

**Uncertainty**

*Cont. from p. 42*

May 8, Finestone raised the same question in the House, this time when MacDonald was absent. The minister of International Trade, Pat Carney, answered that "the Government is acting on this issue. Legislation will be introduced."

This was not enough for Steven Langdon (NDP, Essex-Windsor) who asked for confirmation that members of the Ways and Means Committee of the U.S. Congress had written to the government about the Bill. "Have they tied what they have written to whether or not they would support free trade when the issue goes from Canada to the U.S. Congress later this year?"

Carney could only respond that she and the Deputy Prime Minister felt that the Americans had over-reacted to the issue and that "The Prime Minister has responded saying that he feels that this is an issue which should not cause any concern to the Americans."

In the light of the obvious concern it does cause, her answer appeared weak.

On the same day, ACTRA released a statement on film distribution, addressing the rumours which were now rampant. Afraid that the govern-

ment would back down, it made public the following text which was sent to the Prime Minister: "In view of the entire Canadian film industry, the immediate introduction of the proposed Bill on film distribution is paramount to the development of the industry in Canada. Rumours that the government is altering its priorities are causing serious alarm. Any change in the declared policy and intentions of the government could only result in concern and apprehension regarding the government's commitment and firmness of resolve in relation to all cultural issues, particularly in relation to the free trade discussions. We urge that the film distribution Bill be proceeded with as a matter of priority."

The statement had the full accord of the 12 organizations which comprise industry associations.

By the following Monday, exasperation was apparent at the department of Communications as the reassurances of the government failed to quell the pessimism in the industry that the project was indeed being abandoned. Deputy Minister Jeremy Kinsman spoke with *Cinema Canada* about the need to "legally sanitize" the legislation (see accompanying article) before it could be ta-

bled, and insisted that it would go forward as soon as it was ready.

Meanwhile, one of two things seemed certain. Either the minister — generally considered a veteran of the political process with a lot of clout in the

Cabinet — was naive in believing she could produce such legislation "within a few weeks," or she has run into opposition which is using the legislative process to slow her down.

Either way, time is running

short. Parliament is due to recess for the summer by the end of June and experienced observers suggest that may be just enough time to table the legislation for first reading and let it die before second reading discussions can take place.

**A legislative adventure for DOC**

MONTREAL — Deputy minister of Communications Jeremy Kinsman explained to *Cinema Canada* in a telephone conversation the process which was slowing down the distribution legislation.

Originally, he said, the legislation was conceived to hinge on the inter-provincial trade powers which would put the question in the federal domain, but there were fears of provincial opposition. Currently, it is being dealt with at

the point of importation of films.

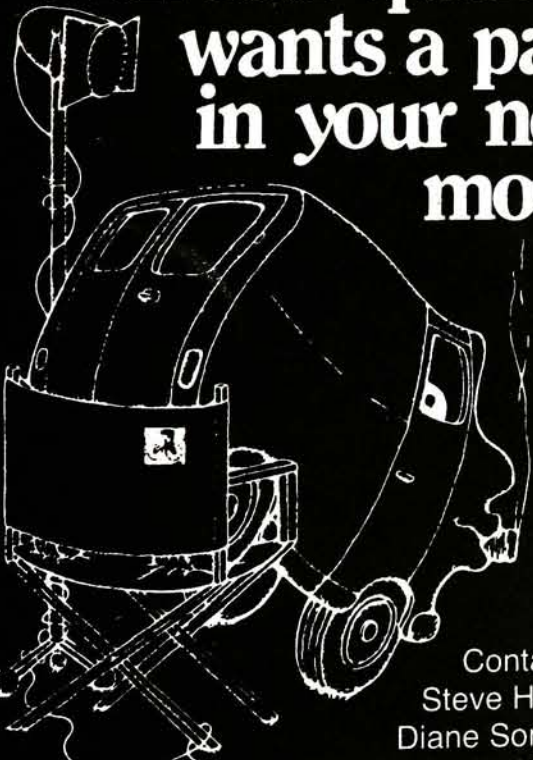
Explaining the process, he insisted that "things come up which have nothing to do with film," but which must be dealt with. For example, he stated that a "recent Supreme Court decision on the licensing of energy products was sufficiently unassertive of the federal position" to make the writers of the film legislation consider, once again, the language of the law.

Everytime it (the legislation)

hits a new set of approvers, it snags." He wondered rhetorically, now that it deals with the importation of films, "Does this now become a trade bill?" The department must now consider the repercussions of this possibility.


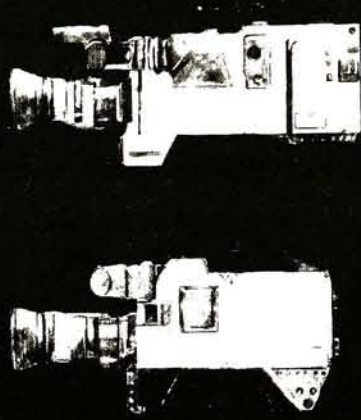
All the while insisting that the legislation will be tabled and that the government is committed to it, he concluded saying, "Writing laws is tough. It's an art form." One art form, obviously, which is not in danger in Ottawa.

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