

● (1430)

Let us also look at what it would do to the Senate. In my view, this will be interpreted by the press as an attempt at censorship—and it is an attempt at censorship. What are we going to do? Ask them to retract the film? Make a new film? We will appear merely as a group of well-intentioned but misguided people who take something that has already been published and has appeared, and pick it over to try to prove that those who made that film were wrong. The press will not take kindly to it. I know there are many people in this chamber who do not take kindly to the press, but the press has more weapons than we have; they will have a field day with us. They will think that we are absurd, over-aged fuddy-duddies, interfering with a legitimate process—historical revisionism—in trying to tell a film maker, or any other creative person, how to do his or her job.

There was a committee called the Committee of Privileges in the other chamber which examined the behaviour of the press with respect to articles that appeared in *The Gazette* attacking certain political figures and certain of their businessmen associates. The reaction in the press was not favourable to that investigation, yet most people in the other chamber believed that they had the right to carry out that investigation.

The activities of that committee did not enhance its reputation. On the contrary, in the eyes of the press and in the eyes of the people, as the press presented the proceedings, the reputation of that committee was damaged. In the end, the weight of the evidence showed that perhaps the committee should have stayed right out of that area.

What I am saying to you, honourable senators, is that for the sake of Billy Bishop, let us not get into this argument. I would urge you to reject this motion by the Honourable Senator Molson, even though I appreciate he has the finest motives in proposing it.

Hon. George van Roggen: Honourable senators, I had not planned to speak on this matter but I do feel I should make one or two comments on the points made by Senator Gigantès.

First, I do not think that looking into the use of taxpayers' money by the National Film Board on a matter of this sort can be described as an attempt at censorship. If this were done in the private sector by any private film maker or book publisher, that would be acceptable in a free country such as Canada. The question that the committee can look at is whether or not taxpayers' dollars should be used by a collection of jerks to produce trash of this sort.

As for the old fuddy-duddies in the Senate being criticized by the press for looking into this matter, several of the old fuddy-duddies in this chamber were not old enough to fight in the First World War, but certainly were in the second. I cannot see why the committee should feel constrained to enter into a long debate with the producer and others involved in this film. I do not know whether I would, in fact, even call them before the committee. I think the committee can simply examine this matter on the question of whether or not this is a proper use of the money of the Canadian taxpayers, and for

[Senator Gigantès]

that reason I would certainly recommend that the matter be referred to the committee.

On motion of Senator Marshall, debate adjourned.

STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE

GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE—DEBATE ADJOURNED

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Gigantès calling the attention of the Senate to the Strategic Defense Initiative—(*Honourable Senator Hicks*).

Hon. Henry D. Hicks: Honourable senators, I do not think that I need make a very extended speech in relation to this inquiry initiated by Senator Gigantès. However, I do want to record the fact that I disagree entirely with the view that he has taken. I am enough of a scientist, having taken my first degree in science some 50 years ago, to know that the likelihood of achieving a satisfactory solution by the Strategic Defense Initiative is very remote. I am also enough of a realist to understand that if there is scientific information to be discovered, that it is impossible for men not to pursue that discovery, and I think that this is exactly what will occur from President Reagan's proposals for the SDI.

I do not use the term Star Wars. I think it is a great shame that that term was ever invented, because this is not what the Strategic Defense Initiative is. It is an attempt to develop a defensive system against intercontinental and other ballistic missiles. I think that we cannot afford not to pursue this endeavour, even though my best judgment as a 50-year out-of-date scientist is that I think it is highly unlikely that we will succeed. People have said that if only one per cent of the weapons get through, this will still be disruptive. I do not think there is any likelihood that we can devise an umbrella that will filter out 99 per cent of the weapons. In fact, I would be surprised if we could devise an umbrella that would filter out 80 per cent of the weapons. It is a terrible prospect.

However, there is no question that the research involved in this SDI project will have tremendously interesting spin-offs which will relate to all kinds of scientific activities, and I do not think that Canada can afford to be isolated from this research. Therefore, I would go completely the other way. I do not think that the Prime Minister was right in saying that Canada will not participate, but we will allow our universities and our business enterprises to participate. I think Canada should be in on this research and this project, and I think that we should have the advantage of the scientific and technical spin-off, which is bound to occur as a result of this great initiative.

Therefore I say with reluctance—because I respect his opinions very much—I differ with the view stated by Senator Gigantès. I think that Canada should be in on this project, but I would like it to be perfectly clearly understood that I do not expect that the result will be the creation of an umbrella which will protect us 100 per cent from intercontinental ballistic