

Non-Canadian Publications

Canadians view *Reader's Digest* as an asset. I believe it is part and parcel of Canadian life. I want to bring out a point that I think is important. When I was teaching high school, *Reader's Digest* was one magazine that could be used for extra reading material. It was particularly good for those students not receiving any other magazines or daily newspapers. I believe *Reader's Digest* has made a real contribution. It is something that Canadians want. They subscribe to it. Why, then, do we have to have such a narrow point of view and say that it is wrong and anti-Canadian because it does not fly the Canadian flag? I cannot understand the government, and this minister in particular, having to resort to closure to say that this is the way it has to be.

The government should listen to the Canadian people. It should listen to those of us in the House of Commons who have been listening to our constituents. Is the government listening? I believe not. Surveys have shown that 75 per cent of *Reader's Digest* readers would be disappointed if the Canadian edition were no longer published. It has very high credibility among its readers and subscribers. Of those polled, two-thirds said they would disapprove of legislation that would make it economically impossible for *Reader's Digest* to publish a Canadian edition.

Reader's Digest is a family magazine. There are very few such magazines on our newsstands today. There is a profusion of «skin» magazines on our stands. Smut is imported and spread across the length and breadth of this country. People with young, impressionable minds are able to buy those magazines, most of which are foreign. However, the minister has not taken any action against them. He has not decried the fact that they exist. He argues that a person should have the right to read and see anything he chooses. However, when it comes to this family-oriented magazine, he says no. Surely the minister has a clearer view of life than that.

As a family magazine, the standards of *Reader's Digest* have always been high. I seriously question what the minister is trying to prove by legislating it out of existence. The minister has asked the executive officers of *Reader's Digest* to prove that they are serving the Canadian purpose. I presume the minister means they are to show that they are part and parcel of Canada's economic fabric, that they are making a significant contribution and are good corporate citizens.

Statistics have been cited. Possibly they bear repeating, especially now that the government has said the debate will end after five hours because the opposition has forced them to stand still on this question. At the present time, *Reader's Digest* directly or indirectly employs 1,500 Canadians. Most of those employees live in Quebec. I ask, «Where are the Quebec members on this issue?»

● (1710)

Mr. Roy (Laval): Not in the Conservative party.

Mr. Epp: You are saying you do not mind that your constituents will be unemployed, unable to find employment.

An hon. Member: But where is Wagner?

[Mr. Epp.]

Mr. Epp: You are saying that it is of no consequence. My hon. friend from Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) has probably spoken on this issue, while you do not have either the ability or the intestinal fortitude to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): Order, please. The hon. member should address the Chair.

Mr. Epp: Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the reminder. I needed it, and members opposite needed to be bailed out. It has been pointed out that *Reader's Digest*, as far as direction and management are concerned, is overwhelmingly Canadian. Five out of its six directors are Canadians. Its president and all its officers are Canadian. It has some 600 Canadian shareholders. What about investment? Substantial investments have been made in Canada. I have already pointed out that this publication has helped many Canadian writers. All these things considered, we say the government is taking an entirely negative attitude when it seeks to legislate *Reader's Digest* out of existence here. One can only wonder at the mentality of members opposite when they bring forward this type of legislation at a time in our history when so many things are going on which make us fear for our future.

We hear it said that *Reader's Digest* and *Time* benefit from tax privileges which Canadian publications do not enjoy. But take the case of any businessman operating in Canada today. If he buys equipment or goods from another country, none of us has ever suggested that the money he spends in so doing should not be deductible for tax purposes. I refer hon. members again to the case of the television station in Pembina, North Dakota, to which I drew their attention. It by no means follows that advertising will go to *Maclean's* or *Saturday Night* if this legislation is passed. Of course, *Maclean's* is in favour of this bill. It has a vested interest in its passage. Is the government trying to tell us that *Maclean's* is more sensitive to Canadian needs than *Reader's Digest* or *Time*?

An hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Epp: Is that what they are trying to tell those who live somewhat east of Toronto the good, that *Maclean's* is the only expression of Canadian nationalism?

An hon. Member: The best.

Mr. Epp: Is that what you are trying to impose on us?

Mr. Gilbert: Is that a rhetorical question, or do you want an answer?

Mr. Epp: I have the answer; it is to be found in the intent of Bill C-58. It is quite clear. Yes, *Maclean's* is to be the voice of Canada's magazine industry. One gathers this from the bill as well as from the lobby that *Maclean's* has mounted, one which is as well organized, one might say, as the lobby organized by *Time* and *Reader's Digest*; it has been well organized in both cases. Granted the corporate offices of *Time* and *Reader's Digest* are not in Canada, but since when has it become illegal in this country for a company other than a Canadian company to do business here as long as it obeys the laws of Canada? Is this the way to build Canadian nationalism, by legislating it, or a form of it?