

Development of Film Industry

by a Toronto director, about life in Toronto; and it was treated shamefully by the movie exhibitors of Toronto.

● (4:40 p.m.)

A leading exhibitor, who saw it privately, declared that it was "a piece of junk from Hicksville". It was booked into the New Yorker theatre, in the dead week before Christmas. It had practically no advertising. It came and went.

But when it went to New York the critics liked it so well it created a sensation. Their reviews astounded even the film's admirers in Canada. Finally it was brought back to Toronto and received a proper booking.

The point is this: If we are to depend on the good faith and the warm-hearted nationalistic interests of the exhibitors, we are far from realistic. I am convinced that unless we encourage—and I use the word encourage advisedly—exhibitors to display these films, we are involved this afternoon in an exercise in futility.

We know too well that in dealing with exhibitors the major control cannot be exercised by this house; that must be a provincial responsibility. It seems therefore not only sensible but ultimately necessary that if the machinery for this industry is to go forward the minister at the earliest possible date—and I always hate to suggest this—must call a federal-provincial conference.

An hon. Member: Not another one.

Mr. MacDonald (Prince): I will rue the day I suggested this. On this point I see no way around the roadblock, unless the provinces can be made responsible for grappling with this problem. Unless the provinces are willing, as the minister seems to be, to take positive steps we shall gain little from passage of this legislation.

I think, also, that if this is to be realistic endeavour, the corporation to be established by this legislation must of necessity have liaison and links with the provinces. I might say, as an aside, that since some of the provinces have become seriously interested themselves in producing motion pictures, there may be important reasons for having closer links between the provinces and the corporation.

It would be irresponsible to create an agency like this unless we are able to envision its relationship to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. At the present time the C.B.C. is the biggest producer of motion pictures in this country—not necessarily feature films, but of motion pictures. It produces three or four times the film footage the National Film Board produces. One of the tragedies is that a great deal of C.B.C. film produced is only a

[Mr. MacDonald (Prince).]

one-shot affair. Most films produced are shown once, then discarded, and not too tidily in most instances, in some attic or cellar where they are mislaid.

Yet I think the motion picture industry in future in this country will have to think seriously of its relations with the television industry. How many hon. members were impressed, as I was, by the September 28 report of the *Ottawa Citizen* of last year which said that the United States television companies signed a \$92 million deal with the film companies to show \$92 million worth of American-produced feature films on television? There is no mistaking that more and more television companies—and in this country the major television producer is the C.B.C.—will be anxious to produce feature length motion pictures to show in first instance on television, and then to continue showing them across the country in theatres. This will involve a serious consideration.

It seems strange to me that the corporation to be established by the proposed legislation bears a greater relationship to the National Film Board, by provision of a commissioner, than to the C.B.C. which actually produces three times the film the National Film Board produces. We must look into this question seriously.

I want to refer to something the minister said in her closing remarks some months ago, when speaking on the resolution. She said that if the exhibitors do not seem anxious to display or distribute these films, certain questions about a quota would have to be taken up. Presumably that quota would apply to the number of foreign films to be imported into the country. That is the kind of negative approach that will be harmful to the development and encouragement of a feature film industry in this country. I suggest, rather, that we think of the ways we can encourage the expansion of Canadian produced feature films. We should think, in this instance, not of ways to force people to exhibit Canadian films, but of the other side of the picture: What positive steps can be taken to encourage exhibitors to become interested in showing Canadian films?

I think that the "Eady" fund is at least one very potent way to adapt what Great Britain has done, that revenues gained from the exhibition of United States motion pictures can be turned to the advantage of those who produce Canadian feature films. It seems extremely sensible that revenues gained from showing foreign made products should in some way