

to go over it again. However, the hon. member for Ontario added these words:

—and not more than 40 per cent of its content, including advertisements, were first published in a single periodical outside of Canada.

Here, with the greatest respect, my interpretation is that the contents could be entirely foreign and not one line Canadian because the limitation, as I read it, is that not more than 40 per cent shall have been published in any single publication outside of Canada. Therefore, *Reader's Digest* or *Time* could pick up 35 per cent from one publication, 35 per cent from another and 30 per cent from another pool. In fact, you can break up these percentages so long as they are under 40 per cent, and be merely a digest or a compendium put together from other sources. So long as no single publication could claim to be the origin of 40 per cent of the editorial content, the magazine would qualify if it otherwise qualified under ownership.

● (1640)

This is not what we are trying to cure. We would, of course, like to see some Canadian content in a publication, but the motion of the hon. member for Ontario does not establish any Canadian content in it at all—not one line. The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway establishes the same freedom, shall I say, simply by striking out the provision having to do with 40 per cent content from any publication. The hon. member's amendment is strictly limited to ownership—at least to that extent it is clear—and is certainly preferable to the proposed motion of the hon. member for Ontario which I have criticized.

The Parliament of Canada is a place of debate and of mobilization of public authority. The extensive debate that has taken place in this House has tended to mobilize some public opinion. Since the debate started we have seen a number of newspapers take up the question in their editorial pages. It is not attracting much further debate among news reporters. They have reported the debate, which has continued for a good number of days, in every imaginable form they can find, which I suppose is not the way to write stories which sell newspapers, and as a result this debate does not rank as a front page attraction so far as a news feature is concerned.

As a result of the debate in this House, the attitude of the Minister of National Revenue has been modified. Following the debate on second reading and the discussions in committee, the public was astounded by the statement of the minister that “not substantially the same” was going to be interpreted as meaning 80 per cent. Further, he assumed the fiat that should anyone discover a means whereby these requirements could be circumvented in any way, then either the law would be changed so as to clamp down, or the interpretation of the law as it might exist following passage of this bill would be changed so as to catch everyone. There is about as much principle in that as there is in the most tortuous of crooked arguments.

Then we had the other day, I think to the astonishment of the press and the whole of the Canadian public, the statement by the Minister of National Revenue that the government has come to an accommodation with *Reader's Digest*. I don't know how much thinning oil was put into the works by either side in regard to interpretation.

Non-Canadian Publications

I should like to lend whatever influence I have—I was almost trapped into saying whatever weight I could lend—to the argument of my colleagues that this bill be returned to the committee. I should like to know through my colleagues on the committee what changes have been made in the thinking of Mr. Zimmerman and his board and that of his principals in Reader's Digest Incorporated to enable them now to live within the spirit and letter of the law as amended by this bill.

I have before me, Mr. Speaker, a file which, for the purposes of the record, is about an inch and a half thick, containing representations from *Reader's Digest* and from an aroused citizenry, most of them readers of *Reader's Digest*, lamenting, fulminating and generally deploring the lack of principle and the insidious action of the government in trying to take away the position that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired. He may continue with unanimous consent. Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I promise to finish within two minutes, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, protestations have been made. The government decided, for its own reasons which I will not go into at this time, that the status of *Time* and *Reader's Digest* should be changed, ten years after a government of the same stripe had given that particular status to those two magazines. The members of this House would like to know from the Minister of National Revenue just what the government has done to change its mind, and what inspired it to insert some oil into the works that has induced rapprochement, shall I say, between *Reader's Digest* and the government in this particular matter. Also, we would like to know whether anything is developing in regard to *Time* Incorporated. May I thank the House for its indulgence, Mr. Speaker, and say I certainly support the amendment of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I notice that a number of government members called for the question when you recognized me. I think about the only questions that still confront us are, why are they so silent and why are they backtracking so rapidly as they go back to their constituents to discuss Bill C-58?

An hon. Member: They are all asleep.

Mr. Epp: If they are all asleep, then that is an attitude they are familiar with and perhaps it is where we should leave them. The amendment of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt) has my wholehearted endorsement and support. The government and its supporters would be very wise to consider what that amendment does in essence. It really bails the government out a very sticky situation in which it finds itself.