

we will move to the point of being able to propose to the provinces some arrangements. I think that suggesting to the provinces, whether Quebec or any other, that they share in the establishment of a quota system is in a sense taking the same kind of political decisions that the federal government is taking. I believe in a variety of incentives, and to me this provides no real incentive for there to be exhibition.

● (1700)

Let us say that the quota system were to be honoured by various companies as being efficient or important to them. If I were sitting in the boardroom of any one of those corporations, my very first question would have to be, "What is in it for us?" These are business people we are talking with, not the heads of churches or some kind of good will or charitable organizations. Unless there is to be some definite return or economic incentive I think they will always find ways to avoid exercising any real responsibility in this regard. That is the way I have felt for a long time.

Not only is this not likely to be honoured; that is only part of the problem. There is nothing sufficient to generate active interest, if you like. I think we want more than just the impassive or almost unhappy acceptance of the quota principle the minister has enunciated and tried to have adopted by the provinces. I would hope he or his officials would try to work out something similar to the Ead's model if that is not totally transferrable to our system. Surely some modification of that principle would be of value.

This brings me back to what I was saying a moment ago. It seems to me that if we are to be concerned about the magazine industry in this country, it will not be enough just to be concerned about it in terms of ensuring that the advertising inequities that presently exist are removed. I have already expressed some of the difficulties that may exist in the actual transfer of that 50 per cent to be spread among Canadian publishers. We have to be concerned about the level at which the consumer or the reader will be able to make these publications available to himself. If the distribution chain is very heavily controlled by outside sources, then it is obvious we have not really solved the problem.

I suggest there are a variety of ways in which the minister could deal with this distribution system. There are some immediate ones he can look at. One would be an investigation under the Combines Investigation Act to determine whether there is some measure of monopolistic practice that is preventing adequate access to Canadian publications. The second thing might be to throw open some of the government's own retailing operations, such as Info-Can, across the country. The first step that might be worth taking is to explore the possibility of making Canadian publications available through the storefront offices of Info-Can which exist in so many towns and cities in this country. At least this might be a transitional role to make sure there is access to various publications across the country.

I say that my time is rapidly expiring. I am prepared to support the measure that is before us, and I shall do so. The one major difficulty that has been raised during the debate

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is in relation to the 80 per cent content rule. It has received a great deal of flak in recent days. It is important that this be viewed in the kind of context in which there will be a certain amount of flexibility. As I understand this principle, and it has been applied in other similar situations, it will not result in a sort of issue by issue situation but will involve an over-all look at publications within a 12-month period.

I hope that at the committee stage we will not be so totally wedded to the proposal made recently by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Cullen) that we cannot look at some alternatives, perhaps similar to the one exercised by the CRTC of increasing the degree of Canadian content on a growth percentage basis with a view to reaching a certain goal in a fairly short period of time. I do not think we want to put ourselves in the position of doing what is right but not appearing to do what is right. I know committee members will want to spend a good deal of time looking at that particular issue.

In conclusion, I want to say that like so many other matters which have involved initiative by this government, whether in the area of energy conservation or regional development, the government has enunciated some good objectives but its implementation has been very deficient. The minister said back in 1973 that we had only scratched the surface of the problems facing the Canadian publishing industry. I want to remind the minister that he should not just use a back-scratcher when obviously we are going to require a spinal transplant, particularly for this Canadian industry which in recent years has become increasingly under fire and in need of an over-all study and strategy in order to be viable and available to all Canadians.

Mr. Joe Flynn (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, I in no way want to become involved in a quota system debate. While it obviously plays an important part in the magazine industry, it does not really come into this particular argument regarding the amendments to the Income Tax Act in Bill C-58. Let me start by saying that perhaps the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) and myself should have been involved in dialogue for a few minutes earlier, because I think we could have exchanged places and capably carried out our admonitions directed to members of the government or even to the opposition. I will develop that theme as I go along.

I address my early remarks to the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp). I would like to tell him that we in the backbenches are not afraid to speak up and talk about the question directly. He has given me the opportunity to ask myself some very particular questions and I think that is the way it should be. That is what the debate we are having today is, in effect—an examination of the whole question. I, for one, as a member on the government side, would like to ask some of these questions out loud. Perhaps I should direct the really big question to the entire backbench. I am really asking this government to reawaken in me the feeling of doing the right thing, and removing the confusion that exists in my mind because of the feeling that Bill C-58 has put us in a bigger quandary than we have ever been in by creating the insurmountable task of answering those questions that have come before us. This question involves the matter of Canadian ownership and