

flying officers such as Buzz Beurling or Mynarski and other heroes did not fly missions and deserve awards for heroism? Perhaps the NFB is preparing a film to show that the Hong Kong veterans who were prisoners of war were not chained, were not starved, were not beaten and were not forced to march miles without food or water?

Senator Gigantès expressed concern that we would be criticized for referring this matter to committee. He said that the press will not take kindly to it, and I say to him: "So, what else is new?" He thinks that they will say that we are absurd, over-aged fuddy-duddies. They will say that as they do every day of the week. I do not think that Senator Gigantès should be concerned, because I can refer him to articles written by Ron Lowman of the *Toronto Star* which support the action we are proposing to take. I can mention Sir William Stephenson who really castigates the production which caused embarrassment to us, particularly in the view of our neighbours below the border. It is up to us to make a decision on whether this course of action is right, and I think it is right.

This film has hurt over 20,000 air force officers who are still living; it has hurt and affected the thinking of the 700,000 veterans who are still living. I believe that it is our duty to have this matter referred to committee as soon as possible so that we may vindicate that part of our history which this production has defamed.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Douglas D. Everett: Honourable senators, I rise to take part in the debate on this subject for the second time. I spoke on it when Senator Molson first raised the issue in February 1984. This question has been before this chamber for a considerable length of time and it is my belief that it should be dealt with—and promptly.

I believe that Senator Molson established an irrefutable case for a review of this film by a Senate committee. To those who did not hear his brilliant speech I recommend that they read it in *Hansard*, because it is a speech that is well worth reading.

I want to deal with a couple of aspects of the case that might be of interest to honourable senators. I have seen the film and I think it would be worthwhile for honourable senators to take the time to see it. Basically, it is an anti-war film. It raises two major issues: First, war is fought to satisfy the lust of generals and to increase the profits of arms manufacturers; second, war is fought, according to the producer, in order to sustain a decadent capitalist society. There is absolutely no recognition in this film that the majority of people fought—and many were wounded and died in World War I and World War II—because they valued the lives they lived, the freedom they enjoyed and the democracy that they lived under. There is absolutely no recognition of that fact.

● (1450)

Billy Bishop is used by the producer to establish this case. He is portrayed as a liar and a cheat. It is stated, by implication and, indeed, directly, that he obtained his Victoria Cross fraudulently; and the basic premise is that generals create heroes in order to sell the war to the public.

[Senator Marshall.]

I have heard remarks made that, if we were to refer this to a committee, the Senate would be involved in some sort of censorship of free expression.

Both to the National Film Board and to the press in this country, I say this: Freedom of expression and freedom of the press carry with them a very heavy responsibility, a responsibility which often is not discharged as it should be by those exercising it.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Everett: This film has been treated as a documentary. It purports to deal with the issue of Bishop as he really existed; yet, in fact, even people on the National Film Board admit that it is not a factual documentary. That is the essence of Senator Molson's case.

War is a horrifying business, and the heroes of war are not always the most attractive people when we look at them in peacetime. If the producer of this film wants to make an anti-war film, he is, as far as I am concerned, entitled to do so. He can make his case, and it can be refuted. That is what freedom of expression is all about. However, when he bases his case, as he does in this instance, on character assassination, then there is something fundamentally wrong with what is being done, and to point out that fact does not involve censorship. We must be clear on that. For that reason, I have absolutely no hesitation and no qualms of conscience in supporting Senator Molson's motion. I feel most strongly that a committee ought to look into this matter with a view to nullifying the character assassination that has taken place.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Finlay MacDonald: Honourable senators, this is a matter on which I did not intend to speak, but I do wish to make it clear that I am in support of the motion.

I know something of this business, having spent a lifetime in the broadcasting and production fields. In my view, even if this were a private agency, it would still have to accept some responsibility for the nature of the program, and would have to accept the consequences following upon that fact.

This production did not win awards because of its substance or its facts. This is a comparatively new device, sometimes referred to as a "documentary." I believe Senator Molson was having difficulty with that definition because this is a hybrid type of process which mixes entertainment with fact to develop a new type of exotic animal.

I congratulate the honourable senators who have spoken on this subject. I am not unaware of the fact that if we refer this question to a committee for study we incur certain risks, but I believe that those risks are worth taking. I think a good case has been made and, indeed, an excellent one was made last week by Senator Frith when he made reference to the fact that an otherwise first-class body which we have set up to preserve our identity and to foster matters involving nationhood should, at least, have an opportunity to appear. Senator Molson makes it abundantly clear that he is not engaged in any kind of witch hunt. He is not out to challenge the credibility of the producer. I say that our proposed procedure is not without some risk, but