

are anxious to appear on television could donate a portion of their salary to the cost of televising the proceedings; they could donate their expense account; they could also donate their pension and then the taxpayers of Canada would not object to the \$6 million expenditure.

In closing, I move, in amendment:

That the motion be not now adopted but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Honourable senators, is it your pleasure to adopt the motion in amendment?

**Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I move the adjournment of the debate on the motion in amendment.

On motion of Senator Frith, debate adjourned on motion in amendment.

### NATIONAL FILM BOARD

MOTION TO EXAMINE AND REPORT ON FILM ENTITLED "THE KID WHO COULDN'T MISS"—DEBATE ADJOURNED

**Hon. Hartland de M. Molson,** pursuant to notice of Tuesday, September 17, 1985, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized to examine and report upon the activities of the National Film Board with respect to the production and distribution of the film "The Kid Who Couldn't Miss."

He said: Honourable senators, on February 7, 1984, as recorded in *Hansard* at page 188, I brought to your attention a National Film Board documentary on Billy Bishop entitled, "The Kid Who Couldn't Miss."

At that time I expressed outrage that this film was being circulated as a Canadian documentary about our most decorated legendary hero, Major William Avery Bishop, VC, CB, DSO, MC, DFC. A year and a half has passed and I am still outraged. Today I believe I have far more substantive evidence to convince this chamber that the film "The Kid Who Couldn't Miss" warrants the attention of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. I understand that they may refer it to the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs.

The main issue to be considered is whether or not this film should be edited to reflect a more accurate historical look at the life of Billy Bishop. The film depicts Bishop as a liar, a cheat and a fraud who received the Victoria Cross under false pretences. I say that Billy Bishop should be considered innocent until proven otherwise. The National Film Board must substantiate its facts and prove its allegations since it has labelled this film a documentary. Incidentally, the definition of "documentary" found in the Oxford dictionary is "(of film) dealing with real happenings or circumstances, not fiction."

The National Film Board claims it has proof to back up its accusations. I, and all the supporters who want this film withdrawn, believe we have enough evidence to discount all the

accusations that were made against Bishop. We will show that most of the information used for the film came from people, mostly historians, who did not know Bishop. The theme repeated is that there is no proof that Bishop did what he said. I point out that there is no proof that he did not. The records have stood unchallenged for nearly 70 years. When did we start demanding proof of innocence? Surely we can ask for proof of guilt and none has been offered. So, who is telling the truth?

In a court of law a crucial component in a court case is establishing credibility. For example, if the witness on the stand is colour blind they could hardly try to convince a jury that the defendant definitely drove a blue car. In order to render a decision, an impartial jury relies on the credibility of those who take the stand in deciding what is the truth.

More to the point, I will not attempt—and I repeat the word "not"—to question the credibility of the producer-director as a person or as a professional. I will attempt to question the credibility of the facts set out in the film and compare them to the facts that I, and countless others, have discovered in our efforts to have this film withdrawn.

Some of these supporters include many distinguished parliamentarians of different political persuasions, several military historians and experts, Legion members and veterans and even "Intrepid" himself, Sir William Stephenson who, I might add, had 27 victories in France around the same time. As well, we have the support of four of Bishop's contemporaries overseas who are now in their nineties.

I should like to read an extract from a letter in that connection because I think honourable senators will enjoy it. I quote:

I was in the infantry during the first three years of the First War but during my 28 years in the R.F.C., the R.A.F. and the R.C.A.F, I got to know a great many pilots who served in France with Air Marshal Bishop and between the wars and during the last war met and knew personally most of the commanders who served in France during the First War. These included Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Lord Trenchard, Air Chief Marshal Lord Portal, Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas and never did I hear anything but the most complimentary remarks about Air Marshal Bishop.

I would like honourable senators to note this last paragraph which reads:

● (1620)

If there is anything we, surviving pilots of World War I, can do, please call upon us. I am afraid you will have to move quickly as we are all in our nineties and time is running out.

I have several indisputably credible witnesses willing to appear before our committee, and I have a mass of evidence which I am not going to tire you with here. Amongst this evidence are letters from historians and others who have carried out enormous research and have spoken to people who really know their subject. One of these is a man who has spent