

Development of Film Industry

subsidize or stimulate the development of our own feature film industry.

For 30 or 40 years we have willingly exported, year after year, millions of dollars of wealth, to be entertained by motion pictures not produced in this country. It seems eminently sensible for us to take steps to ensure that some revenue gained from showing foreign films is put toward developing and encouraging a Canadian feature film industry.

In closing, I say that we are making this grand venture into the feature film industry at an auspicious time. Great interest was sparked by the announcement of the former secretary of state. We now have producers, writers and technicians, and we can develop this industry in this country. The time is ripe for us to take this step, and from our discussions here we should formulate the strongest legislation possible that will enable us to do this job.

Mr. R. W. Prittie (Burnaby-Richmond): Mr. Speaker, earlier today, speaking on another bill, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) made remarks about the way parliament works and how long it takes to achieve something. I agree with much of what he said. The public does not fully understand that, under the legislative process, consideration cannot be rushed. I confess, nevertheless, that I am amazed at the time this legislative item has taken to come this far. The hon. member for Prince (Mr. MacDonald) referred to the fact that the former secretary of state, the hon. member for Outremont-Saint-Jean (Mr. Lamontagne) made a public pronouncement as long ago as 1964. I believe an interdepartmental committee had been at work for some time before he made that pronouncement. We last had the bill before us on June 20, 1966, and here we are, on January 27, 1967, getting second reading. It is an extraordinary operation and I think we could somehow organize our business a little better.

● (4:50 p.m.)

Miss LaMarsh: Hear, hear.

Mr. Prittie: I noticed last year that a report on films for Canada's centennial year was presented to the Centennial Commission on April 1, 1966 by Robert Anderson Associates Limited. On page 5 of this report the following appears under the heading "Feature Films":

A noticeable gap in 1967's film spectrum is the lack of films of epic proportions—theatrical feature films. If such films are to be made, they will occur

only as a result of early government implementation of its announced plans for a Canadian Film Development Corporation to assist in financing and distributing Canadian feature film. Producers are poised and waiting. If the government were to advance this legislation on its order paper, there would still be time for feature films for 1967.

I would be rather late in 1967, following this legislation though I am pleased to see that, as the previous speaker mentioned, some independent film producers are at work in Canada. Seven or eight months having elapsed since we last discussed this measure, there is bound to be some repetition. During the debate on the resolution a number of hon. members raised the question why Canada has not had a feature film industry in the past. The hon. member for Prince gave the answer to some extent. The principal reason is, of course, the relationship between English speaking Canada and the United States. During the discussion at that time I mentioned that those countries which had been obliged to produce their own films developed their own film industries. Sweden is a good example. That country has a film industry which has turned out very many fine films. Indeed two weeks ago, there was a week of Swedish films shown at an Ottawa cinema. The industry in that country came into being because nowhere else was Swedish spoken.

To give another illustration: When the C.B.C. began its television network in the French language there was no material available. France had not begun production at that time, so it was necessary to produce the material locally. This was done, and today Montreal is, I am told, the leading centre for the production of television programs in the French language.

There have been other reasons for Canada's failure to develop a feature film industry. One of them is the fact that distribution facilities in Canada are not under our control. In addition to distribution facilities, personnel and money are needed. Personnel are not lacking. There are in Canada people with sufficient technical ability to produce films—they have been doing so in other parts of the industry for many years. Many of our people possess the requisite acting capability; they are acting on television, now. There are still enough capable people here, though unfortunately some were attracted by prospects in the United States or in France.

Then again, producers find it difficult to raise money for their projects. I wish to quote briefly from an article which illustrates this point. This was taken from the Ottawa