

My last question concerns the subject of censorship. Members opposite will say that this is not a bill which imposes or implies censorship.

**An hon. Member:** What about closure?

**Mr. Epp:** We already have closure. This is censorship. Let us take a look at what Canadians, particularly Canadian editors, are saying. It is they, I submit, who are most informed about the power of the press, the power of the mass media, to influence the opinions of Canadians. It is they who are, possibly, more aware of the dangers inherent in this type of legislation than the average Canadian or the ordinary member of parliament. I will begin with the *Ottawa Citizen* and an editorial dated October 25, written by Christopher Young who I believe has certain connections which I do not intend to go into. He wrote this:

It is accepted now in our society that governments should make rules about how much lean meat is in the bacon package, what kind of information is provided on the clothing labels, what safety devices are built into the chassis of a car. It is not accepted, and should not be accepted, that governments will make rules about what kind of material can go into a newspaper or magazine written, edited and produced for the consideration of the public.

The writer continued:

The point is not whether you or I like these magazines or admire their methods. The point is that it is wrong in principle and dangerous in practice for any government to assume power to control the contents of the commercial press.

Reference has already been made to the *Sudbury Star*. The article on its editorial page on October 28 of this year was entitled «Content? Silly, risky censorship.» The *Toronto Sun* of October 30 had this to say:

*Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* would like to see competitors removed from the arena. Understandable. Theirs is a vested interest and a conflict of interest. And their views should be ignored. If they can't hack it and appeal to Canadians on merit alone, they don't deserve to survive.

What about the *Moncton Transcript*? In an editorial on October 28 the paper had this to say:

The dangerous aspect is that this policy opens the way to control of editorial content in all publications, including newspapers. No doubt there are those in government and in the public service who would be only too glad to muzzle the free press. They know that if the people are to be manipulated, to be made subject to the dictates of those who would be their masters rather than their servants, an essential prerequisite is state control of the media.

The *Hamilton Spectator* has this to say in the first paragraph of an article dated October 25 and entitled «Basic freedom eroded»:

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We have said it before and we intend to keep saying it. The federal government's decision to control the content of *Time* magazine and *Reader's Digest* is a dangerous precedent in a democratic society.

The *Winnipeg Free Press*, a newspaper with which I am a little more familiar, in a recent editorial reiterated its position as being small «l» liberal in philosophy. If that paper has been watching this administration for many years I should like to report that it is becoming more and more small «c» conservative.

**An hon. Member:** You mean big «C».

#### *Non-Canadian Publications*

**Mr. Epp:** That would be even better news to me. In an editorial dated October 28 entitled «Nationalist madness», it had this to say, and I am sure the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) will be interested in this piece of information.

**Mr. Guay (St. Boniface):** I have read it.

**Mr. Epp:** You agree with it?

**Mr. Guay (St. Boniface):** I said I have read it.

**Mr. Epp:** It reads, in part:

This kind of restrictive legislation serves no good purpose and profits no one; it works only to the disadvantage of the public, which has never been consulted and whose protests are overwhelmed by the self-serving propaganda of publishers, politicians and nationalists.

As for smaller newspapers, the *Belleville Intelligencer*, in an editorial dated November 1, 1975, commented on the services both *Time* and *Reader's Digest* had given, and more specifically commented on the vested interest that *Maclean's* has in Bill C-58. The *Calgary Herald*, in an editorial dated October 27, commented on controlling the press.

It might be said that this is a danger that does not exist, but I suggest that is not the case. I believe hon. members opposite should seriously ask themselves what this bill will do. The bill is now going to be rammed through the House of Commons; debate is to be ended by closure. Is this in the best interests of Canadians? More importantly, I suggest that the result of this kind of action can come back to haunt all Canadians in the future.

It is a sad day, I suggest, for Canadians when legislation of this kind is presented to the House. The *Vancouver Sun* is of the opinion that tears should be shed, not for *Reader's Digest* and *Time* but for some other more fundamental issues that are inherent in Bill C-58. In an editorial dated October 30, it said that tears should be shed for a country that allows its laws to be twisted by bureaucratic redefinition to apply to specific publications. The editorial continues:

They are for a government that believes it is serving people by determining they should read something «different» and allowing a committee of anonymous taxmen to sit down with a ruler and decide, inch by inch, whether it is different enough.

They are for the great many Canadians, albeit a minority, who have been told by their government that they are not mature enough, not discerning enough, not patriotic enough to know their own minds.

And they are for all those who believe that the only way this country can be independent is by being 80 per cent different from everybody else, without realizing that, in doing so, they are accepting that foreign—and primarily American—standards are the only worth while ones against which Canadian achievement can be measured.

The editorial concludes:

The key question, it seems to us, is control over editorial decisions. Whatever criteria are used for establishing that Canadians have editorial control, if that is the goal, it is abhorrent to then suggest that their Canadianism should be perpetually judged against what they do.

Despite the apparent outward levity concerning everything we are saying, I am sure that within their heart of hearts many backbenchers opposite are deeply concerned at what they are being party to today. I hope they will take it upon themselves to go to the minister, to the House leader, the President of the Privy Council, and to the Prime Minister, if they can approach him at all, and place