

Books do not require any specific tools to be consumer nor do they impose any restriction of space or location on their consumers.

Even senators on the other side are reading a good book while I speak! And they do the right thing!

Books are still the most "open" way of communicating, after the spoken word. Because they store information, because they last, books have deeply marked all our civilizations which are civilizations of the written word: What would the western world be without the Bible, Islam without the Koran?

Because books have all these properties, they cannot be considered, even in our present-day world, as a business product only, nor as a product that can be replaced, their impact on individuals and communities being so deep and important.

I remember the beginnings of television when people would say: this is the end of the book, it is over. When television invaded us, it was so much easier, so much more attractive. People thought: Books do not count any more, they belong to another era. This is not true, television has stimulated the publishing business.

Through its policies, Canada has up until now recognized the important role played by books and those policies have found support among Canadian people.

I have no recollection of governments' support for books having ever been criticized.

As a society, we cannot allow ourselves to tax books. Let us remind ourselves that books are first and above all a matter of language, be it French or English. And language is our only means of access to knowledge. Have we assessed the social cost of imposing the GST on books?

In the context where the implementation of the GST would bring about new paperwork which would increase the burden for businesses, let us remind ourselves that if Quebec publishers have earned income of about 70 millions of dollars in 1986-1986, that is an average of less than one million dollars individually, nearly 80 per cent of them have income of less than one million dollars.

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It has to be pointed out also that 16 per cent of the publishers have income of less than \$50,000. This is the income of publishing businesses!

That industry, small when compared to the giants of the international publishing world, produced 2,701 titles in 1986-1987. This achievement is all the more outstanding when considering that the average print run for publishers generating income of over one million dollars is 3,960 copies only whereas it drops to 2,500 copies for publishers whose income lies between \$200,000 and \$500,000 a year. Can you imagine!

There are 953 copies for publishers with revenues under the \$50,000 mark, which is surely the case for those who publish mainly poetry. The average number of copies for youth publishers specializing in novels or storybooks is 4,000 copies, while it is 3,061 copies for textbooks. Those are small print runs. But, as in other areas, competition must nevertheless be

maintained with children books published in France, at 50,000 copies the very first edition, which reduces the sale price. In literature, the number of books printed averages only 1,289 copies and in general literature, 3,395 copies are produced. These figures are more recent than those I had when I was in the business, for example, I mentioned before the book entitled *Le jour est noir* by Marie-Claire Blais. If I was publishing that book today, I would have to reduce the number of copies to 1,289 instead of 3,000, as I did in the sixties.

For French-language publishers in Quebec and in Canada, to succeed in producing a book that will compete on the market is a miracle when one thinks of the small number of copies they produce.

Yet, one must do it and the competition is fierce. On this small market for a population of six millions, one finds French, Belgian, Swiss, American and English Canadian products. These are available not only in hardbacks, but also in paperbacks, which are cheaper, although they cannot reach the bargain you find in the English paperbacks. Clearly, a book published in the United States goes from 100,000 to 150,000 copies, while even a pocketbook in Quebec can hardly reach 5,000 copies, for heaven's sake. These foreign books are also available at bargain prices and distributed with all sorts of advantages through readers clubs, and, in Quebec, there is mainly one, foreign owned, and the Quebec production represents only 20 to 22 percent of what is available.

In other words, the publishing industry in Quebec has succeeded its takeoff in spite of an enormous competition.

Hon. Paul David: May I ask you a question about the book club in Quebec you mentioned? The name you gave has Quebec in it. You are now saying it is a foreign publishing business. I take it it belongs to someone from another country.

Senator Hébert: It is probably a subsidiary of a business in France.

Senator David: That may be the reason why they have far more books from outside Quebec in their catalogue.

Senator Hébert: Yes, that must be the reason. Among Frenchmen they manage. In other words, the book industry in Quebec manages to soar against fierce competition, without the benefit of economies of scale that characterize large publishing industries, without the benefit either of revenues generated from the exploitation of related rights—sale of film and television rights, sale of a pocket edition or sale to a book club—that require a generally strong and rich cultural industry. The average length of time publishing companies have existed in Quebec is only 16.4 years and the median length of time is 13 years. That means that industry is far from enjoying a maturity that will guarantee Quebec consumers the stability and full development of national books production. Besides, that industry gains from government support as was mentioned earlier. In 1986-87, 84 per cent of Quebec's publishing companies received government aid totalling \$6,439,300 or 9.3 per cent of the revenues they generated.

To jeopardize ever so little the fragile equilibrium so hardly achieved that at the moment allows French speaking consum-