Robert Lantos, RSL Entertainment Corp.,

Toronto:

"Overall, I feel it's a very positive step, long overdue and one which will substantially strengthen the film industry and create an environment of stability which has not existed until now in Canada. The redefinition of the National Film Board role is equally overdue and reflects the reality of what the NFB should be for Canadian film industry. The leadership of the NFB should play a much more prominent role. The leadership of the key structure in the industry is not in the hands of Telefilm Canada that creates the possibility of a giant monster, I'm talking, of course, about the national film board. It's a constant checks and balances. You can't just inject $7.5 million, but it will do more or less in the same boat, I think, it's zero. It's a step in the right direction and it's a bigger step than I've ever seen in my working lifetime which is about 13 years in this business. Telefilm wants to become even more and more important. We're going toward a system where production in Canada is going to be a production for the television, and the producers are going to be in the service of the CBC and Telefilm. And, curiously, coincidence, both organizations are run by just about the same person since Andre Lamay was given his post by Pierre Trudeau, who is his mentor, in law, and who controls him completely. It's really a gummik 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 the addressers itself to the television industry. It's completely idiotic. The Australians have refused to sign the co-production treaty agreement with Canada, saying that the Canadian conception was exact and that the policy may have a result.

If I have to judge the policy on a scale from 1 to 7, 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 think it's more progressive and it's a step in the right direction and it's a bigger step I think than I've ever seen before in my working lifetime which is about 13 years in this business. But I think it's zero. One of the things I've said that superceded this in my view is the fact that he's out in the cold since Turner's been in.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 the traditional liberal small 'l' liberal sense and big 'L' liberal sense in terms of Canada, there are certain costs to independent culture and that, regardless of these costs are, there's a certain minimum threshold that we were prepared to stand for and fight on. I think there's something like a minimum number of Canadian films being produced yearly even if the argument could be made that they'd be self-financed. 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 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 talent. This is the kind of thing that disbands the Cote-de-Liesse facility and gets rid of the lab there and puts production money into the CBC instead, the regions, I think it's a very Futurist 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 which prevailed in the Film Board and still prevails in the CBC of course, the further we get away from that, I would say that I support the attitude."

The fact that it's the deinstitutionalizing, kind of getting away from the monolithic structures - the staff, the kind of civil servants and bureaucrats and the other things - giving the principle programs out to the private sector, that makes sense. Those that want to sponsored films constitute a certain part of the film industry. "I think that it's a number of priorities in the agenda that work here - I'm just looking for a middle ground that will help promote the Canadian cinema. And I see myself as part of the public sector of the film industry - that is, I can be non-commercial. From instinct and interest the kind of subjects I tend towards have to be supported by government because no one else would. So, when I look from BC - we have a very reactionary government out here - only the Federal government offers the opportunity for some enlightenment now, but I think Fox was a very intelligent thing from what I can tell. A lot of the industries thought the policy suggested means that he took a little distance and a kind of criticism. I thought that the Appleburst stuff which I thought was disastrous and stupid-minded actually."

"I think it's a move I thought it was a move towards strengthening the Canadian culture - back into the front rank of the public consciousness that we had in the 20s when we were backburner for a few years and somebody like Fox could articulate those kinds of arguments. I had to rate the film policy from 1 to 10. I would give it, I think 6 or 7. But the issue of how the policy would be, it's 6 or 7. I think it's more or less in the same boat, I think it was 7's already dead since as far as I know distribution in English Canada is almost dead."

"Anyway, for the moment, the policy does affect me. It might have if the federal government had taken the decision to revitalize the independent film industry, and that's obvious that had Paramount or Fox been present, we would have been able to keep limping along, that's all."

"Finally, it's been three years now that Fox has done nothing in Canada, I'm sure they get 10, but I can only conclude that it's a situation that wasn't worth touching. I've always found that strange because there is a distribution problem here at the governmental level, let's not kid ourselves. Cinema is after all not a major industry in Canada. Whether there is a Canadian cinema or not is not going to change the face of the Canadian economy even if you put the entire film industry together from exhibition to production, it does not represent an enormous activity. And distribution is a tiny fraction of this. You know in my opinion, politicians are simply not prepared to undertake a great battle to save that sector. Or so it seems to me, and I think it's been said in the past 30-40 years, nothing's ever been done politically it's just not worth it."

"So things'll go on pretty much as they've been. I don't really know what the great difficulty is since Fox is after all the first minister to have ever tackled this dossier. But for all sorts of reasons it's they give up. They won't, when you look at it in practice two years later, nothing comes of it distribution, nothing, exhibition."

"If I look at the policy as a distributor, I'd give it a 1 - there's nothing there. As a citizen, I'd give it 4 or 5, but then, as I said, I haven't read it."

Pierre René, France Film Distributors

"I haven't even read it so you see the kind of importance it has in my eyes. All I know is the announcement that it's been made, and that's it. I'm not interested in the details, from what my colleagues have told me it does absolutely nothing for the independent film industry in Canada. And that's about it. Even if some have said that it kills the sector, I can't see how you can kill something as vital as this as far as I know distribution in English Canada is almost dead.

"Anyway, for the moment, the policy doesn't affect me. It might have if the federal government had taken the decision to revitalize the independent film industry, and that's obvious that had Paramount or Fox been present, we would have been able to keep limping along, that's all."

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Michael Spencer, Filimline Productions

Montreal:

"My general reactions were that the film policy was not a clear call for any particular thrust or action over another action. It covered the entire water-front. (cont. on p. 38)"

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Random opinions
(cont. from p. 37)
...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 to 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’s 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 future for the film industry in Canada is to produce for television because television is something we can control to some extent ourselves.’ At least there’s a policy...

Attempts have been made by various ministers to negotiate this kind of a deal, to my knowledge. In 1965, in 1972, probably in 1977. None of it has ever worked because the government of Canada has never taken a solid position up-front with legislation in place that they can use to convince the other side that they are really serious. And I don’t have any hope that this will be any better than any of the other efforts.

So on a scale from 1-10 I’d be tempted to give the policy a 5, but that sounds like I have no opinion. So I’ll give it a 4.”

George Christofi.

Filmwest, Edmonton:

“We were hurt a great two years ago when the tax shelter was removed and people no longer had an investment incentive. Until then, we were doing quite well. There is nothing in the most recent policy which repairs the damage which has been done.

The impetus is good. It is structurally valid with the future technology and all that. But it’s too early to tell whether it’s just going to be centered in the Montreal-Toronto-Ottawa triangle again, or whether it’s going to get here.

The Film Board has always been good to us out here. The policy seems to reject the Film Board were the lab people down East or the film policy does not address the Film Board provides us with work over the rough periods — it’s a symbiotic relationship... The new measures won’t have any effect; it’s just words.”

Peter Simpson, Simcom Ltd., Toronto:

“I guess my impression is generally favorable. It seems to draw all the areas together. From wathing the events over the years, there wasn’t a single policy before. Now what they’ve done is amalgamated all the various policies into one cohesive body. I don’t think that they’ve necessarily fit that well together. It wasn’t really thought out as one policy ; it’s simply an amalgamation.

The policy is weak in its attempts at marketing, in the circulation of Canadian films...

Having chats with the majors just doesn’t work. Funding in itself is one thing. If making sure they have access to the screens in this country is another, and I don’t think they’ve been realistic about insuring that is going to happen.

The fund is a good idea. There’s no specific help for features. Pointing out the continued existence of the capital cost allowance is a bit of a joke because you couldn’t get arrested selling cca’s these days. It’s nice that it’s there, but having it on the statutes and having it function is a different thing. There will be positive aspects. For the first time they have acknowledged the distribution and marketing phase. They have acknowledged that there is help needed in that area. I hope that some experimentation by Canadian distributors on Canadian films with theatre chains will show the warts and perhaps lead to a more comprehensive policy which will be more realistic about getting the job done.”

Andy Emilio, Citadel Distribution, Toronto:

“I think the policy is irrelevant to distribution. It is going to Americanize whatever Canadian production is done here on in. It puts the control which people like myself had — the entrepreneurs — into the hands of the government and Telefilm Canada. Canadian distributors used to be involved, because we knew the marketplace from the ground up — better than the producer at certain given times. Now the Majors are to handle the films, not only in the States but in Canada. Aside from putting us down in our own country, we don’t have a chance to extend outside of the country either.

The film policy wasn’t worth waiting for. It doesn’t solve any problems. It will affect the industry adversely. The Canadian part of the film industry up here is still a small part of the whole. Most of the films, if they are American, can take. Taking all facets of the industry — producers, directors, actors, writers, distributors — the policy is simply going to lead the good Canadian people out of Canada because the Americans will learn to cultivate people up here and spurning them down. It’s not going to prove the industry in any way.”

Allen Stein, Filmwest, Edmonton:

“I think almost everybody in the private film industry applauds the spirit of the film policy, and I join with them. But there are quite a few things which alarm me about it. The main thing is that — I don’t want to say I want to put the West on East thing, or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are in the East at a disadvantage no matter how open and warm and sensitive the people in the central institutions are to us, because of the centralization of these various institutions. Just to make the phone calls and the trips to Toronto, we’re at a huge financial disadvantage because that’s an expensive and time-consuming proposition. And we’re not part of the gossip mill and the socializing that goes on in Toronto so just for starters, we’re at a disadvantage and the film policy does not address that issue at all. The word ‘regional’ only crops up once in the film policy, and only with reference to the Telefilm Canada part of the policy. So what scares me is that there are no directives in the policy to govern the basic principles by which Telefilm will operate via a vis regional parity and regional development. In fact, its developmental role is very subject to question because Telefilm, in the past, has shown itself to be more interested in the Hollywood orientation. The problem is that a few people or even one person has a lot of discretionary power. With guidelines that would satisfy people here, it’s a little bit scary. With all its money, Telefilm doesn’t seem to be very oriented toward the first-time producer, or the producer who is outside of the standard clique.

Most people are pretty sceptical about the distribution part. It seems to me that the problem is so much more fundamental than just quotas or voluntary quotas or whatever they try to do. It’s a whole cultural kind of thing, and it’s so deep and it’s so broad that to try to attack this problem without trying to kindle the whole national imagination, which is really what it’s all about...”

(Cont. on p. 39)
Random opinions

"Generally, I think it's a step in the right direction, with one extremely disturbing factor which concerns distribution. I think that, in so far as distribution is concerned, the policy is short-sighted, erroneous, ignorant and devastating. It should be changed. As it stands, it's an absolute negation of what has been said and done for the past ten years and more. You still have to show me a country in which there is indigenous production without national distributors. If Canada is to be the new model, well, I'd like to see that."

Andre Link.
Cinepix, Montreal

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Jim Westwell, Televestra Film Development Inc., Vancouver

**CINE MAG**

TWELFTH ANNUAL AWARDS 1984
ENTRY DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 14TH

AWARD CATEGORIES

1. Animation
2. Audio-Visual Portable (6 projectors or less)
3. Audio-Visual Non-Portable (7 projectors or more)
4. Commercial
5. Documentary – Uner 30 minutes
6. Documentary – Over 30 minutes
7. Instructional/Educational
8. Sales Promotion and Public Relations
9. Music Video
10. Television Drama – Under 30 minutes
11. Television Drama – Over 30 minutes
12. Television Variety – Under 30 minutes
13. Television Variety – Over 30 minutes

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ENTRY FORMS
WRITE OR CALL CFTA/ACCT., 32 FRONT STREET WEST, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5J 1C5. (416) 361-0153.

Allocations by the Société

MONTREAL – Since the Société générale du cinéma became Quebec's principal film-financing agency Feb. 20, it has allocated over $2 million of public money to 75 private-sector projects.

Figures released July 17 report an allocation of $2,365,144 to 25 projects between Feb. 20 and July 13, 1984. Thirty two projects ($322,323) fall under the development category; 16 projects ($1,656,000) followed, and everything they are going to do to the Majors to beg them to agree to take money from Telefilm to launch Canadian films. That's all. Basically, I thought that the policy was going to give Telefilm Canada something to do. Before, 80% of the money given to them was used up to pay the salaries. Now they're just hiring more incompetent people. But what are they doing? I've asked Lamy now for years. I want to know what they're doing, what they've done since Lamy took over. I never had any beef before, but since Lamy took over, there's been nothing. I'm deeply dissapointed, so much so that in my case it's going to influence the way I'm going to vote."

Since the 1984-1985 aid plan (approximately $8 million) went into effect June 1, the SGC had by July 9 received applications for a total of 109 projects with budgets totalling $40 million. Figures released July 17 report an allocation of $2,365,144 to 75 projects between Feb. 20 and July 13, 1984. Thirty two projects ($322,323) fall under the development category; 16 projects ($1,656,000) followed, and everything they are going to do to the Majors to beg them to agree to take money from Telefilm to launch Canadian films. That's all. Basically, I thought that the policy was going to give Telefilm Canada something to do. Before, 80% of the money given to them was used up to pay the salaries. Now they're just hiring more incompetent people. But what are they doing? I've asked Lamy now for years. I want to know what they're doing, what they've done since Lamy took over. I never had any beef before, but since Lamy took over, there's been nothing. I'm deeply dissapointed, so much so that in my case it's going to influence the way I'm going to vote."

ADMINISTRATOR

The Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre invites applications for the Position of Administrator.

Founded in 1967, the CFMD (a non-profit arts organization) distributes and promotes the work of Canada's finest filmmakers.

The successful candidate will:

- administer daily business affairs of the organization
- work with and be responsible for the Centre's staff of 5
- represent the Centre at various film festivals and forums
- work with the elected Board of Directors
- prepare grants applications and maintain relations with government granting bodies.

Qualifications for this position include:

- experience in arts administration and financial planning
- knowledge of the issues relating to independent film production
- well developed interpersonal, communication, and problem solving skills essentials.

Salary: $18,000 to $20,000 per annum, commensurate with experience and qualifications. Written applications will be accepted until September 7, 1984.

Please submit to:
Search Committee, Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, 299, Queen St. West, Unit 204A, Toronto M5V 1Z9.