

Supply

has done is to attack one of the most basic liberties of Canadians, one of the most essential rights that any Canadian must have if our democracy is to survive and flourish.

There are a number of different ways in which the Government has done this. This is the first Government in the history of Canada ever to launch a raid on a newspaper under the Official Secrets Act. It was done by this Government against the Toronto *Sun* when it did not appreciate the fact that the *Sun* was publishing documents on the extent of Soviet subversion in Canada. Therefore, what it did was to sic the RCMP on the *Sun*. It is the first time in our history that this was done.

This is a Government which has threatened the publicly-funded CBC on more than one occasion, including one case where the Prime Minister threatened to put the lid on Radio-Canada if it did not change its coverage because it did not like the people who were giving coverage to events.

This is a Government which has set aside a massive war chest, unparalleled in the history of Canada, for propaganda—often very highly partisan propaganda—to sell a contentious, disputed point of view and to ensure that when it cannot earn good publicity in the nation's news media, it will buy it. It will bypass the news media, using it simply as a vehicle for going directly to Canadians with their tax dollars, trying to persuade Canadians that the Liberal point of view is right.

There is nothing in the law which prevented previous governments from doing that. The only thing that prevented previous governments from abusing tax dollars in that way was a sense of self-restraint, moderation and decency, a respect for the Canadian way of life.

Many of our freedoms as Canadians over the years since Confederation have depended upon the willingness of governments to recognize that fundamental reality. Part of what makes us Canadian is our respect for the rights of one another and the unwillingness of people who have power to abuse power and to take away the rights of others. That was the case and it has worked well until this Trudeau Government came to office.

What we have found in recent years is a steady accretion of power in the hands of a few and a steady diminution of the rights of Canadians and of liberties which we have historically taken for granted. The Government is about to embark upon a new assault on freedom of the press in Canada. The Minister of State for Multiculturalism (Mr. Fleming) has been waging a one-man war against Canada's daily newspaper industry. In the past few days he made a speech in which he said that before the end of this month the Government will be tabling legislation which will hobble or control the daily newspaper industry in Canada. It will regulate the ownership of daily newspapers and affect the ability of newspaper to do their job.

It is essential if our democracy is to function well that we have a press that is free and unfettered. Even when the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) does not approve, as he sometimes does not, that right must still be exercised by the fourth estate to hold the Minister to account. It will shine light into areas of government administration

where the Government does not want the public or the news media to go.

● (1240)

Mr. Ouellet: Have you seen your psychiatrist lately?

Mr. Beatty: Do you see, Mr. Speaker, what happens when one points out the mentality that there is on the part of the Liberal Government? Do you see, Mr. Speaker, how particularly the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs vociferously indicates that there is no way that this could be the case?

Mr. Fisher: He is right, you are wrong.

Mr. Beatty: You can tell a guilty conscience when you see one, Mr. Speaker. No one should have a more guilty conscience than this Minister, who has consistently attacked the independence of Radio-Canada over the years and has shown by his own actions that he has no regard for the need for independence of the news media and for the need for a free press in Canada.

Mr. Ouellet: You are sick. I attacked separatists.

Mr. Fisher: He is protecting Canada.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, we have a Government that is incapable of distinguishing between the national interest and its own interest. It cloaks its actions by saying that everything it does is in the national interest, yet everything it does is calculated to be in its own interest. What is seen time after time, both in the House of Commons and across the country, is that any Canadian who dares to challenge the Liberal Government, any Canadian who dares to question the policies of the Liberal Government or their actions, finds his Canadianism impugned and is told that he is a bad Canadian and that somehow he is doing a disservice to his country because he does not agree with the Liberal Government. This is the attitude that the Liberal Government has shown toward the press.

As a result of the Kent Commission, which was set up after the simultaneous shutdowns of the Ottawa *Journal* and the Winnipeg *Tribune* and which made broad and sweeping recommendations that would have seen an extremely dangerous intrusion by the Government into the daily newspaper industry in Canada, we found that the Liberal Government used this as a Trojan horse to get its foot in the newsroom door. In the future the Government will control the ability of people or organizations to buy a daily newspaper. It will give direct grants to daily newspapers in order for them to open new bureaux, something that was systematically rejected by every reputable news organization in the country because those news organizations did not want to be beholden to the Government or its friends. The Government will set up a Government-sponsored and Government-funded press council to pass judgment on the nation's journalists. The first chairman and vice-chairman of this Government-funded press council will be appointed by the Government and the funding will come from the Government. It will create a convenient vehicle for the