

to finance temporarily work performed for other public authorities or other agencies as the public interest requires, \$2,092,413.

Item agreed to.

National film board—

402. Acquisition of equipment, \$118,604.

Item agreed to.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I move that the committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again this day.

Progress reported.

NATIONAL FILM BOARD

PROVISION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNMENT FILM COMMISSIONER, ETC.

Hon. Robert H. Winters (Minister of Resources and Development) moved the second reading of Bill No. 317, respecting the national film board.

Mr. Green: On a question of privilege, the statement made last night by the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Fournier) was that the film board estimates would be taken up before we went ahead with the bill. I am afraid some of our people are not here.

Mr. Winters: They were just passed.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Mr. Speaker, there are two items in the estimates for the national film board, Nos. 401 and 402, and they were carried. Having nothing before the house we have reverted to the National Film Act.

Mr. Green: They went through in a rush. Will the minister make a statement?

Mr. Winters: Perhaps I should make a few remarks in moving second reading of the bill entitled "an act respecting the national film board". First, it might be helpful to hon. members if I again reviewed briefly the history of the development of the board which was established by the National Film Act in 1939. As early as 1914 there existed in the Department of Trade and Commerce an exhibits and publicity bureau whose functions included the production of motion pictures and still photographs designed to promote external trade. Later, in September, 1918, other government departments were required to consult with this bureau on their purchase of films. Then in 1921, this agency was re-organized as the Canadian government motion picture bureau.

For the next eighteen years, the motion picture bureau continued as the government film producing agency. At times, however, individual government departments entered into arrangements with outside private pro-

National Film Act

ducers for films. During this period motion pictures were growing in importance as an instrument of public policy. In due course it was considered expedient to establish a board comprising members from various phases of our national scene to advise the government as to how this medium might be used to best advantage to interpret Canada to Canadians and other countries.

Accordingly, in 1939, the national film board was set up under the National Film Act to be the co-ordinator, adviser and general supervisor of government film activities. The board, with the film commissioner as its chief executive officer, was given power to administer funds voted to it by parliament for making films. Actual production, however, remained with the motion picture bureau. In 1941, in a move toward greater efficiency, the motion picture bureau was transferred from the Department of Trade and Commerce to the control of the national film board, and the government film commissioner assumed the duties of director of the bureau.

In time it became apparent that the National Film Act of 1939 had not contemplated an operation of the kind in which the board had become engaged, especially under the impetus and stress of wartime conditions. Difficulties were experienced in fulfilling the purposes laid down in the act. Although the board had a continuing program of production, the great majority of its personnel were employed for three-month renewable periods. Other difficulties were experienced in financing and accounting, and in making contracts for the distribution of films.

Recognizing the difficulties under which the board was operating, and at the same time wishing to obtain an independent expert opinion about the business management of the board, on November 15, 1949, I asked Messrs. J. D. Woods and Gordon, a firm of business management consultants, to examine the board's organization and business administration, and I informed the house accordingly on December 7, 1949. The report submitted by this firm was tabled on March 29, 1950. Members of the house have had an opportunity of studying it, and will see that it recognizes the difficulties and offers certain solutions.

The recommendations contained in the report fall into two main categories, those relating to internal organization and administration, and those requiring legislative action. A number in the first group have already been implemented. To give effect to the changes which require legislative authority the bill, with respect to which I have the honour to move second reading, includes provisions which, if implemented, will: