

FLASH!

On November 10, Cinema Canada published its first News Update, a news bulletin appearing two weeks after the regular issue of the magazine, calculated to get the news to the readers while it's still fresh. Between the monthly Cinema Canada and the monthly News Update, subscribers won't need any other source of bi-weekly news on the television and film industry.

SHOW ME!

Below is a summary of the news which appeared two weeks ago in the 12-page tabloid which made up the News Update.

Quebec signs with the Majors

On Oct. 22, the Quebec government and the Motion Picture Export Association of America signed an agreement which will free up many foreign language films for Quebec-based Canadian distributors.

At the same time, the agreement confirms less favourable conditions for the distribution of English-language films in the province. The Majors may still distribute features if they are either the "producer" of the film or the "world-wide" sales agent of the film.

Both of these definitions are explained at length in the Update, and the implications of the agreement are considered.

Union demands Macerola go

According to the National Film Board employees' union, film commissioner François Macerola is caught in a contradiction of his own making and should resign his post as president of the NFB.

As co-chair of the Non-Theatrical Film Industry Working Group, Macerola, in the eyes of the union, was caught "giving away" the NFB to the point where the government agency would cease to have the importance which made it great.

Macerola released to *Cinema Canada* an internal memo in which he states he cannot endorse the Working Group's recommendations concerning the NFB though he backs the report as a whole. The conflict at the Board continues.

Walter Senior replaces Famous' George Destounis

The first in-depth reporting on the replacement of George P. Destounis as head of Famous Players Limited by Walter Senior. The premature departure of Destounis, officially retiring at the end of the year, and the arrival of 42-year-old Senior is linked to Gulf and Western's revived interest in exhibition in North America.

Performance strong as Famous changes bosses

The current performance of Famous Players is analysed, and a short history of the competitive context, involving the Combines Investigation of the American Majors and the vigor of the Cineplex chain, is given. A second look is taken at the Imperial-six fiasco in which Famous loses one of its most important theatres.

With Senior at helm, Famous continues expansion

The first interview with Walter Senior, outlining his approach as he takes over the reins of Canada's second largest exhibition chain.

Studio D needs urgent funding

MONTREAL - Filmmakers at Studio D are feeling the pinch between a diminishing budget and growing public expectations about their work.

The studio recently requested an additional \$500,000 in addition to this year's scheduled funding allocation of \$580,000 in "free money" - discretionary funds after overhead, salaries and services. Dorothy Hénaut, filmmaker and spokesperson for the studio, told *Cinema Canada* that the popularity of the work produced by the women's studio and the subsequent need to maintain a high profile in Canada and overseas should not be ignored by the NFB administration when additional funding is requested.

NFB statistics show that rental booking and print sales of *Not a Love Story* (1981) and the Oscar-winning *If You Love This Planet* (1982) are double that of most English productions at the NFB. Statistics also show that most of the 40 films produced by Studio D since its inception in 1974 are rented and sold 50 percent more than most NFB films.

Hénaut and acting executive producer Ginny Stichman agree that the current level of funding for Studio D is not commensurate with the task and vision of the studio.

Since fiscal year 1981-1982 the allocation of free money to Studio D has followed an unsteady downward course from 10.9 percent to 9.7 percent (1982-1983), 9.9 percent (1983-1984), 6.2 percent (1984-1985), 6.69 percent (1985-1986) and 7.6 percent as of April 1986-1987.

Hénaut describes the state of production at Studio D as "stagnant". She says the necessity of carrying over a portion of last year's work into the current fiscal year resulted in a

spending freeze in July 1986. Recently, however, a request was granted (in September) for an additional \$125,000 to complete several projects which had been held over.

Hénaut told *Cinema Canada* that \$175,000 is now needed to complete all the films currently in various stages of production and that a further \$200,000 would be used to develop new production ideas.

"We have hardly even dared to dream about the future Studio D," says Hénaut.

Although she acknowledges that a general budget cutback of \$10 million over three years has affected all 10 studios at the NFB, Hénaut, like the head former of Studio D, Kathleen Shannon, insists that Studio D is one of the strongest cards that the NFB has and should be played as such.

Hénaut says her worst fear is that Studio D become a victim of its own success and that NFB funding to independent women filmmakers across Canada will be made at the expense of Studio D budget allocations.

"I really haven't seen any sign of more money going to the regions although they say this is happening," says Hénaut. "If this is the case, I would say that our own strength is something that women in the regions support. They can point to our films and say this is the sort of film we want to make."

Joan Pennyfather, vice-commissioner of the NFB and director corporate affairs, says the NFB has stated its commitment (in its operational five year plan) to maintaining Studio D and at the same time create employment for women filmmakers in the regions.

"No one argues that it is absolutely necessary to maintain Studio D," says Pennyfather

who adds that although there are budget restraints in effect there is no suggestion that money that would otherwise be spent on Studio D is going to the regions.

She explained the NFB support to filmmakers in the regions will be fully disclosed within several weeks when the NFB officially adopts "the employment equity plan" legislated as Bill C-62. This legislation was put into place by the current Communications Minister Flora MacDonald when she held the Manpower portfolio.

The far reaching influence of Studio D has, in part, been responsible for the creation of a woman's production unit in the French Program Branch of the NFB.

George Dufaux, general director of the French Program Branch announced in mid-November that the unit known as Programme Point de vue de femmes will be headed by Josée Beaudet, director of *Le Film d'Ariane*.

He said that consultation with women's groups throughout French-language Canada has revealed a need for greater employment opportunity for women filmmakers and more films for and about women.

"We are like Studio D inasmuch as we are socially concerned but you might say we are a little less socially concerned. There is a great deal of interest inside and outside of the Film Board about drama but we are supposed to do documentaires," Beaudet told *Cinema Canada*.

Hénaut and Stichman say there is no sense of rivalry for the reported \$165,000 allocation of free money for the new French-language woman's unit. They say they welcome this opportunity for women filmmakers.

"Nice person" joins Montreal festival

MONTREAL - "He's a very nice person, he knows cinema and he can represent us well in English Canada and the U.S.," is how Serge Losique, founder of the 10-year-old Montreal World Film Festival describes his new director of special programming, Leonard Schein.

Schein, age 37, former director of the Toronto Festival of Festivals and before that the founding director of the Vancouver International Film Festival, was appointed special programming director for the Montreal World Film Festival, Monday, Nov. 3. He has a one-year, renewable contract.

In his new role, Schein will be responsible for choosing English-language films in Canada and the U.S. for the festival which runs for over a week in late August every summer.

Losique told *Cinema Canada* that the new posting was created to allow Schein to assist in strengthening distribution contacts in English-speaking Canada and the U.S.

Schein's last posting was as director of the 1986 festival in Toronto which achieved a record box office in early September. However, on Sept. 24 Schein resigned for what were

called "personal reasons" while reportedly having come into conflict with local Toronto media, festival administrators and staff.

Asked if he anticipated any repercussions in Montreal from the publicity Schein received in Toronto, Losique, well-known for his antipathy towards the Festival of Festivals, says he is not concerned about what happened in Toronto.

"I've worked with bigger losers before," said Losique, referring to his past associations

Cont. on p. 48