

Non-Canadian Publications

House, and certainly any thinking person in Canada, could not believe that we have fair competition in the market today. In all sincerity I hope that at some point the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock will withdraw that after he has re-thought his position about whether there really is competition between Canadian and American periodicals under the law as previously set up.

I think every member of the House should clearly understand that Bill C-58 is an attempt to eliminate an unequal situation which has existed for many years. As the hon. member knows, a royal commission started by his party stated that what we had was bad legislation and that there should be no situation in which exemptions are given to American magazines. I think members should really reassess the position they are taking when, after years of debate, hon. members are still arguing that this is some form of censorship and that fair competition is being knocked down.

Let me say that there are people outside this Chamber who are taking note of what is being said by the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock. People will not be taken in by an argument that is facetious to start with, and which has no substance in respect of competition.

I must bring up another point the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock discussed at some length. He compared Canadians to Lilliputians and suggested we are living in isolation. I am sure the hon. member will re-assess that also. Of all the arguments I have heard in the House regarding Bill C-58 the most facetious is the one that we are somehow living in an isolated world here in Canada with nothing coming in. In fact it is exactly the opposite. We have, coming in from the United States as well as from other countries, books, periodicals, you name it, Madam Speaker. We have periodicals flowing into this country from other nations. If anything our problem is trying to establish an identity with all the material that is coming in from other countries.

● (2040)

I was very surprised when the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock said that we were isolationists, and that we were trying to stop books and periodicals from coming into this country. The distribution system of our magazines on our newsstands is in the hands of the Americans. The majority of the material available on our newsstands is from the United States. Anyone who has ever looked at our media must be impressed with the great amount of foreign material and foreign publications presented to the Canadian people. We wonder sometimes why Canadians do not have an identity. I submit it is for that very reason. That is why I disagree with the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock.

Regarding the right of our writers to security—again the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock discussed this at some length—surely what we are trying to do is to provide a market for Canadian writers and artists so that they can have a chance to be seen and heard over our media because, due to the size of our country and the number of our people, we do not have the money to devote to these periodicals or money to compete with the very large and the very rich countries which have much more money to put into this area. No wonder we do not have more Canadian

[Mr. Anderson.]

television programs, for example, to sell to the Americans. We put our programs on the English market occasionally. I submit that we can change this so that the Canadian people will have the opportunity to see and to hear programs produced in Canada, not imported from another country.

The hon. member who spoke before said that Bill C-58 is a veiled attempt at censorship. Because *Newsweek* is not given the same advantage as *Time* or *Reader's Digest* I wonder if the hon. member would say that the Canadian government is applying veiled censorship to *Newsweek* magazine. The fact that such magazines are not given a tax break does not mean we are trying to stifle them or keep them out of the country. There is no one in the House who would suggest that these articles or periodicals are not available in Canada.

I hope that the position taken by *Reader's Digest* means that they, in their wisdom, find they can live within the proposed legislation, and I hope that we in this House can settle down and get on to different things. I am sure that in a year or two from now this legislation will be considered to be good legislation, and perhaps a milestone on our statute books. For all these reasons, Madam Speaker, I hope that this debate can be concluded speedily.

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, I welcomed the intervention of the last hon. member because I believe that the essence of his comments was that we should attempt to reduce the American influence in this country. Whatever else may be said about fairness in competition and so on, this is essentially so.

Most of us Canadians would probably agree that we feel Canadian periodicals should be a thriving industry in this country. However, I have grave doubts about this legislation making that a reality. I think in fact that this bill will divide the country further. Many people who are willing to support the Canadian periodical industry are now becoming quite concerned about the way in which this is going to be done, about this open and blatant attempt by the government through the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Cullen) to rule on what is a Canadian periodical. It is the Department of National Revenue, of all departments, that is ruling on that. Surely the Department of External Affairs or some other department would be better qualified to rule on Canadian content.

In effect this legislation is an attempt to impose thought control in a selective area of our periodical industry. The Department of National Revenue has given us no information on who should make up this board. After all, it is their role to interpret our tax laws, but in practice they tend to come down heavily against the individual. This is becoming more and more obvious. I think they will do the same in deciding what is Canadian content.

If it is important that there be a decision on the Canadian content in periodicals, then the same role should apply to newspapers. We would not have many newspapers left in this country if the rules proposed in this bill were applied to them. The back door agreement to keep *Reader's Digest* is obviously a sop to the part of the country where it is located. I am surprised this event did not take place sooner. It is also a recognition of the fact that *Reader's Digest* cannot be duplicated in Canada. It contains human