

## Non-Canadian Publications

good joke until the point where the visitors departed as quietly as they came. The speech being made at that moment by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona deserves their attention, and the joke would have been much better had they stayed, because their departure left it just a little sour, in the mind of this member at least.

One then sees that there is an article on the premier of the great province of Ontario. This is the feature article. This is, again, an indication of what is important in the land right now. One finds another article on a former member of this House, the great hockey star, Howie Meeker, who was briefly in parliament and sat as a member of this party. With an opening edition like that, there is hope for *Saturday Night*, because those who wrote to me are not cynical and they are the backbone of Canadian nationalism in this country.

What gives me the most hope for this magazine is one poem written by the Canadian poet, Miriam Waddington—and it rhymes! A magazine which devotes itself in the 1970s to a poem which dares to rhyme is one which has set itself on a path of courage. The poem, too, addresses itself to the people who wrote on behalf of *Reader's Digest*, and part of it reads:

We never know what's apt to happen and although money isn't everything how will things be, where will they go, when we, our generation, win or lose, fed up with curbing hell at last drops all the reins and everything busts loose?

This is one of the concerns expressed by people who write to me because they look at a world where so much is busting loose and they wonder why the minister is concerned about taking the Canadian edition of *Reader's Digest* from them; they cannot understand it. Surely, for these people, the justification cannot be Canadian nationalism; and surely, for these people, if Canadian magazines would address themselves a little more to that large reading audience—and with the state of education in this land, it soon may be the only reading audience left—they will succeed, because those people want to see some indication of quality. They want to see some indication of virtue and some indication that the magazine could become, not an intrusion, not an insult as they look at the cover but one with which they would be glad to renew their acquaintance. I feel that the resurrection or rebirth of *Saturday Night* could perhaps more properly be called the return of the prodigal. Having rooted in the trough of sensationalism for too long until it lost its readership in this land, it has decided to return to a format which served it well for many years when it was a great magazine in Canada.

I am concerned, too, about the question of the 80 per cent different content. That matter has already been raised, and I do not wish to dwell on it. One can imagine a board being set up to determine the content. That would be a dangerous and difficult policy, and surely such an idea should be dropped. While it might be possible to establish a weekly news magazine that would qualify in terms of different content, (in spite of all the minister's brave words I suspect that would be interpreted as Canadian content very quickly) the law could be set down, but people would have to make the judgment. It might be possible to establish a Canadian weekly news magazine—I hope one is attempted in the near future—but I am afraid it would not be possible to establish a Canadian Digest.

● (1550)

A lot of government policies have led us to the present situation, Madam Speaker, and not just the question of tax privileges. Other members have spoken about postal rates, taxation and lack of government support; all reasons why the Canadian publishing industry is in its present state. As I look around the newsstands and read the magazines that come to me, I see a revival in Canadian publishing. If the minister's bill has done that, then I think the measures he has in mind for *Reader's Digest* are not necessary in order to revive Canadian publishing.

There are more negative aspects to this bill than positive aspects, Madam Speaker. I am particularly conscious of remarks made in the speech of the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) on May 8. The hon. member has gained a reputation in this House for courage, clear thinking and an ability to express opinions not laid down by the government. He said, as reported at page 5611 of *Hansard*:

Close to six million Canadians read and enjoy the Canadian edition of the *Digest* every month. *Reader's Digest* material is made available to, and much of it is used by other editions around the world. Some articles receive exposure to 100 million readers in 13 languages. *Reader's Digest* has made some 32 per cent of its common stock available to Canadians through a public issue, the only *Digest* company in the world to do so. Shareholders bought their stock with the understanding that the company's operations were not under any threat at the time the stock was issued. *Reader's Digest* had that assurance from the government.

I hope the government will think carefully about that aspect of the threat against the company. Of course, it is a government that has gone back on agreements before; it is a government that withdrew from the world's fair at Spokane after being the first in. There are other examples of how it does not instill confidence in the Canadian business world. I suggest that the action being contemplated here is as great a threat to nationalism and a sense of pride in one's country—in fact, a much greater threat—than the presence of *Reader's Digest* in this country could ever be.

**Mr. John Roberts (St. Paul's):** Madam Speaker, I had not intended to enter the debate at this time as I shall have an opportunity in committee to examine the question before the House in specific detail. I am moved to intervene, however, because after listening to some of the speeches, and reading others given at a time when I was not able to be in the House, I was concerned to find a deepening and perhaps studied obfuscation or drift in the view being presented by the official opposition. It seems to me that on this question, which is an important one, members opposite have an obligation to make clear where they stand. They have an obligation to level with the House of Commons, and an obligation to level with the people, on what they believe should be done in the relation to the special tax privileges *Time* and *Reader's Digest* now enjoy. Originally, the position of the opposition was clear, and it was strongly supportive of the government. Back on January 23, speaking for the official opposition, the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) said as reported at page 2527 of *Hansard*:

We believe that the move to eliminate the income tax advantage shared mainly by two magazines, *Time* and *Reader's Digest*, is a good one.