

TV sellers complain of Montreal market

MONTREAL - Increase the number of TV buyers attending the market place at the Montreal World Film Festival or get out of television is the message Canadian sellers are sending the festival organizers.

The message comes hot on the heels of the this year's market place (Aug. 24 to 31) in Montreal's Meridien Hotel where, for the first time in the festivals' ten year history, a special Télévidcan section, devoted to Canadian television and video programming was introduced.

Of the 750 market participants from around the world, just over 300 were buyers including distributors in both film and television.

Television buyers, she says, represented an "increasing minority." No fewer than 200

six-night hotel passes were sent to buyers with an expressed interest in Canadian TV product, but Dinsmore would not say exactly how many of these buyers responded to the invitation.

Among the sellers who say they are disappointed with the failure of the market to produce buyers are members of the Ontario Film Development Corporation contingent of 13 companies which participated in the market for three days.

Of these, seven companies have indicated they will not return next year; three will return if changes are made and three companies have said they will return.

Brian Villeneuve, executive coordinator of the OFDC, told *Cinema Canada* that an absence of TV buyers was the

most common complaint among the group.

"Those with high expectations expressed disappointment at the number of buyers," says Villeneuve, who adds that there were also problems with in-house television monitors used by regular customers of the Meridien Hotel.

"Most say that if the buyer problem can be solved all other problems will pale in significance. They feel there is no point in being in Montreal if they can't sell their product," says Villeneuve.

Dinsmore acknowledges the absence of enough buyers as something the festival is striving to eradicate, however, she adds hastily, that the feasibility of doing business at the Montreal market is determined by the seller's own efforts and that

those who "worked the market" this year were successful.

"Our priority this year was Canadian product," says Dinsmore. "We went out of our way to contact many buyers."

She explains that because of the first time emphasis on Canadian product, many of the buyers in attendance were participating for the first time. She says publicity by word of mouth will mean an increase in the number of buyers next year.

Lizanne Rouillard of Film-optio International Inc. in Montreal says one reason for the weak turn-out of television buyers may be the late August timing of the festival just prior to the London and European markets.

"August is the month of holidays in Europe," says Rouillard, who adds that buyers may be too busy to travel to Montreal with preparations for MIPCOM in MIFED in October and the

London Market in November.

With sales at the market amounting to 1 per cent of annual sales and having counted only 25 TV buyers, Rouillard suggests the market "forget about television" and strengthen the feature film side of the market.

"The Montreal festival is for movie buffs," says Rouillard. "It is not the right time of year for television and although Canada is a good producing country we do not have enough distributors."

Dinsmore argues that the market is held late enough in August to avoid the vacations period and that buyers would welcome the opportunity to screen programs in Montreal before the more demanding fall markets.

Caplan-Sauvageau

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to parliament and became a member of three standing committees in the House of Commons - communications / culture, labour / immigration, external affairs / national defence.

Other members appointed to the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture are Jim Caldwell (PC), Sheila Finestone (Lib. communications critic), Lynn McDonald (NDP, communications critic), John Gormley (PC), Carol Jacques (PC), Bob Pennock (PC).

At presstime the election of the chairman by committee members was scheduled for Oct. 21.

Gabriel Fontaine (PC-MP for Lévis), past president of the Standing Committee, told *Cinema Canada* he expects the minister to submit the report "within several weeks" and that the unimpeded process of legislation from first to third reading will take at least six to eight months. He noted that the workload of the committee, as yet not determined, will affect the rapidity with which the committee can make recommendations on Caplan-Sauvageau.

In addition, the minister has called for responses from the private sector and the general public to the recommendations of the report. A series of informal public discussions will be held, and the minister and DOC staff will meet with representatives of the industry, the provinces and various other interested parties.

During the past year, the report had become the brunt of many a joke, due to its continually receding due date. First anticipated in January 1986, then March, June and August, the past minister of Communications Marcel Masse was fond of saying that he was going to send it directly to the

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