

Non-Canadian Publications

That is to say, the government's position is a good one—strong, straightforward, supportive. At page 2528 he said:

—that we would be in agreement with the thrust suggested by the Secretary of State in eliminating advertising that is now being put through foreign broadcast stations.

That is also straightforward and supportive of the government's position. He went on to say:

In summary, we are pleased that the government has at last acted, subject to what I have said, in the fashion indicated in the statement.

Clear, straightforward, simple, strong, obvious support for the government's position. There was no doubt then about where the opposition party stood. What happened by May 8 when the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) rose to take part in this debate in response to the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner)? Where was their straightforward, clear, supportive position then? Were the snows of January melted by the time the darling buds of May were in bloom? The hon. member for Fundy-Royal talked about almost everything but what was at issue. He talked about postal rates, about distribution of magazines, about government advertising; he hardly talked at all about the tax privileges held by *Time* and *Reader's Digest*.

There is a story about a Scottish philosopher, Madam Speaker. Every time an objection was raised to his philosophy or theories, he said, "That is indeed an important objection; we cannot overlook it. We must stare it full in the face and pass on." That is what the hon. member for Fundy-Royal did every time the question was raised of what we should do: he looked it straight in the face and passed on. On May 8, at page 5597 of *Hansard*, he said:

A tax policy should apply equally. *Time* and *Reader's Digest* could easily fulfil their obligations as Canadian citizens by broadening substantially, over an agreed span of time, their Canadian ownership.

There is nothing wrong with that. Then we got a splendid assertion of principle.

Perhaps application for citizenship could take the form of an increased sale of their shares to citizens of this country.

Perhaps? That is not nearly as clear and straightforward. Later, he said:

—it might be fair to ask that more of the decisions relative to their editorial content should be made in this country.

Might? That is not very strong. Then later:

My party and I are very nervous about this particular provision.

That is about the content rules. Madam Speaker, my hon. friend here says they are nervous about most things, and that is probably true. He continues:

I think that content rules, particularly as they have application to news magazines—

Does that mean *Time* and also *Reader's Digest*? Then he continued:

—are repellent to me and to this party.

Straightforward? Clear? Direct? Not at all. Ambiguous! If I could characterize that in a word which I hope is parliamentary, Madam Speaker, I would say those qualifications are "weasel" words—ambiguous—they provide an escape hatch for the hon. member to get out if he so desires. The resolution that had been there in January is now irresolution. In fact, I think one could describe the policy as presented, in so far as one could divine it from the speech of the hon. member for Fundy-Royal, as secret;

[Mr. Roberts.]

wrapped in a muddle; hidden in an enigma. I think we should know who is speaking for the opposition and what their position is on these fundamental tax questions. In the last few words of his speech, the hon. member for Fundy-Royal made one suggestion which I thought was uncharacteristic but he did not stress it for any length of time. As reported at page 5600 of *Hansard*, he said:

Then we are getting into an area that through the years has given tyrannical governments the power that free men have resisted through the ages.

There is a slight suggestion of sincere concern there. I would not mention it except that it was the theme picked up by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) in his contribution to the debate last Friday. He portrayed himself as a great champion of civil liberties: the Bill of Rights is framed on his wall and so is Magna Carta. This concern of his was not much in evidence in debate last Thursday. Last Thursday the hon. member was not on my side trying to resist the encroachment, the censorship, which the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) wished to place on the CBC. He was not speaking, that great champion of civil liberties, at that time. However, he did speak up last Friday on *Time* and *Reader's Digest*. He said:

● (1600)

—I am pretty concerned that by means of a tax measure we have brought censorship into this country.

That is not true. I will explain why in a few moments.

If this bill passes, the *Reader's Digest* and *Time* magazine will likely come off the news shelves in Canada.

That is not true, as my colleague from British Columbia indicated a few moments ago.

—it will permit not only this act but the act covering taxation in this field to allow a group of bureaucrats to determine what Canadians will be able to read.

That is not true. He said that when you curtailed the press or tried to curtail freedom of speech, whether by taxation or otherwise, you turned back the pages of history of the country 700 or 800 years. Then he said that this government wants to bring in censorship on what we should read. I was going to say that the whole of the speech of the hon. member for Calgary North was a red herring. It was such a large speech and such a large red herring that I think it might be fair to characterize it as a red whale. I say "a red whale" because the characteristics of whales are blubber and a tendency to spout.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roberts: There is no board to be established under this legislation which will censor the material that will go into magazines, Canadian or foreign. The hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay (Mr. Johnston) was concerned about the question of who is to assess what is Canadian content or what is not Canadian content. This is not what the legislation enjoins. The legislation will simply enjoin that a magazine, an issue appearing in Canada, be substantially different in content from that appearing somewhere outside of Canada. One would be able to make that comparison even if one did not read the articles. One could look at them and see whether they were the same articles which appeared in another magazine. One could total them up