

Development of Film Industry

I am not too concerned at the moment as to who organizes the film crews, but I must confess I was surprised, when the committee on broadcasting and films made a visit fairly recently to the National Film Board, to find out that the employees of that board had not been organized. But whether they are organized by the international or the C.S.N. is not our business.

I have not tried to get a legal opinion, since the minister replied to the question, to see whether or not the National Film Board is operating within its mandate. Philosophically I have no objection to the National Film Board co-operating with the C.B.C. to make films. The public has put money into both corporations and probably should get a good return on it, but I pose this question: If indeed the act is not clear, can we not make it clear? If the interpretation of the act is that the National Film Board cannot make feature films, then we know where we stand. Further, if it is the wish of the government and the C.B.C. that their facilities could be used for that purpose to assist the C.B.C., then perhaps the act should be changed.

However, I suggest that when the feature film industry in Canada gets off the ground we are apt to receive more complaints of this type. In fact the same complaint appeared in a publication which I received the other day, "Canadian Film and T.V. Industry," published in Toronto, which incorporates "The Canadian Moving Picture Digest." Whom it represents I do not know, but it made this same complaint about the mandate of the National Film Board. I shall have more to say when we discuss the various clauses in the bill, but that will conclude my remarks for now.

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I am of the opinion that this is a direction in which we should be moving and, even though it has been somewhat delayed, I congratulate the Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh) upon bringing forward this piece of legislation. The film industry is the kind of industry in which, as a nation small in population, we should be involved, because it demands high quality, high degrees of technical skill and artistic talent, and does not involve great use of natural resources. In addition, if we can manage to sell our film production abroad it would alleviate greatly our balance of payments problem. As it is, since this industry began we have made our contributions both in money and in talent to

almost every other part of the world except Canada.

I am pleased with some of the clauses in this bill, particularly the one which suggests that certain qualifications will have to be met, namely

—that the completed film will, in the judgment of the corporation, have a significant Canadian creative, artistic and technical content.

I am sure this will lead to problems for both the minister and the corporation. I am sure that not long after films are completed someone will rise in this house and demand why Canadian tax money has been used for a particular film. I wonder how the determination on the adjective "Canadian" will be made in conjunction with the words "creative, artistic and technical content".

I also wonder about the quality of films produced. I am sure applications will be received from people who have always had a burning desire to create the ultimate in what is known as *avante garde*, or underground, or modern films. I am sure these people will also apply for funds. Somewhere along the line the corporation will have to develop sufficient nerve to say no to some of the applications it receives. In fact it may be called upon to say no to a completed film.

I would remind the minister, without making any comparisons, of the embarrassment General Franco had in Spain when, a few years ago, he invited back to his country all of the creative talent which had earlier been driven out of it. One of the people who went back was the very famous and talented director Bunuel who then proceeded, without the knowledge of Franco or his government, to produce a film that was one of the most fiercely anti-clerical films ever made anywhere. General Franco and his agents learned too late about this film which was produced under their very noses. The film was smuggled out of the country and presented at one of the great European film festivals. There it won all of the awards, which is not at all surprising considering the nature of the film.

We shall have to watch the content of films as specified in this bill. There is no reason why "Doctor Zhivago" could not have been made in Canada, but I suppose it would not have had Canadian content within the meaning of this bill. I only hope our film industry will not be so restricted.

● (5:10 p.m.)

I would also urge, although this may be in contradiction of some of the remarks made by