

Mr. Symes: I was being facetious.

Mr. Epp: Having been back home to the west where clarity of thought prevails, I thought I would find out what the people were saying back home. The *Winnipeg Tribune*, I understand, is a paper that is at times supportive of the present administration. I wish to quote from an editorial in the *Winnipeg Tribune* of February 9, headed "Arrogant action". I do not think the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie would have too many complaints about the editorial policy of that paper.

The editorial reads in part:

Now, with the bill stalled in the Commons and with several MPs ready to propose amendments which would tone down the severity of its terms, the government has taken it on itself to interpret the law before it is even passed.

Mr. Cullen said the agreement with *Reader's Digest* would permit the publication, based in Montreal, to use the same articles as the parent magazine in the U.S. As long as they are edited and condensed in this country, they will qualify as Canadian content.

That's rather like saying if one imports milk from Wisconsin and processes it in Thunder Bay, one can then call it Canadian condensed milk.

No wonder Mr. Stanfield and other MPs, some of them Liberals, are shocked. As Mr. Stanfield pointed out, interpreting the law is for the courts, not the cabinet.

If governments can decide what the law means, they are endangering the painfully-won and dearly-bought concept that making the laws must be a separate function from interpreting them.

The government has, in effect, taken control of a segment of the press. Further extension of this control may lie in abeyance, but it is a precedent which this or future governments could use for their own purposes and to their own ends.

That is the critical issue, no matter whether the minister wants to think of it in another way. That is the central point of Bill C-58, whether or not his brainwashed officials want to think of it in another way. I found it interesting that the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway compared this bill, at the time she moved her amendment, to the 1930s and early 1940s in Nazi Germany when there was also content control. One might say that this will not reach that point, but why does the government want in any way to have content control? That question has not been answered by the Secretary of State or by the Minister of National Revenue to the satisfaction of anyone. Government members are silent on this point. If they were given the opportunity to speak, I know many of them who are in sympathy with the amendment of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway would do so.

In recent months we have also witnessed other totalitarian governments exercise control over the press in their own societies. One need look only to the USSR and the role played by persons such as Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn. As I say, the New Democratic Party members are strangely silent about that. Such governments are quite willing to use thought control, press control and content control. Some members of this House and some Canadians might think we will never come to that. I say this legislation opens that door. In no way should the government become part and parcel of any regulation or legislation which allows any government or any minister to decide whether or not a publication meets the criteria of the government relative to content.

Let the government bring forward legislation relating to ownership and those involved in the editorial and publica-

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tions business. Let them bring forward that kind of legislation, but not content control which is abhorrent to Canadians. This government, supposedly a Liberal government, surely cannot at this point in time justify a position whereby it will control content or give officials of the government an opportunity to interpret regulations relating to control.

One could mention many other instances in the last few months where governments have tightened up in respect of the press. The process we are witnessing in this House these days is not very dissimilar to what we have seen in other parts of the country. The importance of this bill to the government can be interpreted in only one way. The government is dedicating a disproportionate amount of the House time to this legislation.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, there are certain strange rumblings from the NDP again. No member of the NDP seems to want to stand and make a speech in respect of content and control of the press, but if there were a left-wing press involved I am sure they would be on their feet.

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): The hon. member may continue with unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): The hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) may continue for a reasonable period of time.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Epp: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the House. There is one last comment I wish to make. I believe the subamendment brought forward by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway should find support in all quarters of the House. It retains the right of advertisers in editorial publications, papers and magazines to have a privilege for tax purposes. I say to the government, again, that surely they can support that type of amendment to this type of legislation, but let them not become a party to a proposition which would also bring in content and thought control, as Bill C-58 does.

● (1710)

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to make a few remarks to support the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt), because it seems to me it is not only a sensible amendment, one which is an attempt to improve the legislation, but it comes from a member who has a background in, and presumably a feeling for, journalism in this country. Too often in government lately inexperience and lack of knowledge are held