

flow through the same satellites, cables and fibres, can be stored in the same tapes, videodiscs and chips, and can be accessed on the same terminals and screens. Plays become movies which become books or musicals and records, sometimes improving in the process, and generating new wealth with each transformation. In any of its transformation, it may pass through a cable, or a satellite, and even be etched onto a videodisc and stapled into a magazine, or burned into a memory chip and played through a home computer.

This growing grasp of the unity of information was reflected in the rush to conglomerate in the Sixties, when industries in the media formed new alliances. And it can be seen in government in the rationalization or restructuring of the government's role. In the United States, the office of telecommunications policy, and its successors, were created to come to grips with the new phenomenon. In Canada, the expertise which had been nurtured in the Departments of Defence and Transport found an expanding home in the Department of Communications, which was created in 1969 to develop policy for the carriage of information, to which computing was soon added. And now, most recently, the responsibility for arts and culture has been shifted to this department. To explain why our government has decided to combine culture with communications in the same department, let me read from my minister's recent statement to the arts community.

"This change should ensure that communications policy is conducted with the highest concern for the cultural content and the cultural implications of communication technology. It should also help make the cultural milieu more sensitive and more aware of the importance and the rapidity of technological progress in the field of communications."

Information means jobs

A second reality of the information age is that information is jobs. If 50 per cent of the work force is now, or will soon be working with information, then the economic development, and indeed the viability, of the world's nations depends on a flourishing information sector. If the flows of information between nations are too unidirectional, and in effect stifle expression, then the damage to the world's economy could be serious. It is not without significance that the major oil companies are moving rapidly into information, and that some forecasters predict their revenues from information may surpass those from energy.

National concerns over transborder data flows focused initially on the question of privacy, are moving to issues of sovereignty, and will probably come down to a matter of jobs, if the Canadian experience proves typical. I can only presume that the emphasis in Canadian policies will be positive. I note that Canadian service bureaus are competing effectively in the United States, and that Canadian businessmen, scholars and researchers want access to the best information available, and will want to shop for it in the global marketplace. However, we would be naive not to take into account in forming our policies, the fact that the continued viability of Canadian society and our economy will depend upon maintaining a dynamic Canadian capacity in the processing and managing of data.

Integrity must be maintained

This concern leads to a third reality of the new information age: information is
