accomplices. They were clued in. They had always been playing this game.

Once the cast was selected and the shooting of the film began, the game continued in several Montreal locations, including a haunted-looking 19th-century factory that is actually an atelier for a man who manufactures paper by hand. On the various sets, Rubbo went on drawing his actors into what he referred to as "a form of self-hypnosis," in which, hopefully, nothing existed outside the world of the film. Jill Stanley (Nancy), a pretty little girl with a wistful sidelong glance, says, "When we had to cry, sometimes he told us sad stories and stuff to help us. Crying is really hard."

Lucas Evans (Ralph), a wide-eyed, sweet-natured boy, remembers, "I was surprised to see that it was mostly waiting and not doing much, but then, when the second week came, it started getting more and more built up. There was a lot more scenes to do. And it felt a lot easier." In fact, by the end of the Montreal shoot, the kids seemed almost blasé. "It's not hard to get used to," says Andrew, the philosopher of the group. "It's just life if you're in movies." Rubbo, at times quite blasé himself, was talking to them without any condescension – as if they were both adults and professionals.

But during breaks, the kids would drop out of movie life – with its constant, nagging attention to minute details – and just play. With these alert, energetic kids as the focal point of the shoot, the **Tommy Tricker** crew seemed to be a particularly relaxed and friendly one. Line producer Ann Burke, first assistant director Carle Delaroche-Vernet, d.o.p. Andreas Poulson, script Marie Beaulieu – and everyone else – worked quickly, efficiently, and with affection for the project.

On a damp afternoon in August, the company was completing one of the last, and most difficult, shooting days in Montreal. (Sequences were still to be filmed in Hangzhou, China and in Australia, during the month of September). The location was a leafy suburban side street. The families of all the kids were there. People from the neighborhood stood around. Both a TV and a radio crew were taping documentaries.

The camera tracked with the main characters as they pursued Tommy Tricker. Then a mountie – dyed pink from boot to hat – galloped behind the actors on a pink horse, reigned in for his tight shot, and earnestly delivered his line: "I think you need me."

Everyone giggled. Church bells rang, and Andreas Poulsson was suspended just under the tree tops, on a Chapman crane, waiting to shoot the last image of the day.

Anthony Howard was on his bike, in a jean jacket and shades. He and Paul Popowich, a sinewy kid, who played Tommy's accomplice Cass, waited for their cues. "Ride a little faster; gesture a little later," Rubbo said to Anthony. "Be careful." Anthony, who was obviously relishing his role, grinned wickedly. "Don't worry. We're metalheads."

"Action!"

Rubbo watched as the two boys took off, the crane swivelled down, and the camera framed Tommy Tricker and Cass speeding away between the trees.

Maurie Alioff •

March in Newfoundland

"What we need is a revolution of ideas." – **Ken Pittman**, playing the man at the bar in ***Roland's Progress.***

"In Newfoundland, there's a strong history of individual filmmaking and the collective process. It could be precarious to make a feature film assembling the conventional Canadian funding sources – Telefilm and private investors. You hope whatever you do will be another step forward for this dynamic film community, not a reverse step."

Funding versus creativity, conventional structures versus collective arrangements; writer/director Ken Pittman has good reasons to be considering these issues. His first feature film, **Finding Mary March** was shot near Buchans, Newfoundland in July and August, and he wonders how this $1.2 million budget film will fit in the provincial film scene, where films have most commonly been made on a wing and a camera.

With financing from Telefilm, a distribution contract with René Malo, and a broadcast agreement from CBC, Pittman has gone where no other Newfoundland filmmaker has gone before. With an idea taken from a documentary he made on the Beothuks seven years ago, he ended up with the most well-nourished Newfoundland feature film.

"It's a low budget, the average would be twice what we worked with. But I wouldn't want to work with a larger budget on my first feature film. You could make a 90-minute film for less, with much the same substance, but who would get to see it? Who would see this piece of work with so much of people's time and ability in it?"

"There are a lot of great dreams existing in people's pillows. I have no problems with beautiful dreams in pillows, but I want my dream up there on Canadian screens.

This particular dream is set in contemporary Newfoundland; it develops through the forest and along the shores of Red Indian Lake, winter home of the Beothuks. Ted (Richard Boland) a trapper, and his daughter Bernadette (Tara Manual) live in the woods. Ted continually clashes with the mining company and social services, as he won't send Bernadette to school and threatens anyone who strays across his personal boundaries. Into this comes photographer Nancy George (Andrée Pelletier) who specializes in native cultures and wants to capture some Beothuk artifacts. Somewhere along the lakeshore is the grave of Mary March, a Beothuk princess buried in the 19th century.

Nancy's presence aggravates the ongoing conflicts between father and daughter, and highlights the tension between the mining interests and the ancient, echoing wilderness.

"Using a contemporary story with real people was almost an accident. I did it without thinking. It was a matter of the interesting dynamics between people, quite apart from the question of the Beothucks."

"But the subject of the Beothuks is a universal one," said Pittman. "It's another example in the history of human beings when the challenge to respect each other and co-exist is rejected, and really unacceptable conflicts are produced. That process is endless. It's not just between Europeans and North American Indians, but between communities and families and individuals."

The location adds to the story, it plays a starring role in itself. Cast and crew travelled a long way from home to set up in this scenery. The flies were bad, and moose roamed the highway frequently, which made driving sometimes an activity of white-knuckle caution. The unusually warm weather made problems for continuity as the river levels fell by inches and previously green forest clearings were burnt dry and brown. A storm scene had to be improvised with the Buchans fire department, many willing townspeople and some huge fans from the Buchans mine.

The 30 day shoot found the crew in various spots. One evening 20 people are crowded into a small, hot cabin, shooting interiors. The next morning they're standing up to their knees in the Exploits River, or floating on a platform of canoes, following Ted and Nancy as they paddle their way across the water.

"Using this location added up to a third of our budget," said Pittman. "It translated into a lot more demands, working longer, climbing down grades to get the cables across. We're not just a few hours from a film community, we're six hours from St. John's and an hour from Buchans. But it adds a realness to the film. Films that look like they could have been shot anywhere are drained of place."

It will be a challenge to keep this hard-won scenery through the editing. "If you're slowly masking down the setting, you could end up with a brand new film."

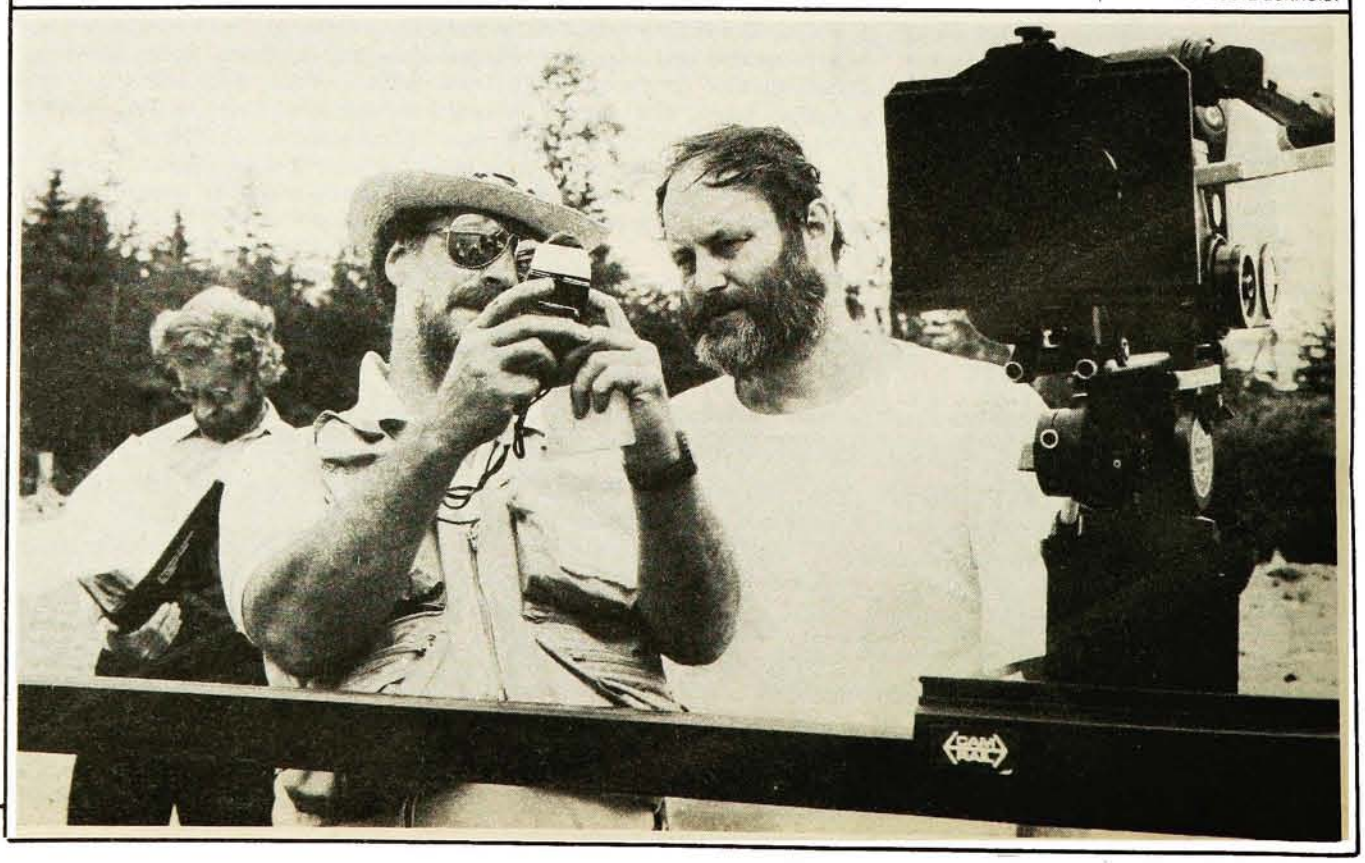
The script itself was revised as it was processed through funding agencies and distributors. "Most of the changes were practical," Pittman said. "There were some compromises, but you know you have to make some if you go through these conventional sources. The question is, where do you stop these compromises? You have to decide that, you have to control their ability to exploit you."

"There's a whole new approach to drawing on these resources. Where Canadian filmmaking generally is so departmentalized, standards in other parts of the country are just not admissable here."

"You have to ask how the industrial mode for feature filmmaking would apply here. We've had a pretty dynamic film community since the late '60s, and this film could be an aberration or a detour. That's a worrisome prospect."

The adaptable and cohesive arts scene means many people work in several dis-

• Ken Pittman looking for **Mary March** with Bob Petrie and Michael Jones — photo: Manfred Buckheist



ciplines. Writers operate cameras and actors score films. One result is that Pittman has assembled what Boland calls "a crew of filmmakers." Among the crew are Michael Jones (cinematographer), and Paul Pope (assistant director).

"This happens in the rest of Canada sometimes, but in Newfoundland it's typical, not the exception," said Pittman. "It's not enough to just dismiss it by saying people are more friendly. They're not limited. The narrow categories of functioning are not appropriate here."

Finding Mary March has a brief winter shoot, then it's expected to appear at the Cannes Film Festival. It will be ready for release in Canadian cinemas in '88, and will be broadcast on CBC the following year.

Joan Sullivan •

Future *Power*

Two studios, of sorts, are being used to shoot **Captain Power and the Soldiers of the Future**, a science fiction TV adventure series that premieres Sept. 19 across North America.

One is a former Toronto Transit Commission bus barn in the city's Parkdale district — 140,000 square feet of cavernous space where 10 sets evoke post-apocalyptic scenes of Earth, circa 2147 A.D. It's a place of dank caves, wind-swept deserts and futuristic spacecraft filled with banks of blinking instruments. Around the corner, between the props department and the studio offices, lie several scale models: a burnt-out city here, a scorched and twisted landscape over there.

But the other 'studio' may be even more arresting. It exists, in effect, only in another dimension — in a digital dimension of silicon chips and lightning-fast computer circuitry.

For this is a show that combines live-action footage with state-of-the-art computer animation that has a sophisticated, distinctly three-dimensional look. And it's the first project of its kind anywhere in the world, says producer Ian McDougall, president of Ventura Pictures.

We're on the cutting edge. It's certainly the first time anyone's done computer-imaging and live-action in this way. In terms of the technology, I don't think we could have done this show four years ago."

The 26 episodes now nearing completion tell the classic good-versus-evil story of dashing young Captain Power who, with the help of his friends Hawk, Tank and a couple of other likeminded associates, is leading a crusade to save the 22nd-century world from the dastardly clutches of Lord Dread. Lord Dread, you understand, is intent on destroying life on Earth, with the help of his robotic Dread Troopers and his handy 'digitizers' — weapons that capture their victims' minds and zap their contents into Dread's data banks. The evil lord also relies on two nasty henchmen named Blastarr and Soaron.

While Captain Power, Lord Dread and most of the other characters are played by flesh-and-blood actors (with the help of some fairly conventional special effects), Soaron and Blastarr are completely computer-animated, except for their voices.

The two characters are the products of ARCCA Animation, a new Toronto animation studio that specializes in computer-generated images. **Captain Power** is its first project.

The scene at ARCCA's offices is in marked contrast to the busy clutter at Ventura's live-action studio. Here, in an industrial suburb, several animators sit in a tidy, darkened room, perched in front of oversized computer monitors. In order to complete **Captain Power** on schedule, ARCCA is operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Animators Paul Griffin and Mark Mayerson explain the computer animation process.

"Initially, we take a drawing from the design department and devise a computer model," says Griffin. "Once we have a model built, it's animatable in umpteen-dozen ways."

Each body part of each character is a separate file in the computer program; using a combination of typed key commands and a computer mouse, the animators create character movement on their screens. One strength of computer animation is that the animators only need to set up three or four specific frames in, say, a 15-frame sequence. As long as the computer is given the right commands, the machine itself 'draws' all the in-between positions.

"It's a lot like traditional animation in some respects," says Mayerson (who, like most of ARCCA's artists, comes from a classical animation background). "We work from a storyboard, know how long the scene will last and sit down and work. The difference is that here we spend our time figuring out how to position the characters instead of doing the drawing itself."

Griffin points out that while computer animation lacks the fluidity and exaggeration of old-fashioned cartoons, it opens up whole new worlds to animators.

In the first stages of preparing a sequence for **Captain Power**, the animators use a "vector format" — a sort of moving sketch on the computer screen. Later a 'quick shade' version is prepared which depicts all the movement demanded by the sequence, but with the character just blocked out in rough colour. A video cassette of this version is taken downtown to the Ventura studio, where it is superimposed onto a video feed of the live-action during the shoot, to ensure the perspective is correct between animated and real characters. Eventually a final rendering of the animation is made, with details and full colouration. At this point a special animation effect is used to "reflect" the tone and colour of the live-action surroundings onto the metallic bodies of Blastarr and Soaron. The result is a remarkably realistic fusion of animation and live-action.

"The computers make an experienced animator's job easier," says ARCCA associate producer Steve Price. "They let him do things he couldn't do before — wouldn't even imagine doing before."

In keeping with **Captain Power**'s high-tech production values, Mattel is launching a Captain Power toyline that could radically alter children's passive relationship with the TV set. If some of the toys are pointed at the television, they will be activated at certain points during each broadcast by a specially emitted signal, enabling the kids to win and lose points in a form of glorified video game.

Despite the toys and the comic-book names of the characters, Ian McDougall is optimistic about attracting more than just young viewers: "In terms of the toys, yes, we're going for a young audience. But we definitely foresee a crossover audience of the kind of people who enjoy **Star Trek**, for instance. Our storylines are sophisticated. This isn't another Saturday morning cartoon."

For McDougall, who is best known for a stint at the Canadian Film Development Corp. and for co-producing the award-winning **Anne of Green Gables**, the show represents a major departure. But as he's quick to point out, **Captain Power and the Soldiers of the Future** is something of an adventure for everyone involved.

"It's new and exciting for all of us. Everybody's being stretched to the limit."

Christopher Harris •