

The Budget—Mr. Nowlan

budget will really close the gap between the performance of the economy and its full economic potential.

With those few remarks on the budget, Mr. Speaker, I should like to turn to a critical area in which the budget is silent, even though the problems are severe. I refer to the communications industry in its various forms. I suggest it is perhaps more than paradoxical that a government which undoubtedly has spent more money on culture and communications than any of its predecessors, if for no other reason than that it has had more to spend, has by overt act and omission done more in this field to create uncertainty about the present and pessimism for the future. The communicator, in all his forms whether in broadcasting or in publishing, notwithstanding his acknowledged central role in developing a national id for the Canadian character, has never been more confused over government policy or more particularly over the lack of government policy.

The debate on nationalism waxes and wanes and then returns again, but direction and federal leadership to the communicator might as well be on the moon. The plan for the instant world tabled by the former Minister of Communications has added to the vacuum of silence even though Mr. Kierans, the man, has made more sound. The reason for this short circuit in the role of the communicator is to be found in the office and person of the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) who now, between penning books, also doubles as Minister of Communications. The minister is now in fact, as well as in law, Canada's first minister of culture and communications since he wears the two hats of Secretary of State and Minister of Communications. Now, perhaps at first blush this could be considered to be a constructive move.

Hopefully the Postmaster General (Mr. Côté) might like to have a consolidated authority so that he could solve some of the problems in the post office, and if he could do it I think we would delegate the job to him. But in this ministry of Secretary of State and Communications or culture and communications hopefully, conflicting government policies could be co-ordinated so that a coherent and consistent policy could be defined and implemented through the communications media and the various federal agencies in this field. But unfortunately that rose coloured view founders on the rocks of reality. A sterile Information Canada is no substitute for vacillation, indecision and intellectual arrogance. That is what we have with this minister today.

I am glad to see that the parliamentary secretary to the minister is here today. I was informed the minister would be away and so I am glad to see his parliamentary secretary. Admittedly, perhaps the pressures of this all-embracing ministry of Secretary of State, which is becoming even larger under the present minister, might explain some of the omissions or vacillations of the minister, although nothing can explain his intellectual arrogance. One has only to look at the many important acts which come within the ambit of the Secretary of State to appreciate part of the dilemma. There is the Broadcasting Act, the Canada Council Act, the Canada Elections Act, the Canada Temperance Act, the Canadian Citizenship Act, the Canadian Film Development Act, the Cen-

tenial of Canadian Confederation Act, the Company of Young Canadians Act, the Disenfranchising Act, the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, the Federal Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, which involves the very delicate and complex discussions with the provinces and which has a five-year budget of I believe over \$300 million. Then we have the Laurier House Act. I shall not go into that. Next, we have the National Arts Centre Act, the National Film Act, the National Library Act, the National Museums Act, the Public Archives Act, the Public Printing and Stationery Act, the Public Service Employment Act, which involves all the services of Canada in the federal system, the Representation commissioner Act, the Department of State Act and the Translation Bureau Act under which we have a rather large and very active bureau in the Parliament of Canada. All these are under the Secretary of State.

Mr. Mahoney: He is a busy man.

• (3:50 p.m.)

Mr. Nowlan: Yes, he is a busy man. My point is that this minister has too many fingers in too many pies to do the job he is supposed to do, that is to help define the role for Canada at this time. When you add to these roles his duties under the Department of Communications involving the Telesat, which is supposed to be circling the sky, and all the problems there, you can then understand partly—if you have a benign spirit and an Irish heart, and I have an Irish heart and am prepared to give him the latitude of a benign spirit—why the poor minister becomes confounded with grants for Billy the Kid, which is nothing more than rude and pornographic, at the price of \$2,500. If there is any doubt about the minister being a busy man and not being able to look after all his responsibilities, just consider the grant of \$3,500 for Mrs. Clark of Toronto, who is the secretary of the Communist league in Canada, to study Marxism. The study of Marxism may be a very positive thing but I do not think one should give a grant to the secretary of the Communist league for the study Marxism, especially when her husband is on the Central Council of the Communist League of Canada.

I agree the minister is too busy. How can he entertain thoughts on something as fundamental as cablevision and educational television, when he has the Opportunities for Youth program to worry about? Surely, an application from needy youth on a pot farm in B.C. deserves the minister's time and attention. What minister of culture or federal minister from British Columbia has not heard of the underground paper *Georgia Strait*? If such solid thought is given to these matters of state, we can surely relax and await with bated breath the minister's recommendation on the problem of bilingual districts in Canada. Perhaps if we wait long enough the minister will make a pronouncement on a film policy for Canada. Perhaps he will make a pronouncement on a policy for the youth of Canada, or perhaps, if we wait long enough, he may answer the delegation which came to him regarding the problem of the publications industry in Canada.

[Mr. Nowlan.]