

The Address—Mr. St. Laurent

of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) would be making a statement to the house concerning this situation. It may very well be that, following that statement, because of the rules which do not provide for more than one speech on one subject in the house, it might be desirable to have something done specially. I shall be glad to confer with the hon. member to see if something can be arranged, something better than the ordinary course of speeches in the debate on the address in reply, which would satisfy each and every one of us that there has been full opportunity given for the consideration of this matter.

With respect to the national film board, may I just remind the hon. member that in the estimates for 1952 there is at page 351, among the appropriations for the Department of Public Works, one for a building for the national film board at Montreal. There was a vote at page 351 of the estimates book for 1952. Then, there was a revote of part of the sum which had then been appropriated, and an addition of another amount, for a building for the national film board in the estimates for 1953. In a vote of \$500,000 for the building at Montreal, there was a revote of \$275,000.

Then, on April 9, 1953, over a month before the concluding day of the session, there was a discussion of this matter, as reported at page 3645 of *Hansard* for that date.

Mr. Drew: Was that the statement by the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton)?

Mr. St. Laurent: No, that was a question raised by the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Fraser). The item itself is at page 399 of the estimates book for 1953-1954.

This matter arose out of a recommendation made by the film board commissioner, Mr. Irwin, who considered the whole situation and who did not recommend that the headquarters—the office of the commissioner and his associates—be moved to Montreal, but that the operating or the producing activities of the film board be provided for in a building to be erected at Montreal.

That is still the situation. The film board commissioner and his immediate staff—that is, the headquarters of the film board—will still operate from Ottawa. The provision being made is for the productive operations of the film board to be carried on at Montreal, for the reasons given at that time by the film board commissioner, and that were recommended by the board of governors and provided a basis for the appropriations made by this house in 1952, 1953 and 1954. That is the situation. It may be that the attention

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

of the people of Ottawa had not been sufficiently attracted at that time by these appropriations, and it was only when they realized that a site had been acquired in Montreal and that the thing was really about to happen that they became active. After reconsidering it and reconsidering the representations that had been made by the city council and by the board of trade of Ottawa, the government came to the conclusion that it would not recommend to parliament any change in the decisions that had thus been arrived at.

Now, the matter to which the Leader of the Opposition seems to have attached the greatest importance, and with respect to which I suppose I should tip my socialist silk hat to him on this occasion, is the decision in respect of the application of the Canadian Pacific Air Lines for a licence to operate an air cargo service between Montreal and Vancouver. The Leader of the Opposition sees something very threatening to the Canadian economy in the fact that the government has seen fit to express an opinion upon what would be the advantages for the public and for the industry in granting that licence to set up a competitive service between Montreal and Vancouver for the carriage of goods by air at this time.

Well, I think we are all believers in competition and that in a general way we would, all of us, be quite prepared to represent to His Excellency, or to any other authority, that the welfare of Canada is dependent upon free competition, not unlimited competition in every way, because of course that is not what the hon. gentleman meant. The hon. gentleman did not mean, for example, that alcoholic beverages should not be controlled by a system of licence. He does not believe, for example, that the operation of a hydro-electric franchise for the public in Ontario should be open to every competitor. It seems to me that it is something quite similar to say that the operation of utilities which require a franchise for the service of the public should not be open to anyone who thinks that he might undertake to do something in that line, with some prospects of cutting into the business of those who might already be performing the service satisfactorily.

I am not at all sure that it would not have been a good thing for silk-hatted socialists, or any other kind of socialists, to have had something to say about the duplicating of competing railway lines at the early part of this century. There can be no doubt that when these lines are established, even if their rates have to be controlled by some public body, they have grounds for coming