

Independents object to Broadcast Centre

TORONTO — The proposed CBC Broadcast Centre for Toronto will be a monster that could spell doom for many independent production facilities, a vice-president of

the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA) says. Wilson Markle toldis Cinema Canada that the centre, which will combine CBC facilities with 1.8 million square feet of

commercial office and retail space, would really be more of a production than broadcast center. But CBC officials strongly disagree and say that the

broadcast centre, which could be under construction by 1988, won't put an end to private production facilities in Toronto. Bruce McKay, CBC manager

of television facilities planning, said the corporation needs to replace and consolidate its more than 20 separate locations in Toronto.

"The intent is to replace something that doesn't work," McKay said.

The CBC knows how much production it will contract out with independent producers and how much is to be done at the broadcast centre, he explained. McKay said the CBC doesn't want to build the centre and turn around and compete with outside business.

While the corporation needs some production facilities, McKay said, it makes no sense for the CBC to be on the leading technological edge.

Markle, who is also president of Mobile Image Canada Limited, agreed that the CBC needs a central facility in Toronto, but said a central production facility is not needed.

He said the CBC should job out its production to independent Canadian producers "otherwise were not going to have a private sector."

"It is going to be the biggest production center in North America."

The CBC wants to build facilities on a 9.3 acre site on Front Street across from the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Markle said the CFTA, which represents members from a full range of film and broadcast interests, opposes the centre and is planning to make a representation to the federal cabinet at "the appropriate time."

"This country needs public broadcasting, but it also needs the private sector support of public broadcasting."

Janet Dey, director of planning and development for the centre, said there is a large amount of support for the facility.

Dey said the only area of sensitivity to the project is from a few people in a specific part of the independent production sector.

Dey and McKay, in an interview at CBC offices, emphasized that it is important to distinguish between the views of independent producers who make programs and people who provide facilities for producers. She said the two groups have different views about the centre.

The CBC needs a strong base in Toronto, Dey said. She said an awful lot of producers can't wait for the centre because it will help make their product look better.

She said in terms of the protection of Canadian culture, the broadcast centre is important.

"We think it is most tremendously consistent in terms of where this country is going."

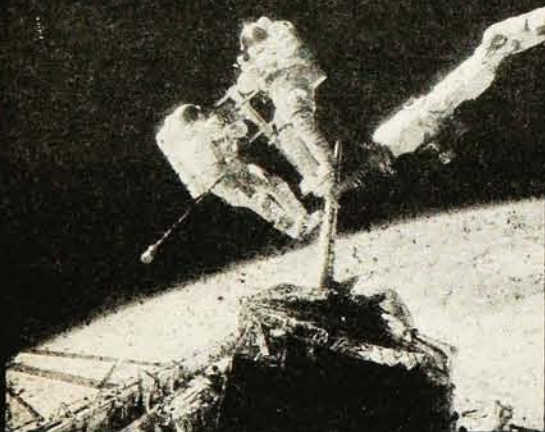
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