

Since this matter is to be decided by the Supreme Court of Canada, it would be premature at this time to establish federal classification boards, albeit run by the provinces, before the court has determined whether the provincial boards are unconstitutional.

Mr. W. Kenneth Robinson (Toronto-Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, first let me commend the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Whiteway) for bringing this timely issue to our attention. I think all members will agree that obscene literature and its proliferation should be the subject of grave concern and, I might add, action.

The purpose of this bill, as set forth in the explanatory notes, is to set up classification boards to deal with the far too heavy traffic in obscene pornographic material. There are two basic premises of this bill. The first is that local regulatory bodies would set standards acceptable to their communities. It is the local input which must be considered as a serious and legitimate counterweight to those who argue that by restricting the availability of such material we also restrict civil liberties. Since we live in a democracy, Mr. Speaker, and we rule by the majority opinion, we must follow the rules the majority sets down whether they are to our personal liking or not. In this case, by setting up local boards we shall have a group that is representative of its local citizens in its opinions. The majority's civil rights will be protected.

Professor Ian Hunter of the University of Western Ontario addressed himself to this point in his article "Obscenity, Pornography and Law Reform." He recommends that any law reforms with respect to pornographic or obscene material must take into account "contemporary community standards." The hon. member's bill is certainly a step in that direction.

Professor Hunter also suggests that there must exist a means to protect people from being involuntarily exposed to obscene or pornographic material. This is the second premise of this bill. More specifically the hon. member calls for prohibition against displaying obscene material for acquisition by persons under 18 years of age.

I do not think that it is news to any member of this House that there is an increasing sentiment against pornographic magazine displays being placed in easy view of children. One only has to peruse the "Letters to the Editor" columns in most newspapers to find outraged parents. It seems that many of their children cannot go into local grocery stores without being assaulted by a barrage of obscene literature. The Ontario attorney general, Roy McMurtry, has many times expressed concern, and I quote:

—that glossy full-colour magazines of hard core pornography, once available only under the counter or in a few adult book outlets, are now being peddled openly in some neighbourhood variety stores in full view of children.

From April 1 to May 8, 1976, Metropolitan Toronto police laid more than 24 charges involving 50 magazines. These came as responses to numerous public complaints. Inspector Robert Stirling of the Metro Toronto police morality squad said in May that he was receiving increasing numbers of complaints

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from people who appeared to be incensed and aggressive about pornography on the magazine racks.

It has often been said that selling pornographic material is a victimless crime. I think that is nonsense. The proliferation of sado-masochistic and anti-human material is bound to have an effect on children and even adults shaping their attitudes toward members of the opposite sex. Certainly this cannot go unremedied.

Archbishop Philip Pocock expressed his concern over the issue by publishing an "open letter of concern" in Toronto papers on December 3, 1976. The Archbishop denounced pornography "as gravely wrong". He said parents should talk to store owners, that they can make it very clear that they do not want this material sold to children, and that if it is necessary to carry "adult" publications that they be placed out of sight of both young people and the vast majority of adults who do not wish to see them.

The United States has set up "adult book-shops" where persons under a specified age are not permitted to enter. These also ensure that the majority of disinterested adults do not wander into an obscene bookstore accidentally. By using this method we could avoid both censorship and also involuntary exposure. Certainly it is worth considering.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. The time allotted to private members business has expired. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the Chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

BROADCASTING OF HOUSE AND COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen:

That this House approves the radio and television broadcasting of its proceedings and of the proceedings of its committees on the basis of principles similar to those which govern the publication of the printed official reports of debates; and

That a special committee, consisting of Mr. Speaker and seven other members to be named at a later date, be appointed to supervise the implementation of this resolution.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be back here before this large and attentive audience to deal with a very important subject. Before the