

*Non-Canadian Publications*

this position in the mind or in the statements of the Secretary of State. He was totally adamant on this point. Then the first week in February, *presto changeo*, there was an about-face in that position of the Liberal party. Previously, the 80 per cent rule also applied to *Reader's Digest*, and now, all of a sudden, it did not. Those articles which had been digested in précis form from a foreign source no longer had to undergo revision when they came into Canada.

**Mr. Faulkner:** Of course they do. You are confused.

**Mr. Friesen:** The Minister of National Revenue stated in the House, in unequivocal terms, that a publication like *Reader's Digest* could not function in Canada under what was commonly called the Cullen rule as outlined in October. He said in the House that the Cullen rule would make an operation like *Reader's Digest* defunct. It is noteworthy that the legislation again was brought forward by the Secretary of State, but the rule and the change in the rule were brought forward by the Minister of National Revenue.

The question is, how did this come about? What happened between the time the committee hearings ended in mid-December and the first week in February which brought about this absolute and total reversal in position? Something happened in the back rooms of the caucus, or the Department of National Revenue. Somebody visited the Minister of National Revenue and gave him a sudden flash of inspiration or insight which made him concede he was being unfair to a publication like *Reader's Digest*. The question that lies before us in this House is, what went on in the recesses of the chambers of the Minister of National Revenue? What kind of deal was made between the minister and officers of this one publication? What is it that made him change his mind? The minister said in this House that under the earlier version of the Cullen rule *Reader's Digest* could not operate. Now we see the 80 per cent different rule in respect of those materials from sources of continuing arrangement suddenly changed so that *Reader's Digest* qualifies.

In view of the fact that representatives of Maclean-Hunter insisted in October it needed the 80 per cent content rule in order to function, it would be worth while to ask what Maclean-Hunter is going to do now that *Reader's Digest* will be able to function in Canada. What is going to happen to that poor, distraught, undernourished company? What will happen to that tender flower, as it has been referred to in this House? Is it not going to be able to function now that the 80 per cent rule has been changed?

Members of this House, and members of the committee particularly, have a right to know what went on during the negotiations between the board of directors, or the president of *Reader's Digest*, and the Minister of National Revenue. The parliamentary committee, whose function it was to discern and ascertain what the best solution was in respect of legislation like this, was bypassed, overlooked and ignored regarding those negotiations. It was not advised until the day the press release was issued, and I believe the standing committee has the right to know what went on. Indeed the minister has an obligation to tell the standing committee what went on. It is a responsibility of that minister to deal fairly, honestly and openly with the

[Mr. Friesen.]

members of the standing committee so that they may be apprised of the negotiations which went on.

● (1600)

The overriding question which stands before the House today is do we now have the best possible legislation in the form of Bill C-58 as it is presently before us? Obviously if there have been negotiations in the back rooms it is not the best possible legislation. So, Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather):

That Bill C-58 be referred back to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts to enable the committee to hear evidence about arrangements made after the committee reported Bill C-58 to the House which will enable the *Reader's Digest* to qualify as a Canadian periodical.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I must bring to the attention of the hon. member that his motion was meant to be seconded by the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) who is not in the House at the present time. Perhaps the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) would second the motion.

**Mr. McKinnon:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure most if not all members feel as I do about Bill C-58 at this point in time. On the one hand I am grateful that this charade is finally coming to a close. On the other hand I am still as much in the dark as I was several months ago when the government first launched its vendetta against two of the finest publications in Canada. We still do not know, after weeks of deliberation, just why the bill was tabled.

When my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Victoria-Haliburton (Mr. Scott) rose to speak on this bill a couple of weeks ago he opened his remarks by saying that everything that could be said had already been said about the substance of Bill C-58. He added that he was compelled to speak on the bill on behalf of his constituents, more than 90 per cent of whom were in favour of leaving these two magazines alone. I am sure the same applies to many people in the great riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. I know also that many of my colleagues have received great numbers of letters in respect of this bill.

The remarks of the hon. member echoed the sentiments of most members of this House, although many of them did not put those sentiments into words. Like my colleague, I would like to commend the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt) and the other members on the government benches who had the courage to speak out for their constituents on this vital question. As my colleagues are aware by now, I tend to be a sort of quiet and retiring person, and so I greatly admire scrappers like the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway who proved right from the beginning that she had the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) figured out right to the "T". She showed beyond a shadow of a doubt that, while he professed to be some kind of an expert on the publishing industry, he was simply parroting the phrases provided to him by the Toronto publishing clique, the barons of mediocrity.

It should be interesting to see the Secretary of State in the next general election campaign flip-flopping, squirm-