

*Non-Canadian Publications*

lations regarding content is well known here. I have also expressed my deep concern about the morality and the reflection on us as a nation over the manner with which we are treating those who were welcomed here one third of a century ago and who now are being ejected in a manner worthy of a banana republic, not that of a free, mature, and democratic nation such as Canada.

The one major concern in this whole debate, the reason I have participated with such vigour, and the reason I rise again on third reading is fear for the fundamental freedom of our country. This fear has been expressed by the most responsible and able people in the media across this nation. We all see it threatened under this tax legislation. We see freedom threatened by giving bureaucrats the power of cultural police, and courts being stripped of the power in this case that should wholly be held there.

There should not be a final decision by anyone in a democracy other than a court. This is a threat to freedom itself. The foundations of democracy, not only freedom of the press but use of law and the court as final arbiter, are being lost in the regulations which are part of all this.

This is all happening as our world grows smaller and the number of free societies is diminishing. It is obvious that the first sign of trouble and emerging tyranny is erosion of a free press. Freedom, so precious but with such fragile underpinnings, is constantly in crisis. It should never be tampered with or treated lightly, because it can quickly collapse. Freedoms throughout the world were virtually lost overnight when a despot took over nations when he could not stand up to the scrutiny of the masses. The first act was inevitably to remove those who exposed him to scrutiny, that is, the published and, today, the electronic media. That thus eliminates freedom of the press, and then there is the freedom to do whatever is desired with the people, and any atrocity is acceptable.

I use this illustration because to understand the normal we must understand the abnormal. The extreme is always a possibility and a danger when freedom is so delicate. Those who watch and report to the citizenry, and those who are known as the fourth estate of society must be with us whether they are good or bad. A free press is our protection. It does not matter that the style of reporting might not make us all happy. I wish it were better in Canada and that there were more self-discipline within the press so that there would never be danger of control over it. Our system of justice, our system of parliament, and our agencies of government must be watched, just as the courts must be watched, by the press. Bill C-58 could be a dangerous step and could shatter the fragile underpinnings of our whole system of public communication.

All of us here, though devoted to our country and our democracy, could share in our own demise. Many here sincerely believe in some high minded objective, some hope of national growth and superiority and, frighteningly enough, national purity against the entry of outsiders. That has happened often in history, and history must be our lesson.

Some of my hon. colleagues express concern and even some disgust that this bill has struggled so long through gestation. It should never have been conceived. Perhaps the parents of this bill are mismatched, and the product can only be a warped, deformed monster. I think there

[Mrs. Holt.]

would be greater cause for worry if Bill C-58 had been taken as lightly as some of the committee members wished, or if it had been handled with the casualness of what some have described as a simple tax bill. It is much more than that. It is a twisting of regulations to fit the plan of a cultural assassination to silence certain periodicals because they are not purely Canadian.

Freedom was lost in another country in the search for a pure Aryan quality. The first move there was to silence the press. Once the press or the media was no longer free, the most horrendous atrocities could occur. Millions of lives were destroyed, and no one was there to report that or to account to the nation or the international community, because the nation itself was no longer free. Perhaps that will not happen here, but it was always maintained it could not happen in Germany. After all, Germany was one of the most culturally advanced societies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, it did happen, and thus there can be no guarantee that it cannot happen elsewhere, even in Canada. When any group abuses freedom there is the danger of losing it. Whenever people fail to use self-discipline in their profession or business, the state inevitably moves in and opposes it.

It has been said by the leader of this side of the House that before the anti-inflation program was introduced, big business, big industry and big unions would not use self-discipline; they would not co-operate to solve the problems of this nation, and so controls were imposed. It frightens me to think that controls could ever move into the cultural field. Some of the most democratic people in this country are actually saying this without awareness of the tyranny into which they can lead all of us, and despite their well-intentioned and seemingly high minded principles. Some members of parliament talk of imposing codes of ethics on journalists.

The Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) talked casually in the committee of a cultural plan for Canada. It is possibly because of what is happening in other areas in Canada that reinforces my fear at this moment. Judy LaMarsh in her commission on violence in the media discusses the possibility of censorship. The CRTC has ordered CFCF Montreal to show cause why it should not lose its licence for doing what is one of the jobs of the media, drawing attention to controversial issues, including the actions, good or bad, of government. The issue of the language bill, Bill 22 in Quebec, and the reaction, a petition with 600,000 names, seem to have angered powerful forces close to the government.

● (1620)

CRTC chairman, Harry Boyle—one of the great Canadian electronic media experts and an eminently just man, one who understands freedom and the delicacy of its life and knows the press as well as any Canadian—explained his reasons for the CRTC threat to the CFCF licence by saying the reporting was not balanced. Surely that is a journalistic judgment and not one that should concern the CRTC. But CRTC power has become almost greater than the government that has created it. It is because of this that I am so concerned about this one other and major step toward diminishing freedom in communications.