is a tough and comprehensive freedom of information act. The time is long past when government can claim that information about how it acts and handles tax dollars is its own property and not that of the people of Canada.

If the present situation is allowed to continue unchecked we will find that the essential equilibrium between government and opposition which has existed over the centuries of parliamentary democracy will be destroyed. Instead, we will have one political party with a slush fund of \$70 million or \$80 million with which to promote its own policies and interests. It will be able to reach into the taxpayer's pocket to promote those interests and gain support while other political parties do not have similar funds to promote their point of view. I do not argue that the opposition parties should be funded from tax funds; it is the responsibility of those parties themselves to raise the money. I say, however, that this abuse must stop if our system of parliamentary government is to remain healthy.

If this trend continues we will find that it is yet another attack on the press in Canada. What we see now is that when the federal government cannot earn good publicity it uses tax dollars to buy good publicity. It simply drowns out competing points of view by purchasing as much time or space as is necessary to get its message across.

This is just one example of a series of attacks on freedom of the press, which includes the Kent commission report, the raid on *The Toronto Sun* under the Official Secrets Act and threats by cabinet ministers, including the Prime Minister, against Radio-Canada because they did not like its political coverage. It is essential that this trend not be allowed to continue.

In his book "The Government Party", Reginald Whitaker quotes from a memorandum that was sent to the Liberal Party in 1948 by Walsh Advertising Agency entitled "A Formula for Liberal Victory". I think it sums up the message that the Liberal Party believes in. On page 217 of that book there appears the following:

—we stripped away all the mysticism of political campaigns and "sold" Liberalism as we would sell any other product or service—by modern merchandising methods . . . Walsh has always approached its political assignments with the same techniques that it employs successfully to sell automobiles, fountain pens, hosiery, etc. for other clients . . . Given a free hand, Walsh proceeded to formulate a plan that would sell a government to a people, just as we would sell any other product or service to people . . . Inferior products can annihilate superior ones, if shrewdly, consistently and heavily impressed upon the public.

● (1540)

That was in 1948, Mr. Speaker, before I was born. In the intervening 34 years the Liberal Party has learned that lesson well. They have discovered that by using massive amounts of tax dollars, they can convert those dollars to the use of the Liberal Party and sell inferior policies and get their point of view across in a way no other Canadian can do. This represents