

Development of Film Industry

from the state. We are breaking no new ground here. I support the resolution. I say that we in Canada have the talent and that it is now up to us to encourage it in connection with the important film production industry.

Mr. Prittie: Mr. Chairman, we join in welcoming this legislation to help establish a Canadian feature film industry. It will not guarantee its establishment but it may make it possible. The minister dealt briefly with the reasons we have not had a feature film industry in Canada. She correctly mentioned our proximity to the United States. The Americans have produced so much in English on film that we have not made the effort. I think this is true of many fields including scientific and educational research. So much has been going on in the United States that we in Canada have felt there was little use trying to compete.

This branch-plant thinking is part of the answer but I do not think it is the whole answer. Lack of ownership and control of Canadian movie theatres is one factor. The minister said there were 1,400 motion picture theatres in this country. Very few of these are Canadian owned and the whole question of profitable film production is closely tied to the facilities available for distribution.

The minister also mentioned the number of Canadians who will attend motion picture theatres this year. I do not recall whether she told us how much money they would spend, but over the years a very large sum has been accumulated by motion picture theatres in Canada and as far as I know none of it has been plowed back into the Canadian motion picture industry as has been done in a number of other countries.

It has been said that if the majority of people in Canada spoke some tongue other than English we would by now have a film industry in this country. The fact that we speak the same language as our giant neighbour has been an inhibiting factor.

Look at what has been happening in some other countries. Consider Sweden which has a thriving motion picture industry. If the Swedes are to have films in Swedish, that is the only place where they can be made. If the people of Holland are to have motion pictures in which the actors speak Dutch, then obviously they will be produced in Holland as, indeed, is the case. Surprisingly enough, Hong Kong, a British Crown colony, is one of the leading film production centres of the world. I say nothing as to the quality

of these pictures but certainly the quantity is great. The other great United States neighbour, Mexico, has a much larger film industry than we have in Canada although it can get films in the Spanish language from many places in the world. Again, this suggests a close relationship between film production and the language spoken. Necessity is the mother of invention. This adage often occurs to me when I think of the French language productions of the C.B.C. in the television field.

• (5:50 p.m.)

At the time the French television network of the C.B.C. was started there was practically no French language television in the world. France had just begun its television program but there was no French television in Switzerland or in Belgium. Our people had to produce television programs from their own resources. They did so and produced some very good programs. Now there is a large corps of technical people, producers and artists in Montreal and it is the leading French language television production centre in the world. Again it is a question that if one has to do it one can do it. The talent is here in Canada.

The reason these people were successful was that the market was assured. Their own network took up the programs they produced. The distribution of their production was excellent. This is an all-important question to which I will refer later.

We in Canada have a film industry, both public and private, but not a feature film industry. The National Film Board has been in production for a great many years. Its work is well known. Its quality is good. It has won many awards in different parts of the world.

We also have a private motion picture industry in Canada producing films of different types including television films, commercials, industrial films, training films and films for government departments. The people in that industry have built a number of studios throughout the country which are quite adequate for feature film production and they have the necessary technical and directing staff.

Both the National Film Board and the private companies have provided a good training ground for Canadian personnel who can be used to produce feature films. A number of the private companies are well known for their technical excellence. Crawley Films of Ottawa are known throughout the