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CROWN CORPORATIONS DISSOLUTION AUTHORIZATION BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government) moved the third reading of Bill C-60, to authorize procurement of the dissolution of certain Crown corporations and to amend or repeal other Acts in consequence thereof.

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed.

CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Macquarrie, seconded by the Honourable Senator Tremblay, for the second reading of the Bill C-69, intituled: "An Act to amend the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security Act and certain other Acts in relation thereto".—(*Honourable Senator MacEachen, P.C.*).

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, Senator MacEachen is indisposed today with a bad cold. I know that he had looked forward to proceeding with this order. I sent him some material over the weekend so that he could prepare himself to go ahead today. I hope that he will be here later in the week. If it turns out that the honourable senator cannot speak to the matter this week, we will try to have someone else speak to it.

● (1425)

Senator Macquarrie: He is worth waiting for.

Senator Frith: I shall tell him you said so.

Order stands.

NATIONAL FILM BOARD

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

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Molson, seconded by the Honourable Senator Macdonald (*Cape Breton*):

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".—(*Honourable Senator Gigantès*).

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: Honourable senators, I regret that Senator Molson is not here. His very proper, very understandable and very honourable concern about this issue is a reflection of his decency and of his patriotism. However, I feel that I must speak against his motion and his recommendation that this issue be sent to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. Obviously, from what Senator Molson has said to us, he is concerned about the reputation of Billy Bishop and the damage that was done to his reputation by a National Film Board film. Therefore, his purpose, as I understand it, is to have the Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee examine this issue and, perhaps, to provide a forum for restoring the reputation of Billy Bishop, if his reputation has, indeed, been damaged by this film.

I will attempt to prove that the procedure suggested by Senator Molson may further damage the reputation of Billy Bishop and may be harmful to the Senate itself. One could say that this film—which I have seen and which upset me—is a revisionist film. It tries, as is being tried by many contemporary historians who did not live the events, to prove that a god had feet of clay. All our gods have always had feet of clay. Some of us who are not gods have feet of clay up to our Adam's apples, and I am sure I am one of those. But there are revisionist historians around. The producer based the film on the texts of some of these historians, who try to get themselves published by examining an accepted fact and proving that those who accepted it were wrong to accept it.

Let me confess that as a historian I sought in my academic endeavours to prove that the Spartans in the fifth century B.C. were wicked and that the Athenians were always fine. I approached academic work, because it is the way it is approached, to try to demonstrate that the accepted truths are poorly based, and thereby gain some academic notoriety. All academics do this. One academic who was working for me while I was a university dean wrote a paper describing how he had induced a certain behaviour in rats by torturing them. That was published. Then he would erase that behaviour from the same rats by a new series of even more fiendish tortures. That is academic work. The point is that attacks on Billy Bishop have been printed in certain journals. If the Senate conducts the inquiry Senator Molson suggests and the producer accepts the invitation to appear before the committee, he is bound to defend himself by bringing forth, not only the texts, but the authors of those texts, which have attacked the reputation of Billy Bishop. and, in so doing, will probably further damage the reputation of Billy Bishop and cause further adverse publicity for what, after all, is one of the great and precious legends of this land. The advice that a wise public relations officer would give to his minister would be, "If you are being attacked in the newspaper, unless you absolutely must answer, don't; it will only protract the attack and cause a new one." In the same fashion, for the sake of Billy Bishop's reputation, I think we should drop this matter.