

1989 totalled \$156,522,000. Statistics Canada released data in September 1990 showing that those firms paid that year \$34,937,000 in wages and salaries, \$14,586,000 in copyrights, and spent \$92,289,000 in printing costs and so on to publish their own books.

Nevertheless, the future of our publishing industry is still uncertain. Its recent obvious successes, over the last two decades, should not cloud reality. That industry is still not in a totally comfortable situation.

The dramatic decrease in sales following the implementation of that tax on books will bring about in the publishing industry a major crisis which will lead to the closing of a significant number of publishing houses and bookstores.

The situation will be just as much dramatic within the book distribution and shipping sectors. Many printers, typographers, graphists, proof readers, carriers, translators and so on will lose their jobs. Last, the number of authors published in the province of Quebec will decrease sharply.

School publications will be greatly affected by this new tax. The price of books bought by college and university students will increase from 20 to 30 per cent. You know what such an increase means for them. The same situation will prevail for private school students at every level.

As for primary and high schools, only book procurements by school boards will benefit from a partial rebate to compensate for tax paid by the boards. Every other item paid for by the students or their parents will be fully taxed, namely copy-books, school supplies, reading books, dictionaries, and so on. Parents usually buy school supplies for their children, and they will have to pay 15 per cent in tax in the province of Quebec.

Furthermore, the tax will impose a heavy administrative burden on publishers and school boards while its benefits in the form of tax revenues will be relatively small. Interestingly enough the government will gain almost nothing from that tax.

Lastly, our financial partners, not to be inclined to invest in our publishing industry as it is, have already started to worry about the future viability of the industry following implementation of the GST on books.

I remember one bank manager who was not too happy to see me enter his office to tell him how important it was to invest in authors like Marie-Claire Blais and Victor Lévy-Beaulieu. They didn't understand what I was taking about.

● (1530)

We must gather our courage and say "no"! I know that there is no problem on this side, but I am thinking of you, on the other side. We must say "no" to the annihilation of 20 years of work. We say "no" to any tax on books. That is what we should all say.

Senator Simard: Did you say "yes" to the preliminary study in March or April? You got caught in your own net and now try to blame others.

Senator Hébert: I don't think a preliminary study would have convinced you.

Senator Simard: That's the problem!

Senator Hébert: I don't think that a preliminary study would have convinced Senator Simard because I never saw the senator swayed by any argument appealing to the intelligence or to the heart. But you could perhaps give me one example of change—

If books are essential to the intellectual health of all Canadians, including Senator Simard, if they are the traditional instrument of freedom of expression and form the basis for building one's national identity, for the French-speaking population in this country they play an altogether unique role. They are the guardian of a minority culture's knowledge and linguistic expression, in a way that is unique in North America. And they are particularly important to this Francophone cultural minority.

For the same reasons as our Canadian Anglophone colleagues, and aware of the disastrous impact the application of this tax would have on a product that is so basic to cultural enrichment, we ask . . . I yield the floor to the Coalition I mentioned earlier:

We ask that books be considered an exempt product.

Books have never been taxed in Canada. And I say this for the third time since I started my speech. However, I imagine this may have escaped the senators who are talking. Since Confederation, books have never been taxed in Canada. Recognizing the educational value of books and their importance to the public, Canada has always refrained from introducing measures that would have made books an elitist product.

The Canadian government has made books accessible to all, in all regions of this country. It promoted the birth and growth of a national publishing industry thanks to intelligent policies, supported by substantial programs to assist the publishing industry. The Department of Communications has spent \$23.5 million and the Canada Council \$23.9 million on the publishing industry over the past three fiscal years.

Why do some people think it is worthwhile for a government department and for the Canada Council, which is still independent but which those gentlemen would dearly love to control . . . Why do these two agencies keep giving substantial grants to the publishing industry, when the GST will come and take it all away?

The government has even planned measures regarding the postal rate. There was a special rate for books so that the vastness of our country would not be a discriminatory factor in the availability of books. Because of the cheaper rate, we were able to send books to the small French bookstore in Vancouver.

The government has taken all these measures for a simple reason: the government believed in the written word and accepted the fact that it was the basis of culture in society.

Gestures like those clearly show how the Canadian government has always tried to offer the people of Canada a truly democratic education. The government has never imposed discriminatory measures on books. It wanted to give Canadians the same access to knowledge, to favor the freedom of