

Oral Questions

Miss Carney: We sure do.

Mr. Trudeau: It was a commercial type Crown corporation which the Government does not directly manage. It names directors, it has a management group, and from time to time the Department, in this case the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, through representatives of the bureaucracy on the board, attempt to follow the matter. It has been proven that this is not the best way of managing because the civil servants in Departments are not equipped to second guess, nor should they, perhaps, second guess the management and say, "You should have decided this rather than that." All they can do is send out danger signals. It was because the danger signals became very worrisome that we decided to change the form of management.

We now have management through the CDIC which is managing a commercial company which in a way has more responsibility to parliament. The CDIC is that, Madam Speaker. It is appearing before Parliamentary committees now and it will do so in the future. It has undertaken to give quarterly reports on the management so that Parliament and the Government can be more up to date on how the management is performing. That is why we made the change. Until then, Madam Speaker, we thought—

Madam Speaker: The Hon. Member for Trinity.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PATENTS OFFICE

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the recent Economic Council of Canada studies which suggest that information about new technological advances is slow to reach potential users in Canada, will the Minister consider enlarging the role of the Patents Office to allow it to play a more active role in the diffusion of knowledge about technological advances as is done in the countries of some of our competitors?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, this is a very interesting question. I should be happy to discuss this point with my departmental officials, and I wish to thank the Hon. Member for making this very interesting suggestion.

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[English]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

PENALTY PROPOSED FOR MEDIA DISCLOSURE OFFENCES

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General and it concerns the

proposed legislation to create the new Security Service. If a member of this new Security Service, or even an informer for the Service, commits a serious criminal offence, is convicted of the offence and possibly fired, the Minister knows that under Clause 12 of the legislation any member of the press, or anyone else who reports that fact or details of the offence, can be sent to prison for five years. How can the Minister possibly justify this totalitarian media gag which, in effect, is a denial of the right of freedom of the press under the Charter of Rights, and makes a mockery of the safeguards under the law?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, Clause 12 is intended to protect Service members who are under deep cover or in cases where revelation of their identity would be injurious to the operations of the Security Service. It is not intended as a coverup for wrongdoing. I look forward to dealing with that Clause and others in a constructive way in committee when the Bill is referred.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, the Minister knows very well that is in fact a coverup of any details whatsoever of any possible wrongdoing.

ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, under Clause 22 of the new Bill the new Security Service is given carte blanche access to all confidential records, including tax records, medical records, journalists' notes, lawyers' files, MPs' records, social insurance numbers and, incredibly, even census records. How can the Minister possibly justify this massive invasion of the privacy of Canadians? Specifically, what possible reason can there be for the Minister's ignoring the recommendations of the McDonald Commission and allowing the new secret police carte blanche access to census records which are obtained from all Canadians on the basis of total and absolute confidentiality?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, what the Hon. Member has forgotten to mention, as he misrepresents the Bill across the country, is that there is a very strong safeguard provided in the fact that none of these new intrusive powers can be exercised without a member of the agency approaching a judge and satisfying the judge that the target is a threat to the security of Canada under the tight definition provided in the legislation, and that the operation is justified. I think if the Hon. Member would inform people about the balancing safeguards, as well as telling them about the powers, and about the requirement that this country has, as do all countries, for a national security program, he would be serving the interests of Canada better.