
CHAPTER I

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Conclusions and Recommendations

Information Canada's role and terms of reference should be defined by an Act of Parliament which spells out Information Canada's authority and responsibilities.

Two of the more common clichés of modern life are that "information is increasing faster than man's ability to assimilate it" and that "government is becoming increasingly remote from the governed". In support of these clichés, others can be cited to the effect that "the pace of life is rapidly accelerating; that decision-making requires more rapid and complex calculation which can only be carried out by experts; that the onrushing development of technology makes our views of human society obsolete before they are even formulated". Implicit in all these statements is an unstable division of society into a cabalistic in-group of the informed and the expert—confirming the observation that knowledge is power—and the rest of society which, by definition, is dependent on experts for a share of their knowledge, and of their power.

It is vital, therefore, that the flow of information between Canadians and their government be maintained if participatory democracy is to become anything more than a trendy phrase. The federal government must carry out its obligation to the citizens of Canada to keep them fully informed of its plans and programs. We see this flow as mainly a one-way affair where Information Canada is concerned. Although Information Canada should be