

employees, as to how many will lose their jobs. And second, Mr. Speaker, will he publish these studies?

Mr. Masse: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is fully aware of two things. The choice is his. Either he is setting a huge trap, big enough to completely engulf the Parliament of Canada, or else he is badly informed. Since the beginning of this month, I have been explaining in this House, and the Hon. Member has always been listening very closely to my answers. But perhaps I should give him further explanations. It is not my responsibility, as Minister of Communications, to get involved in the day-to-day operations of the CBC. The Hon. Member would be the first to blame me if I were to decide how the CBC will be organized, with a station in this town or in that city, how programming should be developed, or that the CBC should have so many hundreds or thousands of employees. The Hon. Member would be the first to blame me for interfering in areas where I have no business. I am therefore convinced that he did not ask the question out of ignorance. He knows I cannot answer that question. It was a trap, Mr. Speaker, a bear trap or whatever you want to call it. You know very well, Mr. Speaker, that this is absolutely not within my responsibility! The responsibility lies with the management of CBC. They have to develop the budget and send it to the Minister of Communications, who will discuss it and introduce it into the budgeting process within the parliamentary system.

But I would never attempt, and certainly never with your approval, Mr. Speaker, or that of my hon. colleague, to enter the CBC's innards and work my way up to its thinking process. The CBC is an institution which as we must recognize, has been historically very important both to the French-speaking and the English-speaking population of this country. And you may rest assured that the CBC, established as it was by the Progressive Conservative Party many decades ago, will not be destroyed by any disciple of that party, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The question period being over, we will proceed with the debate. The Hon. Member for Ottawa-Centre (Mr. Cassidy).

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa-Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the speech we just heard by the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse), and I think there is considerable confusion on the part of the Government, which is talking about open information and favours a communications policy. It is quite clear, however, at least from the perspective of the Minister of Communications, that although speaking is communicating, what we are talking about is propaganda.

The Government wants to impose a propaganda policy that will promote the Government and the Progressive Conservative Party at the expense of the Members of this House, the press here in the gallery and all Canadians, every single Canadian citizen. This is 1984—of course the title of George Orwell's novel comes to mind—and we have had a clear demonstration

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that the Conservatives prefer a policy that leads to the management of information, to an open information policy.

The Liberals have just criticized the Government for its cynical attitude, but I would say their Government had a similar policy from 1980 until this year. There is very little difference. For instance, it was the former Liberal Government that refused to give the Auditor General the information he needed to examine the purchase of Petrofina shares by Petro-Canada. Today, after criticizing the Liberal Government's policy, the Conservatives are pursuing the very same policy now they are in power. Both parties take the same view that information must be controlled to benefit the Government in power and should not be used to benefit the public and government in general.

[English]

I would like to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that in August, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), as he now is, then the Leader of the Conservative Party, said in Kingston: "The present Government believes that you have only limited rights to know. Conservatives believe you have every right to know". That was a quote, Mr. Speaker, but there were some words left out. It now appears that Conservatives believe you have every right to know what the Conservatives think you ought to know, and nothing more. That is the chilling effect of the new guidelines which were put down last week by the Prime Minister, the interpretation in the communication to deputy ministers and, more recently, as I know from listening to this debate, by the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse).

I found the interpretation and propaganda which came from the Minister of Communications deeply disturbing. It reminded me a bit of the New World Information Order which has been discussed in UNESCO and strongly criticized by the Government and the people of Canada, the journalists of the free world, the United States and most of the other industrial democracies. That is a policy of news management which has been discussed by some Third World countries, which we have been right to reject in UNESCO, and which I would hate to see imposed in this country.

[Translation]

If I may continue, Mr. Speaker, as Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, the Prime Minister promised a fundamental change in the Government of Canada if the Conservatives took over from the Liberal Party.

This is why they were elected on September 4. What we see now certainly is a fundamental change, but it is designed to restrict even further the freedom of information of Members of Parliament, members of the press and the Canadian people.

[English]

As in so many areas, it seems to me that the Government has reversed its stand and has rapidly and precipitously abandoned its promises of making fundamental changes, the promises on which they were in fact elevated to power. These implications are severe for the press and for us in this Chamber. They are particularly severe for the 250,000 men and