Random cross-country sample of opinions on film and video policy

Robert Lantos, RSL Entertainment Corp., Toronto:

"Overall, I feel it's a very positive step, long overdue and one which will be beneficial to the film industry and create an environment of stability which has not existed until now in Canada. This redefinition of the National Film Board role is equally overdue and reflects the reality of what the NFB should be. It is indeed a move in the right direction, and I welcome it. I still believe, however, that the leader both creatively and administratively is essential. The entire milieu is against it. I'm talking, of course, about the Canadian cinema. There may be a contradiction in the terms of reference of the public sector - the CBC and Telefilm - because it's the only organization in Canada that has been living off government money for three years.

"I have to judge the policy against the backdrop of the last few years. I think the film industry has been working hard to keep Telefilm going, and Telefilm in turn has been a major contributor to the entire water-front in Canada. Now that Telefilm has a policy, the future is looking a bit brighter. The establishment of the CBC for television is against it. It's really a 'game of right-wing, free-market redistribution of Canada, of course, the idea of a kind of institutionalizing of Canada, of centralization, of regionalization - the structures - the same person since Andre Lamuy was given his post by Pierre Trudeau, who's his genuine, and who controls him completely. It's really a 'gammick' and I think it's deplorable that the producers don't understand things more clearly. Especially since the policy just buries the entire film industry. It's against the basic principles of the television industry. It's completely idiotic. The Australians have refused to sign a co-production treaty agreement with Canada, saying that the Canadian conception was extended. "If I have to judge the policy on a scale from 10 to 1, it's zero. There's just nothing in it. No, there's $1 million for scripts, so I'll give it a one."}

Tom Shandel, Jericho Films Ltd., Vancouver:

"You know for those of us on the Coast, or in the provincial enclaves like the Montreal English, who are, I imagine more or less in the same boat, I am actually quite impressed and it's a step in the right direction and it's a bigger step. I think I've ever seen before in my working lifetime which is about 15 years in this business. I think it's about time. One of the things I've said superseeded this in my view is the fact that he's out in the cold since Turner's been in. And this, I find shocking because I thought that the move for the kind of cultural components of this film business staying in the Department of Communication has actually been basically salutary for those of us in the industry. "Fox understood in a traditional liberal small 'T' liberal sense and big 'L' liberal sense in terms of distributing in Canada, there are certain costs to independent culture and that, regardless of what these costs are, the producers themselves have to meet the minimum threshold that we were prepared to stand for and fight on. It's not anything like a minimum number of Canadian films being produced yearly even if the argument could be made that they're beneficial to the country. Or else we'd be absorbed in the American culture. And I would look at the policy with that kind of attitude that goes back to 1929 and the Aird Commission which really called for the establishment of the CBC for exactly the same reason that if we had left it to a kind of Tory thinking, we'd just be absorbed in the United States. "Considering the NFB is a very important employer in our area, only a small core staff that hires exclusively freelance people, and anything that disbands the Cote-de-Liesse facility and gets rid of the lab there and puts production units in the same regions, is I think a very futuristic move. It even pleases the kind of right-wing, free-market types that exist out here. So I think that getting away from the idea of a kind of institutionalization of Canada, of centralization, of regionalization - the structures one's a very futurist move. I mean pleases the kind of right-wing, free-market types that exist out here. So I think that getting away from the idea of a kind of institutionalization of Canada, of centralization, of regionalization - the structures one's a very futurist move. I mean pleases the kind of right-wing, free-market types that exist out here. 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but... it's much too diffuse.

"Since the government introduced the Broadcast Fund last July, its policy should be based on that concept. The thing to do is push Canadian production in the direction in which it can be of some impact. The policy doesn't zero in on anything, and I don't think that provides much leadership or excitement or whatever."

"Although the policy seems to reject the Film Board recommendations of the Applebaum-Hebert Commission, it doesn't really suggest any other policy. It defines no role for the Film Board. It simply says that the Board should be given five years to devise a policy for itself."

"When you come to the distribution thing, I think it's a pity that they didn't follow up on the Broadcast Policy. At least there they had given some direction, they said, 'Look. The other policy doesn't really suggest any tribulation thing, I think it's a pity thing, and I don't think that the Baum-Hebert Commission, it or excitement or whatever."

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can't hurt but it follows the Hollywood model, and Tele
film's into that. There isn't a word about Australia, or
about an industry which can
grow up with a cultural identity as well as being viable
financially and artistically.

Andre Link.
Cinepix, Montreal

"Generally, I think it's a step in
the right direction, with one
extremely disturbing fac
tor which concerns distribution. I
think that, in so far as
ignorant and devastating.
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