Robert Lantos, RSI Entertainment Corp., Toronto:
“Overall, environment of stability which the reality of what the NFB kaesque. There are excellent
the leader both creatively and industrially in the film and television industry; it’s healthy
and reflects reality. However, it stops short of where it should go in terms of protective legis­
tion in the film industry. There is an opportunity for us to make a very strong push to the
system on foreign films distributed by foreign distributors in Canada. There may be a
concentration of so many players in the hands of Telefilm Canada that creates the
possibility of a giant monopoly in the hands of one or two companies. There should be
constant checks and balances established so as to keep Tele­
film in tune with the private sector.”

Rene Malo, Les Films Rene Malo, Montreal:
“The policy is right, it is in the tradition of Kaf­
kesque. There are excellent chances that the policy will simply be reversed because no government can live with it.
The entire milieu is going. I’m talking, of course, about the distribution policy. But there’s
nothing else in the policy. What’s there else there? It’s completely superficial. It only repeats what everyone else has been saying for the
last five years. It supposedly
injects $7.5 million, but when you analyse it, there’s only $1.5 million for distribution,
and $1 million for script development. All the rest goes toward making Telefilm even
larger – it’s already becoming a huge monster – and Telefilm wants to be even more
and more important. We’re going toward a system where production in Canada is going to
be a production for tele­
vision, and the producers are
going to be in the service of the CBC and Telefilm. And, curious coincidence, both organizations
are run by just about the
same person since Andre Lam is given his post by Pierre Lescure, who is his brother-in-
law, and who controls him completely. It’s really a ‘gam­
mick’, and I think it’s deplorable
that the producers don’t understand things more clearly.
Especially since the policy
just buries the entire film indus­
try in the hands of a few people itself to the television industry. It’s completely idiotic. The Austra­
lians have refused to sign a co-prod­uction treaty agreement with Canada, saying that the
Canadian conception was
exclusionary.

“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 Shandell, 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
progressive and it’s a step in the
direction right and it’s a bigger
step I think than I’ve ever seen
before in my working lifetime
which is about 15 years in this business, and the overall
of. One of the things I’ve said
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 be­
cause I thought that the move
for the kind of cultural com­
ponents 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 tradi­tion
liberal small ‘I liberal sense and big ‘I liberal sense, in Canada, there are certain costs to indepen­
dent culture and that, regard­
less of what these costs are, there’s a certain amount of money that we
have to consider in the
minimum threshold that we were prepared to stand for and fight on.

It’s something like a minimum number of Canadian films being
produced yearly even if the argument could be made that they be themselves.
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 free­
 lance people, it’s a Canada that disbands the
Cote-de-Liesse facility and gets
rid of the lab there and puts production telling what kind of
regions, is I think a very futu­
ristic 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 institu­
tionalization of Canada, of cen­
tralization which prevailed in
the Film Board and still prevails in the CBC of course, the further we get away from that, I’d say that I support it.

The fact that it’s the deinsti­
tutionalization, kind of getting away from the monolithic structures – the staff kind of
civil servants and bureaucrats and the other things – giving the film board programs out to the
private sector, that makes sense.
Those that want to
sponsored films constitute a
part of the film industry. It’s a number of priorities in the
agendas that work there – I’m just looking for a middle ground that would help private sector.
And I see myself as part of the public sector of the film indus­
try – that is, I can be non-com­
mercial. From instinct and interest the kind of subjects I tend towards have to be sup­
ported by government because
no one else would. So, when I
look from BC – we have a very reactionary government out
here only – the Federal govern­
ment offers for production for
some enlightenment now, but I think Fox was a very intel­
ligent from what I can tell. A lot
of the more radical policy suggested means that he took a
little distance and a kind of
careful approach to the Apple­
but stuff which I thought was dis­
astrous and stupid-minded actually.

“I just think it’s a move, I
thought it was a move towards
Canada back into the front rank of the
public consciousness that
considered itself to be backburner for a few years and
somebody like Fox could arti­
culate those kinds of argu­
ment. I had to rate the film policy from 1 to 10, I would
give it, 1, 6 or 7. But the issue
whether the policy is 5, 6 or 7 or
1, 5 or 6 is more or less in the
same boat, I think, and I think that strange because there is a
distribution problem here at the
governmental level, it’s not
just us 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 repres­
ent an enormous activity. And
distribution is a small fraction of this. Politicians are
simply not prepared to undertake a great battle to
save that sector. Or so it seems to me. In Canada, we’ve been talking in the past 30-40
years, nothing ever has been done practically it’s just not
worth it.

“So things’l go on pretty
much as they’ve been. I don’t
really know what the great diffi­
culty is since Fox is after all not the first minister to have
ever tackled this dossier. But for all sorts of reasons if they
put up their wines, not when
you look at it in practice two
years later, nothing comes of it – distribution, nothing, exhibi­
tion.”

“Maybe if I go to the policy as a
 distributor, I’d give it a 1 – there’s nothing there. As a citi­
zen, I’d give it a 4 or 5. But then, as I said, I haven’t read it.”

Michael Spencer, Filmline 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.

September 1984 - Cinema Canada/37
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) 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 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 is a policy...

They could have put a lot more stress on the question of video-cassettes, for example. Video movies in video stores and all that. They could have said, 'That's an important area. We will come up with some special programs to assist Canadian producers to get their stuff marketed.' But they seem to be trying in every area, except in the case of theatrical distribution. There it appears that the main thrust of their idea is to tell Canadian producers, 'Try and get into Canada via the U.S.' I think they should be honest with Canadian distributors and say, 'Look you guys, your business is going down the tube. Why should we put any money into it?' But they didn't say that. On the one hand, they say, 'let's get Americans to distribute more Canadian films in Canada, and then they have these programs of support for marketing of Canadian productions but it remains to be seen if what they're going to be doing is assisting Americans. “This negotation with the U.S. Majors for more Canadian films in television is all being presented to us as if it has never happened before. But, in fact, attempts have been made by various ministers to negotiate this kind of a deal, to my knowledge, in 1981, 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 Christoffi.
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 that image which has been done. “The impetus is good. It's 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 thing to be concerned about the Film Board were the lab people down East or the film policy does not address that thing, or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major west or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major east or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major east or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major east or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major east are pretty suspicious of this board. “Although the concept is generally favorable. It seems to draw all the areas together. From wathching 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 they all 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 attentiveness. In the distribution of Canadian film... Having quiet chats with the majors just doesn't work. Fundamentally, the majors are not going to make sure they have access to the screens in this country is another, and I don't think they've been realistic about insuring that 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 what is happening to 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 accommodate whatever Canadian production is done from 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, that's where American money is going. “Taking all facets of the industry — producers, directors, actors, writers, distributors — the policy is still going to lead the good Canadian people out of Canada because the Americans will learn to cultivate people up here that bring 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 see the majors vs. East thing, or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major east or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major east are pretty suspicious of this board.

“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 I try to attack the problem without trying to kindle the whole national imagination, which is really what it's all about...”

Mobile Image is Dubner
Three very busy Dubners generating computer graphics. Fresh, exciting, attention-getting graphics. Dubner computes something you mess around with. In experienced hands they are spectacular. And Mobile Image has the experienced hands. In fact Mobile Image has a full hand of services to help you produce spectacular television programming, television commercials and industrial videos. Some of the most mobile images of the '80's, at, prices right out of the '70's.

Let our experienced hands add a spectacular dimension to your images.

Mobile Image
in Toronto's lower West Side.
26 SOHO STREET
591-1400
Call Ted or Doug or June for the permanent Mobile Image service.

triangle again, or whether it's going to get here.

“The Film Board has always been good to us out here. The thing to be concerned about the Film Board were the lab people down East or the film policy does not address that thing, or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major east are pretty suspicious of this board.

“I think the policy is irrelevant to distribution. It is going to accommodate whatever Canadian production is done from 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, that's where American money is going. “Taking all facets of the industry — producers, directors, actors, writers, distributors — the policy is still going to lead the good Canadian people out of Canada because the Americans will learn to cultivate people up here that bring 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 see the majors vs. East thing, or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major east or the Hinterland against the Metropolis — but those of us who are outside of the major east are pretty suspicious of this board.

“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 I try to attack the problem without trying to kindle the whole national imagination, which is really what it's all about...”

Mobile Image is Dubner
Three very busy Dubners generating computer graphics. Fresh, exciting, attention-getting graphics. Dubner computes something you mess around with. In experienced hands they are spectacular. And Mobile Image has the experienced hands. In fact Mobile Image has a full hand of services to help you produce spectacular television programming, television commercials and industrial videos. Some of the most mobile images of the '80's, at, prices right out of the '70's.

Let our experienced hands add a spectacular dimension to your images.

Mobile Image
in Toronto's lower West Side.
26 SOHO STREET
591-1400
Call Ted or Doug or June for the permanent Mobile Image service.
Random opinions

(cont. from p. 38)

Jack Darcus, Exile Film Productions, Vancouver: "I'm impressed with what they are talking about. The main problem is the elections. I'm worried about the removal of Francis Fox and I'm not sure that was the right thing to do in the middle of the process. The election is going to matter very much for the filmmakers because the implementation of the policy is, I expect, going to be questionable. "The most promising part of the policy is something that is going to be done about distribution of Canadian films in Canadian theatres. The surface thrust is that a lot of money is going to be distributed to people in the industry but behind it is the idea of a fair system in Canada for Canadian films and Canadian theatres. All the details of the thing sound very positive. "I think that what's happened in the past is that a 'good will' system has been put into place. And that was eroded and never brought into practice. My understanding, from the film policy meetings we've had out here, is that they will explore ways to bring pressure upon the Americans to do something about this. I'm not interested in good will myself because I just don't believe it works, but after a six-month period of evaluation, they will talk about such things as tax levies, quotas and all that. I think the idea that the Americans will somehow unfreeze Canadian films in America might add up to a little more than tokenism. The problem to be addressed is that all the money leaves the country every year without any of it resting here, doing what it should for us as it does in other countries."

Jim Westwell, Televestra Film Development Inc., Vancouver: "We don't have a particular great need right now to read it but I guess that just it doesn't affect me immediately at this moment. I guess that's why I haven't bothered to pick up and run with it. But inevitably it certainly will affect me down the line and bow, I don't know yet before I read it. But no, I've been working on a Hollywood picture and it's going on and on and that just keeps me busy."

Victor Loey, Vivafilms, Montreal: "There's not a single word of new facts, new suggestions, new ideas. They are simply rehashing the same paper I've seen for the last six years. Basically, what I see is that they have hired more people and they came up with the same policies. They watered down everything from the Majors, they left the field totally open to them, and we're extremely unhappy with them. "I'm falling back to my old position. I don't give a shit one way or the other what the government does because they're not helping us. I'm going to suggest to my organization of distributors that we should stop operating with them in any way and treat them as if they don't exist. They have never, never done anything we told them to do. We submitted a very specific paper about pay-TV which they have never followed. We have submitted suggestions for the video policy. It hasn't been followed, and everything is, once again, controlled by the Majors. I was totally and completely surprised by the policy. I would never believe that Francis Fox would sell out to such an extent. It's a joke. What are their conclusions? I've seen that they are going to go 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."

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 72 projects between Feb. 20, July 13, 1984. Thirty two projects ($322,323) fall under the development category; 16 projects ($1,659,800) are for feature films; seven projects ($73,996) in the category of distribution; 17 special projects ($269,364); and three projects ($43,260) in the marketing category.

Since the 1984-85 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, of which the SGC was being requested to invest $7 million.

The state has allocated $10 million towards cinema this year, SGC CEO Nicole M. Boisvert told Cinema Canada. "Just think of what we could do with $10 million a year."

The Fournier Report, which recommended the creation of the SGC, also recommended an annual film-financing budget of $25 million.