

● (10:10 p.m.)

[English]

NATIONAL FILM BOARD—RECONSIDERATION
OF ORDER LEVYING CHARGES FOR USE
OF FILMS

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that the National Film Board recently introduced a policy whereby they charge for films that have already been produced and are lying in the Film Board archives. These are films that have been distributed to Film Board libraries across Canada, and generally have been used by institutions and organizations for educational purposes.

In my own area the Indian reservations need to be educated about the Canadian way of life, because many of them do not have CBC television reception. Consequently, these Indian reservations must resort to National Film Board facilities. I remember as a young boy using these facilities, and many of these films awed us in our day. Many of our young people in these frontier areas, if I may call them that, have been impressed by these films, and are today.

Under this new policy the Film Board is going to charge for the use of these films. As I have said, the films are in stock, and I think nothing is to be gained now by imposing a charge for the use of the film. I think the prime motive in the minds of a lot of the librarians is to find a quick way of destroying the National Film Board.

The minister is not present in the House tonight and has left it to his second lieutenant, or whatever his classification may be, to explain his policy. I do not think the amount involved will be very large. According to resolutions passed by the Saskatoon public library, from January 1, 1969, to November 30, 1969, the system lent 6,334 films. If these films are to now carry a charge of \$3 per film, the amount involved, \$18,000 odd, could hardly be called a fantastic sum. Even if the maximum charge were imposed, the amount involved would be only \$72,000. However, the amount itself is not important. What is important is the film material. I do not think the minister quite appreciates this.

Judging from some of the minister's letters to my colleagues, he is not exactly aware of what is going on in his own department. A colleague of mine wrote to the minister saying he thought the present practice should be continued. The minister replied that there had been no change in the present pattern, so I am not sure that the minister really knows

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just what is going on. Surely he could spare the amount of \$72,000 which would have been charged in my own province had the new policy been in effect. If he must save a few dollars, surely he can do it by economizing on just one program of the CBC.

The National Film Board has already indicated it has had recognition in many areas. I think there is going to be a presentation to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) tomorrow. I do not know whether I am in order in reading part of this announcement, but perhaps I could read the statement which will be made tomorrow in French. I hope the House will forgive my lame attempt in the French language.

[Translation]

Ironically, we get less recognition in Canada than abroad.

[English]

In other words, my interpretation is that, ironically, we are recognized more outside Canada by strangers than we are by Canadians. This indicates to me that somewhere along the line the minister has not recognized the value of the National Film Board. Over the years as a young student I watched other students take advantage of films produced through the facilities of the National Film Board. These have been produced free of charge in order that students might learn to live in and understand Canada. The minister must realize that Canada is not Montreal, and that Canada is not Quebec. To the Indians in the northern part of my riding Canada is the area in which they live, and the southern part of Saskatchewan. If the Indians saw a film about a wheat-growing area they would be thrilled. I am sure if we saw a film about the life of our northern Indians we would understand a little better the way they live.

Those of us who hold the positions we have in this place should work to help these native people solve their problems. I think the minister has been misguided. For once I should like to see him withdraw a directive of which he is perhaps unaware but obviously should—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

Hon. Robert Stanbury (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising this question and for his expression of confidence in the National Film