• (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, if the minister is acting for the Minister of Finance and wishes to conclude the debate, then I want to say that there are other members who wish to speak on this subject. I do not want to utilize my opportunity at this moment, but with the departure of the minister I thought that on a matter as important as this the government might feel constrained to move the adjournment of the debate. I think that would be the proper course. It is not very conducive to parliamentary debate to continue in the absence of the minister. I know he has to be away but my understanding was that the debate would be adjourned until his return. However, I do not know whether I have any foundation for that belief.

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Speaker, if we cannot get unanimous consent I believe there is no alternative but for me to move adjournment of the debate at this stage. Therefore I move that this debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

CUSTOMS TARIFF

On the order:

Second reading of Bill C-200, an act to amend the Customs Tariff—the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Monteith: Mr. Speaker, I think it was probably intended that the customs tariff and excise tax bills should be left over until the return of the minister also.

Order stands.

CANADIAN FILM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PROVISION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FEATURE FILM INDUSTRY

Hon. Judy V. LaMarsh (Secretary of State) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to establish a corporation to be known as the Canadian Film Development Corporation for the purpose of fostering and promoting the development of a feature film industry in Canada; to empower the corporation to invest in individual Canadian feature film production, to make loans to producers thereof, to make awards for outstanding accomplishments in the productions of Canadian feature films, to make grants to film-makers and film technicians, to otherwise advise and assist the producers of Canadian feature films; to provide for the administration of the said corporation; also to appropriate for the purposes of the measure a sum of $10 million to be paid out of the consolidated revenue fund from time to time and to establish in the consolidated revenue fund a special account to be known as the Canadian film development advance account to which amounts may be charged or credited as the case may be.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Rinfret in the chair.

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, this resolution has been on the order paper for some weeks and arises by virtue of the announcement made in September last year by my predecessor. This is the first opportunity the house has had to deal with the matter. Perhaps I might deal with the thought behind the resolution and the bill which it will support.

I am informed that in Canada there are some 1,400 movie houses which offer film fare to local patrons. At the box offices of these cinemas something close to 100 million admissions will be sold this year. By the end of the year audiences will have seen several hundred different feature films. Of that total fewer than half a dozen, perhaps as few as two or three, will have been made in Canada by Canadians.

The fact is that there is at this moment no feature film industry in this country. It is true that there is an occasional full-length motion picture made, usually on a very modest budget; but there is no continuity of production and no industry as such. Hence there is no real opportunity in this universally popular medium for Canadians of talent and technical skill to make their careers.

Several factors account for our dependence on entertainment films from abroad. We in Canada have always been keen moviegoers, but our home market simply is not large enough to sustain domestic film production at an economic level. The importation of foreign films has never in this country been restricted and our screens have always been amply supplied—one might even say inundated—with films of all levels of quality from the vast output of the studios in the United States of America and Europe. Against this kind of overwhelming competition Canadian producers have never been offered by their government compensating advantages.

Elsewhere the governments of nearly every country except the United States have recognized that the growth, and indeed the very survival, of a national film industry will require state support. This takes a number of forms in different countries, including remission of entertainment taxes, grants tied to the