

Non-Canadian Publications

Apart from liquor advertising, the second most common advertisements are those of the travel industry and automobile companies. These are all foreign-controlled, as are the bulk of the liquor advertisers. So who are we promoting? I suppose it could be said that we are promoting the product of foreign companies, and I do not think this is very essential to this country.

In addition to the government being unhappy about ineffective Canadian ownership of *Time* and of *Reader's Digest*, the government seems to wish to control the editorial content of those magazines. I think this is a very dangerous step. We have already seen that the government does not mind using its authority to punish those who disagree with it. We have the recent example of the federal government withholding the advertising of its current campaign to reduce the use of energy in the Montreal paper *Le Jour* because it did not agree with the editorial policy of *Le Jour*. Thus, it is not averse to using its authority to back up its own political views.

For the government to demand that the content of a magazine, even though it is owned primarily by Canadians, must be 80 per cent different from that of the parent magazine is a very dangerous step. It seems to me a rather artificial or arbitrary way to act. The decision is a subjective one, as well, because one person's idea of difference may vary from that of another. I do not see how you can say that news or news-based stories should be 80 per cent different from those of the parent publication if one is at all interested in accuracy or fairness in the reporting of news. Also, as the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) clearly pointed out, there will be loss of revenue to Canadians as a result of jobs lost if this measure is successful in driving *Time* and *Reader's Digest* out of Canada.

It is also of interest to note that when *Reader's Digest* came to Canada a certain percentage of our population subscribed to it. This percentage has not changed in all the years it has been printed in this country. I suggest that if *Reader's Digest* were forced to cease publication in Canada, there would still be as many people buying the magazine as before, with the difference that our Post Office would lose several million dollars revenue but would still be required to carry the magazine to Canadian readers. Those who print the magazine in Canada would be out of a job, and if they did not find another job they would become the recipients of unemployment insurance or welfare and would not pay income tax. Neither would the companies. Thus, we would have suffered the loss of what is, in effect, the Canadianization or Canadian view of foreign happenings as presented by very talented people in a way that has not been copied by any other existing journal in Canada.

I should like to close by quoting an article that appeared in the *Calgary Herald* on Monday, October 27, 1975—a paper that is also concerned about this question:

Government control of magazine content, backed up by changes in the tax laws, is being used as part of an effort to destroy *Time* and *Reader's Digest* in Canada.

That is a very dangerous precedent, even if the aim—to make fully Canadian magazines more viable—is praiseworthy. The regulations are not, strictly speaking, censorship. However, they tend to legitimize a mechanism for government interference in the decisions of a publisher. They also tend to create a climate which discourages vigorous criticism of the federal government—a disturbingly authoritarian government, at

[Mr. Schumacher.]

times. Donald Macdonald's decision to withhold federal advertising from a Montreal separatist newspaper is significant in retrospect. When a government begins to take measures against publications whose editorial position it dislikes, the habit can quickly become ingrained.

The government's action against *Time* and *Reader's Digest*, admittedly, is not intended to silence voices of dissent. The hope is that stifling these two magazines will enable *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night* and the like to breathe more freely, commercially speaking. But no matter how noble its purpose, a government that sets out to destroy or financially cripple a magazine bears watching. It might develop a taste for blood.

● (1610)

That is my great fear. Already we have had an example of what this government likes to do concerning people who do not agree with it. I think that if we allow a situation to develop in which editorial content will have to be 80 per cent different in relation to a certain publication, we will have the government imposing itself in an area in which it definitely should not be.

I should also like to point out that I do not see how these things can be considered as concessions. It is said that *Time* and *Reader's Digest* have received great concessions, as if we have been giving them something. I suppose they have concessions so far as *U.S. News Report* is concerned, but they do not have any concessions in relation to *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night* or any other periodical in this country. I do not like the use of that term. They are not on the same footing. I submit that if there were great merit to the product of *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, they would be able to compete and they would be in a position to grow in this climate. It has been perfectly obvious over the last number of years that they have been unable to do so. I do not see why the level of journalism should be dragged down to a lesser level just because these are wholly-owned Canadian publications.

There is also the question of what this bill will do in respect of professional journals. This measure could inhibit those publications which are necessary for the development of the country, economically speaking if not culturally speaking. I suggest it is not proper for the government to propose measures the only effect of which will be to drag down the level of journalism in this country and give the government the tools with which to impose control over its people.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, in rising to take part in this debate on Bill C-58 one should point out that basically it affects four things.

An hon. Member: Are you for the people?

Mr. Horner: Yes, I am for the people. The great difficulty the present government has is in determining whether it understands the people and whether it is prepared to listen to the people. There is a very significant difference. That party just went through some kind of a conference in which a selected few had the right to ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and their other leaders one question.

An hon. Member: That is wrong. You are talking through your hat.

An hon. Member: You hit a sensitive spot. Keep going.