

FRONTS WEST

by Kathryn Allison

The Department of Communications' annual survey of the B.C. film industry is currently being compiled. Results are based on responses to a questionnaire that was sent out to over 2,000 industry members, including independents, production companies, distributors, and union, guild and association members.

Laurel March, the study's compiler, reports that the results indicate increases in all areas, particularly in production and employment. The number of production companies reporting is down 15 per cent from the last survey, but their average yearly revenues were \$256,450 in 1985, up 37 per cent from the previous year. Presumably the larger production companies have all reported this year, with the smaller ones either flourishing or dropping out, to account for the large leap in revenue. Incomes for individuals working in the industry were also up in 1985. Average yearly fulltime salaries for men were up 15 per cent, from \$34,100 in 1984, to \$39,000 in 1985. Women's salaries still sadly trailed men's, but were up from \$20,500 in 1984 to \$24,590 in 1985.

General comments from respondents show that there is a great deal of concern about the lack of a permanent movie studio in Vancouver, and there were many references to the slow pace of the development of the Dominion Bridge building into a permanent studio. There was a general call for more federal and provincial support of the film industry; the provincial government's lack of recognition of the industry was emphasized. There were many suggestions that B.C. develop a provincial film fund based on the Ontario and Alberta models. There is a general agreement that better facilities for training not only technicians, but also directors, writers, actors and particularly producers, all desperately needed in B.C. The study will be available in June.

Telefilm's Wayne Sterloff reports that there are numerous feature films waiting for the feature film fund to come into effect. Among them are Cal Shumiatcher's *Visa* and David Hauka's *Road Film*. Sterloff anticipates that several of them could be underway by late summer. Meantime, Telefilm is interested in getting another television series going to add to the two main ones already in production (CBC's *Beach-*

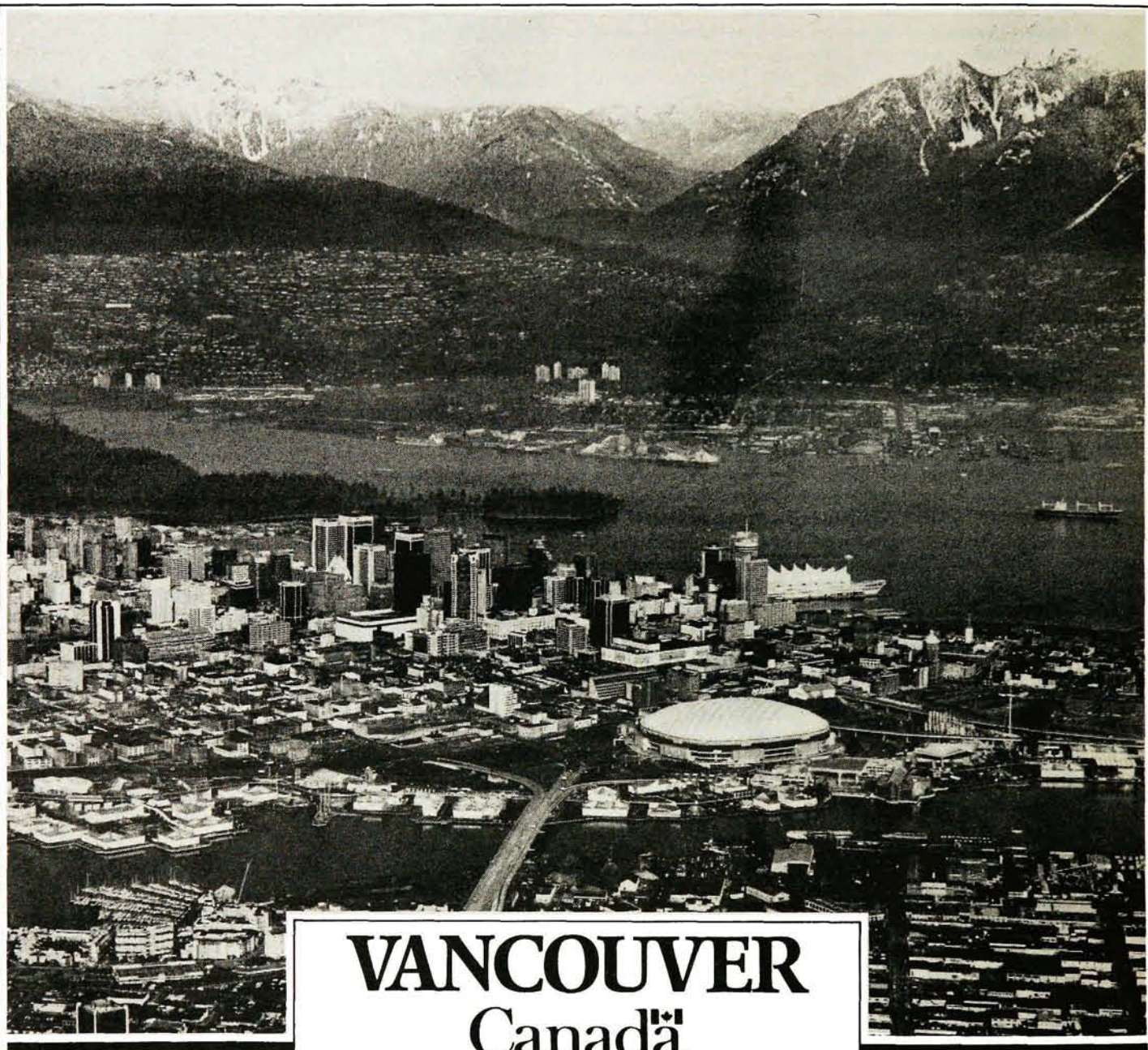
combers and Danger Bay), and Sterloff is looking at a couple of ideas, including a one-hour dramatic series from a very reliable producer, and a half-hour comedy series from

the Winnipeg Film Group.

A comedy series called *Survival Guides* is in development, with Ed Richardson of Tegra Industries producing. Alarcom is involved along with Telefilm, and an L.A. sale has already been made with KCET. Also in development is *One Thousand Cranes*, a play by

Colin Thomas about children's fear of nuclear war, that Vancouver's Green Thumb Players successfully toured through the Far East a couple of years ago. Cathy Chilco is producing the film version, with Thomas writing. The CBC network is involved in the development of the project.

Already shooting is a documentary called *Rebirth of Haida Canoe*, produced by Chris Wooten, directly by John Wright, with Doug McKay as DOP. The film uses an original Haida canoe that was shipped from the National Museum in Ottawa, and will be shown at



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Vancouver boasts top-quality facilities for casting, crews, production, and post-production. Producers of films like *Quest for Fire*, *Never Cry Wolf*, and *Runaway*, have been

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EXPO. Thomas Howe and Associates are distributing the film. **Which Way to Carnegie Hall** is a half-hour documentary which tells the story of seven local child prodigies. Ivan Horsky produced it, with CBC radio veteran Robert Chesterman directing. It was shot in April and May.

scuttled for a status quo arrangement involving private industry leasing the building with minimal improvements, he is terse. "Our attitude is, just lease us the building and let us work in it. So we're waiting... we're patient." Meanwhile, union members are assisting Alan Clapp's Space Station pro-

ject at Douglas College. The college is going to be converted into a space-age minicity this summer as an alternate EXPO event. Key union people are training fifteen people in the various technical aspects of filmmaking as they construct the space station in moveable segments which will

be assembled in June. The trainees will move up on the union's experience roster as a result of their space station training.

Chapman stresses that there is limited need for people to fill entry level positions in the union, which needs breaks and opportunities at the top end so

that people can move up and make room for the new ones. He projects that only 20 people will be assimilated into entry-level positions this year, and will be discussing the need for controlled growth and training of production personnel at the Vancouver Film Festival's Trade Forum on June 2.

Five U.S. films are confirmed for shooting in B.C. this summer, and Rex Bromfield's **Heartbreak Motel** will shoot in June. George Chapman, the Business Representative of IATSE 891, admits he's disappointed that *Tripwire*, the first big U.S. feature of the season which collapsed in preproduction, but with more pictures being scouted this year than last, he is confident union members will be busy well into the fall. When asked about the Dominion Bridge movie complex proposal, which he has actively supported for several years, and which has been

Buttering up the feasts

MONTREAL - **The Peanut Butter Solution**, second in Rock Demers' *Tales for All* series, has begun a tour of film festivals around the world. The tour started with a screening at the Films for Youth Festival in Laon, France, to be followed with festivals in Gijon, Spain; Melbourne, Australia and Minneapolis, U.S.A. Last year, **The Dog Who Stopped The War**, first in the film series, took the Grand Prize at Laon.

New World Pictures of Los Angeles is distributor for **The Peanut Butter Solution** in the English-speaking world. Cinémaplus, the distributor for the French version, **Opération beurre de pinottes**, reports over 1,000 pre-sale orders for the videocassette and expects that number to double by the end of April.

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