

Non-Canadian Publications

de-la-Madeleine (Mr. Bécharde). I suppose that some people read *Reader's Digest* in Bonaventure, as others do everywhere in Gaspesia and Magdelene Islands. I feel that *Reader's Digest* is being discriminated against at this time, and I cannot see how people could be harmed if we continued to apply the same policy.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member should join us and urge the government to decide at long last to take a position and to continue to favour a magazine such as *Reader's Digest*, that I read as well as my family, so that a great many people who live far from libraries and large centres, may know what is going on first of all in our own country and then in the rest of the world.

[English]

Mr. F. A. Philbrook (Halton): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support Bill C-58.

An hon. Member: You would.

Mr. Philbrook: That's right, I would; and you will see why in a minute. This bill seeks only to eliminate a few exceptions. It does not seek to discriminate against any existing policy. It supports the Canadian media industry but not the larger, foreign media industry. Canadians are justifiably patriotic but also international in outlook. We should value information from other countries, but not more than from our own country. There is a welcome place for foreign communications here, alongside strong and independent Canadian counterparts.

● (1620)

Bill C-58 covers television also, but let us talk first about magazines. My colleague, the hon. member for York West (Mr. Fleming), covered the television aspects this afternoon. *Time* and *Reader's Digest* are unquestionably the most widely read foreign publications in Canada. They have produced what they call Canadian editions and invested and operated in Canada to a greater extent than most foreign publications, which is to their credit. But they also profited well by the deal. Nonetheless, they are not, and will not be, classified as Canadian magazines until they are truly Canadian and meet all the criteria established by the government which represents the people of Canada; and they are not entitled to share in any special privileges granted to Canadian publications until they do so qualify. In recent times they have been given their chance to conform to our definition of Canadian publications but have not conformed. So, such exceptions are not justified. It might even make sense to put all publications, foreign and Canadian, on the same tax basis, but not at this time.

The small Canadian publishing industry historically has had some difficulty in competing with foreign publications. It has asked the Canadian government to support it until it is self-sufficient. This support has been given in the form of special tax concessions to its advertisers to attract advertising dollars to domestic magazines. To some extent this has helped, but not enough yet. Is any of this surprising for a young nation struggling among established powers?

Why do our own institutions need such help? Obviously, they need it partly because other countries have bigger, stronger and more established economies and home mar-

kets to support all their enterprises. Some Canadian apologists complain that our Canadian products are inferior and do not deserve the support of the Canadian government. "Let them stand up and compete like adults," they say, "and not be molly-coddled." Even if such criticism is true, Canada needs its own best communications and cultural systems and all possible steps must be taken to make it a reality. We are determined to be a sovereign nation, with all due regard for our giant neighbour to the south and the rest of the world power blocs. Therefore, certain key areas must be safeguarded. The media is certainly one of the most important. Most of us agree that the necessary ability exists here in Canada. We need a solid, concerted national effort to put that ability to full use.

One wonders why two major foreign magazines, plus a few minor ones, were ever granted the same privileged tax exemptions as Canadian products. Other foreign publications were not so lucky and yet have survived. Also, they had every right to complain of discrimination compared to *Time* and *Digest*. These exceptions do not make any sense at all. *Time* and *Reader's Digest* are rich, powerful companies. They are well established by now. Their American editions will continue to sell well here. If other foreign publications can afford to operate here without special tax concessions, why can't they? They can, but they obviously prefer not to. They are determined to keep their special privileges, as though they were Canadian, yet they would not expect the corresponding situation to be tolerated in their own country. The U.S.A. safeguards its own.

How did these exceptions occur in the first place? Was Canada so hard up for culture a few years ago that it would give up anything to get the most popular publications available at the time? Did we let the powerful U.S. government bully us into accepting these magazines on their economic terms? Did we just not think enough at the time about all the implications of being colonized in this way, socially, culturally and politically?

There are certain other irritants in the situation, certain subtle malinfluences with which we put up over the years. They are not the reasons for Bill C-58, but are relevant. They include *Time's* political propagandizing on behalf of the ultra conservative, right-wing philosophies of the publisher, Henry Luce, and his cohorts and *Reader's Digest's* red-baiting, intolerant lead articles. Both magazines were in business when Canada was trying to develop its own independent, moderate way of life and promote a more peaceful, tolerant world instead of stringing along with a pernicious cold war. Thoughtful students were aware of these insidious influences back in the early 1950s. Undoubtedly, too many Canadians were exposed to such early subliminal propaganda. The situation has changed. Now Canada is stronger, richer and more capable. We can profit from international exposure but must, at the same time, move forward with our national development of a dominant native press.

Some Canadians have charged that Bill C-58 simply represents crass commercial favouritism toward central Canada, Toronto in particular, specifically the Maclean-Hunter enterprises. Well, these Canadian institutions are there and open for the participation of all Canadians. If that is not enough, Canadians can start their own enterprises in the east or west, relieved of the burden of compet-

[Mr. Allard.]