

Canadians who served with the Royal Flying Corps.<sup>(1)</sup> When asked why he had consulted British experts and witnesses to the exclusion of most Canadian sources, Mr. Cowan replied, "I didn't feel that anybody here that I knew of, in any case, had anything to add to it except to say, 'Well, the official history says that he did it.'"<sup>(2)</sup>

If the instinct of the professional journalist is to rely heavily on interviews, the instinct of the professional historian is to rely as much as possible on "original sources", that is to say, archival material, published documents, and unpublished material such as diaries, correspondence, etc., whose origins are as close as possible to the events under study. Secondary sources, such as memoirs and the published works of other experts in the field are also consulted as widely as possible. The most critical task is weighing this mass of evidence, testing it for validity, and, assessing it, just as you would in a court of law, before rendering a judgement. This judgement is "bound always to be complex, because historical events are complex."<sup>(3)</sup>

The final test of a historian's professional judgement lies in what he or she has published for the scrutiny of other professionals in the field, not in the reservations he or she may be prepared to express in private and in confidence. In the opinion of your Committee, anyone who makes direct use of such material does so at his or her own professional risk, whether as a journalist or as a historian. We believe that the National Film Board should have insisted on far higher standards of research and of the "admissibility of evidence", or the close association of professional historians with the project, before permitting work to continue on the film. We also believe that the proposed format of the film should have been changed to a traditional documentary study to avoid the additional controversy that might be caused by the "avant-garde" techniques and dramatic licence involved in the modern "docu-drama". As Mr. Macerola admitted to the Committee, the "docu-drama" is "a new form, and obviously a risky one."<sup>(4)</sup>

The film "The Kid Who Couldn't Miss" has caused intense controversy since its release in 1982. Some parties to the dispute

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(1) *Proceedings*, 7 November 1985, p. 5:5-6.

(2) *Ibid.*, 10 December 1985, p. 8:15.

(3) *Ibid.*, 7 November 1985, p. 5:7-8.

(4) *Ibid.*, 28 November 1985, p. 6:38.