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INFORMATION CANADA: 1970-1976

by

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A thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Institute of Canadian Studies

Carleton University
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Abstract

This paper attempts to establish whether Information Canada was a viable experiment. It examines why the government created it, why it failed, whether the rationale for its termination was legitimate, and what was significant about the agency's demise. Information Canada's career is chronicled to show that the agency was an important facet of the democratic process in Canada, and that it was plagued with problems beyond its control. The thesis concludes that the agency's abolition limited the access of citizens to government information. Finally, the paper argues that no clear reasons were given for the agency's termination, and that a central information agency is still needed.

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Introduction

Although it was a sound idea, and ahead of its time, Information Canada failed not because it couldn't fulfill its mandate: the litany of criticism from opposition M.P.'s and the press, and the lack of conviction from the government and the bureaucracy sealed its fate.

In 1964, Pierre Elliott Trudeau had said that progress in a democracy required the availability of accurate and complete information so people might assess government policies, with full knowledge of the facts. Otherwise, obscurantist autocracy would prevail.¹

Information Canada was to provide Canadians and various branches of the government with information. It would coordinate the government's information activities, reduce duplication of services, and generally clean up a landscape strewn with ineptitude.

Although it was thrust into controversy from its inception, the initial reaction to Information Canada was sanguine: "When InfoCan was first introduced to the Canadian Parliament, it was heralded as a great step forward in the area of better provision of government information."²

1. Trudeau, Pierre Elliott. Cité Libre, Montreal, 1964.

2. Miller, Eric, "Information Canada: April 1, 1970-- March 31, 1976: A Report on Federal Government Communication," an unpublished paper prepared for the Treasury Board, November 1976, p.7.

Accolades, however, were short lived; the agency soon fell out of favour with nearly everyone.

The termination of Information Canada elicits many questions: since its purpose was to coordinate government information services, to provide citizens with better information, and to increase their participation in the democratic process, why did it fail? Were the reasons given for its abolition legitimate? Who were the major losers in the experiment?

Part of the agency's problem was its position in the bureaucratic maze: it was designed to function within the government's technical support organization, the Department of Supply and Services--as such, it had no authority to enforce any of its decisions.

"Its minister was without portfolio. Descriptions of the new agency were enveloped in caveats; they stressed its small size and modest budget. Its resources were to be less than half that (sic) envisioned by the Task Force."³ Moreover, the agency's acquisitions were to consist of the established operational functions of various departments.

The mandate given to Information Canada by the government endorsed most of the major Task Force on Government

3. Ibid.

Information recommendations.⁴ The report advocated federal information legislation, and also recommended,

sweeping policy developments, federal-provincial information exchanges and consultation, extensive programs of communication research and social analysis, the regionalization of information access and coordination, reaching the unreached, federal advertising reforms, and the coordination of information abroad.⁵

These were the initiatives to be implemented by Information Canada; instead, the agency was established as a technical resource, without any authority, burdened with responsibilities and activities that could have been performed more effectively by central agencies.

Documents consulted include the report of the Glassco Royal Commission on Government Organization,⁶ various other government reports, and newspaper articles.

In the early 1960's, the Glassco Royal Commission was chartered to examine the efficiency of government administration, and dedicated an entire chapter of its report to government information. Information services, it said, were in serious trouble: duplication, waste and confusion were rampant. The Commission concluded that information about

4. Canada, Task Force on Government Information, To Know and be Known: The Report of the Task Force on Government Information, Vol. I, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1969, p. 13; hereafter cited as the Task Force.

5. Ibid.

6. Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, Report of the Royal Commission on Government Organization, Vol. 3, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1962; hereafter cited as the Glassco Report.

the Canadian government's operations was a right and a necessity for its citizens. It also concluded that government information services were plagued with poorly defined activities that provided little pertinent information, and lacked efficiency and coordination.

Although the Glassco Commission submitted its report in 1962, its recommendations pertaining to information were not heeded until the late Sixties, when the federal government instigated the first full-scale investigation into this area--the 1969 Task Force on Government Information, chaired by D'Iberville Fortier.

The government had commissioned this study because it wanted to communicate more effectively with its citizens. The report stated that the outstanding flaw in government information was the lack of a general information policy. Moreover, the Task Force said that Canadians had a right to full, objective and timely information, and that government had an obligation to provide it.

Other works which provide excellent material about Information Canada include the Standing Senate Committee on Finance (1974) and the Wall Report. The Senate Committee, in examining the 1973-74 Estimates, carefully studied Information Canada's appropriations. The report of the committee essentially reiterated what the Task Force had said: that government had an obligation to inform citizens about its plans and programmes.

The same year, D.F. Wall, the Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet for security matters, had been asked by the Clerk of the Privy Council to inquire how the government might improve its information services. Wall outlined some of the agency's flaws but staunchly supported it in principle.

Information Canada's first epitaph was written in 1976 by its second Deputy Director General, Eric Miller. The study outlined the agency's career and the myriad problems which had plagued it. In his eulogy, Miller depicted the existing state of government information and said that students of the federal communication process who wanted an up-to-date medical on the government's information process, "have only to reread Volume I of the Task Force on Government Information."⁷

A thesis on Information Canada, written by Beverly Edwards in 1980, was helpful in tracing the agency's career. The paper provided useful insight into the various machinations which surrounded the agency. Edwards argued that the organization of Canadian government information services had traditionally gravitated between centralization and decentralization, and that Information Canada was an overly exuberant attempt to centralize government information. This, according to her, is why it failed.

7. Miller, op.cit., p. 2.

Much of the thesis to follow also contains material derived from Information Canada's Annual Reports--documents which were crucial to the chronicling of the agency's career and accomplishments.

Various newspaper and magazine articles, as well as the Information Canada files contained at the public archives, were consulted. Documents dealing with the history of government information were also obtained from the public archives.

This paper investigates the Information Canada experiment with a view to suggesting that the agency should have succeeded, that the reasons which led to its demise were essentially external and beyond its control. The agency's career was haunted by the suspicion that it would be propaganda arm of the Liberal party, rather than an information service. This suspicion and criticism by the press, bureaucracy and opposition abetted Information Canada's untimely demise.

Chapter one presents a concise history of Canadian government information services, before the appointment of the Task Force. Problems with government information during the 19th century are discussed, and the career of the Wartime Information Board--the only coordinated government information service in our history--is summarized.

The next chapter presents a summary of the Task Force on Government Information and describes the spirit which

prompted the government to establish Information Canada.

The third chapter discusses the creation and early operation of Information Canada. Initial reactions by the press, opposition, etc., are examined and their castigations are outlined. The chapter also examines Information Canada's various problems, as well as its growth within the bureaucracy. The Federal Identity Programme and the problems with the agency's first director general are discussed.

The fourth chapter covers Information Canada's career from 1972 onward. The appointments of the agency's new director and deputy director, as well as the organizational changes are discussed. Changes included the abolition of the Automated Information Monitoring System; improved customer service which resulted from the internal reorganization of the publishing branch; further breakthroughs of the Federal Identity Programme; and the opening of new enquiry centres throughout the regions. The chapter outlines the report of the Senate Committee and the Wall Report, and also focuses on Information Canada's abolition; the reasons and excuses are assessed, and the reactions highlighted.

The conclusion attempts to depict the agency's role within the Canadian democratic polity: it presents the argument that the loss of Information Canada unnecessarily reduced the access of citizens to government information.

CHAPTER I

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION
BEFORE THE TASK FORCE

The Task Force on Government Information--appointed August 30, 1968 by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau--was commissioned to ascertain how the Canadian government's information services might be improved; it was also asked to recommend methods which would increase the government's knowledge of the needs and concerns of Canadians.

When it reported in 1969, it concluded that "A strong, comprehensive and coordinated government information service has never been able to grow and thrive."¹ It also commented that the lack of guidelines regarding the organization, operation, function and interdepartmental cooperation of the government's information services, had created a piecemeal network of independent divisional agencies.

Historically, many governments of Canada have attempted to deal with information. However, only a partial record remains of the activities of the information services of government departments. "Little has been sorted out, even less has been written down. For a service committed to

1. Canada, Task Force on Government Information, To Know and be Known; The Report of the Task Force on Government Information, Vol. I, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1969, p. 3.

communicate, this dearth of historical communication is curious if not extraordinary."² According to the Task Force, government information as we know it today developed after World War II, but its origins precede confederation.

In 1851, the British North American colonies advertised themselves at the International Exhibition at London's Crystal Palace.

They assembled furs and feathers, minerals, a cutter, stuffed wild-life heads, a painting of caribou, an exhibit of timber showing both rough-hewn and finished surfaces, and other familiar North American wares...The illustrated London News reported that 69 [exhibits]... earned awards.³

The importance of government information continued to grow after confederation, but was mainly restricted to departments which dealt with economic expansion. The Department of Agriculture was the first to have a well organized information service: since so much of Canada's economic activity during the 19th century was a result of agriculture, the government had felt the necessity of distributing information about agricultural products.

Most of the federal government's information activity remained in the hands of the Department of Agriculture during the 19th century.

Agriculture organized trade fairs, supported the first government publications, and it recorded probably the

2. Task Force, p. 123.

3. Ibid.

earliest effort to publish public information in both English and French.⁴

One of the department's more important information activities--which pertained directly to the new country's economic development--focused on immigration, which remained its responsibility until 1890.

The relationship between economic expansion and government information became more evident when, abetted by growth in manufacturing, the Canadian government created the Department of Trade and Commerce in 1892. This department was to promote Canadian exports to help develop the manufacturing sector, and soon became a pillar of government information.

In 1901, Sir Wilfrid Laurier established the government's first coordinated information agency, the Canadian Exhibition Commission, which was attached to the Department of Trade and Commerce. The Commission united all of Canada's national and international exhibitions under one authority and was, according to the Task Force, the first example of a Canadian Prime Minister so personally concerned about government information that he stepped in to impose some coordination and efficiency.

Throughout the early 20th century, government information activities continued to increase. Great quantities of printed material were published by various departments. For

4. Task Force, p. 123.

example, in 1900, William Lyon Mackenzie King then Deputy Minister of the Department of Labour, founded "The Labour Gazette" to provide statistical and legal information about the field of labour.

The economic and political character of Canada were changed by World War I. "At its end, agriculture still held its firm place in the economy but manufacturing, spurred by wartime demands and United States investment, had grown dramatically."⁵ In 1918, the government created the Dominion Bureau of Statistics to gather, examine and publish information on the economic and social life of Canada and to periodically "conduct a census of the Canadian population, housing, merchandising and agriculture."⁶

Though government information continued to grow in the period between the two wars, the most important changes befell government information during World War II. The war effort had necessitated a considerable centralization of economic and government activity. As a result, federal authority was very strong, especially in areas of information. Censorship was enforced by the government for the duration of the conflict, and was supervised by the Censorship Coordination Committee. The Ministers of National Defense and Transport, the Secretary of State and the Postmaster General made up the Committee.

5. Task Force, p. 127.

6. Ibid. p. 129.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Public Information, on December 7, 1939, a report which outlined the need for efficient collection, coordination and dissemination to the public of information relating to Canada's war efforts. The report led to many changes in government information, culminating with the establishment of the Wartime Information Board (WIB), September 9, 1942. The Board, which consisted of a chairman, vice-chairman and eight members--all appointed by the Governor in Council--was directly responsible to the Prime Minister in his capacity as President of the Privy Council and Chairman of the Cabinet War Committee. The Board's mandate was to coordinate the existing public information services of the government, and to supervise the release from government sources of Canadian War News and information to any country outside Canada.

The Wartime Information Board grew out of the pressures of War and the need to transmit clear and concise messages both to the people at home and to Canadian missions abroad. It involved the departments' first organized and comprehensive attempt to coordinate their several information efforts for the sake of a cause that was greater than departmental ambition.⁷

The obtaining of public support for the war effort had necessitated an elaborate information machinery. As the Glassco Royal Commission noted in its report,

...the wartime experience left a lasting impression on political leaders and administrators, and during the

7. Task Force, p. 133.

next few years most departments which had not already established information services, did so.⁸

The departments of Transport, Labour and Health and Welfare were among those which established their information services during the war.

The Wartime Information Board was a revolutionary development in information coordination; all the government's public information services had been coordinated by it. Never in the history of Canada had an agency possessed a perspective on all the government's information services. However, peacetime brought an end to the federal government's interest in coordinated information services, except for the WIB's overseas operations, out of which the government created the Canadian Information Services (CIS). The CIS provided the means and facilities for distributing information concerning Canada to other countries, and coordinated the government's public information services in this area. In 1947, the CIS was amalgamated with the Department of External Affairs. The interdepartmental coordination which had been prevalent during the war waned in the wake of growing departmental autonomy in information matters.⁹ The WIB and CIS were not kept as information agencies after hostilities had ceased, most likely because

8. Glassco Report, p. 62.

9. Task Force, p. 134.

government officials felt they had outlived their purpose, and that they were too centralized for peacetime.

As had World War I before it, World War II brought many changes to the economic nature of Canada: the country's industry was far more complex and diversified than it had been before the war,¹⁰ and the years which followed witnessed an increased activity by the government in the field of information. In 1946, the Treasury Board officially classified information officers. Henceforth, they would be classified between Levels 1 and 4, with a salary range of \$2,400 to \$5,400.¹¹ Although significant changes continued throughout the Fifties and Sixties, interdepartmental liaison was still lacking as each department's information service matured independently.

The 1962 Glassco Royal Commission on Government Organization devoted an extensive portion of its report to government information. The Glassco Commission noted that the development of government information had been gradual and had occurred in response to specific needs which included: an increase in government operations with a corresponding public demand for information about the government's policies and programmes; greater government involvement in the country's economic life and the promotion

10. Task Force, p. 132.

11. Ibid. p. 135.

of information concerning Canadian resources; a developing sense of national sovereignty and the need to project Canadian concerns abroad; the demand for specialists precipitated by the development of mass communications; and the adaptation to government purposes of the public relations techniques used in industry.¹²

The Commission noted that government information played a significant role in the Canadian polity. More specifically, it delineated the categories into which government information fell: services to the public; the enlisting of public support; the public's right to be informed; and government information abroad.¹³

Providing the public with information and promoting efficiency, economy or market opportunities in a particular industry, were either the main reason justifying the existence of some departments and agencies, or at least an essential facet of their operations, according to the Commission.¹⁴ Cited as examples were the Dominion Bureau of Statistics' statutory obligations to publish, the National Research Council's publication of scientific findings, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation's statutory responsibility for the promotion of good construction and housing designs, etc.

12. Glassco Report pp. 61-62.

13. Ibid. p. 63.

14. Ibid.

Obtaining public support and cooperation by the government in certain areas was deemed a necessity by the Commission. For example, the Taxation Division of the Department of National Revenue, to avoid backlogs and penalties for late filings, had developed an information strategy to encourage early completion of income tax returns. Similarly, the Post Office's publicity campaigns encouraged the public to post letters and parcels in early December to avoid the Christmas rush.

One very important observation made by the Glassco Commission concerned the public's right to be informed:

Knowledge of government activities is a public right, and indeed a necessity; but the growing size and diversity of government make the satisfaction of this need more and more difficult. The machinery and processes of government are therefore taking increasingly into account the public demand to be informed.¹⁵

The recognition that the public had a right--at least theoretical one--to government information was an important breakthrough: although without statutory enforcement, this claim was a harbinger of the spirit which created the Task Force on Government Information, and ultimately of Information Canada. Moreover, the report said that the government had the obligation to inform the public about the services which were destined for them.

15. Glassco Report, p. 67.

The possibility that a government might misuse information to further its own ends was also addressed by the Commission, but, the notion was disclaimed: "Even if this were true--and there is no evidence that it has been--the attempt would founder on the independence of the news media, and the safeguards inherent in the political process itself."¹⁶ However, to prevent the possibility of the abuse of information, the report made some specific recommendations: government information had to be strictly factual and objective; the volume of information needed to be restrained and balanced; and, a fine line had to be drawn between genuine information and material released only to impress.¹⁷

The major flaws underlined by the report were the lack of coordination, direction and central planning of the government's public information services. To encourage such coordination the report recommended that "Somewhere in government there should be a lookout from which the broad sweep of the information landscape can be viewed with reasonable detachment and the perspective kept in focus."¹⁸ It was felt that coordination did not imply complete

16. Glassco Report, p. 69.

17. Ibid. p. 69.

18. Ibid. p. 112.

centralization of information, but that a concerting of efforts was desirable to eliminate duplication of services and waste. Though the Commission's recommendations seem to have been largely ignored by the government of the day, they were nonetheless instrumental in diagnosing the problems with government information and in prescribing a solution.

The history of Canadian government information is apparently linked to the economic and social development and diversification of the Canadian polity. During the 19th century, as we have seen, agriculture was the major economic activity in Canada: correspondingly, most of the government's information diffusion lay in areas directly related to it. As the Canadian political economy developed and diversified, government information services increased as well. For example, the growth of the manufacturing sector in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and World War II considerably changed the face of government information.

The evolution of government information points to a steadily increasing flow of information, and government attempts to deal with it. The Wartime Information Board was an important facet of the development of information services: although it was designed strictly for the coordination of information during the war and was perhaps too centralized for peacetime, it proved that coordination was possible. The Glassco Royal Commission assessed the government's relationship to information and recommended

that it take a more active role in order to provide better organization and coordination. Although the Glassco Commission had recommended the formation of a central lookout from which government information could be coordinated, it was not until 1970--with the creation of Information Canada--that such a coordinating agency was established. As we shall see in the next chapter, government information services were lacking in organization and coordination. The Task Force on Government Information was to examine the condition of government information services, and make specific recommendations designed to improve their efficiency.

CHAPTER II

THE TASK FORCE: NEED FOR ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Precipitated by a reform "zeitgeist," the Canadian government became the advocate, in the Sixties, of a more open, participative and democratic polity. Social order seemed to be threatened: the federal government felt it had to establish links which would enable it to communicate effectively with its citizens. Against a developing concern about the health and stability of democratic life in Canada, the government ordered the first full-scale investigation of its information services, the Task Force on Government Information.

The Task Force noted that among many large minorities in western countries, there existed extensive and profound disaffection with government.

More people have a higher standard of living than ever before; nevertheless, there is resentment about the gap between the old promises of democratic rhetoric and the frequently bitter realities of what the system has actually delivered to many people.¹

Moreover, the Task Force cited examples of extensive dissatisfaction: strikes by millions of workers in Europe; the outbreak of student violence everywhere; racial

1. Task Force p. 2.

disturbances in the United States; and terrorist activities in Québec.

Since the governments of the west might continue to grow out of touch with their constituents, the Task Force felt that a government more responsive and tuned in to the needs and problems of its populace, could avert imminent social strife.

The real gulf today is between those who participate and those who do not...if larger numbers of people fail to participate in the conduct of public affairs, it is because they are prevented from doing so by a lack of resources which would make participation more meaningful: money, social and economic status, a sense of efficacy and personal prestige, membership in active groups, and so on. Among these resources the most commonly wanting...is the information factor...²

The Task Force discovered that approximately one million Canadians were quite uninformed about Canadian political life, and knew nothing about the extent to which federal and provincial governments were involved in their lives. In addition, a far greater number of Canadians were only slightly more informed than their completely ignorant one million compatriots. "Someone should tell those people something,"³ the Task Force said. Taking care of the country in an effective manner no longer sufficed; the government that was truly responsible had to combat its own potential for lethargy and tyranny by setting itself up for

2. Task Force, p. 2.

3. Ibid, p. 3.

criticism. Student revolts were--according to the Task Force--only harbingers of what lay ahead; hordes of people could blindly revolt without proper background knowledge and information.

For almost a decade, this awareness of the potential tragedy dawned with increasing vigor on successive Canadian governments. In the early Sixties the Glassco Commission confirmed that government was wanting in effective communication. Subsequently, government departments prepared reports on their information division.⁴

The Task Force discovered that many Canadians were politically handicapped. In addition, it was observed that these people didn't know where to go to take advantage of federal programmes, since they had never heard of them.

The main contention of the Task Force was that a declared policy on the government's obligation to provide timely information to the public, and the public's right of access to official information should be implemented.

The combination of no coordination, no common legislative justification even for the existence of information services, and conservatism that verges on chronic timidity had had a number of stultifying effects on federal information programmes and on the competence and morale of federal information staff.⁵

Many factors had contributed to an atmosphere which had tolerated bungling, fostered professional lassitude, given security to incompetence, and allowed for a general state of

4. Task Force, p. 3

5. Ibid. p. 16.

disorder. Among these factors, the Task Force listed: the incapacity of successive governments to provide a policy on information services; lack of coordination of information services between departments in everything from accounting methods to morale, etc.

Chapter five of the report's first volume cited twelve major failings in government information. Although neither a comprehensive, nor a fully detailed account, the list provides an interesting perspective on the said mess.

The twelve major failings included the following: the misuse of English and French prose in government publications; the absence of any graphic design concept among information divisions; a lack of a definition of what constituted information for accounting purposes; duplication of services; the confused state of the government's list of publications; "...incoherent, ineffective, unplanned, uncoordinated and wasteful..." departmental advertising; and the conservatism of government services with respect to television, film, and other audio-visual techniques, which the report felt was "...enough to make one suspect that federal officials are still sending stuffed moose-heads to London."⁶

In sum, the list depicted a federal government communication system in a state of disarray. The information

6. Task Force p. 29.

landscape lay strewn with anything but efficiency. A truly democratic government would have to provide a catharsis: changes seemed at hand. The failings cited in Chapter 5 of the report provide only a glimpse of the overall scenario; more evidence is cited in the ensuing chapters.

Chapter 6 of the Task Force dealt with Canada's failure to create an efficient information service system abroad. The overall picture was, however, not entirely gloomy: the information efforts of certain departments had provided some signs of success. External Affairs' sponsorship of National Film Board movies was one example. Nevertheless, the report castigated the federal government's pervasive lack of coordination in its diffusion of information to other countries: "...as a whole, our information abroad has long been stumbling through a stunning sort of chaos."⁷

The department of External Affairs was designated the chief culprit, although the report stipulated that it would be brutal oversimplification to direct blame to only one department. The External Affairs rebuttal cited by the report, was that it had been denied the necessary funds to service information programmes.

...the respect with which most of the brass of External Affairs have regarded the information function in their own department is so low, even by government standards, that it appears to have infected the entire department

7. Task Force p. 33.

with anti-information sentiment. It has inspired most of the brighter boys in External to avoid the Information Division as though service there amounted to an official reprimand.⁸

The above quote revealed a pattern which the Task Force confirmed was applicable throughout government. The ineffectiveness of government information abroad grew directly out of the sense of purposelessness incurred by most information personnel.

...governments that have been prepared to spend millions of dollars a year on information have never given External Affairs the means to impose workable machinery for inter-departmental coordination of information efforts abroad and because External Affairs has never fully exploited the mandate it had. Furthermore, governments have never given External Affairs, or any other department for that matter, a clear-cut policy on government information and these departments have not bothered to establish one of their own.⁹

Indeed, it is regrettable that information efforts abroad had been carried out without a general policy, or even the likeness of a master plan.

Further along in its study, the Task Force noted an absence of conviction, at the top levels of government, that the public should be as fully informed as possible on the government's policies, problems and workings. It observed that tradition was guilty of imposing on the Canadian government a carapace of secrecy. "We have inherited from Britain the principles of Ministerial responsibility, the

8. Task Force, p. 33

9. Ibid. p. 34.

dominant executive, and both the neutrality and anonymity of the public service."¹⁰ Also inherited from Britain was the "thirty-year rule" which bound governments to preserve certain documents in secrecy for a generation. In addition, the report noted that the tradition of tight administrative secrecy had come to us not only from Britain but also from France. The Task Force emphasized that the value of this tradition had yielded to the pressures of society and to the democratic need to involve unprecedented numbers of the public in the decisions of government.

[The only] way left to disperse the whole fog of secrecy and excessive nervous-Nellyism that surrounds so much printed government information...[is] for a Cabinet to pronounce an appropriate and freshly open policy on government information and a declared entrenchment of the people's right to know.¹¹

The report suggested that the democratic system would inevitably succumb to the gradual deterioration of its vitality, to increased civil disobedience, or to the consolidation of governmental power in a degree of dictatorship, unless government could restrict the diffusion of apathy, alienation and disaffection among its citizenry.¹²

Although the report did not argue that reform of the government's information services would make the world safe

10. Task Force p. 40.

11. Ibid. p. 41.

12. Ibid. p. 42.

for democracy, it contended that democratic vitality could be preserved by a continuous flow of information from the government to the people, and from the people back to government.

The outstanding flaw which it perceived in the federal government's information services was the absence of a general policy. In addition, the government had no agency to help it develop or implement information policy. There were no guidelines which would permit such central authorities as the Privy Council Office, Treasury Board or the Public Service Commission to give general focus to the sundry information efforts of the government.

What governs federal information activities are the separate preoccupations of separate departments and separate agencies. This work is often fragmented. It is generally uncoordinated. It lacks clarity of purpose. Sometimes, in terms of the broader issues and goals of government, it is even contradictory.¹³

Blame for the disarray of the information services was not placed at the feet of any individual department or source: the problem emanated from the "system." The report suggested that the only people in a position to create a policy for government information were the Prime Ministers and Cabinets.

If vacuums can breed, the government's policy vacuum on public information has bred some massive failings. It has meant that the Federal Government has simply had no ready means to address itself to all crucial questions

13. Task Force p. 47.

of information policy that transcend the programme interests of the departments and agencies.¹⁴

The main "questions," as referred to in the report, were: participation of the people in the processes of government; public access to government information; fostering a sense of national identity; setting new standards of competence in the use of the official languages; need for improved information abroad; informing the Canadian people of the government's cultural activities; and the attitude of public servants towards informing the public. Although these questions as well as others transcended departmental information responsibilities, the government had no structure to deal with them.

Canadian governments, over the years since the Second World War, have unquestionably spent hundreds of millions of dollars on information but not one of these governments has ever set a policy to provide any consistent testing of the results of this investment. There is no policy on cost-benefit studies. Indeed, throughout the information services, there has never been a general policy to regulate the use of such basic equipment of communication as radio and television.¹⁵

As a result, morale suffered in information divisions: the report confirmed that this laxity stemmed from the absence of policy objectives, and from the lack of direction given information personnel. In addition, information services were often ill-informed about the policies and

14. Task Force, p. 47

15. Ibid.

implications of the programmes in their own departments, since they operated in considerable isolation.

Another important problem was the interdepartmental confusion in information activities, and the duplication of effort. At the moment, there is simply no machinery to guarantee the kind of coordination that would enable the information services of different departments to perform together to achieve more than occasional united presentation.¹⁶

Unfortunate consequences had arisen from this lack of policy. Cabinet Ministers and their political cronies had often been content with the status-quo since it enabled them to take advantage of "objective" government information for partisan or personal purposes. In other cases, the report noted, straight government information was distributed reluctantly--a process which failed to satisfy civil servants, the public, or the politicians.

The federal government had failed to fulfill its obligation to inform its citizens; it had addressed its publics neither in Ottawa nor the regions.

The Federal Government is the one level of government in Canada that is obliged to serve the entire national interest; and the failure of successive federal administrations to establish a policy in the information field amounts to a failure to fulfill a major responsibility to the federation.¹⁷

In the elaboration of specific recommendations to solve the information problem, the Task Force urged that a

16. Task Force, p. 48.

17. Ibid.

national policy should recognize the federal nature of the constitution, and the balances which are required by parliamentary democracy in Canada.

Although the threat of propaganda needed to be considered, the government had to make a decision: it could either maintain the status-quo, and avoid indictments of harbouring improper intentions, or reform its institutions and impose the appropriate democratic safeguards.

The choice, however, had led us to a conclusion...since any strengthening of the government information apparatus involves the possibility of a government's manipulating public opinion, there must be a parallel strengthening of both Parliament and the public in the determination and review of government information policies.¹⁸

The principles that were basic to the Task Force, and which it suggested as the essence of a new policy on information, were that "the Government has an obligation to provide full, objective and timely information, and that citizens have a right to such information."¹⁹ In addition, since these principles outlined a right of the people, and an obligation of government, the report suggested that they be declared publicly, and be protected in some permanent and formal way.

Government communication was wanting in organization and coordination, and the Task Force report presented a

18. Task Force, p. 49.

19. Ibid.

clear case that significant changes were in order.

In the course of the Task Force's research, it seemed increasingly unfortunate and extraordinary that no Canadian government had ever got around to spelling out the relationship between government information and government objectives.²⁰

The major changes proposed by the Task Force were a new information policy, and a new administrative structure. The report went so far as to declare that the Cabinet should appoint a Minister in charge of information programmes, since the implications and the developments which would occur in the implementation and coordination of these programmes, justified it. The report was careful not to refer to this Minister as Minister of Information; instead he was called the spokesman for the government on information.

The report proposed that this Minister be chairman of a Cabinet committee dealing with information policy: his major concerns would be the objectives and organizational requirements of the new policy.

The assignment of a Minister, as chairman of such a committee would give the Cabinet an overview of information policy--a scope...that's more comprehensive than anything the individual departments and agencies could possibly provide.²¹

The appointment of a Minister as chairman of a Cabinet Committee, rather than a Minister of Information, stemmed from the Task Force's suggestion that it wanted coordination, but not excessive centralization.

20. Task Force p. 51.

21. Ibid. p. 52.

We want, if you can imagine it, the decentralized coordination of a major government activity and, though many governments have wrestled with this very goal, it is doubtful whether any has ever quite achieved it. One sure way to deny it, however, is to appoint a central authority with power to impose the coordination.²²

Respective departments needed to maintain a good deal of autonomy in information matters. To avoid extensive centralization, the report suggested that, in addition to the Minister in charge of the Cabinet committee, the government create Information Canada--a central agency of information activity--and appoint a Minister responsible. With some prescience, the Task Force suggested that without the cooperation of the committee on information policy there would simply be no coordination of government information activities.²³ The committee was to be advised and to receive support services in the manner of other Cabinet committees. The Privy Council Office would provide it with a secretariat; all departments, including the Prime Minister's Office, would advise the committee.

The establishment of a council of directors of Public Affairs Divisions was the next step suggested by the Task Force.

The council would permit an understanding of the government policies that affect all of the departmental services at once, or a group of them. It would pool

22. Task Force, p. 52.

23. Ibid.

knowledge of current information plans, and thereby give the services--including those required for information abroad--their first comprehensive view of their own working context in almost 25 years. The full council might call a meeting only when circumstances appeared to warrant one, but its functional subcommittees would meet regularly.²⁴

The Task Force also suggested that Parliament be involved in the scrutiny of government information; a committee of Parliament in charge of considering government information policy would be crucial if government were to have control of its information services.

To sum up, the Task Force proposed, in addition to the creation of Information Canada, the following measures: that a permanent council of information directors consider government information; a Parliamentary committee review information policy; the formulation of such policy be the concern of a Cabinet committee chaired by a Minister; and that another Cabinet Minister be responsible for, and report to Parliament on the administration of Information Canada.

We regard the split in ministerial functions concerning information policy, and the Parliamentary Committee, as two safeguards against government's possible misuse of its strengthened machinery of information.²⁵

"The foregoing considerations of principles, policy elements and the formulation of a general government policy

24. Task Force, p. 53.

25. Ibid. p. 54.

on information,"²⁶ form the essence of the Task Force's 17 major recommendations.²⁷

The Task Force depicted Information Canada as a central government agency in charge of information resources and technical services. The agency was designated two areas of specific concern: the first involved information which transcended any department's jurisdiction. The second concerned duplication of information activities.²⁸ Information Canada was also to be a monitor of government information performance standards. In addition, the new agency would distribute an entirely new range of information, improve public access to information about federal programmes, and create a free and coordinated flow of information between the government and the public.

The report further declared that one of Information Canada's more important tasks would be to encourage the public's direct and enlightened participation in federal affairs.

It would emphasize relevant research, and develop feedback on federal information from the regions of the country. Its concerns would therefore involve not only the distribution of information but also the government's ability to keep abreast of changing social circumstance and the changing needs of the people.²⁹

26. Task Force, p. 54.

27. See Appendix.

28. Task Force p. 55.

29. Ibid.

Many information activities, e.g., those involving culture, economics, science and technology, etc., would be merged and provided by Information Canada, since they were partitioned or duplicated in many corners of the federal bureaucracy. "Its main operation would therefore reflect both a realignment and an extension of government information services."³⁰

The report suggested that Information Canada operate within an existing ministry. It listed as possibilities the Department of the Secretary of State, Supply and Services, and Treasury Board.

The Task Force also gave the following reasons why the director of Information Canada should exercise his authority at the level of Deputy Minister, or Assistant Deputy Minister:

For one thing, his role as co-ordinator on information activities would not be only important but also extremely sensitive. For another, he would be reporting directly to a Cabinet Minister. Part of his administrative job would be to bring together talented, competent and already well-trained information personnel from inside and outside the public service.³¹

The status and qualifications of the director of Information Canada were to have reflected the urgent need to upgrade the importance of information personnel and their duties.

30. Task Force p. 55.

31. Ibid.

The report proposed giving Information Canada's director responsibility for the production of information material, service facilities and necessary liaison arising out of policies for information outside Canada. However, policy directions in foreign matters were to remain under External Affairs' jurisdiction, assisted by an advisory board, and in consultation with relevant departments.

Information Canada would finance directly the production of material of common and interdepartmental interest for use in information abroad. At home it would also finance advisory services for departments, and the work that it undertakes on its own initiative.³²

An annual report reviewing Information Canada's activities, including special reference to problems of public access to government information, would be prepared by the director and tabled before Parliament.³³ In order to protect and facilitate the public's access to government information, Information Canada would act as a public advocate.

Generally, as we see Information Canada, its other activities would involve advising, providing services, co-ordinating, reviewing, and initiating certain programmes of its own.³⁴

Information Canada would advise departments and agencies on the organization, personnel and programmes dealing with

32. Task Force, p. 56.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

information. It would provide services such as regional offices and technical production. "It would co-ordinate on those occasions that the government chose to designate it as a 'lead agency' for major information programmes."³⁵ It would review certain information programmes and report on their value to Treasury Board.

Within established policy directives, Information Canada would initiate information programmes "that have never existed because no government has ever required any department to take a government--wide view of information."³⁶

Without "prejudging" the organization and structure of Information Canada, the Task Force suggested that it might comprise nine administrative units. The first was referred to as the Total Communications Unit; its primary function would be to refine information concepts and techniques in order to assist departments and the central agencies in their information programmes.³⁷ Moreover, this unit would participate in the development of a general policy to incorporate design systems for federal information, and would implement specifications for both federal and departmental identification programmes.

35. Task Force p. 56.

36. Ibid. p. 55.

37. Ibid.

The second administrative unit would comprise the Public Advocate function. Its purpose would be the study of complaints dealing with government information, and to aid citizens in obtaining answers to their queries.

There is a real need for an official and practical recognition of the need to assist citizens, and the administration, in the application of the right of access to government information.³⁸

The Referral Centre was the third unit listed. It would contain an indexing unit to store reference material for the public; provide an enquiry service for telephone queries; and a mail unit to answer questions, or to refer them to proper sources.

Since the Task Force believed that the government urgently needed a field staff to strengthen and coordinate the flow of information between the regions and Ottawa, it proposed that a fourth regional unit be established. A minimum of five offices would be introduced in the main regions.

A unit at Information Canada's headquarters would support the work of the regional offices. The general task of the central unit would be to establish a coherent and responsive federal presence on the local scene. Through the regional offices, it would make information available on larger complexes of federal services, programmes and policies than the functional departments can currently provide on their own.³⁹

38. Task Force, p. 57.

39. Ibid. p. 58.

Fifth, the report suggested that the government establish an Audio-visual and Exhibitions Unit. The Task Force proposed that the government transfer the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission to Information Canada, to permit the integration of experts involved in design and production with the support services of total communications. Also,

An audio-visual unit would enable the administration, for the first time, to make full and effective use of radio, television and film to explain its programmes and policies.⁴⁰

The sixth unit--Documentation Canada--would publish and distribute information in the areas of common interest defined by government; departments and agencies, and on its own initiative. Also, Documentation Canada would incorporate the Department of Supply and Services' publishing, distribution and sales facilities.

Seventh, an Information Abroad unit would be designed to adapt the work of Documentation Canada to foreign audiences, and to mobilize the government's technical resources and support services, in order to enhance Canadian information abroad.

There is a fairly intimate relationship between information activities abroad and the general policies of External Affairs, and therefore the work of this branch of Information Canada would require a particularly close association with the work of the Department of

40. Task Force p. 58.

External Affairs, strengthened by the appointment there of an Assistant Under-Secretary for Public Affairs.⁴¹

The eighth unit was named the Special Information Services; it would provide a prompt and economical transmission of information for government departments and agencies.

It would operate a wire service to permit the rapid transmittal of information in well-defined categories, including press releases and other information that has currency and urgency...The wire service should be made available to the press on request.⁴²

Finally, the report proposed that an administrative service be responsible for the general management of Information Canada, including tendering and contracting of government advertising.

The structure we have outlined above is complex and unquestionably difficult to achieve. But simple proposals seldom solve complex problems, and the need of the Canadian people for government information may be one of the more complex social problems of our time.⁴³

The Task Force recommendations provided a specific overview of the problems which plagued government information: the report had clearly pointed to the lack of a government policy dealing with information and to the incomplete information which Canadians were receiving.

With the benefit of hindsight it may appear that the Task Force had been too rash in prophesying social upheaval

41. Task Force, p. 59.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

and revolution, since there was little historical justification for this sort of action in Canada. Indeed, Information Canada may even have seemed a tall order. One thing is clear: the Task Force was specific in outlining the problems with government information, and the proposals needed to remedy the situation.

For the Task Force proposals to work, a great deal had to be accomplished: Information Canada had to be established; terms of reference for the agency needed to be expressed in a clear and permanent manner--through an Act of Parliament for example; the government had to recognize citizens' rights to information, and its obligation to provide it; safeguards against the abuse of government information were needed; finally, and perhaps most importantly, a great deal of cooperation was needed from the government, bureaucracy and press.

Information Canada was an idea whose time had come. It would work only if all the proper pieces fell into place--or were allowed to fall into place. As we shall see in the next chapter, only some of what was necessary for the agency to succeed was provided.

CHAPTER III

THE CREATION OF INFORMATION CANADA

The Task Force on Government Information submitted its report and recommendations to the Cabinet Committee for Culture and Information on August 29, 1969. The Committee studied the Task Force conclusions, and in principle accepted the report's major recommendations save for proposals five and ten, the former stipulating that the government take steps to reach sections of the public outside the government's information flow, and the latter outlining the need for Information Canada's public advocacy in matters of access to information.

The Cabinet agreed on December 4, 1969, that Information Canada was to be created by April 1, 1970. Information Canada was given the following directives:

- a) to ensure that federal government programs and policies are explained.
- b) to provide information feedback from Canadians to the government.
- c) to co-ordinate federal information campaigns and assist departments.¹

Moreover, the Cabinet granted the organization its own administrative services, and divided it into four branches--one for planning and research; one to produce and distribute

1. Canada, "Organization of Information Canada," Treasury Board Minute No. 695894, approved April 23, 1970. p. 1.

information; another to retrieve and publish information on public opinion; and an administrative branch. In addition, the Canadian Exhibition Commission, the still photo library of the National Film Board and the Queen's Printer were transferred to the Information Canada production and distribution branch.

The Treasury Board approved the government's proposed estimates for Information Canada on December 11, 1969; on January 15, 1970, it accepted the organization's proposed programme activity structure:

The approved program and activity structure substantially followed the organization structure approved by the Cabinet on December 4 inasmuch as there is only one program for Information Canada, and the organization reflects the functional activities of the agency...²

On February 10, 1970, Prime Minister Trudeau announced before Parliament that Information Canada was to be established by April 1, 1970. It must be noted that the Prime Minister's February 10th statement "was purposely kept short and lacked a great amount of detail pertaining to the initial setup of the new organization."³ The statement on policy did not mention the 147 minor recommendations of the Task Force, nor the reasons they were ignored.

Subsequent to the statement on policy establishing Information Canada, the government was severely criticised

2. Canada, Treasury Board Minute No. 695895, p. 2.

3. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada. M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1979, p. 39.

by the opposition, the press and many public servants.

Much of this criticism may have been due to the fact Information Canada's critics were aware of the previous political connections of the Task Force's members and therefore, did not trust the government's intentions to set up the new agency based upon the Task Force recommendations because of their possible political biases.⁴

"D'Iberville Fortier (The Task Force chairman) had participated in political campaigns with Pierre Trudeau, Bernard Ostry was a personal friend of Prime Minister Trudeau and Tom Ford had helped to organize Pierre Elliott Trudeau's leadership campaign."⁵

Few critics seemed to believe that Information Canada would limit its role to coordination. Rather, they argued it would subordinate all the government's information services. Harry Bruce, a ghost-writer for the Task Force, as well as writer of seven Information Canada reports, declared:

No publicly financed body in the modern history of the federal government--not the railroads, not Air Canada, not even the CBC had ever endured such grisly and concentrated mauling.⁶

The opposition parties steadfastly decried and criticized the government's intention to create Information Canada: they predicted that the government would use the

4. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 39.

5. Ibid. p. 34a.

6. Bruce, Harry, "Misinformation Canada", Maclean's, Vol. 88, January, 1975, p. 45.

publicly funded agency as a propaganda device to keep itself in power. "The opposition doubts if it will voluntarily emit one iota of information which the government does not want given out."⁷

The Conservative Party denounced the agency as a potentially dangerous partisan instrument, and that a Conservative government would dismantle it. The New Democrats and Crditistes were also opposed to the agency. "The Parliamentary Opposition read the official statement and they warned of thought control, a government propaganda machine, and 1984."⁸

Information Canada was also heavily criticised by the press. It was felt that the agency might be used for partisan purposes, and that it might encroach on the press's role.⁹

Officials within departmental information services objected to Information Canada's creation for various reasons:

First, they felt that Information Canada's creation would allow the government to reduce their financial,

7. Bird, John, "Information Canada: Will it Give One Iota of Unpopular Information?" Financial Post, Vol. 64, March 21, 1970, p. 33.

8. Miller, Eric, "Information Canada, April 1, 1970--March 31, 1976: A Report on Federal Government Communication," an unpublished paper prepared for the Treasury Board, November, 1976, p. 9.

9. Ibid.

technical, and human resources...Secondly, many of the departments believed that the government's information functions rightly belonged to them. Therefore, they viewed any attempts to change their traditional functions as an attack upon their competence, abilities and personal property. Finally, interdepartmental competition rather than cooperation had become common practice.¹⁰

Most departments were averse to forgetting past experience, and to collaborating with their rivals.

In her M.A. Thesis, Beverly Edwards argues that, although there were some legitimate fears, most of the criticism aimed at Information Canada was unfounded: the agency was only intended to coordinate government information; criticism was speculative and sensational; the agency would be far too flaccid--i.e., it lacked the authority needed to ensure that its advice was heeded--to engage in pernicious thought control. The new agency's entire "raison d'être," was to ensure that Canadian citizens be properly informed about their government. Its critics were simply reacting to what they "thought was Information Canada's potential for power and not to the power it was actually receiving."¹¹

Despite all the criticism, on March 20, 1970, the Honourable Robert Stanbury, Minister without Portfolio responsible for Information Canada, announced that it was

10. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 42.

11. Ibid. p. 43.

the government's intention to appoint as the first director of Information Canada, effective April 1, 1970, Mr. Jean-Louis Gagnon, "distinguished Canadian journalist."¹² Mr. Gagnon had recently completed his tour of duty as a co-chairman of the Laurendeau-Dunton Royal Commission. His membership in the Québec wing of the Liberal Party drew more invective from the opposition.

On March 26, 1970, Prime Minister Trudeau signed Order-in-Council PC 1970-559, thereby officially designating Information Canada as a department. However, the government waited until June 26, 1970 before passing the Appropriations Act, which gave financial support and parliamentary approval to the new agency.

Prime Minister Trudeau's official statement of February 10, 1970, which created Information Canada, was too brief; no mention was given of supporting legislation. The agency was to be an appendage of a technical-support organisation, the Department of Supply and Services; as such, it had no authority to enforce any of its decisions, and had a role "unthreatening to departmental prerogatives."¹³ Since it had no legislative authority, it could not force any department or agency to accept its proposals; by the same

12. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons Debates, March 20, 1970, p. 5269.

13. Miller, "Information Canada, April 1, 1970--March 31, 1976," p. 7.

token, no department needed to request its assistance. The Minister appointed to Info Can was without portfolio and the agency's terms of reference stressed its diminutive size and budget--allocated resources were less than half those envisaged by the Task Force. The Appropriations Act delegated to Information Canada duties that had previously been performed by other departments.

The range of Task Force recommendations accepted by the government "suggested orchestration and/or implementation by Information Canada."¹⁴ Instead, the agency was organized as a technical resource without leverage or power,

...encumbered with orphaned operational responsibilities that had already existed, and with some other activities that could have been more effectively performed by the central agencies. If Information Canada was expected to make any kind of significant difference to the federal communication process, it had been singularly ill-equipped to do so.¹⁵

Information Canada was designated to function horizontally across the government as a central agency; however, "it would be partly a central agency without the muscle of a central agency, and partly a common-service agency without the bureaucratic consensus needed to survive."¹⁶

The agency's first year was dedicated to establishing and "building the necessary structure for undertaking its

14. Miller, p. 8.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

manifold assignment without any precedent to guide it."¹⁷ InfoCan's structure was outlined in the Cabinet's decision of December 4, 1969--Planning, Information In, Information Out, and Administrative Branches.

Information Canada's maiden voyage was afflicted with two very serious problems. When the agency was created, it had virtually no staff. "In fact, it did not start to actively recruit the majority of its staff until June, 1970."¹⁸ "This was caused by the government's delay in appointing the Director-General and the officials needed to administer the hiring."¹⁹ Therefore, the agency would not fully operate until October, 1970.

By the end of its first year, Information Canada had hired 501 of the 520 people it had been requested to employ: 126 people were hired through the Public Service Commission; 376 of its new employees were transferred to the agency when it absorbed the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission and the Publishing branch of the Queen's Printer.²⁰

The agency's second major affliction--one which it was

17. Canada, Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, Ottawa: Information Canada, 1972, p. 1.

18. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 52.

19. Gagnon, Jean-Louis, "Memorandum for All Members of Information Canada: Where We Are and Where We Are Going," Ottawa, June 3, 1970, p. 2.

20. Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, p. 2.

never able to shed--was the overall lack of cooperation given to it by government departments. Information Canada could only service other departments when requested:

Because Information Canada's role in relation to the information divisions of the other departments and agencies of the federal government is limited to co-operation, co-ordination, resource assistance and advice, its operations do not take precedence over, nor replace, their individual information programs.²¹

The agency evidently lacked the authority to make any of its recommendations stick; subsequent to this incapacity, departments and agencies continued to operate and even expand their information services; in the first year of InfoCan's existence, separate information staffs of the various departments "grew from 900 to 1,992 people, and they have been growing ever since."²² Obviously, Information Canada was perceived as undesired competition.

In spite of its slow start, Information Canada did initiate new projects in 1970-71. The agency introduced Enquiry Centres, the Federalism and Federal Identity Programmes, and exhibits on federalism.

The Federalism Programme was destined to help citizens understand how the government functioned:

The objective is to make it easier for citizens to get information about Canada and government programs, to

21. Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, p. 2.

22. Shackleton, Doris, Power Town: Democracy Discarded, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1977, p. 74.

use government services, to comment on governmental affairs and, in general, to engage in participatory democracy.²³

The Federalism Secretariat created under this programme was designed to promote projects and to suggest ideas within the civil service which would contribute to greater public understanding of national institutions and the federal government process.²⁴ At the end of the agency's first year, the Federalism Secretariat still had not recruited its four officers; however, by borrowing staff from other areas of the department, some projects were undertaken: e.g., the Federal Identity Programme and a series of exhibits on Federalism.

One programme initiated by the agency in its first year which still survives, was the Federal Identity Programme. Information Canada decided that a corporate symbol was necessary for two reasons: first, it "would identify not so much individual activities of departments as the corporate presence of the federal government;"²⁵ secondly, a universal design would permit the government to reduce its printing costs.

The Canadian flag was used as the basis for the design: "The left-hand bar is the same as on the flag, as is the

23. Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, p. 8.

24. Ibid. p. 9.

25. Ibid. p. 10.

maple leaf in the center. Where the right bar would be is the title of the federal agency involved."²⁶

The new logo was introduced to some departments during the 1970-71 fiscal year; Information Canada expected the design to be in general use on stationery and cheques the following fiscal year, and to appear shortly thereafter on signs and vehicles. With the major design problems solved, economy would be the "main factor governing the rate of general introduction of the symbol."²⁷

To facilitate the public's access to information on federal policies and programmes, and to gather feedback from it, Information Canada opened enquiry centres. This concept grew out of "an awareness of the fundamental importance in a democracy of providing a two way flow of information between citizens and their Parliament and government."²⁸ The centres were created to solve two major information problems:

The first is a product of the sheer complexity of modern government with its labyrinth of levels of jurisdictions. This complexity serves as a challenge, and sometimes as a barrier, to the right of Canadians to know what their governments are doing and how they can use the federal structure to solve their problems; indeed, how they can participate in changing their structures when it becomes necessary...A second problem

26. Clive Baxter, "Image-making 'Federal White' may be New Ottawa Trade Mark," Financial Post, Volume 64, October 24, 1970, p. 1.

27. Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, pp. 10-11.

28. Ibid. p. 3.

is the loss of human contact in modern technological communications. Technology has a growing role in communications, and a vital one, but it has an anonymous influence. Governments are, and must remain, human institutions; they must involve themselves with the people...on a human basis, face to face, listening as well as speaking.²⁹

The first enquiry centre opened in Ottawa, November 16, 1970; others would open in all major Canadian cities as funds became available. The information centre included a bookstore, photo sales, a reading lounge, the reference section and the "informatèque"--the heart of the centre;

Staffed by trained information officers and equipped with a rapidly-expanding information bank and referral system,...[the informatèque] is designed to make information on government programs and services more readily accessible to the public. Whenever a direct answer cannot be supplied, the information can provide the caller...with fast, on-the-spot referral to the proper source of the information desired.³⁰

At the end of the 1970-71 fiscal year, more than 6,000 enquiries per month had been handled by the Ottawa National Enquiry Centre--nearly twofold the initial volume.

Although the government had promised to provide the major cities of the country with information centres, there were only eleven centres at the time of Information Canada's termination in 1976--Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Moncton, Charlottetown and St. John's.

29. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "Notes for Remarks by the Prime Minister at the opening of the National Enquiry Centre," Ottawa, November 16, 1970, p. 1.

30. Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, p. 7.

The Federal Exhibit programme was the fourth initiative undertaken by Information Canada during its first year. During 1970-71,

...Information Canada designed and largely completed a number of mobile exhibits to carry to Canadians in all parts of the country the story of federalism with particular emphasis on federal services, the myriad of problems government has to face and how it tries to solve them.³¹

The agency also prepared display material featuring government programmes, to be used where public traffic was heavy--shopping centres, post offices, railway stations, and airports. In addition, the agency assembled and designed exhibits and displays to be used throughout the world to encourage international trade and tourism.

On the whole, the program was very successful and drew wide support. This was due to the fact...the Expositions Division had been part of an older and respected government agency, the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission.³²

Although the government had heretofore assembled exhibitions, the Federal Exhibit Programme was the first to strongly elaborate the federalism theme; approximately 650 exhibits and displays, including support material, were produced by Information Canada in 1970-71.

Information Canada's first year was very active: the agency established a study group to determine the

31. Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, p. 11.

32. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 59.

formulation of a federal government publishing policy; without such a policy, there had been and would continue to be, a tendency by various government branches to produce publications without a definition of costs involved.³³ The Publishing Division endeavoured to resolve such problems as cost control, cost of printing in two official languages, pricing, quality control, marketing, etc. Information Canada also produced posters promoting national unity, and other aspects of Canadianism. Discussions between federal and provincial information professionals, to promote mutual cooperation, were initiated. Also, to promote overall co-ordination between government departments and itself, Information Canada helped create the Council of Federal Information Directors.³⁴

Information Canada's first annual report concluded that although much progress had been made, certain problems had to be solved if the agency were to operate according to its mandate:

The first of these involves the principle that any individual government, departments or agencies, are not autonomous units but part of the public administration as a whole which implements government policy. This implies that the public administration of Canada, which is increasingly concerned with developing coordinated programs, must be seen to be doing so and ready at all times to explain its actions...The second of these

33. Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, p. 14.

34. Ibid. pp. 15-16.

problems involves reaching the unreached...It is necessary to find out [which Canadians are not reached]... why they have not been reached, what they want to know and how the dialogue can begin...The third of these areas is the articulation of a policy to protect the right of all Canadians to greater access to information that affects their lives.³⁵

The second year of Information Canada's short life was understandably better organized than the first: recruitment was nearly complete, and the last unit transferred to the new agency--the National Film Board's still photo division--completed the organizational structure on August 1, 1971.

Most of the information distributed by the agency in 1971-72 was in the form of replies to individual citizen enquiries, or books and pamphlets prepared by departments, but distributed through the six Information Canada bookstores and its mail order service.³⁶ Citizen enquiries increased 130%, booksales by 25%.

The Expositions Division of Information Canada produced two notable firsts during 1971-72. First, it had adopted a cost recovery plan which, after economies of about \$1 million in overhead, "charged true costs to the client department, a measure to stimulate efficiency, economy and better accounts."³⁷

35. Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, pp. 20-21.

36. Canada, Information Canada, Annual Report 1971-1972, Ottawa: Information Canada, 1973, p. 1.

37. Ibid. p. 1.

This decision to put the Expositions Division on total cost recovery was not made by Information Canada. It was ordered to do so by the government, in order to reduce this division's high design and production costs. As a result of the implementation of total cost recovery and the government's perceived need for more financial restraint, Information Canada dismissed the former chief of the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission and two of its top officials.³⁸

Secondly, the division had prepared a series of exhibits for Canadians about Canada and its government,³⁹ despite a proliferation of exhibitions prepared by other departments for use abroad. Six hundred thousand Canadians had seen the exhibits in the summer of 1971.

The National Film Board's Still Photo Library was officially transferred to Information Canada on June 1, 1971. The Photothèque, which opened in August of the same year, maintained an updated collection of over three-hundred thousand photos of Canada and Canadians. In addition, the Photothèque provided departments with a comprehensive advisory service, to assist them with photographic, indexing, and cataloguing difficulties. At the request of departments and agencies, this division also provided photographic assignment services. The Photothèque also expanded its services; a new photo stories service--Fotomedia--would offer on a monthly basis photo stories prepared by some of

38. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 61.

39. Information Canada, Annual Report 1971-1972, p. 1.

the "best freelance writers and photographers in Canada and covering topical Canadian activities which will reflect the constantly changing face of Canada."⁴⁰

Information Canada's Publishing Division, responsible for the distribution of government publications to retail stores, agencies and the private sector across Canada, had a good deal of success during the 1971-1972 fiscal year:

...the Publishing Division had gross sales of publications amounting to \$4,137,712, up 25% from the 1970-71 figure of \$3,307,385. These figures include sales of official documents, books and periodicals. Mail order sales reached \$2,139,069 net as compared with \$1,727,793 in 1970-71, and royalties amounted to \$85,524 as compared with \$32,651 in the previous year.⁴¹

A revision of government mailing lists by the agency's Communications Division, to ensure that information was sent only when requested, "resulted in the deletion of more than 50,000 names from federal mailing lists, for an estimated annual savings to the government of approximately \$500,000."⁴²

The Enquiries Division also had a fruitful year, improving and expanding its operations. For the National Enquiry Centre, 1971-72 was a year of "consolidation, streamlining and preparation for the back-up support of regional centres

40. Information Canada, Annual Report 1971-1972, p. 1.

41. Ibid. p. 4.

42. Ibid., p. 6.

to be opened subsequently."⁴³ The agency's second Enquiry Centre opened in Winnipeg in April 1971. Although Information Canada had planned to open centres in Toronto and Montreal within the 1971-72 fiscal year, these were postponed to the summer and fall of 1972 due to accommodation problems. The ever increasing volume of enquiries was handled by a skeleton staff which operated from temporary quarters in both cities. "The two offices have responded to a combined total of 36,934 enquiries and have recorded 746 comments from the public between April 1, 1971 and March 31, 1972."⁴⁴ Moreover, Information Canada had undertaken negotiations and planning for the establishment of centres in Halifax and Vancouver.

The Publishing Division's bookstores were integrated into the Enquiry Centre operation; Information Canada gave the following reason for this action:

The past year's experience suggested that greater cross-pollination of information and expertise could be achieved through an integrated administration of the two operations. Recognizing also the information service element in the distribution of government publications, Information Canada undertook a shared integration plan for the bookstores and enquiry centres. The plan calls for an umbrella approach whereby the booksales and enquiry facilities can complement one another in the provision of comprehensive information.⁴⁵

43. Information Canada, Annual Report 1971-1972, p. 8.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid. pp. 8-9.

The agency's Research and Evaluation Branch was also quite active; it was to develop and improve information programmes and techniques in cooperation with other branches of Information Canada, and with government departments. The branch conducted the background research for studies issued by the Planning Review--a device used to improve the information on government programmes. Various surveys were also conducted in Québec City and Vancouver to determine the respective populations' knowledge of the federal government.

It must also be mentioned that the introduction and implementation of the Research and Evaluation Branch of Information Canada was a new step forward in the area of government communications. Never before had the Canadian Federal Government dedicated the time and resources which were needed in order to fulfill the very important function of predicting and developing more efficient and effective communication programs. The government had always hoped that its information programs were meeting these requirements, but it had never taken the appropriate steps to guarantee that they were.⁴⁶

Considerable progress was made by the Federal Identity Programme during 1971-72. The new federal symbol was implemented in 22 departments; at the end of the year, the "bar and maple leaf" was on all of the Department of Supply and Services' vehicles. Moreover, "The interdepartmental advisory committee was expanded to include a sub-committee on linguistic matters and another on signage."⁴⁷ Although the

46. Edwards, Beverly. The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 67.

47. Information Canada, Annual Report 1971-1972, p. 10.

Federal Identity Programme pervaded most government departments, there were some exceptions:

Approximately twenty government organizations such as Air Canada, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian National Railway were exempted from the Federal Identity Program, on the grounds that they had to operate on a competitive commercial basis.⁴⁸

Since the programme had the support of Cabinet and the Treasury Board, it was highly successful.

...the departments found it easier to go along with a program which did not pose a serious threat to their autonomy, than to fight with the government's major political force and keeper of the public purse strings, the Cabinet and Treasury Board.⁴⁹

The programme did receive some criticism; it "irked ardent monarchists such as John Diefenbaker by downgrading the royal coat of arms."⁵⁰ Anglophiles were disconcerted; no department--save the judiciary, Government House and Parliament--would use the coat of arms as its symbol. The Federal Identity Programme was also flayed for the commotion and tumult it caused the public:

Ironically, the array of terminology and symbols has been even more confusing during the phase-in period than it was prior to the program. Not only have various departments used different nomenclature, but the changeovers have not occurred uniformly within departments.⁵¹

48. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 65.

49. Ibid.

50. Sheldon E. Gordon, "At least Now the Government Knows What to Call Itself," Financial Post, Volume 69, February 8, 1975, p. 7.

51. Ibid.

Although Information Canada was heavily criticized by the press and opposition during this period, it did receive some praise. Clive Baxter of the Financial Post noted that Canadians would be well served if Information Canada's new Enquiry Centres matched in the quality of the Ottawa centre.⁵²

In addition, those members of the...public who had had an opportunity to use the new facilities were, in general, satisfied with their operations and, in some cases, enthusiastic about their potential. As a result, many members of the general public generated a large amount of word-of-mouth publicity which caused a dramatic increase in the number of enquiries that the Centres received.⁵³

Despite this praise, invective by the press and opposition against the fledgling agency ebbed and flowed. Opponents of the agency referred to it as the propaganda arm of the Liberal Party. The agency's every move was observed by its antagonists.

This, in turn, has forced Robert Stanbury, the responsible Minister, and Jean-Louis Gagnon, the Director of Information Canada, to spend so much time stressing all the things their agency isn't going to do, they leave themselves open to the inevitable impression that perhaps the government doesn't really need any such organization at all.⁵⁴

52. Baxter, Clive, "Why Information Canada has an 'Image Problem,'" Financial Post, Vol. 65, May 8, 1971, p. 4.

53. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 64.

54. Baxter, Clive, "Why Information Canada has an 'Image Problem,'" Financial Post, Vol. 65, May 8, 1971, p. 4.

Despite the claim by Information Canada officials that the agency was running smoothly and efficiently, fuel was added to the fire of its opponents' vituperation.

First, Information Canada made the mistake of publishing some information before it had been approved by Parliament. Immediately after the Official Opposition discovered that this was true, Robert Stanfield brought it to the public's attention.⁵⁵

The following is an excerpt from a speech given by Mr. Stanfield to the Central Nova Scotia Progressive Conservative Association on February 22, 1971:

In fact, at the same time as our Members were arguing their cases, the government had the gall to issue through Information Canada a P.R. booklet, entitled "How Your Tax Dollar is Spent," which coolly states even before Parliament had spoken, that the Department of Fisheries had been wiped out.⁵⁶

Also, Information Canada's first annual report was tabled in Parliament approximately one year late. "As a result, [Information Canada] was made to look totally incompetent by this incident."⁵⁷

Another event which denigrated the agency's reputation, was the leaking of an incriminating memo to the media. The memo, which had been sent by Information Canada's Deputy

55. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 69.

56. Notes for a Speech by the Honourable Robert L. Stanfield, P.C., Q.C., M.P., Leader of the Opposition to the Annual Meeting of Central Nova Scotia Progressive Conservative Association, Westville, Nova Scotia, Monday, February 22, 1971, p. 2.

57. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 70.

Director-General, R.A.J. Phillips, to its Director-General, Jean-Louis Gagnon, was obtained by the Toronto Globe and Mail in February 1972 and published shortly thereafter.

Its contents were extremely incriminating to the leadership of Information Canada and the government which established it. In it, R.A.J. Phillips, who by this time was almost totally disappointed with how Information Canada was functioning and the reception it was receiving, stated his views in the following manner: 'The record of the past six months...leads one to conclude that it is urgent to consider some projects to justify our budget and existence...Virtually all new visible projects have been cancelled, although our budget continues to rise...Unless there are rapid changes, the current year will indicate that Information Canada is doing roughly what other departments did previously in managing the activities which we took over; that we are providing a certain pool of resource support which could come from private industry; and that most of the major projects we had launched to create a better understanding of the federal government have been dropped, shelved, or left in a limbo of indecision.'⁵⁸

The media and opposition had a field day; Robert Stanfield said the memo was the first useful information produced by the agency--"this was to the effect that Information Canada doesn't know what it is doing, or where it is supposed to be going."⁵⁹

Leakage of the memo also precipitated the dismissals of the Director-General, and the Deputy Director-General. However, Mr. Gagnon's dismissal might have been expedited by a combination of factors; certain bureaucrats in close

58. Edwards Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 71.

59. Notes for a Speech by the Honourable Robert Stanfield, P.C., Q.C., M.P., to a Fund Raising Dinner at the Calgary Inn, Calgary, Alberta, March 23, 1972, p. 7.

contact with him declared that he was a

master of the three-hour lunch; a man whose indecision drove his subordinates half-mad; a professional charmer whose eagerness to be professionally charming inspired him to agree with one man's proposal one minute, and with another man's flatly opposing proposal the next minute; a diplomat whose instinct to see things go smoothly led him to invite old mandarins from tough old departments to treat Info Can with contempt.⁶⁰

Although Mr. Gagnon's performance as Director-General seemed inadequate, perhaps it was indicative of a more profound and serious flaw: in a memo to Robert Stanbury, he alleged a failure to recognize the Expositions Branch's vital role. Moreover, he declared that:

This failure in turn stems from the present structure of Information Canada which has increasingly revealed itself to be illogical and non functional. If a logical principle...were applied, the resultant new structure would have...beneficial effects.⁶¹

In addition, Mr. Gagnon maintained that a proposal made by Information Canada to Cabinet regarding cost-recovery had been denied, and that the Treasury Board was "re-evaluating" many of the agency's future projects.

He also suggested that the Cabinet be 'requested to accept Information Canada's proposals concerning the clarification and redefinition of the agency's mandate to include a revised, project oriented organizational structure along functional lines,' and accept its estimates of the cost of the functions which would be carried out under a revised mandate.⁶²

60. Bruce, Harry, "Misinformation Canada," p. 46.

61. Jean-Louis Gagnon, Memorandum for the Honourable Robert Stanbury, "Redefinition of Mandate," June 10, 1971, p. 1.

62. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 73.

Replacements for Gagnon and Phillips were appointed June 30, 1972: Guy D'Avignon was the new Director General, and Eric Miller the Deputy Director.

The change of Information Canada's senior management revealed a profound flaw in its structure. The terms of reference which the agency had been saddled with were insufficient: Information Canada was to be an appendage of the Department of Supply and Services. As such, it lacked the legislative authority to ensure that departments and agencies accept its proposals or services. Moreover, the government made a serious error in judgement when it appointed prominent Liberals to the Task Force and to the directorship of Information Canada. The press's criticism over this fact would have been justified: an agency which purported to provide citizens with information about their government couldn't afford the luxury of appearing to be a sanctuary for the Party faithful.

Although Information Canada accomplished a great deal in its first few years, the seeds of what would prove to be its downfall were beginning to sprout. The agency's trials and tribulations, precipitated by the government's lack of commitment and determination, inspired little confidence from either the press or the bureaucracy, and though many changes were made to Information Canada in 1972, irreparable damage had been done.

CHAPTER IV

INFORMATION CANADA'S CAREER AND DEMISE

As a result of the manifold problems which had plagued the agency since its inception, many changes befell information Canada after June 1972. Several factors were instrumental in establishing this new order:

First, the Trudeau Government was in a minority situation for approximately two years of this time period, (June 30, 1972, to December 31, 1975) while it was in a majority situation throughout the entire first time period. Secondly, Guy D'Avignon was the Director-General of Information Canada...Thirdly, the second era was a time of re-evaluation and reorganization, while the first era was responsible for the agency's initial organization...Fourthly the first era was characterized by the experimentation with and introduction of... innovations in the field of government information.¹

Information Canada's new Director-General, Guy D'Avignon, had been a senior civil servant with the Canadian Government since 1966; and he had been the Assistant Deputy Minister for Finance and Administration in the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce since 1971.

The agency's new Deputy Director-General, Eric Miller, possessed a strong background as a professional communicator; the years which preceded his appointment at Information Canada included the operation of a consulting firm and the

1. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 77.

vice-presidency of Maclaren Advertising Ltd., in Toronto. His credentials also included senior positions with five ad agencies in Montreal and Toronto, as well as 25 years experience as a writer, designer, account executive, manager and public relations expert.²

Shortly after his accession to the directorship, Mr. D'Avignon orchestrated a study and evaluation of Information Canada. As a result, the agency's new management engulfed their operations in a shroud of secrecy, partly to squash the political storm, and partly to minimize ill-founded criticism.

The first three months of Guy D'Avignon's directorship were characterized by extreme caution and secrecy. In fact, throughout the summer of 1972, the new Director-General of Information Canada and the Minister responsible for the agency, Martin O'Connell, would not speak to the press not [sic] the general public about Information Canada's future or present state of affairs. The aura of secrecy and caution was mainly due to the administrative and political problems which it had experienced throughout 1971 and part of 1972.³

The change of management, and the ensuing veil of secrecy, drew conjecture on the nature of the agency's activity--the media predicted that Information Canada was in for some serious changes. Some of the agency's observers concluded that a thorough reorganization was imminent given

2. Duncan, Stephen, "InfoCan: Our Uninformative Information Service," Financial Post, Vol. 66, July 29, 1972, p. 3.

3. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 78.

Information Canada's performance, and the reputation of its newly appointed Director-General as an excellent administrator.'

Once the evaluation was complete, the alleged shake-up didn't materialize: the agency's surreptitious behaviour and the surrounding speculation had changed little--it was business as usual after all. Although some changes did occur, Mr. D'Avignon stated to the Financial Post that InfoCan

'remains the sort of time-bomb that governments come to fear. Opposition parties know they can get applause any time by taking a crack at Information Canada. Every time they do 525 employees become a little more nervous and a bit more anxious about their future.'

An important change, precipitated shortly after D'Avignon's appointment, was the abolition of the Automated Information Monitoring System. The system monitored the press and various media to supply information to the government on a daily basis; its critics purported that the system might pose serious threats to the health of the democracy, since it could help the government consolidate its hold on power--by telling it more than it needed to know:

Because it was intended to monitor all press, television, radio and public speeches and then supply the government with this information on a daily basis, both Guy D'Avignon and the press felt that the danger of it

4. Duncan, Stephen, "InfoCan: Our Uninformative Information Service," Financial Post, Vol. 66, July 29, 1972, p. 3.

5. Baxter, Clive, "Info Canada Changes Its Image," Financial Post, Vol. 67, January 1973, p. 14.

becoming abused by people inside and outside of the government was too great. Therefore, AIMS was never put into operation and it died on the drawing boards before its dangerous [!] potential activities could become possible.⁶

The argument against AIMS was misleading; a variety of government departments--including Treasury Board--presently provide such a service, and similar systems operate in the private sector. Furthermore, AIMS failure was induced, not by an imaginary danger, but by administrative and technological pitfalls:

A man who has left the bureaucracy entirely remembered the time Information Canada tried to launch an elaborate, electronic monitoring system of newspaper content across Canada. InfoCan planned to sell this daily, superpress digest to the other departments, and a multi-department committee met to discuss the idea. My informant was at the meeting and he, and another bureaucrat with special knowledge of electronic data systems, 'knew' that InfoCan's proposal was technologically impossible. They said nothing. 'We knew it would take them six months to find they couldn't bring it off and, sure enough, six months later they canned the project. We might have told them if they'd been different people...[!]' The point is, I think that 'you cannot survive in a bureaucracy without friends.'

In addition, Guy D'Avignon confirmed that AIMS' death warrant was signed, not by imaginary fear and moonshine regarding its potential abuse, but by a series of tangible factors:

It had all the overtones of 'group think' and Big Brother deciding what his audience would or wouldn't

6. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 80.

7. Bruce, Harry, "Misinformation Canada." Maclean's, January 1975, pp. 45-50.

hear. As with many criticisms of Information Canada, this objection was as much based on emotion as fact... But it also brought up the thorny question of copy-right. Did the government have a right to buy one copy of a newspaper and then retail its content to thousands?...I saw it as direct competition with the private sector...and I don't feel we should be doing that, so it is all over now.⁸

The introduction of mobile information officers to compensate for the inadequacies of the enquiry centres, was another significant change during 1972-73. Information Canada's Regional Operations division initiated a project which involved sending information personnel into rural areas of Manitoba and Nova Scotia which had been previously unreached by most federal government information services.⁹ Thus the mobile information service was to help compensate for regional disparities throughout Canada. Although agency officials believed that the enquiry centres were useful in communicating with urban, well educated and informed citizens, they also felt that the mobile information service was necessary to provide Canadians in remote areas with the information which was rightfully theirs.¹⁰

At the beginning of 1973, only six of the forty-four

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8. Duncan, Stephen, "InfoCan: Our Uninformative Information Service," Financial Post, Vol. 66, July 29, 1972, p. 3.
 9. Information Canada, Annual Report 1972-1973. Ottawa, Information Canada, 1973.
 10. "Communications: Some Simple Concepts (Part two)." INC, Information Canada's house organ, Vol. 2, No. 5, 1975, p. 4.

major government departments had information staff outside Ottawa. Information Canada's mobile information service would change this. Mobile officers, it was hoped, would help federal regional offices strengthen their presence and effectiveness, reduce duplication of services and prevent departments from unnecessarily opening regional information offices.¹¹

The first two mobile information units were set up in Manitoba and Nova Scotia during 1973--regions which had hitherto received scanty information from the federal government. The units would:

Bring with them books for sale, other publications to be given away, and small teams of officials ready to answer questions about what the federal government can offer the public--and to listen to what the public wants done.¹²

To improve its service to the public, Information Canada attempted to expand and decentralize its bookselling operations in 1973. Guy D'Avignon negotiated with three hundred bookstores across the country an agreement whereby the stores would act as Information Canada agents. In addition to booksales, special sections of the stores were to be set aside for promotional material.¹³

11. Information Canada, Annual Report 1972-1973, p. 1.

12. Duncan, Stephen, "InfoCan: Our Uninformative Information Service," Financial Post, Vol. 66, July 29, 1972, p. 3.

13. Information Canada, Annual Report 1972-1973, p. 1.

Improved customer service also resulted from an internal re-organization of the Publishing Branch. Particularly in the area of mail order sales, "...processing has been streamlined to the point where the average turn-around time is now five days, which represents a very great reduction."¹⁴

The Publishing Branch initiated an inventory control and disposal programme in January 1973 to remove obsolete and surplus publications. The programme deleted 55,000 of the 70,000 items listed in the Canadian publications inventory. Once the programme was completed, this inventory of Canadian publications would contain 10,000 titles and the international inventory would contain 5,000.¹⁵

The Federal Identity Programme made considerable headway during 1972-73. The new federal symbol--the bar and leaf--was adopted by twenty-five more departments, crown corporations and agencies. At the end of the fiscal year, forty-seven organizations sported the logo--the F.I.P. was according to the agency's 1972-73 Annual Report, the world's most extensive corporate identity programme.¹⁶

With enquiry centres operating in Ottawa and Winnipeg, Information Canada opened new branches in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Halifax:

14. Information Canada, Annual Report 1972-1973, p. 1.

15. Ibid. p. 9.

16. Ibid. p. 4.

Information Canada had, by the end of 1972-73, the basic elements an enquiry network designed to reach ultimately into every Canadian region.¹⁷

Unlike its counterparts, the Halifax centre was not operated exclusively by the federal government; it was administered by a cooperative agreement between the federal and Nova Scotia governments. Information Canada's Annual Report explained that although the programmes showed a welcome spirit of federal provincial cooperation, it was something of a bureaucratic problem: two cash registers would be necessary, since neither government had the authority to sell the other's publications.¹⁸

The volume of enquiries handled by the five operational information centres was considerable:

...Information Canada enquiry centres handled a total of 355,800 requests for information. The Ottawa centre handled the largest single volume, with an average of 10,078 per month, followed by the Toronto centre with an average of 9,536 per month--70% of which were telephone enquiries. Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver answered an average of 3,891, 2,005 and 2,426 enquiries a month respectively.¹⁹

The magnitude of the enquiries handled by the information centres required a reorganization of the reference service. The indexing section was adapted to handle the cataloguing of publications: the reference system would now

17. Information Canada, Annual Report 1972-1973, p. 9.

18. Ibid. p. 4.

19. Ibid. p. 10.

include different government publications, including government Acts and Regulations, as well as information on federal government programmes and contracts.²⁰

In addition, Information Canada established a liaison section responsible for the creation of the indexing information bank, the verification of government information sources, and the development of new reference tools.

During the 1972-73 Fiscal year, Information Canada's Expositions Branch created 153 domestic and international Exhibits for 58 government departments.²¹ The branch's major activity was the Canadian Trade Exposition in Peking. "The fair was visited by an average of 22,000 people per day--including Premier Chou-En-Lai--during the two week period."²²

The Expositions Branch created two other major exhibits during 1972-73:

At the Third Annual Asian Fair, held in New Delhi in November and December, the attractive Canadian pavilion drew crowds of 70,000 or more per day to see a cross-section of products presented by 10 Canadian companies. The travelling exhibit "Reflets du Canada" on the canal barge MV Canada, a special pilot project started in the previous fiscal year, at the request of the Department of External Affairs, attracted 95,385 visitors during its 128 day visit of France, Belgium and the Netherlands.²³

20. Information Canada, Annual Report 1972-1973, p. 11.

21. Ibid, p. 5.

22. Ibid. p. 6.

23. Ibid.

The work of the Exhibition Commission--the "team that designs and mounts Canada's superb international trade fairs--"²⁴ did not go unrecognized; a plethora of awards for posters, graphic and exhibit designs were granted it during 1972-73.

A study to determine the feasibility of converting Information Canada's publishing and distribution activities to a cost-recovery basis was initiated by Treasury Board in the fall of 1972:

Under the direction of Special Projects, outside consultant services were used to develop a work plan leading to this conversion. By November 1972, the work plan had been approved and a special task force assembled to implement it in preparation for conversion to cost recovery on a test basis for the summer of 1973 and finally, official conversion effective April 1, 1974.²⁵

Although conversion to cost recovery appeared to be a fiscally responsible move, it held onerous ramifications for the agency. According to Eric Miller, two handicaps hindered cost recovery: stores were designed as information centres as well as bookstores--thereby preventing cost-effective product presentation; secondly, the agency had no control over its product. Departments maintained control over the writing, clarity of presentation and design of the products to be sold by Information Canada. "And, it had to

24. Baxter, Clive, "Info Canada Changes Its Image," Financial Post, Vol. 67, January 1973, p. 14.

25. Information Canada, Annual Report 1972-1973, p. 10.

make every single one of those books, winners and losers alike, available."²⁶

In spite of its administrative changeover and efforts to correct past mistakes and dispel the half-truths which plagued it, Information Canada's tribulations persisted. The Progressive Conservative Members of the House of Commons "made a spirited--if vain--effort to vote down funds for InfoCan's budget."²⁷

This incident worsened the agency's situation. Prime Minister Trudeau spoke in defense of InfoCan:

Information Canada wasn't something that was going to die with the Liberal Government, whenever that was going to be; this was something we had set up so that the people of Canada could know of the benefits and rights that they enjoy under the federal system of government, and what the tax dollars paid to the federal government gets them in terms of benefits, direct or indirect. And yet,...it was sabotaged from the beginning, it was ridiculed and attacked by the media and the Opposition. And quite frankly, it's very, very difficult to get it off the ground.²⁸

Perhaps the Prime Minister forgot to mention that his government's lack of commitment to the agency, and the bureaucracy's laxity also made it very difficult to establish InfoCan's credibility.

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- 26. Eric Miller, "Information Canada April 1, 1970--March 31, 1976: A Report of the Federal Government Communication," An unpublished paper prepared for Treasury Board, November, 1976, pp. 12-13.
 - 27. Baxter, Clive, "Info Canada Changes Its Image," Financial Post, Vol. 67, January 1973, p. 14.
 - 28. Trudeau, Pierre Elliott, Transcripts of the Prime Minister's Speech at the Liberal Party Convention, Vancouver, July 15, 1973, pp. 13-14.

In the centre of this political maelstrom, the agency did initiate two noteworthy programmes during 1973. The feedback and networking programmes were introduced to improve the agency's ailing nature. The feedback programme was designed in order to allow Information Canada "to discover who was using the enquiry centres and what questions they were seeking answers for."²⁹ The programme was intended to help the agency improve its services. According to Bradley Mann, the agency could plan information programmes more efficiently and provide departments with the assistance they needed to identify their special publics, as well as the flaws in their information services.³⁰

The networking programme was involved in the exchange of information through established community and provincial organizations and institutions "such as public libraries, schools and information centres."³¹ Information Canada considered this programme a major breakthrough in the extension of its service network: community centres and organizations could now be used as information exchange bureaus.

Thus by supporting these network contacts in each community, networking...developed into an on-going part of

29. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 84.

30. Mann, Bradley, "Evolution and Information Canada," INC, Information Canada's house organ, Vol. 2, No. 5, August, 1975, p. 11.

31. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 85.

Information Canada's services, to both rural and urban communities.³²

InfoCan's activities were the subject of two government reports in 1974; the agency fell under the scrutiny of a Senate finance committee and the Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, D.F. Wall. It has been alleged by some that these reports were "highly" critical of the agency;³³ careful examination of the documents reveal that these allegations are somewhat specious. Although the reports were critical of Information Canada, they openly approved the principle of the agency.

Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet for Security Matters, D.F. Wall, was requested in October 1973, by the Clerk of the Privy Council to examine how government communicated with the public and to recommend how the process might be improved in "order to achieve a better public understanding of government initiatives and actions."³⁴ In the course of his investigation, Wall consulted Deputy Ministers and the heads of government agencies. His provisional conclusion determined that improvement in assorted areas was in order.

32. Mann, Bradley, "Evolution and Information Canada," INC, Information Canada's house organ, Vol. 2, No. 5, August, 1975, p. 11.

33. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 85

34. Wall D.F., "The Provision of the Government Information," Privy Council Office, 1974, p. 32.

Wall outlined six of the agency's flaws. First, Information Canada's terms of reference were unclear. Secondly, since the agency was unable to develop adequate relationships with departments, it had little substantive information to disseminate. Third, departments were antagonistic to the agency, and were unwilling to cooperate with the initiatives which it did propose. Consequently, public information needs were not fulfilled. Fourthly the agency

could not possibly direct, control, operate or even fully coordinate substantive information programmes in defiance of statutory departmental and ministerial responsibilities and "dollar control."³⁵

Moreover, the officials interviewed by Wall felt that Information Canada officials did not have adequate knowledge of the nature and function of the federal government. Sixth, and finally, for many of these reasons, it was not attracting staff of the "necessary quality to make it credible and effective within its existing terms of reference."³⁶

As far as the agency's potential was concerned, many of the people which Wall interviewed saw it as a central device whereby government departments could provide their information to the public, as well as a means to facilitate communication with the regions. In addition, they felt that Information Canada could perform these functions only if it

35. Wall, D.F., "The Provision of the Government Information," Privy Council Office, 1974, p. 10.

36. Ibid.

had clear direction and support; the agency would also have to gain the respect and support of government departments by demonstrating that it could provide some services more economically and efficiently than the departments.³⁷

The Canadian government's release of information considered precipitous or innocuous, combined with its proclivity toward automatically withholding all "other" information, was a major complaint voiced by Wall's subjects. They also stipulated that the agency needed direction and support.³⁸

Several of the people interviewed declared that a "Freedom of Information Act"--such as those in Sweden and in the U.S.--was the best means to serve the public's right to know; this, they argued could be achieved by "enshrining the freedom of information in the Constitution as a fundamental right of the same order as freedom of speech or freedom of assembly."³⁹ In spite of the prevalence of these ideas, Wall dissented:

...my counter arguments were essentially these:
 (a) that neither of those countries had at the heart of their political systems the concepts of collective responsibility or Cabinet solidarity, which necessitated a degree of "built-in" confidentiality in government decision making;
 (b) that a legalistic and essentially adversary approach to the release or non-release of government

37. Wall, D.F., "The Provision of the Government Information," Privy Council Office, 1974, p. 10.

38. Ibid. p. 16

39. Ibid.

information had in both the United States and Sweden led to an elaborate bureaucratic system of seeming to adhere to the letter of the law while avoiding much of its spirit; and

(c) that Canada could best benefit from the experience of these two countries by approaching the matter on the basis of sound principle and good policy, out of which good law might emerge if law were eventually deemed to be necessary.⁴⁰

Mr. Wall's assertions, in wake of the profusion of adverse opinion he cites from academics, journalists and senior public servants, are enlightening; structural confidentiality and Cabinet solidarity, it might be suggested, were the very antithesis of the rationale behind Information Canada's creation, i.e., the right of Canadians to full information about the government's policies and programmes. If the government adhered to the philosophy of structural confidentiality, Information Canada's fate was imminent.

The general conclusions of Wall's report sounded very familiar: first, that the Canadian Government is increasingly difficult for those who govern and incomprehensible to its citizens, because of a lack of "...coherent and comprehensive policy for the provision of information to the public, based on clear and acceptable principles."⁴¹ The second conclusion resembles an argument expressed by the Task Force: that the provision of government information is

40. Wall, D.F., "The Provision of the Government Information," Privy Council Office, 1974, pp. 16-17.

41. Ibid.

a sine qua non of democratic government; "To govern is to inform--to be well governed is to be well informed."⁴² Finally, Wall argued that,

While the fulfillment of the public's right to the information must be balanced against the fulfillment of its right to be protected against the abuse of information, the public also has the right to know the means by which that balance is struck.⁴³

In addition to the above conclusions, Wall proposed the reduction and coordination of unsolicited and redundant information, and a clearer delineation of jurisdiction between Information Canada and the various departments.

The Wall Report noted that the Cabinet was responsible for a good deal of the problems surrounding government information. Although Cabinet is the best informed and visible government branch, "it is perceived as being among the least informative and in relative terms and as a collectivity, it probably is."⁴⁴ Wall said that a central reason for this imbalance was "the general thrust of policy in relation to information has tended to be protective rather than forthcoming, and most of the policy guidance in terms of what should be withheld rather than what should be made available."⁴⁵ For example, Wall cites that until 1964 there

42. Wall, D.F., "The Provision of the Government Information," Privy Council Office, 1974, p. 18.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid. pp. 28-29.

was absolutely no reference in the "Guidance Notes on the Preparation of Cabinet Documents and the Conduct of Cabinet Business," to the public explanation of issues treated in Cabinet documents.⁴⁶

Wall felt that Information Canada could become more useful by expanding or adding to its functions:

- (a) as a central mechanism of availability of information;
- (b) as a source of advice and expert assistance in the preparation and direction of information, and on whether to 'make or buy' information programmes;
- (c) as a necessary complement to departmental operations in the regions; and
- (d) as a training resource.⁴⁷

Much of the Wall Report was a repetition of the Task Force on Government Information. Although the report did describe some of Information Canada's faults, it was unable to alter the agency's ailing predicament.

The report pointed to the Cabinet as a major source of the agency's troubles. Wall suggested that the government could liberalize its exercise of power by adopting a new philosophy of information: one which disregarded the stalwart bromides of structural confidentiality and Cabinet solidarity.

Another important report examined Information Canada's activities during 1974: the Report of the Standing Senate

46. Wall, D.F., "The Provision of the Government Information," Privy Council Office, 1974, p. 29.

47. Ibid.

Committee on National Finance on Information Canada analyzed and reported on the Estimates laid before Parliament for the fiscal year 1973-74; the Senate also prepared a supplementary report on the agency.

The Committee's decision to examine the agency was explained as follows:

In May 1973, the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, in the course of examining the 1973/74 Estimates, decided to examine in detail the appropriation of one department, and chose Information Canada for this purpose...ensuring that the people of Canada receive information on the organization and actions of their federal government is a most important function and in this report we attempt to show ways and means that will accomplish this task in a more effective manner.⁴⁸

The Committee's original intention was to table its report with the results of its examination of the Estimates, but it needed more time to "...do full justice to the examination of Information Canada and table a fair and impartial report,"⁴⁹ so it was delayed until the next fall.

The report emphasized the need for a free flow of government information:

'Two of the more common clichés of modern life are that information is increasingly faster than man's ability to assimilate it and that government is becoming increasingly remote from the governed'...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

48. Canada, Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance on Information Canada, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1974, p. xiii.

49. Ibid.

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 phase.⁵⁰

It also stated that the government had an obligation to keep the citizens of Canada fully informed of its plans and programmes.

The report pointed to a major problem which had plagued the agency--its unclear status in the government panoply of departments and agencies: the Committee felt that Information Canada lacked the authority and direction it needed to promote cooperation among government departments, and as a result, that these departments usually passed up opportunities to obtain the agency's expertise and services. To remedy this problem, the Committee recommended that Information Canada be established by an Act of Parliament to clearly delineate its jurisdiction as a government department, "and establish its relationship to information services in other government departments, to Treasury Board and to Parliament."⁵¹

The Committee dispelled the myth that the agency posed a "propaganda" threat. While it was easy to reach for the club of totalitarianism to beat the government for its

50. Report of the Standing Senate Committee, p. 1

51. Ibid. p. 5

initiatives in the provision of information, the issue in Canada was more prosaic. A central information agency was, according to the Senate Committee, not much of a threat to the liberties of citizens.⁵² The report also noted that Canada's open society left no room for an "Orwellian" Ministry of Truth:

...and despite the cries of the more extreme parliamentary and press critics, Information Canada is ill-suited to such a role. Until jackboots, torture chambers and the 2 a.m. knock on the door become everyday features of Canadian life, such a notion is absurd.⁵³

Although the Committee openly supported Information Canada, it did point to some failings. The agency's implementation of the Mobile Officers Programme was strongly opposed because of its expense on a per capita basis. The Committee thought the Mobile Officers supplied little pertinent information, a condition precipitated by what the senators called the officers' confusion about their roles: they counselled people about social programmes instead of providing information on the government's policies and programmes. The Committee felt that the programme had potential for unlimited growth and cost, and that it should be discontinued.

The report suggested that Information Canada should be appointed as the Treasury Board's agent responsible for

52. Report of the Standing Senate Committee, p. 9

53. Ibid.

screening the information budgets of the various departments; it would also advise Treasury Board on the information programme expenditure proposed by departments. This was deemed essential since it was hard to determine the amount government spent on information:

One of the more striking features of the testimony given in the course of the Committee hearings was that no one quite knew what information was, at least for accounting purposes.⁵⁴

The situation seemingly prevailed throughout government: departments and agencies camouflaged their information costs under various categories in their budgets.

The report also suggested that regional offices be restricted to those already in operation--Halifax, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Toronto; in this manner, the size of the agency's staff in the regions would be frozen at the present level. The main function of the offices would be to evaluate the effectiveness of government information programmes. The report confirmed the importance of the inquiry centres:

The Committee considers the enquiry service to be among the most valuable and potentially the most significant aspect of Information Canada's operations, from the point of view of effective contact between Canadians and the federal government.⁵⁵

In addition, the report endorsed the Communication Services Branch: the senators thought the service an excellent

54. Report of the Standing Senate Committee, p. 9.

55. Ibid. p. 25.

example of coordination of departmental information activities.

The Branch was...involved in projects which crossed departmental lines, including the coordination of information programs for the 23rd Congress of the Permanent International Association of Navigational Congresses in Ottawa in July 1973, and the Federal Identity program...⁵⁶

The Publishing Branch also received the report's accolades. However, the report did make some suggestions: since the high cost of running the bookstores was prohibitive, it advised that no more be opened. It also recommended that Information Canada's role extend to the design and distribution of government publications, and that the traditional use of printed media be downplayed in favor of alternatives:

Government departments often tend to base their information on the printed word and to ignore the effectiveness of radio, television and audio-visual aids. Information Canada should become experienced in the latest audio-visual techniques and should advise departments on their use.⁵⁷

The Committee also felt that Information Canada should not act as a training ground for information personnel, but instead, that it should "advise government departments on the qualifications required of information personnel and the methods for evaluating their performance."⁵⁸ In the same

56. Report of the Standing Senate Committee, p. 32.

57. Ibid. p. 39.

58. Ibid. p. 40.

breath, the senators recommended that the agency develop a system to evaluate information personnel.

Finally, the report endorsed the agency's Expositions Branch, noting that it provided important services--creating domestic and foreign exhibits according to the requirements of departments and agencies.

Although the Senate Committee supported Information Canada in fact and principle, the agency continued to suffer a barrage of press criticism:

Information Canada began badly, with far too many restraints and little acceptance by either departments of the government or the public...The Senate Committee is probably right in suggesting that there be an agency, responsible to a minister, which isolates the costs of information and coordinates departmental programs to eliminate overlapping and other wastage...It is impossible to see it as a descendant of Information Canada, in whose genes lives a free spender.⁵⁹

The prevalence of this type of opinion confirmed that the agency was not very popular with the press: both the Senate Committee and the Wall Report endorsed the agency, yet the press continued its litany of misgivings. Some reporters used the Committee Report to blame the Prime Minister for the agency's failings; some went so far as to indict the report for not openly criticizing Mr. Trudeau:

The report doesn't lay a glove on Prime Minister Trudeau for the blurred and unrealistic guidelines which he devised for InfoCan back in 1970, any more than it blames the agency for its inability to measure

59. "Free-Wheeling InfoCan," Globe and Mail, May 2, 1974.

up to them...A casual student of the report might even gather that the honourable senators were unaware of the identity of the author (Trudeau) of the unworkable concept (Information Canada).⁶⁰

Harangued by the press, and vilified by nearly everyone else, Information Canada continued its treacherous journey through the bureaucratic maze.

The agency opened new enquiry centres in Edmonton, Saskatoon, Moncton, Charlottetown and St-John's, during the 1973-74 fiscal year. Every province now had its Information Canada Enquiry Centre, and the service was operating at full strength.

Each of the new centres had been equipped to provide regional publications mail order service. As well, arrangements were made with provincial government information services and more than 150 community information centres and libraries across Canada to develop practical, effective information networks beyond urban areas and linked to or resourced by the nearest one of Information Canada's eleven inquiry centres.⁶¹

Despite the Senate Committee's criticism of the agency's mobile information programme, research indicated a strongly favourable attitude toward the programme on the part of individuals and groups served.⁶² In addition, research and feedback analysis were conducted to determine whether other regions could benefit from the service. In

60. Blakely, Arthur, "InfoCan is alive and as well as can be expected." The Gazette, May 4, 1974.

61. Information Canada, Annual Report 1973-1974. Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974, p. 1.

62. Ibid.

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some areas, the programme got rave reviews:

The release of the Senate Committee's report on Information Canada, which has recommended the disbanding of the mobile services information officers project, is doing away with one of the program's most effective services...We hope the federal government will take a long look at the report, and then fire that particular recommendation out the window.⁶³

To facilitate access to information on the federal government, Information Canada produced a series of special information materials during 1973-74. Foremost in this list was the Organization of the Government of Canada, a reference book describing the federal government's structure in detail. The book was improved over previous editions: the texts and organization charts were standardized; a glossary of terms, a list of acronyms and abbreviations and a key word index were added.⁶⁴

The 1973-74 fiscal year was especially productive for the Federal Identity Programme--fifty-three more federal organizations adopted the bar and leaf design; one-hundred departments and agencies now used the new symbol. In 1974, a special management system was developed for the programme:

Because the Federal Identity Program had such wide ranging impact across the federal administration, a management system was developed, with the council of the Treasury Board Secretariat, to relate all aspects of the task more directly to the board's responsibilities in the areas of the program, administration and official languages policy.⁶⁵

63. Amherst Daily News and Sentinel, May 4, 1974.

64. Information Canada. Annual Report 1973-74, p. 3.

65. Ibid. p. 5.

The Graphic Design Secretariat was created in January 1974, to improve the quality of federal visual communication; it would pursue the development and implementation of the Federal Identity Programme, while providing Treasury Board and departments with advice on graphic design and its management in every part of government.

Information Canada developed a bi-monthly periodical for its employees in 1973, to "improve internal relations and draw the various regional offices of Information Canada more closely together."⁶⁶

The agency's Exposition Branch was quite active during 1973-74:

Expositions created 200 domestic and international exhibits for 70 government departments and agencies during the 1973-74 fiscal year. Domestic exhibits accounted for approximately two thirds of the total number of exhibits.⁶⁷

The branch also obtained awards of excellence: one silver medal and two awards of merit from the Art Directors Club of Toronto were accorded for poster, graphic and exhibit designs.

The Publishing Branch developed a system for the conversion of its operations to a cost recovery/revolving fund basis and implemented it April 1, 1974. The order processing, procurement and inventory control divisions underwent several changes under this new system.

66. Information Canada, Annual Report 1973-74, p. 6.

67. Ibid. p. 7.

The inventory control and disposal program, started in early 1973 to reduce stock to more manageable levels, was successfully completed during 1973-74. From a Canadian Government publications inventory of close to 70,000 titles, the computer listing showed less than 15,000 items at March 31, 1974...As well, agreements were reached with international organizations that the Publishing Branch should carry in its live inventory only those publications selected as having definite appeal and marketable value in Canada.⁶⁸

To facilitate the access of government publications to people at the community level, the Publishing Branch appointed approximately one-hundred booksellers as authorized agents for Canadian government publications throughout the country. These agents would carry a minimum amount of selected publications, to be displayed in their stores.

The Publishing Branch also initiated a review of the government's publishing policy:

A complete review and updating...was undertaken by officers of the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Department of Supply and Services. That project was completed during the fiscal year and it is expected that the new policy will be issued, once approval has been received, during the course of the 1974-75 fiscal year.⁶⁹

The Research and Evaluation Branch conducted many studies in 1973-74--including a survey of Information Canada customers, to assess the quality of services offered by the bookstores, authorized agents and the mail order service.

68. Information Canada, Annual Report 1973-74, p. 9.

69. Ibid. p. 10.

Moreover, the branch undertook research into information distribution, media audiences, etc.

A project of particular interest is a sociometric study of certain characteristics, significant in terms of information, of the Canadian population, in order to divide the latter into small amounts of qualitatively, quantitatively, geographically and culturally homogeneous groups in terms of various types of problem areas. Use of this system should contribute substantially toward improving communication between the federal government and the various publics it serves.⁷⁰

Information Canada's Personnel Branch was very busy in 1973-74; at the end of 1974, the agency's manpower strength was 587--26 more employees than the previous year.

Treasury Board's new Official Languages Administrative System was implemented during the year; identification of language requirements for positions with Information Canada were to be as follows:

51 per cent bilingual, 26 per cent English or French, 15 per cent English essential, and eight per cent French essential. As 80 per cent of the positions identified as bilingual were already occupied by bilingual incumbents or were vacant, they were designated for bilingual staffing effective December 31, 1973. The other 20 per cent of the bilingual positions have been designated for progressive staffing with bilingual incumbents, from April 1, 1974, to December 1978.⁷¹

Throughout the 1974-75 fiscal year, Information Canada maintained a steady course, and didn't ruffle too many feathers:

The year under review was one of stabilization. Information Canada attempted to build a firmer base for

70. Information Canada, Annual Report 1973-74, pp. 14-15.

71. Ibid. p. 17.

improved communications between the people of Canada and their government. The Agency concentrated on strengthening its services to other departments, and continued to provide improved services for citizens.⁷²

To improve liaison and cooperation between departments, Information Canada developed an advisory service to aid departments with their presentations of public information aspects of memoranda to cabinet. The service was very successful; "By the end of March 1975, most departments had responded by designating representatives to work with Information Canada's Liaison Officers in this important area."⁷³

Departments progressively increased their demand for communication counsel and assistance from Information Canada. Professional and technical advice offered by the Liaison division included pre and post-testing of programme effectiveness; target audience delineation; graphic design; audio-visual and print production; marketing and advertising; and evaluation of departmental information policies, programmes and activities.

Information Canada's Expositions Branch created 325 domestic and international shows and displays in 1974-75--approximately 70 per cent were domestic exhibits. The Branch prepared the International Women's Year exhibits,

72. Information Canada, Annual Report 1974-75. Ottawa: Information Canada, 1975, p. 1.

73. Ibid. p. 3

Changing Times, Changing Women, [was created] for the Women's Program of the Department of the Secretary of State. The portable exhibits were used in shopping malls, in small exhibitions, and in meetings and lectures during the summer of 1975.⁷⁴

In addition, the branch created a permanent Canadian exhibit for the Commonwealth Institute in London. It provided a geographical and historical perspective of Canada, its people, flora and fauna. Information Canada was finally converted to a cost recovery/revolving-fund basis during 1974-75.

The agency also entered into a series of agreements on co-publishing with other firms:

Co-publishing is a measure which was announced by the Secretary of State in 1972, both to assist the Canadian book publishing industry and to allow government to benefit from the private publisher's commercial expertise in design, production and marketing. Private publishers are entrusted, to the greatest extent feasible, with the publication and marketing of government publications. The copyright of these publications, however, remains the property of the crown.⁷⁵

Information Canada was to be responsible for this co-publishing policy, and published in cooperation with the MacMillan Company the National Atlas of Canada.

Despite the blatant lack of support from the press and bureaucracy, Information Canada did achieve status as a recognized publisher in the private sector; the agency was an active member of the Canadian Book Publishers' Council,

74. Information Canada, Annual Report 1974-75, p. 7.

75. Ibid. p. 9.

the Independent Publishing Association and l'Association des Editeurs Canadiens.

In an attempt to distribute information on federal programmes throughout the country, the agency expanded its Regional Operations Branch during 1974-75. Moreover, the enquiry centres handled in excess of 350,000 queries received by telephone, mail or from visitors.

Although the agency had managed to keep itself out of trouble since the administrative changeover of June 30, 1972, it still had few friends and the opposition's invective was unrelenting. In fact, the government departments were increasing their informational personnel and programmes and were clamouring for the abolition of Information Canada.⁷⁶

Bombarded on all fronts, the agency could survive as long as it had the confidence of the Liberal government. However,

...some members of the Liberal government began to question Information Canada's right to exist in a period of high inflation and to believe the allegations which were being made by the departments and press.⁷⁷

Despite the steady erosion of support by the government, Information Canada was making headway with a number of departments and agencies during 1974-75 fiscal year. At the

76. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 101.

77. Ibid.

time it was abolished, according to Beverly Edwards, the number of government departments which requested technical and professional help from Information Canada had increased considerably, and had been increasing throughout 1975.⁷⁸

Faced with escalating inflation, the government reacted--albeit cosmetically in Information Canada's case; Minister of Finance Donald MacDonald presented to Parliament, on October 14, 1975, a policy statement titled, "Attack on Inflation: A Program of National Action." MacDonald said that the only way to wrest Canada's finances from inflation's grip was to establish a national programme to control it. As a result, the government established the Anti-Inflation Act in October 1975.

Information Canada stood in the midst of the crossfire: it was accused of being wasteful and useless; it was hounded on all sides and consequently was dismantled. While explaining the Anti-Inflation Programme to Parliament on December 18, 1975, the Hon. Jean Chrétien said the agency would be terminated. He also announced that the bookstores and the division which handled expositions would continue to exist as parts of other departments.⁷⁹

The agency was abolished as a result of the Anti-Inflation Programme on December 18, 1975. The government

78. Edwards, Beverly, p. 99.

79. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons Debates, December 18, 1975, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1975, p. 10156.

knew where to look when it had to trim its budget; but cutting the costs was only part of the scenario. As Jean Chrétien said,

Information Canada was terminated because it became politically expedient to do so; too many problems surrounded it--administrative reasons, dead ends, a belligerent press, etc.⁸⁰

Predictably, the agency's termination had little effect on the fight against inflation, "Faced with criticism, the government disbanded Information Canada as a cosmetic economy move..."⁸¹ For instance, Information Canada's budget for 1975-76 was \$9.5 million. Abolishing the agency would ostensibly save taxpayers close to \$10 million; however, careful scrutiny disproves this assertion, since, in the wake of InfoCan's termination,

...\$5 million will still be spent on salaries for the 677 employees who will be transferred to other departments,...Another \$2.5 million will be spent on the bookstores and the branch which arranges government displays at trade fairs and exhibitions.⁸²

Thus the cost saving measures aimed at Information Canada were ineffective. Moreover, the austerity measures neither mentioned nor addressed the rampant increase of information programmes throughout the various ministries. Memoranda prepared by senior InfoCan officials, and sent to

80. Interview with Jean Chrétien, January 1986.

81. Michael Lavoie, "InfoCan to Slip Quietly Away--11th Hour Battle Lost," Ottawa Citizen, December 19, 1975.

82. Ibid.

Labour Minister John Munroe, minister responsible for InfoCan, said, "Staggering increases in costs have arisen from ignorance among senior public servants, lack of co-ordination among various departments and failure to analyse the effectiveness of advertising and other information programs."⁸³

At the time it was trashed, Information Canada was developing a programme that proposed to save the government \$50 million by reviewing information programmes.

Confidential memorandums [sic] obtained by the Canadian Press outline InfoCan's proposals to streamline, co-ordinate and cut at least 25 per cent from the \$200 million a year that all federal departments spend on information, public relations and advertising.⁸⁴

The agency was proposing to examine all the government's advertising and publication programmes before their launch, and to eliminate useless information by the various departments. Information Canada proposed an interdepartmental inquiry to clarify and explain the role of information and public relations to deputy ministers and senior public servants. Departmental information personnel had increased, but it remained unclear whether the government was communicating more effectively,

Total government information staff had doubled to about 1,000 since 1969, yet there is little reason to believe

83. Lavoie, Michael, Ibid.

84. Ibid.

the amount of information transmitted between the government and its public has increased.⁸⁵

Information Canada also proposed to increase the enquiry centre service, so the centres could provide most of the government's information to the public. If the government were to spend \$75 million less on dissemination of information, and \$25 million more on access through the enquiry centres, Information Canada guaranteed an economy of \$50 million and a more effective communication process.⁸⁶

Finally, Information Canada had urged the government to downplay the importance of advertising agencies, and to buy more advertising directly from the media; a move which would save \$3.75 million of the money spent annually on advertising.⁸⁷

Information Canada's efforts, however, had mostly been in vain; the government capitulated to the pressures which surrounded the agency by abolishing it. Ridiculed by the press and helpless because it lacked "authority over departmental information programs, Information Canada died unmourned in the austerity cuts of 1975."⁸⁸

85. Lavoie, Michael, Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. Gwyn, Richard, The Northern Magus, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1980, pp. 104-105.

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have chronicled the history of Information Canada to suggest that the agency should have succeeded. Its downfall was the result of factors which were external and beyond its control. Although it suffered a series of administrative setbacks, Information Canada provided Canadians with coordinated information about their government. The agency's many innovations are still evident today--not the least of which is the Federal Identity Programme. Information Canada failed because it could not obtain the legitimacy it needed to survive; criticism from the opposition and the press, and a lack of conviction of the government and bureaucracy denied it the necessary credibility.

Although healthy scepticism about the centralization of government information was justified, since a really open approach to information is contrary to the nature of governments in general, a majority of the criticism thrown at the agency was either exaggerated or misleading. Opposition parties had spearheaded the attack on the agency before it was established, and helped create an atmosphere of cynicism which enveloped Information Canada from its inception to its demise. The opposition's reaction to the agency was not very enlightening:

speaking off the top of their collective head without the benefit of reflection, spokesmen for all three

parties unhesitatingly denounced the Government's blueprint for a ministry of propaganda.¹

Opposition Leader Robert Stanfield responded to the February 10, 1970 announcement of the government's intention to create the agency, by claiming that it could easily become

a sort of ministry of propaganda. I say it is surely obvious that Information Canada could very easily become 'Manipulation Canada.'...This is a dangerous proposal.²

With very little evidence the opposition blasted the agency, and suggested that it would become a bureaucratic ogre.

NDP Deputy House Leader David Lewis felt that the Prime Minister's statement announcing the creation of InfoCan was very disturbing. He claimed that Information Canada was another unfortunate sham in the participatory democracy which the Prime Minister was advocating.

It is utterly regrettable that we should have before us another super agency, costing more money, doing nothing that is not already being done, except acting as an agency for controlling and managing the news that is to come out of government. The only purpose is to befuddle, deceive and mislead the people, it is not to inform them.³

Mr. Lewis's apprehension about an information agency may have been justified, but the reasons he used to support his

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1. Burns, John, "Information Canada: the budding oracle." Globe and Mail, February 21, 1970.
 2. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons Debates, February 10, 1970, pp. 3407-3408.
 3. Ibid. p. 3409.

argument were based on speculation about the possibility of abuse, and not on any actual abuse.

Creditiste leader Réal Caouette said that the only use for the new agency would be to "find jobs for friends of the government, party stalwarts, and for political scheming."⁴ In addition, Mr. Caouette felt that the agency could become a propaganda tool used by the government.

The press was also quick to join in the diatribe against Information Canada. Some of the reasons it used to criticize the agency are disconcerting. A newspaper editorial which said that opposition members were correct in their suspicion of Information Canada, also claimed that

...in this time of austerity in government services Information Canada is expected to cost a million dollars a year more than the combined costs of present departmental information agencies.⁵

Information Canada's budget for 1970-71 was \$7,355,000: its expenditures were \$6,964,851.⁶ The estimated cost of all government information services for the same year was \$150,000,000. Relying on the information provided by the above editorial, Information Canada's budget for 1970-71 would have been in the neighborhood of \$151,000,000.

4. House of Commons Debates, February 10, 1970, p. 3409.

5. "Propaganda Agencies:" Journal Pioneer, Summerside, P.E.I., February 12, 1970.

6. Information Canada, Annual Report 1970-1971, p. 22.

Many editorials were just as enlightening. According to one newspaper, Information Canada's purpose was not merely to impose uniform standards to government publicity, or to place all information agencies under one government department:

Information Canada will be given the power to control the dissemination of news by officials and government departments. This in itself will service the dangerous practice of suppressing information and the people's right to know.⁷

The editorial was partly right: Information Canada did bring some uniform standards to government publicity through the Federal Identity Programme. However, it was certainly wrong in claiming that all information agencies would be placed under one government department. Neither the Task Force, nor Information Canada's terms of reference suggested that the agency play such a role. Moreover, Information Canada never controlled the dissemination of news, nor the information services of the various departments. In retrospect, such comments appear to have been considerably distorted. Part of the reason Information Canada failed was that it lacked the central authority to impose any of its directives on government departments: the agency could not advise departments unless it was requested to.

The cynicism and speculation surrounding the agency

7. "Information Canada:" Winnipeg Tribune, February 13, 1970.

were exacerbated by many factors. For instance, concerns about Jean-Louis Gagnon's alleged Communist past were raised by M.P. Patrick Nowlan during a meeting of the Commons miscellaneous estimates committee. Mr. Nowlan asked Mr. Gagnon if he had ever

...sent a telegram to a Montreal meeting from Washington in 1946...including the words 'Long live the glorious Soviet Union.'⁸

Gagnon was also accused of being an anti-monarchist. He responded to these allegations by saying that he was a republican, a Liberal, a capitalist, and a democrat.⁹

The Right Honourable John Diefenbaker also raised certain questions about Mr. Gagnon's background, and wondered if he could appear before a House Committee in order to bring with him his biographical record, so Canadians could be reassured that the information emanating from Information Canada was objective.¹⁰

Speaking on a non-confidence motion alleging the failure of the government's economic policies, M.P. Erik Neilsen asked why Jean-Louis Gagnon"--a gentleman with a very interesting background closely associated with communist activities--should head one of the most sensitive

8. "'Never a Red,' Information Canada Director Answers." Globe and Mail, May 22, 1970.

9. Ibid.

10. House of Commons Debates, May 19, 1970, p. 7064.

agencies in the government...

...this gentleman has appeared on the same platform as Fred Rose, who was very famous during the days of the Gouzenko inquiry, and was a famous contributor to 'La Victoire,' the communist organ in Québec...his wife was a representative to Hungary at a meeting of International Journalists, which is a recognized international communist organization...under no circumstances should this man be given a clearance to hold any office in the government of Canada.[!]¹¹

With this kind of polemic, it is easy to see why Information Canada had so many problems.

An editorial written in the Toronto Telegram by Dalton Camp, a well known Conservative militant and public relations consultant, went further in its harsh repudiation of the agency:

It will be the largest public relations pork barrel in the history of Western Civilization; its demands on the treasury will rise more rapidly than the cost of repairs to aircraft carriers; its strain upon the credulity of we Canadians, trusting, docile souls that we are, will be no greater than that of the average subscriber to Pravda.¹²

Camp's predictions seem exaggerated today, but when he wrote this article, the War Measures Act had just been proclaimed by Prime Minister Trudeau. His editorial was probably an emotional reaction to the times; a sort of shooting the proverbial messenger. Taken literally, however, his words painted an exaggerated picture of the agency.

11. House of Commons Debates, March 25, 1971, p. 4615.

12. Dalton Camp, "Our New National Flack Apparatus." Toronto Telegram, November 30, 1970.

The October Crisis, combined with the declaration of the War Measures Act did not allay fears about the agency.

During the crisis, a Toronto daily wrote the following:

When Information Canada held its first press conference here [Ottawa] recently, a machine-gun-armed soldier watched sternly as newspapermen asked questions...the sight of the soldier reminded newsmen of all the fears expressed during the past year about Information Canada. The fears that it would go beyond its assigned role as disseminator of material and become a propaganda agency forcing the Government's story on an unwilling press.¹³

The tone of this article was neither helpful nor enlightening. The armed soldier was present to protect Robert Stanbury, the Minister responsible for Information Canada; all federal Ministers were guarded by armed soldiers during the October Crisis.

During its early career Information Canada continued to suffer the barbs which the press and opposition had flung at it. By 1972, after the famous Phillips memo had been leaked to the press, the opposition redoubled its invective against Information Canada and began asking for its abolition. Conservative leader Robert Stanfield asked whether the government would disband the agency and stop the waste of millions of dollars; New Democrat Barry Mather sought either a full inquiry or a statement on whether the government intended to repair or abolish the agency. The Ottawa

13. Mackie, Richard, "Coincidental Machine Gun: Information Canada Girds for Words War." Toronto Telegram, November 14, 1970.

Journal harshly admonished InfoCan:

A pathetic outfit that Information Canada...The whole concept was woolly and wasteful, and we said so from the start...Information Canada was based on a dictatorial concept of what is news...[and] It was encouraged to prance out ballet-like in all manner of esoteric roles.¹⁴

The Phillips memo, according to its author, had been intended as an internal working document designed to stimulate discussion and help Information Canada's management improve the agency's efficiency: it did not present any conclusions, per se.¹⁵ That it was ever leaked to the press was unfortunate and helped demonstrate the animosity which existed towards Information Canada.

Throughout the remainder of its career Information Canada continued to be victimized. Opposition members reiterated their message that the agency was only a means by which the government sought to impose its own view of what was right and what was real.¹⁶ This continued and concentrated attack resulted in the agency's abolition.

One of the few newspapers that actually supported Information Canada, the Ottawa Citizen, made the following comments on the opposition's initial reaction to the agency:

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14. "Information Canada Looks a Little Silly." Ottawa Journal, March 3, 1972.
 15. "Information Note 'Internal Matter,'" Ottawa Citizen, March 2, 1972.
 16. House of Commons Debates, Speech by Joe Clark, July 23, 1973, p. 5911.

The fatuous comments by opposition spokesmen on the government's decision to establish Information Canada hardly deserve serious consideration.¹⁷

In retrospect this comment seems applicable to most of what was said by the opposition and the press about the agency. According to the Citizen editorial, there had been absolutely nothing in the history of government information, in the proposals of the Task Force, or in the Prime Minister's announcement, to support the opposition's claim regarding Information Canada.

If little justified harsh criticism of Information Canada, why did the agency suffer such invective and suspicion throughout its career? The answer might have a good deal to do with appearances; the Trudeau government had established Information Canada because it believed that it was a necessity--the Glassco Commission, the Task Force and innumerable other reports had confirmed that an agency to coordinate government information services was needed. But, since government information presented the possibility of manipulation and misuse, extra care should have been taken by the government not to appear to be harbouring improper intentions. This, it did not do. The record confirms it. The method used to create the agency only helped to rouse suspicions about it. Information Canada had been established by Order In Council. No legislation had been

17. "Good Plan, Bad Time," Ottawa Citizen, February 12, 1970.

drafted and no act had been passed; the agency was responsible, not to Parliament, but to the government.

Thus the agency has been created by the Government, its director had been appointed by the Government, both are responsible solely to the Government and can be eliminated or dismissed by the Government. Yet they are supposed to supply to the people of Canada objective, unbiased and full information...Immediately there is a conflict of interest.¹⁸

The only way to eliminate this apparent conflict of interest would have been to establish the agency by Act of Parliament--thereby making Information Canada and its director responsible to Parliament instead of the government. The opposition parties would have had their chance to speak on the agency, and make recommendations on its establishment. The legislation would have been debated, and the result would have been an agency with authority and credibility instead of one chastised for what it appeared to be.

Although it was set up by executive decree, Information Canada had very little authority; it could only assist departments on their request. Therefore, suspicion about the agency was certainly exaggerated. However, had the government established it by Act of Parliament, many of the agency's problems would have been resolved. It would have had the authority to help government departments coordinate their information services, and much of the opposition's

18. "A Wide Conflict of Interest," Globe and Mail, April 2, 1970.

fire would have been dampened.

The appearance of conflict of interest was not limited to the methods used to create Information Canada. Indeed, the appearance that the agency would become a sanctuary for the party faithful was exacerbated by the appointment of a prominent Liberal as Information Canada's first Director General. Although it has yet to be proved that Jean-Louis Gagnon ever manipulated or intended to manipulate government information, one thing is certain: the man chosen to be the agency's director should have appeared to have been completely dissociated from partisan politics and beyond any reproach. In an area as sensitive as government information, the appointment of anyone who appeared to have partisan sentiments was inviting strong criticism.

The combination of a poor legislative foundation and the appointment of a director who had been a party militant hurt the agency; the press and opposition had found a scapegoat with which to slam the Trudeau government. The repeated attacks on an agency with a shaky foundation helped expedite Information Canada's downfall. The crux of the opposition and press invective--that the agency would become a propaganda device, or that it would be manipulative--has never been borne out in the facts. Not one single shred of evidence suggests that it was either used as a means to diffuse propaganda, or was ever intended to be used as such.

If newspaper editors and members of the opposition

parties had taken the time to read Volume I of the Report of the Task Force, they would have realized the extent of the problem with government information. They would have seen that the agency was set up to solve a problem. Instead, the opposition used Information Canada in an attempt to score political points. Based on the evidence cited, they certainly had no idea what the agency was about. The vilifications which were flung at the agency, and its ultimate abolition were unnecessary: the need for the federal government to communicate with its citizens survives. Countless reports had pointed to the need for better government information: the Glassco Royal Commission; the Task Force on Government Information; the Wall Report; the Senate Committee Report; and the Miller Report all agreed on this point. That Information Canada's elimination was tantamount to an induced miscarriage is most likely--fear and misunderstanding were certainly to blame and the citizens of Canada were the major losers in the experiment.

The fear that government was attempting to centralize its information services was partly justified. An overly centralized government represents a threat to the health of a democracy; it can use its resources for partisan purposes. However, the decentralized nature of the Canadian polity, the federal nature of our Constitution, and a strong tradition of representative government make this unlikely. As Beverly Edwards argued,

If anything has been learned from the Information Canada experience, it is that a central information agency would probably not abuse its position in the Canadian Government any more than the departmental services do right now.¹⁹

Moreover, this attempt to make our polity more democratic should have thrived.

The theory and practice of democratic political society presuppose a strong degree of citizens' involvement. John Locke said of the beginning of political societies that,

Men being...by Nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this Estate, and subjected to the Political Power of another, without his own Consent. The only way whereby anyone divests himself of his Natural Liberty, and puts on the bonds of Civil Society is by agreeing with other men to joyn [sic] and unite into a Community.²⁰

If one assumes that a democracy is a social contract, then it must follow that the contractees know the full extent of their involvement and their entitlements. If citizens of a democracy are entitled to certain rights and to certain government services, then the proper functioning of a democratic government can only be ensured if its citizens know the extent of the rights and services to which they are entitled. The most efficient manner for citizens to learn about these rights and services, is for the government to provide the information required. Although this may present certain conflicts of interest, according to the theory that

19. Edwards, Beverly, The Rise and Demise of Information Canada, p. 131.

20. Locke, John, Two Treatises of Government, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1963, pp. 374-375.

"authority is legitimate only by virtue of its checks, and that the sovereign is dependent on the subject,"²¹ these conflicts can be surmounted by the proper democratic safeguards discussed. Detractors of this theory will argue that citizens participate to the extent that they select representatives who make decisions for them; nonetheless, citizens must have the information they need to participate to the full extent of their democratic prerogatives.

Lord Acton once wrote that "The reality of history is so unlike its report, that we continue, in spite of much disappointment, to look for revelations."²² I believe that this quotation is particularly applicable to government information: much has been done by various governments to provide citizens with better information; a great deal has been learned--the need to improve government information remains. Although any government information service might be subjected to criticism, I believe that the appropriate framework--i.e., legislation with debate in the House, a clear mandate and great care in avoiding the taint of partisanship--would provide Information Canada's descendant a much smoother ride, and most likely a great deal of success.

The need for such an agency still exists and the people

21. Acton, John Dalberg, Essays on Freedom and Power, Meridian, London, 1956.

22. Acton, John Dalberg, Selected Writings of Lord Acton: Essays in the Study and Writing of History, Liberty Classics, Indianapolis, 1985, p. 462.

of Canada would be well served if their federal government deemed it appropriate to establish an agency mandated to providing Canadians with full, timely and objective information about its programmes and policies.

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APPENDIX

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE
ON GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

The first recommendation declared that the right of Canadians to full, objective and timely information, and the State's obligation to provide information about its programmes and policies, be proclaimed, and stand as the basis for government information policy.

The second recommendation concerned the appointment of the Cabinet committee to develop effective information policy, and to facilitate a more coherent and economical approach by the Executive to information.

Thirdly, the report recommended that a House Committee be commissioned to review information policy, and that annual reports be tabled by Information Canada.

Fourth, federal-provincial consultation was recommended in order to establish permanent mechanisms to improve communication between levels of government.

The fifth recommendation stipulated that the government should take steps to reach the considerable cross-section of the Canadian public which did not receive government information. These measures might have included Citizen Advisory Bureaux and neighborhood councils.

Recommendation number six urged that a social survey

unit be created to provide government, Parliament and the public with an insight into the needs of sections of the population, and the effects of existing federal legislation and regulations on Canadians.

The following outlines recommendation seven:

Departments and agencies [should] develop and implement information policies consistent with departmental and agency objectives, and with the information policies of the Federal Government to reflect the enhanced role of the information function and of information officers and strengthen their relations with the media and with particular publics nationally and regionally; and that departments and agencies be encouraged to increase the creative use of the two official languages.¹

The eighth recommendation outlined the need for a Council of Public Affairs Directors from departments and agencies: the council would be set up to permit a better understanding of all government policies affecting respective departments; it would be served by Information Canada; and would pool knowledge on current information plans, in order to develop a broader view of the context of information.

Recommendation number nine defined the central resource and service organization to be known as Information Canada.

This organization would facilitate and coordinate the technical and operational aspects of information activities in Canada and abroad; and would be responsible

1. Canada, Task Force on Government Information, To Know and be Known: The Report of the Task Force on Government Information, Vol. 1, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1969, p. 54.

for certain activities that are currently not being carried out, or are receiving inadequate attention, within departments.²

Tenth, the report suggested that Information Canada be designated public advocate regarding access to federal information, and that it be provided with the necessary staff to execute this task.

The eleventh recommendation proposed that a personnel division of Information Canada provide advice and assistance to the Public Service Commission and the Treasury Board, to establish a career service to upgrade and mobilize information personnel.

Twelfth, the Task Force recommended that regional offices be set up by Information Canada, to allow for an expeditious exchange of information on federal programmes between Ottawa and the regions.

The thirteenth recommendation proposed that an independent agency of record be established to review government advertising, in order to recommend, on the basis of merit agencies capable of undertaking advertising assignments.

Recommendation fourteen suggested that Canada's information programmes abroad be developed in unison with the policies of the Department of External Affairs, under the advice of a board comprised of members from the private and public sectors; these programmes would be serviced by Information Canada.

2. Task Force p. 59.

Fifteenth, the report proposed that the director of Information Canada be at the level of a Deputy Minister, or a senior Assistant Deputy Minister. Moreover, the Minister to whom the director of Information Canada was to be responsible, would be excluded from serving as chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Information Policy.

The sixteenth recommendation stipulated that if the government were to accept the foregoing proposals, it should secure priorities and phasing-in procedures, and determine the necessary financial, personnel and structural arrangements for Information Canada.

The final proposal declared that the legislative implications of the Task Force recommendations should receive prompt attention from government law officers.

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