

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. member put this question on the order paper.

An hon. Member: It is on the order paper.

Mr. Lamontagne: I understand that an answer will be provided tomorrow.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State.

For two or three weeks questions have been asked here and there about the famous Pearson film now in the hands of the C.B.C. Now, some of us have seen it and others have not, but most of us have not seen it.

What is preventing the Secretary of State from inquiring exactly about the reasons why that film is not shown on T.V. in order to settle the matter? We are told day after day that it is the C.B.C. or the B.B.G. which make the decisions, while the Secretary of State is perfectly aware of what is going on. Why not show it once and for all, so that we will no longer hear about that matter in the house?

Mr. Lamontagne: The decision rests with the C.B.C. alone. The corporation has already replied twice, through me, to the requests of the hon. members.

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the Secretary of State.

The minister is well aware of the fact that the C.B.C. comes under his jurisdiction and that if he makes suggestions to the B.B.G. or to the C.B.C., the corporation will pay heed to them. Under the circumstances we do not want to hear the excuse that it is up to the C.B.C. to decide and that the minister has nothing to say in that connection.

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, as long as I am the minister responsible—

Mr. Caouette: Irresponsible—

Mr. Lamontagne: —to parliament for the C.B.C., I will not interfere with the programs presented by the corporation.

Hon. Léon Balcer (Three Rivers): Could the minister tell us, in view of the criticism which seems to be aimed from all sides at this crown corporation, and because of the unceasing questions which always remain unanswered, whether the government intends to convene immediately a committee of the house to study the C.B.C. policy?

[Mr. Fairweather.]

I believe such a step is called for, because of the lack of answers in the house in this regard.

Mr. Lamontagne: I think that there were explanations by the C.B.C. on various occasions. There were two press releases on the matter, and I do not see what a parliamentary investigation could possibly add.

Mr. Balcer: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question?

There is no question of a parliamentary investigation. I should like to remind the minister that the C.B.C. is responsible to parliament, and I feel that it is absolutely necessary that parliament make an inquiry so as to know the policy and the attitude of that corporation toward the Canadian public.

[*Text*]

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): May I ask a supplementary question. May I ask the Secretary of State since the C.B.C. decided not to show this film, which is their right, why was it shown to persons outside of the C.B.C.? Why was Mr. Ballentine told that the purpose in showing this film to persons outside the C.B.C. was to decide whether or not the film would be shown?

Mr. Lamontagne: I am told, Mr. Speaker, that according to the terms of the agreement between Mr. Ballentine and the C.B.C., two copies of the film were given to Mr. Ballentine. Mr. Ballentine had agreed to show these films only to special film societies.

Mr. Douglas: The minister has entirely missed my point. I asked him why the film was shown by the C.B.C. to persons outside of the C.B.C. Is the minister saying now that it was shown by Mr. Ballentine? Then could I ask the minister if the disapproval of the film, which according to this report was registered by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, was communicated to the C.B.C.?

Mr. Lamontagne: I am not aware of this, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, shall we have the opportunity of seeing the Pearson film?

[*Text*]

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have had quite a long discussion of this matter this afternoon. I do not think it should be continued any further at this stage.