

## OPINION

audience, has fulfilled and exceeded the highest expectations of Parliament – just because a few Cabinet ministers caterwaul – seems somewhat worse than mere bullying. It seems folly.

Quebeckers are now talking to each other through their broadcasting service, and no amount of censoring or manipulation will arrest that dialogue.

In English Canada, television should provide the

central forum for our own dialogue. As the advertising industry long ago discovered, the fight for hearts and minds is not waged on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera.

Ottawa, with its high culture bias, has all but abandoned the pop fields to the Americans. And with it, the most vital forum to unite a country.

Perhaps, sir, that bias might also be explored.

# THE WHORES AND HUCKSTERS

by Gerald Pratley

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, on television and on radio too, seems these days to be incapable of devising programs about filmmaking in this country which are in any way a fair and accurate representation of what is actually happening in this field of endeavor. Come to think of it, the CBC seems to be out of sorts with Canadian films no matter in what way it becomes involved. If it shows feature films, they are interrupted by countless commercials; if filmmakers are interviewed, the persons carrying out the interviews seldom know what they are talking about. For years the CBC ignored the Canadian Film Awards; this year, it did a program about them which can only be termed a disgrace. Now we have just seen a CBC Newsmagazine program which purports to be about the so-called 'film industry' which can only be described as stultifying in its lack of understanding, its crassness, its superficiality. One would not object so much to it being 'superficial' if it could be termed at least a 'superficial report,' but it was not even that!

It had a good premise to start from: that four films, **Outrageous**, **J.A. Martin, photographe**, **Why Shoot the Teacher**, and **Who Has Seen The Wind**, have made a great impact on audiences and critics alike. But Newsmagazine chose to concentrate on **Outrageous**, barely mentioned **Teacher**, and the other two not at all. True to form, the production crew rushed off to New York City to photograph shots of dollar bills going into the box office of a cinema showing **Outrageous**, and gasped with delirious delight over the fact that *imagine, New Yorkers like our films, so it must be OK, we've made it at last!* While many Canadians, unfortunately, still think this way, one would expect the CBC to be above such immaturity. But it seems that the program did not think it necessary to go to Montreal, our largest centre of film production.

Quebec might already have left Canada so far as Newsmagazine appeared to care. Perhaps they did try to get some of the Montreal filmmakers to participate and perhaps they refused. But this was no reason to exclude any mention of the many films made there during the past year. There was no mention of the National Film Board's feature films, no mention of Robin Spry's **One Man**, no mention of the Saskatchewan government's involvement with Allan King's film. Instead we had the whores and the hucksters of the international trash brigade telling us yet again that we need American stars, and to back them up, a Canadian supplicant who says "I'm glad Peter Fonda's here or I wouldn't be working." Was this supposed to be a program about Canadian filmmaking or Toronto filmmakers? Those who weren't on the program (and these include all our best filmmakers) should count themselves lucky. The show was edited on the principle that viewers should be smothered with fleeting shots of unidentified films, and no one participating should say more than ten words before cutting to something or someone else. The only exception was Craig Russell, who was allowed to say far too much. If the producers of Newsmagazine think that the success of Canada's films is to be equated with his peculiar talents, then it sums up what little the CBC as a whole knows about motion pictures.

*The above opinions have already been expressed elsewhere. Peter Pearson, filmmaker, sent his to the Globe and Mail and Gerald Pratley syndicated his on the CBC network. Given the importance of the debate around the CBC and the fact that the CBC's license comes up for review by the CRTC soon, we thought it was important to reprint these opinions. Ed.*

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