

National Film Act

ment. If the minister would take some interest in it and suggest some way by which we could get this back for the people of that part of the country, to be handed over again to the government as part of the national park, they would appreciate it very much indeed.

Mr. Winters: That is a matter coming more within the jurisdiction of the national parks branch of the department than under the film board. I have no information at hand at the moment, but I shall be glad to look into it and get in touch with the hon. member later.

Mr. McLure: I brought the matter up under the film board act because last year and the year before the film board people were down there taking pictures, and I understand they took a good many pictures of this old residence. For some reason, however, all those pictures were cut out of the advertising. Whether that was done under instructions from this government or the provincial government I have yet to find out, but I am endeavouring to do so and I hope to get some information on it.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): I have a number of questions to ask the minister on this section. The main portion reads:

The board is established to initiate and promote the production and distribution of films in the national interest—

Who is to decide whether or not a film is in the national interest? That is my first question; perhaps I had better continue, then at one fell swoop the minister can take care of all my difficulties. I like the expression "interpret Canada to Canadians." I assume someone will decide that that is in the national interest, and I should like to know who the person or persons are.

Then paragraph (b) of section 9 reads:

to represent the government of Canada in its relations with persons engaged in commercial motion picture film activity in connection with motion picture films for the government or any department thereof;

Does that mean that a department of government, feeling that it needs a film for advertising some activity of its own, must move through this board in dealing with other persons who might like to produce that film? Is that the meaning of the section?

Mr. Winters: Perhaps I might answer this question now, and answer the first question at the same time. Under this bill we are seeking authority to have a board set up. There is a board set up under the present act consisting of the chairman, deputy chairman, and six members. We are seeking authority to expand that board so as to get a better coverage of the Canadian scene. We

[Mr. McLure.]

think that such a board is the best means for determining whether or not a certain topic is in the national interest and to have it recorded on film.

With regard to the second point my friend brought up, I would say that, in the first instance, if a department wanted a film made and wanted some private company to produce the film, it would approach the problem through the national film board. But that does not mean that, once the arrangements were made with the private company, the contracting department could not deal directly with the private film maker.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): Is the minister going to exclude this commercial corporation which we set up the other day with such tremendously wide powers? It may be that a department wants to buy a film already made. Does this provision mean that the department cannot buy it without going through this board? In other words, is this not what we are doing? We are taking away the discretion and authority of persons in government departments, who are assumed to know their business rather well. Are we not just saying: Here is a new agency—when I use the word new I realize that perhaps we have had similar agencies—and through this agency thou shalt act. Has the minister contemplated some of the real difficulties that might get the board into with the various departments of government?

In other words, we shall say the defence department has to buy through the Canadian Commercial Corporation. Has that company got to go to this board before a training film can be bought which was produced in the United States or England? Can they not just go out and buy it? Surely they should be able to buy it without being limited, both in the negotiations and in the purchase, by this or any other board.

I move on to the next paragraph, and I am going to ask the minister just why it is so narrow. Paragraph (c) reads as follows: to engage in research in film activities and to make available the results thereof to persons engaged in the production of films.

Why in the world are we going to have a research agency set up, paid for by the government, and permit that agency to make the results of its inquiry known only to persons engaged in the production of films? Are we not limiting the thing too greatly? In other words, we are going to assist certain people to the exclusion of other people. Let us say that the minister and I think we would like to go into the business of making films. We form our company, but we cannot get the benefit of anything done by this research organization for which the people