

So, Madam Speaker, for all those reasons, I seriously believe that it is my duty to oppose passage of this bill. That is why, when the vote is called, I shall adopt a very clear stand, with no bitterness towards anyone, but as a free and responsible member. I must oppose passage of this bill, because it runs counter to other legislation passed in 1965 and 1971, which seemed excellent then and if it was good then, it still is today. I shall therefore vote against Bill C-58 on third reading.

● (1730)

[English]

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Kootenay): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this third reading debate somewhat perplexed by some of the statements that have been made this afternoon. Since the last debate we have had the benefit of some correspondence from the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner), and the reply to that correspondence from *Time Canada*. Also, an interesting article has appeared in "Citizen Forum" in today's issue of the *Ottawa Citizen* in which some interesting questions are asked about the debate that is going on at present.

I listened with interest to the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Stollery) tutor us on the difference between a magazine and a digest. I suppose we should all be grateful for his attempt to elucidate that rather fine point, except that most of us understood it clearly many weeks ago. Apparently the only two members who did not clearly understand it are the Secretary of State and the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Cullen).

One wondered, when listening to the hon. member for Spadina, why somewhere along the line some months ago, or a year ago, he had not discreetly tugged the sleeve of the Secretary of State and given him the explanation that he has given us this afternoon, because I am sure many people wondered why the two publications have been lumped together so long. The hon. member said there was only one similarity between them, but he missed the real similarity between them, and that is simply the fact that they have been lumped together in this piece of legislation from the beginning. That is what has made *Reader's Digest* and *Time Canada* seem to be the same thing in the minds of some people.

The author of the article in "Citizen Forum" is Mr. Horwood who says that there is an absurdity in all this. He writes:

The absurdity is obvious enough; it becomes painfully apparent when government must resort to measuring these pomposities in percentages; 75 per cent Canadian ownership, to fortify our national pride; 80 per cent non-foreign content, to protect our Canadian culture. They even argue about such puerile yardsticks. Perhaps 50 per cent would be enough. Well, how about 66 2/3 per cent? No, let's settle for 80 per cent.

We find the same argument carried forth in the letter from the minister addressed to *Time* magazine, when he wrote with a pomposity that has not been heard for some time. One suspects he probably used a quill pen and black ink, and that what he wrote was written as a present to posterity rather like Lord Chesterfield's letter to his son, something one suspects was designed to live forever in the annals of Canadian letter writing, something perhaps related to a recent bill which safeguarded Canadian treasures. One almost expects to see a price tag of \$1,000 on the original of this letter already so that it will not leave the

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country in some auction of great Canadian art. It is full of the same sort of simple definition that has been provided for us by the hon. member for Spadina.

First the minister confirmed that *Time Canada* has no grounds for objecting to Bill C-58. Anyone who is based outside of this country knows that he has no grounds for objecting to Canadian legislation in the sense that the powers of this sovereign land are sovereign still and can be used, no matter how foolishly, how ill devised, and how badly written is the legislation.

No matter how many abrupt shifts in policy have to take place, there is still a sovereignty there, and power on the government side is still there. Certainly the public has come to realize this and members on the government side have come to realize it in the backbench revolt which led to the sudden shift of policy with regard to the position of *Reader's Digest* vis-à-vis that of *Time* magazine. That was transparently evident to the Canadian public in their response to the appeal from *Reader's Digest* compared to the response from *Time* magazine. We did not need a lecture from the hon. member for Spadina this afternoon to teach us that, nor do the Canadian public need it because they have known it for a long time.

The minister writes a sentence which, because of its brevity, is obviously one that is supposed to live forever. He states: "What *Time Canada* is fighting for is money, not principle." I suppose there is a balance and a brevity there that would rate something for its literary value, but nevertheless it is not just *Time* magazine that has been concerned about the principle. A good many voices have been raised in this country by independent Canadians, by independent Canadian publications, and by authors who have written that they too are concerned about the principle and they too are concerned about the measure of control that this bill will give to the government over publishing in Canada. They too are concerned that the 80 per cent figure is not in the bill itself and that it lies at the whim of the government and the minister responsible any time in the future. Those are matters of principle and matters of concern. They are very real issues that we must consider. I also join in the call to have the bill returned to the committee.

I agree with the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) that it is a good thing that *Reader's Digest* will continue to publish in this country. I note that there are thousands and thousands of Canadians who wrote letters by hand to members, sometimes painfully with aged and arthritic fingers, in which they told me that they wrote few letters but they wanted to write to tell me they love the size of *Reader's Digest* because they can hold it in their hands, something they have difficulty managing with other publications. They gave intimate details of their own situations. I know they are delighted that that magazine will continue to publish in this country. The opposition, with some help from some courageous backbenchers opposite, has scored a victory which will be recognized as such throughout Canada.

But that is not the point. The point is that we need to know on what basis the victory was won and what arrangement was made. I should think that the hon. member for Spadina, with his knowledge of what constitutes a digest, would be just as curious, as a member of the