

*Non-Canadian Publications*

We then encountered a real difficulty. Who is to decide if any publication is 80 per cent different? I cannot accept the government's action. I believe the Canadian people have the right to decide for themselves what they want to read and when to read it. If there is to be more state control in all facets of our way of living, I suppose we will have to accept it. Yet merely because we are embarking on a program of economic controls which may last three years is no reason for accepting a publishing control which may last for all time.

● (1740)

It is most unfortunate that any minister, not necessarily this Minister of National Revenue, or any government, by any whim of fancy can change the whole aspect of this. This is a very dangerous precedent that we are setting here today. I hope the minister and the government will reconsider and accept this amendment. They should take the legislation back to committee where it can be reconsidered once again and dealt with adequately. This is an unprecedented move. It is beneath the dignity of this House of Commons. I hope the minister will give it further consideration

I think of certain members of the standing committee on the government side who were in fact against the bill. I think of the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart), the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt), the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Cafik), the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) and others. There are a great many more who may not have spoken, but those were members of the committee and they did their best to get the government to change its mind. That is one reason why I am speaking in favour of the amendment recommending that the bill be given a year's hoist during which the government can reconsider its position, allowing us to consider the matter a second time.

This is probably one of the most evasive bills we have had in this thirtieth parliament. It has generated more mail than any other piece of legislation. One need only read the speeches that have been made. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) has been on his feet twice with regard to this bill. It is very interesting to read his arguments. No one in this House will question his integrity and concern with regard to this or any other bill. I wish to read some of the points he made with regard to these amendments. I quote:

Some years ago this House laid down the principle that if advertisers wanted to qualify for income tax deduction, their advertisements had to be placed in publications not substantially the same as foreign publications or, more accurately, that income tax deductions would not be permitted in cases where those advertisements were placed in publications substantially the same as foreign publications. I make the point that "substantially the same" could not, by any stretching of the English language, mean "80 per cent different." Neither can the English language be so tortured that "substantially the same" means "20 per cent the same." For example, to suggest that a publication "25 per cent the same" as another publication is "substantially the same" is a misuse of the English language. Clearly, the government is changing the law which parliament adopted, and not by asking parliament to change the law it is doing it simply with a ministerial interpretation.

A few days ago the hon. member for Mississauga (Mr. Abbott) was surprised that I should be surprised at the Minister of National Revenue's interpretation of this law. The hon. member suggested that the minister and the department must as best they can frequently interpret the various laws they are called on to administer, particularly the Income Tax Act...

[Mr. McKenzie.]

I recognize that in connection with radio and television the CRTC is following a policy involving the determination of Canadian content. The CRTC lays down rules about what proportion of the programming has to be Canadian content; it determines what it will accept as Canadian content. I am not happy about this set-up. I am not happy about the fact that television and radio stations have to renew their licences every two or three years. I would think that in the six-month period before a licence has to be renewed, the owners of those stations are perhaps a little nervous about the CRTC's attitude. They might be inclined to be a little careful about what they put on their stations during that period. I emphasize that I am not suggesting any improper motives as far as the CRTC is concerned; I am just saying that it is an unfortunate situation. There may be no way of avoiding it.

These speeches go on and on. It is unbelievable that the government is being so adamant with regard to Bill C-58. I hope that the two ministers most involved with this bill and the members of their party who have so clearly spoken out against aspects of it will now give serious consideration to reviewing all aspects. With such strong feeling all across Canada, it is unbelievable that they are taking such a strong stand against the opposition and the Canadian people. I certainly hope the two ministers will reconsider.

[Translation]

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** Mr. Speaker, I will add only a few words before pointing out that I almost entirely approve the amendment now under consideration. We must not forget, Mr. Speaker, when discussing that amendment and the bill that we recognize, that I at least recognize, the laudable intention of the government which is trying to promote the typical Canadian periodical. The intention is fine, it is even praiseworthy. Unfortunately, we are moving towards a rather narrow nationalism and there is sometimes a tendency to resort to law and show some pettiness.

That is why I think the proposed amendment would seem to correct the mistakes that occurred as this famous bill was being prepared. Mr. Speaker, a very objective analysis had to be made of the context of this bill to be able to judge it adequately. We all agreed on that, which is why I support the amendment that a periodical be considered Canadian if 75 per cent of its directors and owners are Canadians, if its writing and publication operations are carried out and controlled in Canada, and if no more than 40 per cent of its content, except advertising, had first been published in a single periodical outside Canada.

I think that nobody objected to control, owners and publishers being 75 per cent Canadian but progress stopped at a certain moment with the famous 80 per cent difference in content and that was a mistake and the minister himself seems to have recognized it by interpreting his bill in a particular way to provide that *Reader's Digest* be considered a Canadian periodical with a content of 80 per cent as set forth. That interpretation is still not as clear as if it were contained in the bill. That is why I think the amendment before us becomes very good since a point had been reached where things were being judged backwards. How can a periodical which by its very nature is a digest of articles relating what is happening all over the world and written by people the world over have an 80 per cent different content from what might be published abroad? We were faced with a dilemma.

Mr. Speaker, when the committee sat I asked the question to a representative of *Maclean's* who said that if *Reader's Digest* disappeared his own company could never