

I can add to these another that is a ritual when answers are given to questions or replies made to notices of motions for production of papers. One that we hear over and over again is that this is an intergovernmental matter and it would not be in the public interest to disclose the information. I think I can put words in the mouth of the hon. member who introduced this bill when I say that we who partake of this debate feel that it is very much in the public interest that there be a good deal more publicity, not less. I suggest it is only on the basis of careful study and reasoned discussion that we can understand the meaning of the choices that we have to make.

The complexity of modern policy making is a principal reason for the universal decline of legislatures as the source of policy alternatives. The example I always give when this question is discussed in academic circles is the famous one of the overhaul base for Viscount aircraft at Winnipeg. The government hired the Thompson firm of engineering consultants to recommend to the government whether the overhaul base should be in Winnipeg or in Montreal. Although this did not matter very much to members from constituencies other than in Winnipeg or Montreal we were supposed to stamp "approved" on the government's decision without, in effect, ever having access to the data which led the government to make that decision. By no stretch of the imagination could it be said that the location of the overhaul base at either Winnipeg or Montreal was a matter going to the security of the nation.

The complexity of modern policy making is a principal reason for the universal decline of legislatures, as well as this Parliament, as the source of policy alternatives. Most of the steps taken have enhanced the policy formulation and evaluation capacity of the executive branch. The celebrated knowledge explosion and the rise of the information processing industry have come to the executive branch in full force, but hardly at all to the legislative branch. Yet the problems of modern government have now become so technical and complex that the legislature has found it increasingly necessary to defer to the executive for answers and recommendations. Information has become an even greater source of power in our political system than it was previously.

The proliferation of information can also produce a situation of chronic information overload. This has been discussed in a book by Harold Wilensky called "Organizational Intelligence: Knowledge and Policy in Government and Industry". I do not want to take up very much time discussing this, though I think we will have to come, either in a committee of Parliament or in some other way, to an agreement on how we confront the problem of administrative secrecy, giving Members of Parliament a great deal more access to various reports and studies.

I think the greatest danger inherent in some recent developments is, if I can put it this way, the triumph of technique over human values. I think this is a very serious subject. This would result in what the great English constitutional expert Harold Laski once described as the "trained incompetence of the specialist", that narrowness of vision that often comes with immersion in a program or policy field. Surely, it is our duty as Members of Parliament to see that the trained incompetence of the specialist

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does not occur as a result of the input—to use a cliché—that we give. Someone put it a little differently when he said that it was our role to prevent extraordinary people from doing extraordinary things to us. That might strike hon. members as a valid reason for our seeking election.

Breadth of view must be combined with technical skill in effective policy making. Generally, the training of information technologists does not overcome their limited and political sensitivities. I hope that we, as Members of Parliament, can fill a very important gap in this chain. If we have a limited social and political sensitivity we should be moved away from this place when election time comes along.

Wilensky made the point well when he said:

The danger of technicism is in direct proportion to the shortage of educated men. Too often the new technologists are methodological and exact in their specialized fields, but impressionable, naïve, and opinionated on broader issues of policy.

I do not quote this author as being in any sense critical of the public service. I see the public service and the elected member acting in some sort of concert, or orchestration if you like, with the technologist, and those who have experience as representatives of the people can add a different and important dimension to the whole area of policy making.

Technologists lack the critical common sense and trained judgment that mark an educated man. Hopefully, with some luck, we parliamentarians can fulfil an important role here. Executives who surround themselves with specialists must always be conscious of the limitations of the contributions of such individuals. It is now possible to arrive more efficiently at wrong decisions based on poor judgment and buttressed by awesome statistics than ever before. Ignorance cannot be the basis of sound policy making, but we must be sure that our definition of knowledge is not dangerously narrow.

Perhaps hon. members will feel that they have heard enough from me, but I cannot resist a final quotation which I think sums up my feeling on this issue. Again this is a quote from Harold Wilensky:

• (1730)

To read the history of modern intelligence failures is to get the nagging feeling that men at the top are often out of touch, that good intelligence is difficult to come by and enormously difficult to listen to; that big decisions are very delicate but not necessarily deliberative; that sustained good judgment is rare. Bemoaning the decline of meaningful action, T. S. Eliot once spoke of a world that ends "not with a bang but a whimper." What we have to fear is that the bang will come, preceded by the contemporary equivalent of the whimper—a faint rustle of paper as some self-convinced chief of state—

With an obvious exception.

—reviewing a secret memo full of comfortable rationalizations just repeated at the final conference, fails to muster the necessary intelligence and wit and miscalculates the power and the intent of his adversaries.

I am not applying any person to this quotation. I feel the issue raised by my hon. friend is such that if this bill should be talked out, it will come back again. But face the issue we must as a Parliament. I hope the facing of it can be done in as objective a manner as the amendment proposed by the hon. member. Even given some of the