

*Non-Canadian Publications*

both the Secretary of State and the Minister of National Revenue know that the Canadian people have voted overwhelmingly against this bill with their letters, leads to only one conclusion: Bill C-58 is purely and simply a vendetta against *Time* magazine. We were told a few days ago that the government had backed down and made an accommodation with *Reader's Digest*, so all we have to do here is debate the merits of whatever the government accepts with regard to the publishing guidelines for *Time* magazine. I do not think a watered-down version of *Reader's Digest* is an acceptable compromise. I do not believe there has been any real purpose in tying up this House for days on end simply to lend an air of respectability to the private war of the government against *Time* magazine, crippling *Reader's Digest* in the process. This House has been used by the Secretary of State and the Maclean-Hunter interests to carry on a one-sided fight against two of the finest publications in Canada, and it is a fight no one can win. Maclean-Hunter would not have to fear *Time* and *Reader's Digest* if they were able and willing to produce and publish a magazine of the quality of *Time*. The people of Canada will not win, because they will lose two of our best magazines and they will not be given anything in their place. It will just be a case of losing. Usually, when people are asked to give up something, it is because they are being given something else which is just as good, or better. That is not the case here.

There is another thing about this bill which concerns me and I know it concerns the people in my riding. There is little doubt that this bill will be passed, as my colleague the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) has pointed out, because there are enough hon. members on the government benches who will vote for it, knowing that their constituents would rather they voted against it. Once this bill becomes law, the government will be able to say that it has been given approval by parliament to exercise censorship of the press in this country. It has been pointed out over and over again that this will only be the starting point for this type of government interference and government intervention into the editorial content of press, radio and television. We have already seen recent examples of interference in broadcasting by the new chairman of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission, and this bill will help to tighten the circle.

I cannot believe that the Secretary of State, or anyone else in the government for that matter, has thought out the matter of editorial content. During the hearings of the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts last December, the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Malone) made a very good argument for the impossibility of determining the Canadianism or the non-Canadianism of a group of words as a mathematical percentage. The witness at that time for the Department of National Revenue, Mr. Hodgson, also made the point that this determination would have to be a matter of judgment. In other words, one person on a given day would make his or her own interpretation of a page of editorial matter in a magazine and make a judgment as to whether it was Canadian enough to meet these guidelines; on another day, another person might presumably arrive at a different interpretation of a similar page of editorial matter and therefore make a different judgment.

[Mr. Scott.]

Under the present structuring of the Department of National Revenue, it will be impossible for that department or any other department to undertake the mammoth task of reviewing and interpreting every page of editorial matter published in the magazines this government has indicated are suspect. It appears that the only answer to this dilemma is to establish a federal board of censorship, under a master censor, and it might also be a good idea to deny the right of appeal. As we all know, judgments of the Department of National Revenue can be appealed. What would happen if one particular magazine decided to appeal the judgment of the revenue department on a page by page basis? Each appeal would deal with a page on which someone had made a judgment, and this could go on forever. Mr. Hodgson tried to explain the manner in which these judgments would be made when he said to the committee:

In a 100-page periodical, for example, we would be looking at each page in turn to see whether that page was the same or different from something else; and if it were the same, we would then ask ourselves, "Was that page procured under a continuing arrangement, or not?"

I wonder how many members of the government or of this House can make anything out of that nonsense. At the same time, the government, through the Secretary of State and the Minister of National Revenue, is talking about percentages the witness from National Revenue is saying that it will be a matter of personal judgment. We just keep getting deeper into a mess that nobody understands. It will get even messier and even more impossible to understand.

● (1730)

Considering the wave of opposition that continues to mount against this bill, Mr. Speaker, I feel that the government should release its members and allow a free vote on these amendments and on the bill itself. It is common knowledge that members of all parties in this House have received a considerable amount of mail on this subject, and common knowledge that the weight of public opinion expressed in that mail runs heavily in favour of *Reader's Digest* and *Time* magazine and against the government. Several members on the other side of the House have spoken against this bill, and there must be many more who are against it but who have not spoken out. Let us determine in the most democratic way possible whether the government can muster the support it needs on a free vote to pass this bill.

When I decided to speak on this bill I also decided to support motion No. 5, standing in the name of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt). After thinking it over I decided to take it a step further. Before I do, may I commend the hon. member for her courage in standing throughout the debate so firmly on a point of principle. I, and others in this House, watched the hon. member being harassed and hampered in her efforts by her own colleagues. They went so far as to deny her the right to sit on the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts while it considered the bill.

The hon. member's amendment is a step in the right direction, but I have thought about the whole question of ownership as spelled out in the law and cannot find any justification for specifying any degree of ownership for any corporation, commodity, or anything else, including magazines, other than the 51 per cent required by existing