

Supply

We can debate which are the most critical areas in terms of support for film production of the NFB, but when it comes to women's issues and children's issues, I certainly feel these are areas which ought to receive a considerable expansion of funds as opposed to a reduction of funds. Under no circumstances are we suggesting that the over-all budget of the National Film Board should be dramatically decreased now or in the future. It is exactly the opposite. We are advocating a significant increase in the funding for the National Film Board.

● (1610)

My colleague, the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood was simply trying to make an important symbolic gesture to the President of the National Film Board to the effect that when he appears before the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture and says to its members that it is his intention to significantly increase the budget for Studio D and women's programming, and a number of other areas which I will not take the time to mention, that that is what we assume he means. But when he obviously agrees and then in the final budget analysis does something different, we want to register our concern with that decision.

The National Film Board is something about which we feel very strongly. As a matter of fact, as a youngster going to school I remember those Friday afternoons when we watched films about Canada. It was probably a way for us to run out the week and give the teachers a bit of a break, I suppose, since we were restless on Friday afternoons. But year after year I was introduced to parts of Canada through the National Film Board. I became educated and informed as to the lifestyle and culture of people living in Labrador, parts of Newfoundland and northern Quebec—in fact, all parts of Canada. For that, to this day, I am very grateful.

I certainly wish to recognize the outstanding contribution that the National Film Board has made to international cinema. The awards which it has won in virtually every film festival has put Canada, along with a number of other private producers, on the cinema map of the world. For that we are all grateful.

I simply wish to clarify these two points. The first point is our support for the National Film Board funding. The second is with respect to the concern of the president in terms of what appears to be his commitment to increasing significantly the amount of money for women's productions under NFB.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Are there questions or comments? The Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone).

Mrs. Finestone: Madam Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House Leader of the New Democratic Party that the discussion we are having relates to a misunderstanding, I believe—and I hope it is not a wilful misunderstanding—on the part of the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood (Ms. McDonald), a member of his Party. In the document to which he has been referring he looked at

children/youth and women's production on page 27 of the document entitled "National Film Board 1987-88 Estimates Part III Expenditure Plan". He is looking at planning priorities. It states quite clearly "priority areas" and then states "English Programming Financial Resource Allocation". That is all women's programming, not just Studio D.

The figures which I outlined this morning, and they are figures which I support, come out of a government department, the Department of Communications. For the Hon. Member's information the booklet is entitled:

[*Translation*]

The briefing notes for the meeting of May 21 1987, National Film Board, Department of Communications, Madam Speaker, and I can hardly think that errors could have been made in that presentation too. In those papers—

[*English*]

There is Studio D and Studio D. I have said it three times today, I think, and I would like the House Leader of the NDP to understand it. There have been ongoing increases every single year in Studio D. The problem that was being referred to by the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood is with respect to the fact that there was an overrun, a budget miscalculation in one year which had to be made up the following year, as well as a carryover of projects and programs that were being developed. It is true, and I said this before, that there were certain producers who could not meet their program objectives because certain fiscal matters had to be attended to first. Whether it is one's mind or one's heart, there are still fiscal matters to which one has to attend.

The facts are clear. The budget for Studio D was not decreased. The women's programming on the English side includes a whole series of programming. Yes, according to the Estimates, programming did go down for the year 1985-86 from \$2.5 million to \$1.9 million and then increased to \$2.1 million. So there has been a realignment of funds. Thus in the total score for women at the National Film Board we have, I am pleased to say, gone from \$500,000, approximately, to \$1.6 million.

When we look at the issue in terms of productions being at \$6.5 million, as well as the \$3.5 million on the French side, we are talking about close to \$10 million. I do not think that one can chastise the National Film Board in that respect.

I would like to ask the Hon. Member this. Will his Party support the amendment of his colleague, the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood? What is his Party's position with respect to the National Film Board and the \$100,000 which members of the New Democratic Party wish to cut from the budget? How does the Hon. Member intend to vote?

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. friend's interjection. I think it needs to be said again that the initiative to reduce the budget by \$100,000 is symbolic. It is an attempt to send a message to someone, a message which is obviously not getting through to certain people. On the one hand I say