

Non-Canadian Publications

As a result of questions which were raised in the committee as to whether this legislation in fact had that effect—

That is, a sop to digests in Canada.

—I again discussed the matter with my officials and subsequently talked to counsel for *Reader's Digest*.

It seemed to me at the time that the legislation would have that impact, that is, that it would preclude digests, so that if two, three or ten Canadians got together and decided they were going to have a Canadian digest 100 per cent owned by Canadians, with the editing and publishing being done in Canada, it would be theoretically possible for them to operate in Canada under the 80 per cent rule, but it would be for all practical purposes impossible because of the unique nature of digests.

That is the point that we continuously tried to bring forward to the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) in committee.

● (1740)

I wonder is the cabinet unanimous in its opinion. On the one hand the Secretary of State adamantly denied the suggestion that this legislation will in any way affect the operation of *Reader's Digest* in Canada. On the other hand we had the Minister of National Revenue saying, obviously as a result of what went on in Committee, that *Time* and *Reader's Digest*, especially *Reader's Digest*, could no longer function in this country. One thing encourages me. Despite such contradictory statements it is evident that the Minister of National Revenue pays attention and listens. Yet I guess the old saying still holds true that a new broom sweeps clean. At least that minister is approachable, is not following a pre-set course, and is willing to change his mind. Whom are we to believe, the Minister of National Revenue or the Secretary of State? Right now I am willing to put more stock with the Minister of National Revenue. I think he wants to do the right thing.

We must resolve some basic issues when considering this bill. I know that others have mentioned them; that does not lessen their pertinency. The Secretary of State has said repeatedly that the intention of this bill is the preservation of Canadian culture. That is a laudable goal. I ask, first, which Canadian culture does he mean? There is some basis for thinking that the Canadian culture the minister has in mind is the culture centred on Toronto, the suave, urban-oriented culture of the self-professed purveyors of culture in Canada. In the assessment of some, that is Canadian culture. Do you want to preserve Canadian culture of that kind? If you do, it strikes me as ridiculous to talk about preserving Canadian culture when we are not necessarily talking about Canadian writers but talking only about the Canadian publishing industry.

I recall questioning a witness in committee who said he was speaking on behalf of the newly formed writers association. I asked, "Incidentally, how many writers in your organization are Canadian?" He replied that most of them are either citizens or landed immigrants. Ha! What a joke! Tell me, how does a landed immigrant from England, France, the United States or South America, writing in a Canadian periodical, preserve Canadian culture?

How does the landed immigrant saturated with the culture of his native country in any way preserve Canadian content and Canadian culture when writing in depth about his experiences of his native culture? If he crosses the Canadian border and writes in a Canadian periodical, how

[Mr. Friesen.]

does he preserve Canadian culture? Is that how you guarantee the preservation of Canadian culture? It is fatuous to believe that you can preserve Canadian culture merely by publishing items in wholly Canadian owned magazines, as defined by the Minister of National Revenue; such expectations are especially foolish as contributing writers need not necessarily be of Canadian origin or of Canadian background.

My next question is this: are such writers Canadian by conviction? The sole purpose of some writers in Canada is the overthrow of the Government of Canada. Can we say that they preserve Canadian culture? How far does the Secretary of State want to go in preserving our culture? Where does he draw the line and to what extent interfere with our publishing industry?

Again I ask, when the minister says he wants to preserve Canadian culture, which culture does he mean? Who will define Canadian culture? Is any member of this House smart enough to define it? Can any cabinet minister define Canadian culture in a way satisfactory to all Canadians? Is anyone smart enough? I doubt it.

An hon. Member: Speak for yourself.

Mr. Friesen: I am, and I am speaking for the hon. member too, and all other Canadians.

If the government intends to preserve Canadian culture I say its goal is laudable, but the procedure is self-defeating. How can you preserve Canadian culture with legislation, when the Canadian people themselves must preserve it? The intent of this bill quite simply is to cloister, purify, and identify that which is truly Canadian. But who will define these things? I suppose the process must begin with the Department of National Revenue, the Department of the Secretary of State, and the Department of Justice defining Canadian culture. We will have to put ourselves in the hands of those departments.

Something else disturbs me, Mr. Speaker. Although the Secretary of State says he wants to preserve the Canadian publishing industry and Canadian culture, he does not do it when given the chance. I am thinking of a publication which went out of business not more than three months ago in my neighbouring riding, largely because people under the Secretary of State did not keep their promises. I am talking of Sono Nis Press, which I am sure the Secretary of State remembers. Sono Nis Press was a fine arts publishing company specializing in the production of artistic works. It published writings by Canadian authors in Canada and its avowed purpose was to preserve the fine arts in Canada. It was a Canadian publishing venture, endorsed and partly underwritten by a Canada Council grant. It so happens that this publication was the brain child of a visiting professor of the University of British Columbia. He has been called Canada's youngest and most prolific writer, a man of no small stature in the fine arts, a great poet and a good writer. Let me tell you his story, Mr. Speaker.

The Canada Council went to him and said, "If you relinquish your full professorship at the university, where you enjoy an assured salary, and become a member of the Canadian fine arts team which is to preserve Canadian culture, we will give you \$15,000 a year." The man was willing to make the sacrifice and relinquished his full