

*Obscene Literature*

by school children during the noon hour. It is in these kinds of places that I believe restricted material ought not to be sold.

It is a sad commentary on our times that anyone who speaks out against pornography runs the risk of being branded by those who defend freedom of expression. My ideas in this House have been branded as paramount to dictatorial censorship. Sir, I will not yield to such arguments. Basically, it appears to me that pornography, whether appearing in literature or on radio, television, in films or on the stage, can be handled in one of three ways. We can ignore the whole matter; we can attempt to legislate the objectionable matter out of existence; or we can try to achieve our goals through persuasion.

I have chosen to follow a democratic rather than a totalitarian response to any of these issues which affect us as a society. In a free society, legal restraints must be justified by an awareness of the harmful consequences that flow from the activities to be restrained. We have assumed that because pornography, or even reference to pornography, tends to shock, therefore the best kind of action is inaction. But citizenship in a society establishes a social contact with our fellow citizens. That contact is a very tender thing, capable of being affected by a great many different influences. It is built on trust and good will, a desire to work for the common good and to yield up rights for the sake of the rest.

● (1710)

We also hear the argument that the state has no business legislating morality, and I have already made reference to that. But, in fact, the state is doing it all the time, and simply because many people do not recognize or do not want to recognize the moral questions involved does not remove them: they are there. Take, for instance, the doctors and nurses who are constantly being pressured to participate in abortions against their conscience. Matters of morality are in fact here. They face us every day in this chamber. We make decisions in respect of them. In fact, in the western hemisphere, at least in Canada under the parliamentary system which is based on the Judea-Christian concept, moral decisions are faced daily.

There are reasons to believe that we should be concerned that the legal restraints have not been stringent enough. Widespread access to pornography constitutes a frontal attack against the family. Pornography of all kinds, whether it is in the form of magazines or other forms, seriously undermines the family. Pornography which becomes easily accessible to children is extremely damaging because of its power to stimulate impressionable minds. Numerous sociologists and their studies have warned us about awakening too early the sexual drives of children. I am not a sociologist. However, I know their conclusions, though often times I cannot understand how they arrive at them. I think it would be agreed among most Canadians, certainly among most parents, that they do not want their children exposed to the kind of obscenity found in almost every corner store.

I could name some by name, such as *Penthouse*, *Playboy* and *Playgirl*. You will understand that I cannot remember the

[Mr. Whiteway.]

others. I am speaking not from experience but only from memory. There are many. The contact in early childhood with this kind of magazine, this kind of postulation that the abnormal is normal and the immoral is moral, makes a deep impression upon the minds of children.

There are several aspects of pornography that directly attack the family, whether aimed at adults or children. Pornography is devastating in its effect on the family, and pornography represents one of the most exploited industries in North America. We ought to be concerned about pornography because it is so unselective. Consider the unselectivity of an influence that stares at your children every time they walk past drugstores, magazine stands or the kind of stores I mentioned earlier. Gambling, for instance, is restricted to adults. Alcohol is not sold to anyone under the age of 18 years. But magazines and books can be picked up by any child. The more readily accessible they are, the more likely their influence is going to be carried over to children's very impressionable minds.

We need, above all else in this country, to recover a sense of right and wrong rooted in an awareness of God. We are fooling ourselves if we think we can resolve moral issues without an appeal to a Supreme Being. The underlying assumption within our law codes is the belief in the God of the Judea-Christian religion. This has given us the basis for moving in directions which we believe ultimately achieve some approximation of justice and righteousness within society.

I would like to argue in the strongest possible terms that ultimately our salvation, specifically in relation to pornography, will hinge on a deep sense of God and our accountability to him personally. Furthermore, we need to be persuaded that a bad moral environment for our children will eventually create the conditions for the destruction of the country and the society we cherish with such devotion. People are influenced by what they think others believe, and especially by what they believe is the common standard of the community, which I have called in time past the common standard of decency. Very few people come to their own basic beliefs entirely from their own reasoning, and most of us depend on stable public opinion to support our own moral opinions.

If obscenity can circulate freely within a community and no protests are made, people will come to the conclusion that public standards are changed or that there are no public standards at all. Furthermore, our personal moral values must be carefully nurtured. Ethical sensitivity is a tender thing. It is the intuitive feeling of right and wrong, the finer feeling of conscience, of mercy and of sympathy. Such emotions in children are indispensable in support for moral judgment, and these finer feelings can be eroded and stunted by a steady stream of impressions which assault them.

Children confronted with pornography and obscenity can become desensitized. Their moral sense will have been eroded, and when they feel that no voice is raised against that which is pornographic and obscene, they come collectively to feel that moral standards have ceased to exist. A bad moral environment will promote evil in the same way that a good moral environment is generally thought to promote good. It works