

same time a freedom and a duty. I think the information function of the press is based on honesty and a term that is not as popular in press circles as it used to be, objectivity, which is very hard to define. I concede that from the start.

Freedom of the press is, of course, limited by ethics in the information part of a newspaper or in the information services of a radio or TV station.

The freedom of the press is, of course, also the freedom of expressing opinions. I think not only has the press a right to do it, but also it has a duty to express opinions; but I have always been of the school that wanted to have as tight a compartmentalization between editorial and reporting as can be. I don't think that it can be absolute because more and more with the presence of television, the written press have to give background and in a certain way to indulge in commentary which blurs the line of division a little bit.

Basically I don't think that freedom of the press is under any serious threat in Canada. I have my qualms about the monopolies, or so-called monopolies of the press in a particular area. I find it very difficult to define what an information monopoly is, but I think that an effort should be made to come to some definition as precise as it can be made. The danger seems to come from these huge organizations. This is my personal view of it. There is also another one which is, in many newspapers, the difficulty of articulating the views of the board of administrators and the policies of the newspaper or the freedom of the newspaper to inform and express opinions.

I have lived through a very painful incident in my life on this very point, but this would lead me into the professional status of newspapermen and—

The Chairman: Well, why don't you talk about that, please?

Mr. Pelletier: Well, there is a tension which to a certain extent is inevitable for the board of administrators in a newspaper and the professional staff of newspapermen. For instance, in a certain paper that I was associated with, the administrators wanted to print an editorial on the front page signed by one of the board members, and I as the editor said no. And they said "Why not? If you are allowed to do so as our employee, why should not we as administrators of the newspaper, be in a position to do the same thing?" And the only answer I had was that as a professional journalist I had learned how to do that and they hadn't. They didn't like the answer of course, but I have always felt that—in a larger mood you know, but I think it is relevant—I don't know how

many of you remember a very good piece by Robert Benchley who used to say the usual citizen doesn't pretend to have a cure for cancer but all citizens have a cure for hiccups. The normal citizen doesn't pretend that he can be an engineer or an atomic scientist, but I know very few citizens who don't have deep down in their conscience the conviction that they could be a fairly good journalist.

Senator Prowse: They all want to write a book.

Mr. Pelletier: This is not my way of looking at it. I think it is a profession—I think it entails very strict technical knowledge, even in the editorial section of a newspaper, and I think that the articulation of a board of administrators with the professional staff that runs the paper is one of the major problems.

I can't pretend that I have found the solution because while looking for it I was kicked out of the newspaper.

The Chairman: And you went into another profession which the public feels equally competent in!

Mr. Pelletier: That is right.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortier: Mr. Minister, on this note, do you accept, professionally, that the owner of a newspaper defines what may be called the parameters of his thought, the parameters of his policy, and compels his editor, his editorial team, to limit itself to editorializing within the bounds of these parameters?

Mr. Pelletier: Yes, I accept it, but I think that this definition must be made—we are in the editorial field?

Mr. Fortier: That is correct.

Mr. Pelletier: I think that this definition must be made if a newspaper is to function properly with the participation of the editor in editorial policy. There are two attitudes which a newspaper can take. It can say: "The thought I wish to express in an editorial, is A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and Mr. Editorial-writer, if you agree with this thought, you are our editorial writer; if not, go elsewhere." There is the second attitude which consists of discussion between the newspaper owners or the board of directors and the editorial writers to reach common ground.

To this I should like to add a simple statement. This is that it appears completely impossible to me to establish all shades because the board of directors can produce a document whose broad outline, the parameters as you call them, will be established. But, daily, editorial writers have to write, and