

Information Canada.

—is proposed mainly for three reasons. First, Information Canada will promote co-operation among federal information offices now operating in mutual isolation. The object will be to increase effectiveness as well as to save money by reducing duplication in the use of staff and equipment and by better joint use of the government's information resources.

The Prime Minister further stated, as reported on the same page, that the staff of Information Canada would total no more than 150 people. This figure was exceeded by the time Information Canada got into operation and it has been growing at a great rate ever since. The establishment of Information Canada has not had the effect of reducing the number of people employed in an information capacity in government departments. In fact, now that Information Canada is in full operation it is more important than ever that government departments be allowed to continue informing the public about what they are doing.

Anyone who has had the misfortune to be dependent upon Information Canada for information knows full well that this agency has become just another top-heavy, cumbersome bureaucracy whose main purpose today, as in the past, is to provide jobs for loyal supporters of the present Liberal government. So far as saving money on information services is concerned, this is a well documented misrepresentation of the true facts. For example, in 1970, when the agency was established, the budget for the nine departmental information agencies was \$19.32 million. This fiscal year it is estimated at \$36.67 million, plus more than \$10 million being asked for to keep Information Canada in operation.

This is economy, Mr. Speaker, but only in the lexicon of the present government. By 1971-72, information costs for these nine departments had increased to \$26 million. By 1972-73, similar costs for these nine departments had increased to over \$30 million. The document I have replaces an earlier one dated March 7, 1973, where the estimate is over \$36. This increase over a four-year period since Information Canada was announced is approximately double the information costs of selected government departments. In addition, forecast expenditures for this agency in the main estimates are now over \$10 million.

● (2010)

Although it is clearly evident from these statistics that Information Canada has not lived up to the Prime Minister's expectations of saving money, it may still be asked what in fact this agency has done except to fritter away taxpayers' money. Can Information Canada justify not only the increase in its own budget—which is over 30 per cent in four years—but also explain why other information costs have doubled since it was first created? Although it can be demonstrated conclusively that in the first three years of its existence InfoCan was not able to live up to its mandate of saving money, it can also be demonstrated that so far the agency has wasted its mandate in other ways.

On January 28, 1972, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) was designated as the minister in charge of Information Canada. Furthermore, Jean-Louis Gagnon, the first director, and Robert Phillips, the deputy director, had both been moved to less sensitive fields, and since last summer Guy d'Avignon, the new director, has been slowly

Estimates

trying to smooth things out. Of these individuals, deputy director Phillips achieved additional fame from his leaked memorandum to his chief last year. In it he said that InfoCan has become "a mere grey presence", that it exists in a "state of largely suspended animation", and it is "urgent to consider some projects to justify our budget and existence, other than carrying on operations which existed before we did".

In the current issue of *Maclean's* magazine there is a story about the former auditor general, Maxwell Henderson. This story is a revelation. I am thankful that the Canadian people can get his comments on the newsstands, because if they had to wait for Information Canada's version of the auditor general's remarks they would have to wait a very long time and they would get a biased and distorted version. The auditor general said in the *Maclean's* story:

Regrettably, in my most recent report, I have to illustrate how the Treasury Board was using its energies and resources to circumvent parliamentary control instead of improving efficiency and setting an example for other departments.

Then he stated that he had pinpointed 150 cases that required effective management action, 65 per cent of which could and should have been cleared up by the Treasury Board. He said:

It is not surprising, in these circumstances, that Treasury Board officials are resentful of the auditor general.

If the government were at all interested in ensuring that the Canadian taxpayer was getting a fair shake for his tax dollar, they would welcome the auditor general's recommendations. Instead, as we in this House are well aware, the government has been carrying on a running battle with the auditor general for years and in fact at one point attempted to take away his authority to make public his findings.

The auditor general has urged the government on many occasions to disband Information Canada as a wasteful and ineffective agency, and it is unfortunate that we are not able tonight to start the process of eliminating this expensive boondoggle by denying this government another cent toward financing Information Canada. I will echo my leader's pledge, though, that when we form the government after the next election Information Canada will become just another bad memory, a reminder of how this government has used the taxpayers' money to pad the federal payroll and create comfortable jobs for any and every person who served the Liberal cause.

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak briefly on the motion which is currently before us. First I would like to refer to paragraph (e), vote 50, which deals with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. I say at the outset that the motion in paragraph (e) which deals with the CBC is a rather dangerous one. This motion which stands in the name of the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) would cut \$59,999 from the salary of the president of the CBC. No matter how any member of the House feels about the president of the CBC, it is impossible to vote at this stage against this individual item. When the vote is taken, it will be taken not on the president's salary but on the whole of vote 50, which is the entire budget of \$232,797,000 of the Department of the Secretary of State for the CBC. I feel this is another