Georges Dufaux's
10 JOURS... 48 HEURES

Georges Dufaux's recent documentary 10 JOURS... 48 HEURES depicts the oppressiveness of East Coast fishing in the '80s—an entire community dominated and controlled by a single company whose main goal is the commercial exploitation of Newfoundland's codfish.

The film is a contemporary reworking of John Grierson's 1929 film DRIFTERS, a romantic and poetic treatment of Britain's deep-sea fishing industry. While Grierson's film focuses mainly on the men who go out to sea, Dufaux's goes several steps further by avoiding the excessive romanticization of the role of the fisherman. Instead, he tries to show how large-scale fishing affects the entire community of Marys town, a small fishing village in southeastern Newfoundland where 80 to 90 per cent of its inhabitants are employed by one company, Fisheries Products International. In Marys town, the fishing industry permeates practically every aspect of people's lives. Dufaux illustrates this by taking his camera into places like the church, the radio station, and the classroom, where references to fishing are invariably present.

The title of the film refers to the pattern of 10 days at sea, 48 hours leave for the fishermen on the trawler 'Zamberg'. This is one of the largest of the FPI fleet and the young fisherman David and his family, it is primarily a detached overview of a life of offshore fishing. The personal hardships a life of offshore fishing entails for families like the McHardys, who are employed by one company, Fisheries Products International, are presented at their best: capture a piece of history—only the constant hum of the factory and the harsh winter light enhance the cold detached feeling of this film.

Dufaux has been praised in the past for his "calm and discreet" style of filmmaking. In this film though, he deliberately works against him. Although the film occasionally is a moving portrayal of the difficulties, the progressions and the progress of the young fisherman David and his family, it is mainly a detached overview of a life of offshore fishing and processing industry in Newfoundland. The film often alludes to the many economic and political problems that have plagued the Newfoundland fisheries for years. Dufaux doesn't, for instance, touch on the interaction between the company and workers even though the film begins with the workplace. After a six-month strike. A radio program heard in the background mentions the pressing need for the modernization of many of Newfoundland's processing plants, and fisherfolk's chronic problems with the unemployment insurance system. However, these issues are never expanded upon and their relevance to the film in general remains at best tenuously connected with their personal lives.

Unfortunately, the overall strength of the film is lost in Dufaux's subtle and distant treatment of the subject matter. This is further weakened by the unnecessary length of 85 minutes. In the end, the Samson doesn't elicit a strong response from the viewer, and one is left feeling indifferent and apathetic to the issues raised by the film.

Mary Ledwell

THE ROAD TO YORKTON

The film is obviously an improvisation, technically competent as it is. But it bears a charm that comes from honesty. Dufaux's fictional character, the novel and inventive "new wave" filmmaker, is a real back to reality of the film in general remains at best tenuously connected with their personal lives.

The difficulties of farming forced many farmers to farm for a living. Until it got too difficult. Then it drove them apathetic.

It was those difficulties—incrédible poverty and extreme isolation—that spurred farmers into farming for the reform movements of the Great Depression. Their lives, who were worse off in some ways, joined forces with the Women's Grain Growers and United Farm Women's associations.

Women who might never have left their children and gardens and livestock fell compelled to campaign for educational, political, and legislative reform. Unassuming, but brilliant "We farm women should know about this patching business", they petitioned for health care, educational reform, who made cameo appearances like it or not, there is only one way to distinguish truth from fiction in this film: the fiction is strange, the truth is very strange.

PRAIRIE WOMEN

Late in June, the downtown branch of the Edmonton Public Library hosted a screening of award-winners from this year's Yorkton Film Festival. The featured presentation was a half-hour documentary called PRAIRIE WOMEN, winner of the Golden Sheaf for best of the festival.

National Film Board of Canada documentaries are not generally considered box-office boffo—but PRAIRIE WOMEN surprised everyone. It packed audiences in the 200-seat theatre for two consecutive nights. The NFB scheduled extra screenings to accommodate the overflow.

Barbara Evans, a graduate of University of British Columbia and the National Film School in London, created a textbook example of what NFB documentaries do when presented at their best: capture a piece of history that hasn't been contained. The topic of this film was the women's farm movement of the '20s and '30s. The heart of this film was the spirit of the women it documented.

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