

*Statements by Ministers*

distribution on video cassettes at libraries and Thursday evenings on the CBC. With these efforts, just think how many more Canadians will have an opportunity to treasure the NFB's work. I would recommend to all Canadians the NFB's fiftieth anniversary production, a great demonstration of creativity. It provides us with a panoramic view of the NFB's lifetime of work.

• (1110)

In these days of Government restraint, Canadians must be vigilant in defending their cultural institutions. Liberals established the NFB to reflect Canada to Canadians. We hope that over the next 50 years, it will realize an even more dynamic communication with the Canadian people.

[Translation]

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the Minister said that the National Film Board had won over 3,000 prizes including Oscars.

[English]

I might tell the Minister that we have a nickname for him over here. We call him "Oscar Masse". We have nominated him "Best Minister In Search Of A Supporting Role". It is too bad that he will not accept a supporting role.

It is with great pride that I join the Minister and the Liberal critic in congratulating the National Film Board on its fiftieth anniversary.

The creation of the Film Board, was largely the work of a documentary film maker, John Grierson. He was a Scot who came to Canada in 1938 to study and co-ordinate a film policy for the Government. The National Film Board was created a year later by an Act of Parliament. Grierson became its first commissioner. The Board's mandate was to interpret Canada to Canadians and to the world.

On both scores, it has succeeded beyond anyone's expectations in 1939. In its 50 year history, the Board has completed 17,000 productions, 6,500 of which have been original films.

I guess we could spend all day talking about the reputation of the NFB and its film makers. It has indeed produced probably the finest documentaries in the world.

[Translation]

The work of National Film Board film-makers in the field of documentaries has had a great influence in showing Canadians how diverse our country is. Pierre Perrault's *La bête lumineuse* and *Pour la suite du monde*, Anne-Claire Poirier's *La Quarantaine* and *Mourir à tue-tête* and Donald Britten's *The Champions* and *Volcano* can be mentioned as examples of this tremendous contribution.

[English]

While the NFB is perhaps best known for its documentaries, the work of its acclaimed animation department founded in 1941 by Norman McLaren has received both national and international acclaim.

I would like to underline for the House the work of Studio D of the National Film Board, which I visited recently, which produced through its short history such films as *Not A Love Story*, *To A Safer Place*, and *If You Love This Planet*.

Anniversaries are excellent times to reflect on the past. They are also times to consider the future. I would like to say to the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) that it is not enough for the Government or for Canadians merely to bask in the glow of the NFB's successes, although they have been great. We have seen major cut-backs in support given to the NFB in the past four years. That is 10 per cent in real terms. As a result, we have seen projects delayed or cancelled, film makers and technicians laid off, user fees imposed, and 18 regional distribution centres closed. I think it is an enormous tribute to the talents of their film makers, technicians and free lancers that their standards have been maintained in spite of these cut-backs.

I urge the Minister and Canadians to take advantage of the fiftieth anniversary to press the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the Cabinet to increase significantly the financial contributions to the NFB.

I will conclude by saying that in an age in which rampant economic individualism is so assiduously promoted, I believe that the arts and cultural industries remain one of the most powerful, if fragile, means of celebrating a sense of shared experience and common