

Management Information Systems

Mr. Cullen: I have run into shallow sceptics before, and the attitude of the NDP on this particular occasion does not surprise me. This is the reason we are having difficulty breaking into the twentieth century in our rules, and in trying to get information from the cabinet. New members of this House are surprised to note that there have been some 2,000 questions appear on the order paper and in excess of 300 notices of motions for the production of papers, without any kind of priority attached to them. They wonder what asset it is to the House when we have to go through all this kind of rigmarole. Notice of motion No. 293 might be ten times as important as the one which is placed at the head of the list on the order paper. If hon. members opposite could agree on some kind of priority, I think they would be surprised at the reception they would get, certainly from Liberal backbenchers.

But hon. members opposite seem content to play the rules of the game as they have been played here for the past 100 years. They present their motions, and a member of the government party gets up and talks them out. If hon. members opposite want to play according to the old fashioned rules, we have men on this side who can get up and speak at length on the subject involved, and much more ably than I. I would like to see something more productive come out of private members hour. If we continue to block this avenue of approach to the securing of information, we will constantly run into a brick wall. By opposing change I can certainly see hon. members of the NDP remaining in opposition for some considerable time.

Mr. Skoberg: You had better hold your breath.

Mr. Cullen: I was holding my breath when private members hour started, hoping that the hon. member would have something more to contribute to the debate than shouts across the aisle. I was endeavouring to make a sincere point, notwithstanding the shallow cynicism of the hon. member.

There are some reports mentioned in these notices of motions that I would like to see made public. I assume they were obtained from people who knew what they were talking about, but whether this particular motion falls in that category or not I certainly do not know, and I certainly have not been made any the wiser listening to the hon. member shout at me across the chamber.

All of us have our own particular areas of interest, whether they be senior citizens, veterans,—you name it—and we would all like to see particular papers produced. There might be support for the production of such papers from all sides of the House. I can assure the hon. member that if there were a bone fide, legitimate attempt to obtain some information, without making it the subject of a notice of motion or hoping through some little gimmick to have it produced, we would all like to know the reasons for not producing it.

I am not close to the ministry, but I am a member of the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration and that is why I have an interest in the particular notice of motion under discussion. I wonder

what this report said, and what it could do to improve the efficiency of the Department of Manpower and Immigration. But I have to follow other avenues in order to get this kind of information. I have to be parochial in my approach. I have to go to my local manpower centre and ask the man in charge what he thinks could be done to improve the efficiency of his office, and whether there are some pressures I can bring to bear in order to be helpful. I assume the kind of information the hon. member is soliciting might be helpful, but I have no way of knowing and the hon. member has not given any reason for wishing it produced.

I would prefer to vote for a motion that I knew something about, one which the sponsor is interested enough to explain. I repeat that in many instances I have to adopt a parochial approach. When I hear from people in my riding who may have received short shrift from an office in another area, I go to that area and try to find out about the situation. This device of notices of motions for the production of papers is being abused. The multiplicity of such motions makes it impossible for them all to be debated. They tell me that at their level every good manager must have a plan and he must determine his objectives and decide, on the basis of the best and latest information available to him, the most effective and efficient means of achieving it within the limit of the resources available to him. Through contact with his Member of Parliament he can find out that he may have unlimited resources. He should make his point to the member, who can then take it up with the department. If it falls on deaf ears there, it should be raised in this chamber in the form of an oral question, a motion or a written question. This recourse is available to every manager and employee of Manpower centres throughout Canada.

● (5:30 p.m.)

In doing a little study on this subject, because I met recently with a manager, I found that the department comprises a staff of almost 9,200 people located in all parts of Canada and other corners of the world through the immigration program. Because of this there must be some kind of organization and plan, and certainly some kind of pre-programming. I would assume that the report called for, "the consultant report by Operations Research Industries, a study and recommendations on the design of a management-information system supporting the departmental planning, programming and budgeting system, undertaken for the Department of Manpower and Immigration," is the area toward which this particular plan may have been directed. Perhaps the hon. member who moved the motion felt the same way. We heard his argument but I for one do not propose to vote in favour of this motion.

I know from the short experience I have had around here, Mr. Speaker, that when a department wishes to start an operation or open a program it must give forecasts to Treasury Board, and this is as it should be. I understand this is achieved through what is called program forecasting, one aspect of planning, programming and budgeting systems. If Treasury Board requires this

[Mr. Cullen.]