

should remain small. We should promote those things that tie us together. That can be done through international magazines such as *Time* and *Reader's Digest*. On that basis, I say they express the Canadian viewpoint, and because they express the majority Canadian viewpoint they have the right to exist, the right to be read and the right to be heard in Canada.

The government has been in power for many years. A government that has been in power for many years often develops the "Big Brother" complex. A small clique or elite within the government gains control and with that control a series of pieces of legislation are put out by the government against the will of the majority of the people. We have seen this happen in governments time and time again. This does not occur on very large issues; it occurs on small issues. It happens when a government becomes deaf, not just deaf to the majority of Canadians but deaf to the backbenchers within its own party, because it is the backbenchers who are out in the larger community. They are talking to people and getting the gut political feeling that people like to read these magazines and want them to continue. I suggest that those backbench members on the government side opposing this bill will survive longer than members of the government who are promoting the legislation.

● (1730)

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to reconsider the content section of the legislation. The principles of the Liberal party can be upheld on every aspect other than content, and the same is true for the Conservative party, in my opinion. I am sure the New Democratic Party does not like content legislation either.

I ask the government to listen to the representations of the Canadian public as expressed by members who have, are, and will continue to speak until the message gets through to the minister. This content rule must be modified, if not totally eliminated, which would be our preference. I think the message is starting to get through. I urge the backbench members on the government side to speak out now. Every time they allow an infringement of this type on our democratic principles it threatens all we stand for.

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, I should like to stir the embers of memory in this House tonight and go back to the days when members were campaigning for the privilege of participating in debates such as this. I suspect members were very vocal on the hustings, saying they wanted to sit in the House of Commons to represent the people of their ridings and the democratic principles for which our country is known and admired all over the world.

I remember listening to the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt) participate in the talk shows for which Vancouver is well known. She said that she was not going to be simply a mouthpiece for all the policies of the government, that if she were elected and disagreed with the government, the government would know about it. I must confess that many times I wondered whether she would be true to her word, and I am happy to say that she has been. I regret there are not more members on the

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government benches who follow her example and remember the statements they made on the hustings.

This first session of the House has been a period of orientation for me as well as other members. I recall the pre-election idealism and how I, and I am sure other members, saw the function of debate as perfecting legislation, and the very word parliament as meaning "talking things out." I find the government benches strangely silent, however. This seems to be a one way dialogue—a monologue in fact.

When I arrived here I learned that the function of committees was to take legislation that was a little too cumbersome for debate in the House and create the best kind of legislation from it. Committees were composed of members representing some kind of background, training or interest pertinent to the legislation, and they would hone the legislation to the sharpest edge, perfecting it in a way that could not be done through cumbersome dialogue in the House.

I watched with interest this piece of legislation pass on a predetermined course set by a minister who refuses to listen to debate and the advice of members of the committee—a minister who has set as his goal that this legislation will go through the House undisturbed and unchanged. For this he is unrepentant. I feel sure, however, that by the time the legislation passes he will feel a measure of chagrin if not repentance.

I have watched the operation of the committee and the function of the government whip. At one time the whip's function was to make sure that members would attend and participate, and that a quorum would be present. That is not the way it works, however. The whip's function is really to make sure that all members are there who favour government legislation and that members who do not favour it will not be there. They get the double shuffle.

I watched with interest the protection of vested interests close to the minister, and the contradictions within cabinet. For example, the minister said there was no problem with this legislation, that *Time* and *Reader's Digest* could function easily in spite of it. For example, the minister said as reported at page 10638 of *Hansard*:

Let me reiterate that the government is not seeking in any way to control the freedom of magazine publishers and editors. Nor do we want to impose our will upon the people of Canada and regulate their reading habits. Bill C-58 in no way impinges upon freedom of expression.

Not at all. Then in committee he said that the success of *Reader's Digest* depends largely upon not only its large circulation but its ancillary projects such as the record industry, Book of the Month Club, and the *Digest* books. These are the ways *Reader's Digest* makes its money. Because *Reader's Digest* is a wealthy corporation it has a healthy margin of profit, and therefore *Selection* in Quebec is not going to suffer at all.

He went on to say:

Examine it in those terms. I think if there is a problem it simply focuses on that particular area, and I would suggest there is enough public evidence around that *Selection* does not have to stop publication.

Then we have the words of the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Cullen) in the House as reported at page 10584 of *Hansard*: