

Non-Canadian Publications

magazine publishing—but more than any other magazine published in Canada, has provided features and news (mature and well researched) each month from all parts of Canada, linking this country.

I have already quoted the next lines which say that the hon. member will continue her fight against the proposed action when it comes before the House of Commons. This reminds me of the day when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) when he was going to start wrestling inflation to the ground, and said that if this was a wrestling match, we had already been cheated on our tickets when we came through the door although we got them for nothing. I am looking forward to seeing this fight continue.

The hon. member went on:

Your letter is one of many others that I will forward to the Prime Minister with my own statement of concern. He and other cabinet ministers are well aware of my position and it is with gratitude that I receive your letter to help prevent the demise of *Reader's Digest* in Canada.

There has been an attempt by certain people—in some cases misinformed and in other, deliberate distortion—to convince the public that *Reader's Digest* is subsidized by the government. This is not so. It is simply a case of allowing free choice of advertisers in Canada by which to sell a product.

Obviously if they are penalized because they want to advertise in the magazine of their choice, they will not necessarily turn to a new media; many could send it out of the country to *Digest*, USA, or to newspapers, television, *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* already over-weight with advertising, as opposed to news and feature content.

I also feel, as citizens, we all have the right to choose the magazine we want to buy. I appreciate the fact that *Reader's Digest* provides Canadians, not only with a good balance of national material, but with universal and international subjects.

I also prefer *Time* over *Newsweek*, *US News* and *World Report*, etc. for the same reason; *Time* provides good, concise, objective record of international news along with well written, depth, packed reports of Canadian interest.

This letter went on explaining in quite some detail all the disadvantages of this bill.

● (1730)

I would ask hon. members to note particularly this paragraph where the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway continued:

Personally, as a writer, I fear the action to eliminate a market for writers and allied industries, especially beginners in this field. If *Reader's Digest* closes out in Canada, this could eliminate jobs in Vancouver and Montreal, lose \$5.2 million in salaries for 450 Canadian employees (including \$700,000 in fringe benefits and \$600,000 in profit sharing); \$22 million in trade with Canadian suppliers; \$1.6 million in taxes; \$3 million in first class postage (not counting the magazine distribution itself). The company has \$8 million invested in office, printing presses, and other capital equipment in Canada.

There is always a ray of light in the Liberal party, it seems to me. For a space of time when members first come here they act as if they have minds of their own, and have not yet learned to check their independence of thought at the door. This is a first class example of the thinking of the hon. member as recently as last April.

I am not sure that I agree with the next paragraph although I have agreed with most of the points she made, particularly in the previous paragraph. She went on to say:

Unfortunately, a small pressure group under the guise of a "Committee for an Independent Canada", with vested interest in the publishing, are using this to eliminate competition. Without such competition—and quality this publication presents—certain magazine publishers will

[Mr. McKinnon.]

continue to sustain their mediocrity, if not deteriorate further. The Committee for an Independent Canada began with what seemed—on the surface—to have excellent objectives.

These are her words, not mine. She continued:

However, now they are distorted—more anti-American than nationalistic. In either case, I think cultural nationalism in our present Global Village, is foolish, and immature in the last quarters of the 20th century.

I have, and will continue, to oppose any attempt to end the life and public responsibility of *Reader's Digest* in Canada.

That is a death shaking oath is it not? Unfortunately it apparently did not extend to November 13. The letter ends:

Thank you for your letter and the support for the continued life of a very vital segment of what I believe is important to Canadian national maturity.

Sincerely yours,

Simma Holt, M.P.
Vancouver-Kingsway.

I am pleased to register her true opinions in *Hansard* for her constituents and her party to know. I am sure she will be here tonight in spirit, if not in body.

The bill before us deals with three segments of the media—magazines, newspapers and television. We have heard a great deal about magazines, and rightly so, but it is likely to have an effect on newspapers as well. One wonders how some newspapers are going to have an 80 per cent Canadian content. With all the world-shaking events that occur I would suspect Canadians would want more than 20 per cent of their news to come from outside our borders.

One thinks of the Vietnam war and the Watergate crisis which happened concurrently. One wonders if any Canadian publication should be limited to 20 per cent of non-Canadian news at a time like that. I think we could run into a great deal of difficulty when we try to monitor or censor our newspapers and publications to comply with this arbitrary 80 per cent rule. It seems to have come about rather suddenly, and to be much higher than anyone had anticipated. People thought we would have a 51 per cent rule, or a 60 per cent rule. The weeks and months dragged by until it was too late for the main publishers to do anything about it. They were suddenly faced with the statement that it was 80 per cent, which made it almost impossible for them to comply.

Incidentally they have gone to considerable lengths to divest themselves of their foreign holdings of stock. Both companies have sincerely tried to get Canadian ownership of their companies up to the required level. For these types of magazines then to be faced with what, for them, is an insurmountable problem of 80 per cent ownership, is rather unfair.

When we speak of this cutting into their publications to tell them exactly what they can publish, I should like to remind hon. members that the Davey commission on the mass media warned of the administrative horrors of legislation that attempted to set Canadian editorial content requirements for the printed media. It is a rare thing for me to agree with Senator Keith Davey about anything, but I believe he knew something about publishing at one time in his life so he probably was correct when he said that would be an administrative horror and he would rather not have anything to do with it.