

Supply

promoting unity. Instead, there is a prevailing climate today which indicates a fragmented country. That office would be better advised to change its name back to Information Canada or "Government Propaganda Canada"—"PropCan" would be an excellent name.

While I am on the subject of national unity, I heard the hon. member for Willowdale say today that the Tories were nowhere when the unity debate was happening in Quebec.

Mr. Lapierre: That is true.

Mr. McDermid: The hon. member says that it is true. If the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) were here tonight, he would probably support our claims of participation in that debate. I can remember our leader sitting on platforms with the Minister of Justice while visiting Quebec and I know very well that there were some very prominent Conservative members on the committee for voting No. As well, I know of the arrangements made between the government and this side of the House with the whip and House Leader in order to enable Quebec members to campaign in Quebec. So do not tell us in the House that the Conservatives did not have an interest in the Quebec referendum debate. That was a misleading statement made by the hon. member for Willowdale.

Mr. Lapierre: Tell us about Roch La Salle.

Mr. McDermid: I saw the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Lapierre) fighting with the WCC in Saskatchewan, and he did a great job of it.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: They got fewer votes than the WCC.

Mr. McDermid: There is no question that there is a lack of control over the government's advertising. The Minister of Supply and Services enunciated very well the program for buying advertising time. However, I do not think ministers know the sort of advertising which occurs in their departments and how it is arranged. We saw an example of ministers being unaware of what happens in their departments when the Minister for Public Works responsible for housing (Mr. Cosgrove) blundered when organizing for his department advertisements which were made by an advertising agency in Montreal. When they were released before or very close to the time the budget was announced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), obviously he did not know what was happening in his own department. Therefore, hearing members opposite speak today about their ability to have better control over advertising I believe is somewhat misleading.

I know that we cannot display brochures, but we can quote from them. I would like to quote from a brochure from the Canadian Unity Information Office, but there is no writing on it, Mr. Speaker. It is a beautiful multicoloured pamphlet, however. It is something which is really beneficial for those people who are trying to renew mortgages at 19 per cent. They are shown this pamphlet, which is meant to show what a wonderful country we have, these people are having a hard time saving their homes.

I do not believe that any amount of advertising will help the government. Canadians cannot be expected to believe something just because it is being rammed down their throats through every available medium.

I would like to quote from an editorial in the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* of April 23. It is headed, "Advertising Bankruptcy". It says:

Apparently assuming that if you repeat something often enough folks may actually believe it, the Trudeau government has launched a \$5 million ad campaign proclaiming that it is "Helping Canada Work."

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Officials say that besides promoting job training and skills development, the campaign is intended to subtly suggest that whatever its problems, the Canadian economy as a whole is working.

Later the article goes on to say:

Somehow, Canada's 1.2 million unemployed, its struggling businessmen and farmers and its consumers trying to make ends meet, have trouble seeing a humming economy. What they see, instead, is a tired old government devoid of ideas, pouring out tax dollars as a screen for inaction and incompetence.

It's a kind of political bankruptcy not even the Liberal ad agencies can cover up.

That is true. Today we heard glowing reports from the hon. member for Welland (Mr. Parent) who said that the 13 vans that are travelling around the country to show how wonderful the government is, are meeting with a great reaction and that people think the idea is wonderful.

I should like to read into the record some excerpts from an editorial in *The Daily Times* of Brampton of Thursday, February 25, 1982, as follows:

We suppose that a government spending \$76 billion a year would think that the portion of a \$70 million annual advertising budget being spent to send a fleet of public relations trailers around the country is pretty small potatoes. It's a pleasure then to hear some of the residents of Brampton and some of our politicians think differently.

M. P. John McDermid again correctly sees the exposition set up this week at the Bramalea City Centre—

That is free advertising.

—as an insult to residents of this city forced to struggle along in difficult economic times.

More satisfying, though, was word reaching our ears that many people at the shopping centre were expressing their displeasure that the travelling road show is still travelling and didn't like the idea of being in our city.

It's clearly a bloody waste of time and money and an indication that the federal government just isn't trying all that hard to cut back on expenses.

That sums things up pretty well, Mr. Speaker. I do not think there is any doubt that when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) tells people to tighten their belts and cut back, such information as this makes it difficult for us to explain things to constituents who are having a difficult time meeting mortgage payments or putting gas in their car or finding the few dollars necessary for daycare so that their wife can go out to work. It is difficult to explain to these people why the government is wasting money on advertising and on sending vans around the country to tell how wonderful things are. It is very difficult to explain that type of nonsense to people. It is very difficult to explain to people how the Prime Minister can raise the salaries of his staff by 19 to 23 per cent or how his milk and bread and