

measure, we find still further the underscoring of the independence of the institute by the provision in this bill that such reasonable travel and living expenses incurred by the chairman, the executive director and the directors of the board, while absent from their places of ordinary residence, shall be fixed by the board rather than by the Governor in Council.

I now turn to an important area although some may say it is just a textual or a linguistic matter. We come to the change in the designation of the institute in French. I do not think, honourable senators, I was chosen to pilot this bill because of my expertise in the French language. I am very modest about my skill in French, and anyone who knows me realizes I have a lot to be modest about. The essence of the change is that the word "mondiales," which Senator Hicks would translate into "global," does not, according to the experts at the board, portray the range and the mission of the institute. It is not "global," but international. They believe that the word "internationales" in the French version is a clearer, better and more appropriate designation. Perhaps it is not le mot juste, I do not know, but it seems to me it works very well. In all our efforts in bilingual legislation, it would seem to me to be important that every time we use a French or an English equivalent of the other, we be as close as possible to the most precise similarity in meaning. If, at the same time, we come very close in spelling, surely that is a literary dividend. Since writers of law write in legal English—but that is not the same thing as good English—I do not think they would mind that either.

Therefore, honourable senators, I commend all these suggestions to you. They seem to me to be sensitive and thoughtful improvements to the existing legislation to make the terminology clearer and to underscore the idea, which came through very strongly in both chambers in the last Parliament, that this new and important institution was not to be, by any means, an emanation of a government or even of a parliament. I believe, to that extent, it should commend itself to us.

Yesterday we heard our colleague, Senator Godfrey, make reference to what they do in the other place as being a good thing for us to do on occasion. Last week, in the other place, they presented this measure, debated it and put it through all three stages in one afternoon. We are not suggesting that we do that. I am relating this to you as an indication of the all-party support in that chamber for this most useful and, I think, valuable alteration to an existing statute.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

On motion of Senator MacEachen, debate adjourned.

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 Frith.*)

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, yesterday, when I asked for the adjournment of this debate, I gave some indication as to why I did so. I would now remind honourable senators why I proceeded in that fashion. The motion states:

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."

It seems to me that this is an unusual motion and an unusual activity for the Senate to engage in. Of course, there is no reason not to act upon this motion simply because I cannot think of a parallel motion since my appointment to this chamber, which is only seven or eight years.

Is there any reason not to do this? I felt worried about interpretations that might leave some whiff of censorship; some impression that the Senate was setting itself up as a censor board. However, when being concerned with that view, we must remember what Senator Molson told us yesterday. We must remember that the issue is not a private feud; it is not even an individual feud with public importance. It is even more than that; it is a matter of public importance on two counts: As Senator Molson pointed out, the subject matter is one of Canada's long-sung and praised heroes; and the other party, if we can so call the NFB in this context, is, of course, a government agency and there is nothing unusual about government agencies feeling themselves responsible to and, in fact, reporting to Parliament and its committees.

● (1510)

I feel that we can justify the action requested by Senator Molson, in spite of the preliminary reaction we might have that we are taking unto ourselves a role that we might not want to extend to other issues. Senator Molson's careful research certainly made a case yesterday for the defamatory nature of the film entitled "The Kid Who Couldn't Miss."

As he pointed out, it is not a documentary—although, as he also pointed out, it is unclear whether it should even be described as a documentary. Certainly, his definition of "documentary," taken from the Oxford Dictionary, to mean something that is not fiction, when coupled with his description of this document, leads one to believe that this film is not a true documentary.

If the film is defamatory, then the defamer, if I can use that expression, has had a forum for its point of view and for the production, distribution and showing of its film. The defamed has no forum—he is dead. Senator Molson wants to provide a forum for Marshall Bishop.