

Development of Film Industry

Most of the problems to be solved were detailed by the hon. lady in her contribution. She said that we have small audiences in Canada in relation to the cost of the product we wish to develop and that we would have to show these films abroad if they were to be successful financially. We shall expect that some films will never pay their way but this should not be a criterion against producing them. I think financial loss should simply produce a go slow sign against accepting any idea from any production source.

There is the problem of getting the films into the mainstream of the 1,400 Canadian theatres that the minister mentioned. She indicated that while the quota system would be initially rejected and the distributors, which are largely United States companies, would not initially be required to show a certain number of Canadian films in Canadian theatres, this aspect would be reviewed. I commend this approach. If hinting to the distributors does not work we may have to take a second look at this matter.

The point that occurs to me is that the Canadian Film Development Corporation must be set up very carefully. Personnel should not be appointed to this corporation as a reward for some misadventure on the political scene. They will have to be knowledgeable people. They will have to be people not only from the world of the arts but also from the world of business.

• (5:40 p.m.)

We have themes in Canada which suggest themselves for production. I think of Laura Secord, that fine, homespun heroine whose memory marches on in the pages of history books and on the covers of candy boxes. I would not wish on the minister the chore of walking through the woods leading a cow and shouting "Excelsior, the Americans are coming." There might be a danger that wide-eyed amateur enthusiasts would take to the corporation themes which, while of great Canadian interest, would not prove to be artistic successes. We look at the films which are successful today and I am sure the heroines are far removed both bodily and spiritually from heroines like Laura Secord.

Mr. Grafftey: Explain.

Mr. McCleave: I will not fall into the trap set by the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi by explaining further. I had thought of a heroine for a film dealing with very current Canadian history. But I forbear. She did live in Canada for a while.

[Mr. McCleave.]

An hon. Member: It might be a smash hit.

Mr. McCleave: There is the question of investment in Canadian films. When I first saw the resolution I considered alternative approaches which might be used to ensure that finance was made available for Canadian productions without tying up part of the federal revenue. I thought of insured loans from the banks. Then I decided this would be impracticable because some films would obviously take a long time to break even and bankers do not want to wait a long time for their money. A second approach could be through an institution such as the Industrial Development Bank on a longer term basis. Perhaps what the minister proposes, a corporation with a certain amount of money of its own, will achieve the same result if certain of the principles applied by the Industrial Development Bank are followed.

I do think we need certain principles here. The minister has indicated it will not be possible for everybody to come off the street with an idea and have that idea translated into an expensive film production. I think she is definitely on the right track there.

I wonder whether the hon. lady has recognized that the cost of film-making is high. We read every week about United States productions which began with budgets of a few million dollars and ultimately went over the \$10 million mark. In short, I doubt that the \$10 million suggested by the minister will be adequate to accomplish all she hopes may be done. Perhaps at a later stage in this debate there will be some indication of the budgeting proposals in connection with the operation of the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

Another suggestion I wish to make is that we should have the benefit of the views of those now engaged in the film industry in Canada. I realize they have made representations to most, if not all, of the parties in this house and that in general they are in favour of the setting up of the Canadian Film Development Corporation. After all, they have made films in this country for some years. They could tell us about the costs likely to be involved, distribution problems and so on. It is for this reason that I suggest the bill should be referred to the committee on broadcasting, films and assistance to the arts where we could hear the views of some of these film companies on the legislation.

I think it has always been recognized that the maintenance and fostering of Canadian arts must often receive generous support