

As far as I am concerned, I will limit myself to talking about the catastrophic impact of the GST on the book industry. Newspapers and magazines will be hit as well, but it is the book which is the base of our cultural development.

● (1430)

I will probably use freely the most remarkable submissions received by the committee so ably and patiently chaired by Senator Sidney Buckwold. Just the presence of Senator Simard opposite is enough to test anyone's patience, and we all congratulate him.

I will quote publishers, booksellers, journalists, authors, but I will try not to mention my own experience in this field, except to say that I probably published more than 1000 articles in dailies, weeklies and magazines, including a political weekly that I founded and published for five years; that I authored 25 books; that I founded a bookstore, a book club, book distribution companies and two publishing companies which have published more than 800 books in fifteen years, with Pierre Tisseyre, J. Z. Léon Patenaude, and several others, to develop in Quebec and Canada a book industry which in the early 60s was still in its infancy.

As an example, I would simply remind you that, in those days, when I started working in the publishing business, in all of Quebec you could only find about twenty bookstores, and they sold essentially books imported from France. Today, there are more than 400 bookstores, and books published in French in Canada are not relegated to some obscure corner anymore. In thirty years, the publishing industry has made giant strides in Quebec and the rest of Canada, as you will see by the numbers that I will quote later.

I will especially emphasize the doubly catastrophic situation of this industry in Quebec, although it is not very reassuring either in the rest of Canada. For example, this is what Lysiane Gagnon wrote in *La Presse* of October 20th:

Until now, books were not taxed in Canada.

Some of us may be not fully aware of that. Never since Confederation has any tax been imposed on books. I quote further from Lysiane Gagnon:

"Everything will change within a year. The GST will put a 7 per cent tax on books. To which Quebec will add its own 8 per cent tax. All at once, the price of books will go up 15 per cent or rather almost 16 per cent, since the provincial tax will be calculated on the after GST amount.

Booksellers and publishers are, rightly, in a state of alert. They forecast a 25 per cent decrease in sales and expect that publishers will be less inclined to "take chances".

I must tell you that this is an anglicism that Lysiane Gagnon herself put in brackets. In French, you should have said "take risks". However, I read a quote and by the brackets, I assume that Lysiane Gagnon knew she was taking risks with the French language.

... Only guaranteed bestsellers will be published. The next Réjean Ducharme whose manuscript will raise

doubts will have to be published at the author's expense. Or else stop writing."

Of course, many culturally-oriented magazines—*MacLean* and *l'Actualité* will probably get by—will not survive the GST.

The letters, documents and briefs opposing the GST in general and especially as it applies to books and magazines are so numerous and of such high quality that it would be difficult to quote even their most essential parts. If there is an industry which is unanimously against the GST, it is the book industry. As evidence of this, here is a partial list of associations which have indicated their opposition to a bill which would destroy all the progress accomplished over the past 30 years. Although incomplete, this list deserved to be heard. I have just received an updated version which is twice as long, but I will dispense with it, limiting myself to the one I had here already.

Association des Éditeurs, Société des éditeurs de manuels scolaires du Québec, Union des écrivains québécois, Union des éditeurs de langue française, an international organization, International Publishers Association—which is not strictly French—Association des éditeurs de périodiques culturels québécois, Association québécoise des salons du livre, Association des distributeurs exclusifs de langue française, Association des librairies du Québec, Association québécoise des presses universitaires, Corporations of Professional Librarians of Quebec, Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de documentation, National Catholic Communications Center, Canadian Magazine Publishers Association, Communication Jeunesse, British Columbia Library Association, Association of Canadian Publishers, Canadian Book publishers' Council, Canadian Booksellers Association, Canadian Community Newspaper Association, Canadian Library Association, Canadian Teachers' Federation, Canadian University Press, Periodical Marketers of Canada, The University of Toronto student's administrative council . . .

As I told you, a few days ago I received a list which is twice as long, but I will spare you.

Allow me however to quote a few passages from the excellent brief of the Conseil consultatif de la lecture et du livre:

The publishing industry is the oldest of all activities now described as cultural industries. However we will have to wait for the industrial revolution if we want the organization of the work to be comparable with what it is today, complete with a division and specialization of duties.

There are various stages in the production of a book, beginning with creation and on through the distribution of the product. The creation stage, that is the work of authors and translators, gets the production process under way. The second stage, editing and publishing, is the major activity of the editor who runs the risk . . . oftentimes.

For oftentimes it is an incredible and extraordinary risk in Quebec . . .