

on regulating and co-ordinating their activities, with a view to preventing waste of public money and government talent because of duplication of effort and lack of appreciation of the various means of communicating with the public. The departmental knowledge of specialists in the larger government departments is something which Information Canada cannot, and should not attempt to, emulate. Government policies which affect these departments should be explained by the departments themselves, not Information Canada. As the government's expert in the field of communicating information however, Information Canada should have a vital role in showing the departments of government how they may best pass the necessary information to the appropriate audience. It should be made clear to all departments that this is government policy and is not something which is to be left to the discretion of individual departments. At issue here is the question of good management of human and physical resources, rather than the acquisition of technical expertise. Departments are understandably reluctant to bow to the authority of outsiders and Information Canada is very often considered as such by departmental information personnel. If its role is properly defined, however, there would be no need for departmental suspicions about Information Canada. If it is clearly seen to be a co-ordinating and assisting body, rather than a supplanting or absorbing one, the overall information program of the federal government could be carried out with greater efficiency and economy.

To this end, Information Canada must be backed by the authority of a Minister of the Crown who is responsible for all federal government information services. We recommend that this Minister be the Secretary of State whose portfolio responsibilities already include several agencies in the broad areas of culture, education and information.

At the same time the problem of Information Canada's relations with the government of the day should not be minimized. To a certain extent, its independence from political interference is maintained by the hiring of its personnel through the Public Service Commission, and through the nature of its functions. It does not exist to criticize the government's policies, but to put out information about them and to provide citizens with information about federal matters affecting their lives. In this respect it is very different from, for example the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which is a Crown Corporation with an information function, but with complete autonomy to criticize the government when it sees fit. But even with a redefined authority as a regulating and co-ordinating body, Information Canada will always run the risk, as it has done in the past, of being regarded as a government propaganda machine. There is little likelihood of this attitude changing, save with time and an objective judgement on its day-to-day operations.