It is offensive, now, to be reassured that our cultural sovereignty will be untouched by Free Trade when the Canadian distribution industry has always been wide-open and is sorely in need of protection. And it would seem a bit of sophistry for the government to maintain publicly that it is willing to move on distribution when the Meech Lake accord diminishes its clout over the provinces, and when culture is a provincial concern at any rate.

Let's make a movie

When I first visited the Cinema Canada offices in Rochedale College in the early '70s, I was seduced by the energy I saw. The graffiti on the walls of the building led to a joyous room, overflowing with the clutter of publishing. Pictures, texts, a typewriter were scattered about while financial records were housed in shoeboxes and no one much worried about balancing the bank books.

Down the hall, the Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre was bustling, and the Toronto Film Makers Co-op was being organized. A lobbying group, the Council of Canadian Film Makers, was already working to attract the government's attention to the needs of the production community.

The community had behind it those first important films, Shebib's Goin' Down the Road, King's A Married Couple, Owen’s Nobody Waved Goodbye. In Quebec, Jutra, Carle, and Lefebvre were hard at work, and Denis Héroux had seduced the public with Vairé.

Rochedale was a hippie haven, and if the organization of the magazine seemed dubious at best, they nevertheless had it together.

What we have lost in the time Cinema Canada has published 150 issues is the sense of connectedness, the sense that our vision mattered and that we wanted to communicate it. Some of the young filmmakers still have it, and they are indeed our hope. But they are working in the margins, still mounting their films as guerrilla manoeuvres while those with easier access to public funds occupy the centre.
A glance at Cinema Canada's '70s

At the start
A group of films produced in Quebec has drawn praise from the New York Times, which says the filmmakers deserve wider recognition.

Reviewer Roger Greenspun uses such phrases as "fresh and unusual" and "evocative and beautifully rich" in describing the films shown in New York at the Museum of Modern Art. "Several of the films, expressing the concerns of French-Canadian nationalism, offer a revolutionary message," he adds. But the message is "generally a pragmatic plea for freedom or for a chance at a better life." March 1972

Behind the camera
I'd like to work with bigger dollies. I'd like to work with cranes. You know, stuff where you can get some of the shots that you can't because the budget won't allow them. I'd love to have helicopter shots.
Richard Leitner, March 1972

The aspirants
The Canadian Film Development Corp. has handed out the first $10,000 of the proposed $50,000 in grants to assist aspiring feature filmmakers in English-speaking Canada. Judith Steed, Gordon Nault and Peter Duffy each received $2,000. David Troster $1,750. Erwin Wiens $1,250 and Michael Anti-Rose $1,000. Sid Adelman, Money Hamet, David Shatih, Bob Huber and Lee Gordon formed the jury. May-June 1972

A rigged system
Foreign films long ago assumed squatter's rights to the captive Canadian audience. It is a control which they took by default and have come to take for granted. As long as Canada had no film industry of its own, the situation was tenable. But as more Canadian films are produced and arrive to be marketed, the problem of this modus operandi become more evident and more serious. This places an impossible handicap on the economic and artistic growth of the industry. It also reduces the Canadian filmmaker to the soul-destroying status of beggar in his own home, and prevents him from earning a living in a popular cinema which is generating over 100 million dollars a year. Sandra Gathercole, May-June 1972

At last
Today it is my pleasure to meet you and outline the general terms of our film policy - a policy which has taken over two years to develop. I hope that we have not laboured and brought forth a mouse, and that the long period of reflection and consultation has not been spent in vain.
Gérard Pelletier, Secretary of State, July-Aug. 1972

The trigger
...I was thinking of quitting writing and I wasn't able to do films. But I saw one day Le Chien dans le sac by Gilles Courlax and it was wonderful. All my complexities disappeared. There was a film that caught me from beginning to the end and I had no more problems. There are very few films like that in your life, that give you energy to go on five or six years more, working.
Jean Pierre Lefebvre, July-Aug. 1972

A closed door
IATSE Local 644-C raised some eyebrows in the film community last month when they rejected cameraman Richard Leitner's application for membership. July-Aug. 1972

The publishing scene
On the question of CinemaCanada being only one of the trade magazines available to AMPLC members, sure, if you count the U.S., but if you look at the other Canadian film publications - Take One, That's Show Business, Marketing, Canadian Film Digest and Impact - you must realize that Cinema Canada is better suited to the needs of the Canadian producer than any of the others.
The editors, July-Aug. 1972

Private help
Harold Greenberg, president of Bellevue-Farhi, recently released the list of Canadian features which received financing through the multi-million dollar fund he set up earlier this year... The Neptune Factor, The Merry Wives of Tobias Rouke, Quelques arpetes de noie, Mother's Day, Simard, Slipstream, Eliza's Horoscope... Oct. Nov. 1972

Foreign experience
Don't forget 10 years ago in this country... nobody knew what making feature films was all about. ... I was able, fortunately, to be with Genevieve (Bujold) and watch her make films with Resnais and with Louis Malle and with de Broca. Before I made J'Était at least I had an inkling of what filmmaking was... Paul Almond, Oct.-Nov. 1972

The great debate
My personal opinion, in case somebody is scared to ask the question, and not representing the opinion of the industry or my corporation, in that I favour quotas!
George Destounis, Famous Players, Feb.-March 1973

A province-by-province breakdown
B.C. saw 105 Chinese films last year, but only 12 Canadian films; Albertans, 57 from Italy, seven made in Canada; in Saskatchewan 59 British
pictures were shown, against 6 from home; New Brunswick saw 202 American movies, 6 Canadian ones; Manitobans, 19 from Germany, 9 from here; Nova Scots, 12 from Sweden, 8 from Canada; Ontario 16 from France, and a pitiful 11 from this country; while Quebec had the opportunity to see 69 from Greece but only 26 from its own soil.


The lobby
At the past two meetings of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers, there was quite a bit of excitement, and many in the industry feel that this newly formed group may be English Canada's last hope in uniting filmmakers on all levels of cinema into a cohesive and powerful voice. (The meetings were chaired by Peter Pearson and Richard Leiterman.) June-July 1973.

From one who knew
With a film quota, the exhibitor would have to show the films. It's like with the minimum Canadian content quota in radio. Every theatre would have to play them. I agree it's tough for the theatres, but... I mean, this is the price we must pay if we want an industry. If we don't want an industry, then let's forget it.


Modest beginnings
You see, when the CFDC gave me the money, they didn't give it to me, they said they would accept bills up to $9,000. So I had to find a company to lend or give me the cash. Guy Dufaux of Les Productions Prisma agreed without any papers from the CFDC. It was just a gentleman's agreement. He gave me the $9,000 to produce the second part of the film and got the production ready in three days.


At Cannes
Canadians were out in force, and for the first time, it wasn't only the Québécois, as hardy souls from Toronto and elsewhere made the anglophone presence felt. Canadians were not only seen but heard, with Toronto the only Canadian presence in the Cannes market.


The promo at home
The villain in the case of Nobody Wore Goodby was the Film Board's promotion department, which did everything but actually bar the public at the door of the theatre. I remember meeting Don (Owen) and Suzanne on the street the day the film opened and remarking that Don must be busy--I imagined him doing interviews for print, TV, radio, etc. No, it turned out, nothing had been arranged. So, except for the reviews and a few other brief mentions, the film was received in silence.


The subject of the film is simply one of those antiseptically repulsive, commonplace water fountains, stuck on an equally antiseptic, concrete-block wall, in the sterile hallway of one of those architectural disasters we call schools. That's the subject. But the content of the film is so much more!


The movers and shakers
When I got to Spain I wrote Bassett a letter and said if anything should happen that he needed me again to do that movie (Paperback Hero), I'd be delighted to do it because, "that movie is really about you and me Bassett. It's really about guys that were brought up to believe that they were stars." Bassett had. I was second cousin to Lester Pearson and all that kind of bullshit. I went to U.D.S., an exclusive private school. Both Bassett and I had a bit of that tin god mentality and we're also a couple of guys who aren't above going into confrontation scenes, even when we're wrong. Rather than back down we'll try to shoot it out.


Winnipeg Manifesto
We, the undesignated filmmakers and filmworkers wish to voice our belief that the present system of film production/distribution/exhibition works to the extreme disadvantage of the Canadian filmmaker and film audience. We wish to state unequivocally that film is an expression and affirmation of the cultural reality of this country first, and a business second.

April-May 1974.

Enter, the investor
Potential investors don't read scripts. Their 12-year-old daughters do... It's a very real problem in Canadian feature filmmaking that so much time and energy is required to raise the money and set up a film, that those involved are... flitting with exhaustion before the shooting even begins.


Cutting teeth on shorts
Another favourite is Leon Marr's Fountain... spelling out the limits of a given undertaking.

A third truth is that the political entity called "Canada" is a vulnerable one. The part of the country which stretches three thousand miles from east to west and stands two hundred miles high from the U.S. border north is particularly troubled by incursions from the south.

The federal government has long known that the articulation of Canadian culture and its enhancement among its citizens is the only sure defense against American aggressions, both political and cultural. It has known that once Canadians feel like Americans and can see no difference in the two countries, then union must follow for the economic promise inherent in the size of the United States would be the determinant. This union may not be a formal, total integration, but as the free trade discussions amply show, many Canadians are already seduced by the promise of the "free" market and don't consider important the cultural price we will surely pay.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board were founded to draw the modern lines of defense against certain incursions. Creating and disseminating messages of unity, examining and reflecting those images which make Canada unique, they have been of overriding importance in maintaining a Canadian identity.

Some interesting hypotheses
Pressed into sharing responsibility for production, especially for the production of dramatic material, the government established the Canadian Film Development Corporation, hoping that the private sector might prove a vigorous and innovative alternative to the government-run organizations which were bogged-down bureaucratically and becoming intellectually and spiritually stale.

Feeling financially strained, the government also hoped that incentives for private investment might create a money pool which would allow it to diminish its support to the production of cultural material, all the while maintaining production at levels which would ensure Canadian content. To this end, The Capital Cost Allowance was established in 1974.

Some misguided notions
As the government tried to sort out how it might create room for the private sector, it established a point system, postulating that numbers of Canadian participants added up to Canadian culture. By monitoring quantity, quality would somehow evolve.

The Canadian Certification Office was created, and although initially it had no mechanism to police its regulations, it was thought adequate to facilitate the creation of valid Canadian films.

As energy built up, resulting from the tax...
shelter initiatives, Michael McCabe as head of the CFDC decided that what was lacking in the equation was American know-how, and he encouraged Canadian producers to find American executive producers to shepherd certain projects along. American stars were introduced to insure box-office success, and American world-sales agents picked up our features to enhance foreign sales.

It followed that entrepreneurship among Canadians was to be discovered and developed, and the entrepreneurs arrived: John Turner imported Harry Alan Towers; the Ph. Ds Julian Melzack, Bruce Mallen and Jon Stan got involved; distributors Pierre David and Robert Lantos turned their hands to production while lawyers Garth Drabinsky, Ron Cohen and Robert Cooper joined the swollen ranks of producers.

Quantity, by some mysterious mechanism, was to convert itself to quality, enlivening the public displays of Canadian production. The alchemists were to be Americans and as yet untired others, new to production in Canada. Money through the shelter was the grease for the new machine. There was little concern about the weakness of the Canadian distributor; indeed, they became all but invisible during this period.

World sales agents from California played an important role, made money and became strong - the name of Candox with its Panamanian bank account comes to mind. Canadian titles abounded, slick press kits were made and Canadians beat the drums internationally, apeing American promotions. No one who was at Cannes in 1979 can forget the embarrassment of the "Canada Can and Does" campaign with all its flashy hype and mediocre films.

The fact was that producers were not concerned with distribution. The government, in what proved to be a totally misguided reading of the industry workings, discounted pre-sales to distributors from the monies which were considered "at risk" for tax purposes, removing any incentive on the producers' part to deal with the marketplace. The money needed for production was all to come from the shelter and was all in place before principal photography began.

The only incentive to make money with a film was to pay back the investors, and this proved meager incentive indeed.

Let's make a deal

With the arrival of the tax shelter and the new deals, the ability of the milieu to deceive itself became truly phenomenal.

What no one said but everyone knew was that Canadian films were now being made almost exclusively because of the highly artificial financial situation created by the 100 per cent Capital Cost Allowance in the federal budget. Though the industry took on the trappings of a market-oriented industry, with its agents and promotions, the only place money was changing hands was between the producers and their investors, and this turned out to be a one-way exchange.

Structural change was everywhere, a new reflection of a new time. Backed by the American majors, the Motion Picture Institute of Canada was founded to out-lobby the CFCC which it did in short order. Representing no groups, responsible to no one but a few hand-picked members, the MPIC held elite conferences, explaining the intricacies of tax shelter financing, offering the podium to American experts and brokers, siphoning the will of Canadians to be responsible to a unique visitor of the day.

Again, no one insisted that Canada should have distributors, capable of taking films to market. No one dared remind the community that the films had to be seen and that money should flow from the box-office if any continuing synergy was to develop.

The new producers saw things differently, and broke up the old organizations. Refusing to participate in the Canadian Film Awards which they did not dominate, they created the Academy of Canadian Cinema, inviting the chief lobbyist of the Majors to serve as treasurer. Unhappy with the rowdy discussions at the CFDC, the consultative committees were abandoned, ending any creative input from directors, actors or technicians.

The producers themselves fell at odds, and splinter groups formed. First, the Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers (CAMPP) broke from the AFMLC which reorganized into the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA), and then CAMPP itself splintered as the Association of Canadian Motion Picture Production Companies a.k.a. the Gang of Nine - the big money, big-profile producers of supposedly commercial features - formed its own private club.

The revolution produced by the tax shelter days was to center the Canadian industry firmly on the producers. Gone was the community of voices which had been present at the outset. Once, names like Ambassador, Mutual, Danton, Cinépix came to mind. Directors Pearson, Shebib, Carle, LeFevre, Brault were concerned.

One could imagine a meeting in which these men, for they were all men, could sit in the same room with producers, unionists and the CFDC to talk about the future. Now, the creative tension of the art and the business was dissipated. There was no direction which was thought to be beneficial to all. Arrogance, fueled by the large sums of money which had been made, was the order of the day.

No one was concerned that obligations were not being met. When, within a year of the bust of the tax shelter the Ontario Securities Commission published lists of producers who were in default of reporting to their investors, it hardly made a ripple.

hrenia" and "cultural ambiguities" of English Canada. The only way to develop an unambiguous sense of how and why a Canadian cinema is important is by considering the contribution of artistic culture to the political and economic independence of a country. And in turn we must ask: What collective ideal is furthered by the continuing independence of Canada from the U.S.? Hofsess has no answer to this question. Through the talk of irrational loyalties to crazy prejudices, of being "Canadian in a profound psychological sense" not a hint emerges that unless Canada can take hold of its political independence from the U.S. to develop a socially progressive, non-exploitative society, the survival of the maple-leaf film industry is a matter of no importance at all.

Robert Fothropig, Oct. 1975

And other perversions

Here in New Brunswick, making a film can be like establishing a bordello; first, no one really believes such things can exist here, secondly, seems no one wants to take part in it because it's immoral, and thirdly, it can never be as good as the ones that exist in Toronto anyway.

Arthur Makosinski, Oct. 1975

Back to business

Later, asked by Robin Spry why Odeon had chosen the year when the least films were being made to try out the quota, (Charles) Mason said: "We're sure we can meet the quota, but if we can't that's going to mean that you haven't made enough films. " He couldn't name five feature films likely to be made in 1976. "If film is entertainment," commented Mason, "then it's business. And if it's business, then it's intended to make money. If films are art, then they should be subsidized like theatre and opera which have never been financially profitable. " As for Odeon chipping in... "That would be like asking Ford to finance Bricklin." Spry's conclusion was that the big distributors were just trying to "compound the disaster." Faced with Mason's comments, those concerned with the fate of Canadian film could only insist on the urgency of legislated levies, as well as quotas.

Nov. 1975

Seen from Quebec

At the moment, it's awful. Nothing's happening. No films are being made in most of Canada including Quebec. Actually, it's worse in Quebec because of that damn law (the first Law Concerning Cinema). The sad thing is that we were the ones who asked for it, were violent about it. We occupied the censor board last year in order to get it. But the situation is going to be worse with the law than without. The Institute responsible for film in Quebec has a better representation from the commercial and industrial sectors than from the film directors, technicians and actors. As usual, the creative aspect of film is pushed aside by the business people.

Claude Jutra, Nov. 1975

All that glitters...

Who needs "Hollywood's Canada" to depict us as rustic nincompoops when we so often play the role in real life? Serving a dress-up meal with hard liquor may seem like a small gaffe in the pantheon of human error, but it proved a depressingly appropriate and revealing detail of the Canadian Film Awards generally. That is scarcely surprising. Taste is indivisible. It's highly unlikely for someone to have good taste and a lively sense of style in one area of life and bad taste and absolutely no style in everything else. So, as went dinner, so went the Awards.

John Hofsess, Nov. 1975

A question of courage?

One of the negatives I've experienced at first hand is my efforts to package programmes. There's a reluctance, a lack of courage, or fear of making decisions that is rampant among the TV executive group... I can't understand why, because it is impossible to get TV off the ground in Canada without making some kind of co-production deal with the U.S.... People up here are too slow to move.


A question of catharsis

I had been struck by the similarity between the political process and that of filmmaking. Both are blood sports: combative, dangerous, invigorating, frustrating and, I suppose, cathartic. The immense effort to realize even the most pitiable result seemed so closely akin in the two fields of endeavour at the end of (his term as president of the Directors Guild of Canada and as chairman of the CCFM) I could no longer tell whether I had spent two years and 10 days in politics in order to make films, or 10 years and two days in filmmaking in order to practice politics.

Peter Pearson, Feb. 1976
A political question
An application for an inquiry into the market practices of the foreign-controlled theatrical film distribution and exhibition system in Canada was filed today with the Commissions Investigation Branch of the department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in Ottawa. (Applicants were Pierre Berton, Michel Brault, Kirwan Cox, Robert Fulford, Sandra Gathier, Allan King, Peter Pearson, Budge Crawley and Gordon Pinsent.) March 1976

Cry from the colonies
Film is more than a business. It remains one of the most powerful expressions of mass culture in the world. That is just as true in Canada as anywhere else. Will we ever know how much of our so-called identity crisis grew out of evenings at the movies? Because what we see on the screen is somebody else—familiar and heroic—but not ourselves. We’re comfortable with it and this is the trademark of a colonial culture…. We now need a further commitment—to put Canadian films into the national distribution system where they belong. If we don’t see today as the time to build on the momentum, then we may lose it all, and that, to put it plainly, would be a tragedy. - Gordon Pinsent, April 1976

Look to the future
It was useful to consider quotas, levies and government aid but to be frank, I was bothered by its (the CBC program Home Movies) approach of personifying the McLuhanism: that is, we don’t see today as the time to build on the momentum, then we may lose it all, and that, to put it plainly, would be a tragedy. - Gordon Pinsent, April 1976

For a moment, the focus became clear. One either participated in a communal adventure towards the creation of a national cinema, or one was reduced to a commodity in the American marketplace.

A loud, sane voice
In the midst of those heady, chaotic times, as the global production budget for features rose yearly from $5 million to $60 million, and then to $145 million and finally to something around $200 million, there was a sense that the direction the industry was taking would lead to disaster. Not only were those who could not keep pace complaining, so were many participants. There was something profoundly unreal, disconnected, absurd about those films, and cynicism was rampant among those who worked on the big-budget films, and bought new homes and flashy cars.

When the magnitude of the wrong-headed-ness became undeniable, CAMPF, now reduced to a handful of producers/filmmakers of the original guard, reacted with a weekend censure on National Cinema. Suddenly, that same scruffy group which had gathered at Rochedale was back. Individuals had gained experience, many had new wealth, some had made interesting films. But in the main, the feeling was that the reality of a Canadian cinema was draining away. Big money had become an impediment and not a facilitator and finally the producer/filmmakers of CAMPF dared ask, What was to be done?

In asking the question, it gathered a larger community of filmmakers around it: Australians who felt strongly about their national cinema, and David Puttnam of the U.K., not yet the head of Columbia nor the producer of Chariots of Fire. For a moment, the focus became clear. One either participated in a communal adventure toward the creation of a national cinema, or one was reduced to a commodity in the American marketplace. And while it might happen that the product of a national cinema could indeed make its way in the American marketplace, as Chariots was soon to do, it was not true—even untrue—that a film tailored to the American market could contribute in an important way to the national culture of another country.

Soon afterward, the house of cards came tumbling down. The public investors turned their backs on the industry, deeply disturbed by the lack of responsibility producers felt toward their investments. The tax shelter days ended with a shortfall of something like $48 million with projected production and monies available. Some lawsuits were filed, some bankruptcies declared or narrowly averted. Julian Melnack returned to Europe and reportedly wrote a book about French wines. Bruce Mallen went to Hollywood to develop real estate and continue in finance. Today, Pierre David, Bob Cooper and Jon Slan are also in Hollywood. Drabinsky abandoned production and Cohen returned to the law. Of those mentioned above, only Lantos has successfully made the jump from a start in tax shelter days to a career in Canada.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch
During this entire period, the federal government remained committed to making this industry work. As if fascinated by the magic of the image, its power and the power of the people it attracted, minister followed minister, promising measures, adjusting old ones, trying to get it right.

Yet early on, Secretary of State John Roberts had got it right. He knew that if anything were to work, the verbs applied. An industry without a strong distribution sector would be no industry. There could be no compromise with the American distributors. There must be levies and quotas. The government must have the will to act.

His position was submitted to Cabinet. He proposed distribution legislation of sweeping importance. He was soundly rebuffed by his comrades in Cabinet. That was the end of distribution legislation in Canada. It was 1977.

The great lie
All the rest has been posturing. Every secretary of State, every minister of Communications, every single study ever commissioned by the department on distribution or the film industry has come to the same conclusion. One must control distribution if one is to create the marketplace for interesting Canadian productions which might eventually liberate the government from its role as primary banker to the industry.

Yet each minister has eventually come up against the Americans. Many have made the pilgrimage to Hollywood; all have met with the master lobbyist of the American Motion Picture Association, Jack "Boom Boom" Valentti, as Robin Williams so aptly named him. Charming, single-minded, and iron-willed, Valentti has threatened and cajoled, explaining patiently the absurdity of Canadians getting into a business which the Americans do so much better, film distribution. And each minister has capitulated, not really to the Americans but to the Canadian lack of will to seize our independence.

Were the ultimate pressures to come from without, we might better deal with them. But the final arbiters are Canadians, those who left for Hollywood long ago and those who depend on Hollywood today; they convince our
government that economic independence for the Canadian film/television industry is unnecessary and unrealistic. And this, despite the many proofs that a film properly structured, can make it at home on its own terms.

So much for the verities

It follows, as day does night, that if there is to be a healthly, independent Canadian film industry, and if businesspersons are still to make a profit, then they must deal with the market at hand.

The market, a place at which money changes hands, is the central medium to distribution and production, eventually moving a product to a consumer, if it has failed to develop in Canada, then the government has repeatedly tried to overcome its lack of will in various studies, the federal government remained committed to the fabrication of Canadian images: films and programs.

Ignoring the reality so amply documented in its various studies, the federal government has repeatedly tried to overcome its lack of will in various studies, the federal government remained committed to the fabrication of Canadian images: films and programs.

The nature of a tube is narrow, constraining, and hollow. Webster's Dictionary reminds us that it looks like a marketplace had been created through which artists could reach a public.

The tube

The nature of a tube is narrow, constraining, and hollow. Webster's Dictionary reminds us that it also refers to an underground railway.

Moving production from the domain of the theatrical feature, where we had no control over distribution, to television where, ostensibly, we exercised control, was simply a diversionary with the result that output and work opportunities are lower than they should be... Film directors in general are less concerned about the money they make than about the establishment of a distribution system that will permit their films to reach wider audiences both in Canada and abroad.

From a banned filmmaker

To the CFDC, film means "culture"... and preferably "high culture"; but failing that, the cinematic equivalent of Norman Rockwell's kitch will do. But what we must never, never have are films like La Tête à l'envers or (heavenly!) Emmanuel films with bite and verve which, whatever their artistic merit, strike a nerve among flinger's and prompt lynxes around the block. A Canadian film should be "worthy" rather than "exciting"--the kind of film that gets polite applause. No lightning and thunder please. No passion or shock. No stretching of sensibilities, no violation of penis taboos.

From a draft of a film policy

There can be no certainty at the outset, in the event of the transfer to the private sector of a substantial portion of the non-theatrical film production now carried on "in-house" by the NFB and the CBC, that the private sector will be capable of delivering a viable film industry in this country, even with the appropriate kind and measure of government support; that it will become competitive with foreign film producers and, at the same time, that it will serve the nation's interest in respect of film as a medium of cultural expression. The most one can say at this time is that conditions ought to be such as to permit it to show what it can achieve...

Making one's way

Fournier knows from experience that it takes at least six months to properly develop a film script that has any value. So it's no way to earn a living, given that "the more ambitious a script, the less its chances of being made," added to the fact that nobody is willing (or able) to invest more than $10,000 in its development. So if you do two in a year and a half, allowing for a short period of incubation, you're living off a very small salary. The only way to make it worthwhile is to also collect the director's cut--the editor's and the cameraman's and the producer's... Partly because of this, Claude Fournier is convinced Quebec's industry is doomed. He's grateful for the role he's been privileged to play—that of a skilful artisan with a good sense of humor.

A broadcast strategy?

We need an entirely new CBC which, together with a properly organized pay-TV agency, would herald a new era in Canadian broadcasting, one in which all Canadian artists would have a fuller and more complete part in the creation of our arts and entertainment. It will take an earthquake to bring about this happy situation, of course, and as we all know that earthquakes don't happen in Canada, we don't expect anything to change.

Scripts thin, scripts fat

I am sure producers and directors will scream at the suggestion they are not available and do not read scripts. And I am sure they will all protest vehemently and say they do not now, nor have they ever, thrown scripts into File 13. Similarly writers are protesting the statement there are no decent scripts in Canada. We have scripts. We just don't have any way of getting them to the people who might be able to do something with them.

Cam Hubert a.k.a. Anne Cameron, Feb. 1977

The global view

I'm not a fence-sitter. I have very definite ideas. I think that competition has got to be good for the industry. I think a maturity for our screenwriters, producers, directors will only come about if they are forced into competition with their counterparts around the world. It's the only way. Otherwise, we'll never be accepted as an industry around the world.

Len Heberman, Feb. 1977
The Quebec cinema law
Instead of heralding a fresh start for the industry, the law signaled the beginning of the end. Scandals in the government and internecine battles in the industry were the only sign of life over the last year. It took (Denis) Hardy 18 months to name five of the seven members of the institute which the law had created. It took more than 20 months before the DGCA had a permanent director. One wondered whether there was not a conscious desire to let the situation worsen in order to exercise fuller control over it later. Looking around us today, one sees that the covert forces which have long affected Canadian cinema, and especially commercial filming in Quebec, may be close to this goal.
March 1977

Haroult asks the ultimate question
In this vast country of ours, plugged in by cable to all that is most attractive in the United States; in this Canadian nation that has been nurtured on the passive virtues of respect for history and for law; in such a country, regional though our culture may be, it will never be allowed to express itself in the sphere of film and television without some federal determination to utilize the popularity of the American product to help finance our own. Do enough Canadians care about this matter to make it appear to Ottawa an important national issue?
April 1977

Ambient schizophrenia
No, for me, one of our greatest problems has been the government’s schizophrenia over whether they should be creating art and culture, or entertainment and commodity. So, as with much else in this country, we emerge with a compromise which suits none of us because it’s not decisive enough. It’s not so much a question of commercialism vs. art as getting behind whatever we’re doing 100 per cent to support it, be it quotas, levies, free enterprise or a nationalized industry.
Piers Handling, April 1977

Do it yourself at Cannes
With every other country relatively well behaved – sticking to the officially approved methods of publicity… nasty little stickers began defacing sidewalks and public monuments. Rabid kept sticking to your shoes as you crossed the street and Cathy’s Curse glared at you with her electric eyes from every second lamp post. It was a wonderful testament to the Duddy Kravitz spirit of our country that even in the midst of the most elegant cocktail party we couldn’t behave ourselves. Perhaps the David and Goliath award should go to the producers of The Rubber Gun… Armed with nothing more than a stencil and a can of spray paint, bands of renegades would steal out in the middle of the night, and while the Nat Cobens and Rossis were obliviously sleeping off their wine and quasi dinners, sidewalks, walls and streets would become living billboards for The Rubber Gun. For one member of the spray team, the big fear was not whether he was going to be caught by the police, but whether he was going to have the humiliating experience of being seen by some startled on his hands and knees painting the curb. On the second night, the worst happened; as he was defacing a fashionable crosswalk, he looked up to find himself at the feet of the original Issa of porno film fame – boots and all – looking down at him with a mixture of amazement and contempt.
June 1977

Slow, slow, some years ago I expressed optimism that the Federal government was moving toward the enunciation of a film policy, even though that movement seemed to most of us to be glacial. I am a little alarmed tonight… We must focus our energies and talents on the basic questions. The proper way to do this, in my opinion, is to identify what will best serve the public interest, and then work to ensure that this public interest is properly and effectively served.
Jack Gray, June 1977

A case of the giggles
I’m beginning to give up hope on Canadian films. Truly am. I go, I’m very responsible, I sit through garbage that I’d ordinarily not endure for 15 minutes. And all because it’s Canadian… Sometimes, when I’m really bored, or my intelligence is really being insulted, I giggle. And that was what I did in The Far Shore. I giggle because I couldn’t believe in the people. I giggled because they talked like no one I ever heard in my life, like slogans out of a badly written political pamphlet. But mostly I giggled because I hadn’t, I’d have been very angry that Joyce Wieland had taken someone like Tom Thomson and made him into a sponge for all of her fantasies about Art, and for all of her neuroses about men, and for that sappy complacent kind of Canadian nationalism that has made just about every feature film made in English Canada appear ridiculous.
Douglas Ord, June 1977

The other cheek
What Canada needs, and needs to value, are filmmakers with independent views. This can’t be legislated and if the filmmakers don’t cherish their unique perceptions, the government certainly won’t. “Art feeds on margins” wrote Jonas Mekas in 1960. The independent filmmakers in Canada should begin immediately to take a hard look at their culture, and the films they are making from it and bringing to it. They should take their art and think it through. If they
video market.

Backing this move to produce for the tube, the government facilitated production by drawing up new rules, condensing the idea that North America and not simply Canada was the appropriate site of the marketplace. A mechanism called a “co-venture” was defined since the Americans refused to sign co-production treaties to protect their partners. The Canadian government aggressively encouraged working with Americans. Telefilm sponsored meetings in California and, most recently, at the Houston convention of NATPE, extolling the virtues of working with Canadians. The Marketing Assistance Program at Telefilm created a group of Canadian sales agents who bought subsidized ads in foreign trade papers and went to MIP-TE, MIPCOM, Monte Carlo and NATPE to sell their wares.

And the Canadians found partners with whom to share Telefilm funds. Disney, Columbia Home Video, MCA and Coca Cola all became partners as the U.S. market appropriated our industry for its purposes.

Others were able to produce directly with Americans. Mattel became a sponsor, CBS and NBC commissioned work directly.

We are not able to see very far these days. Just as the marketplace has grown to encompass all of North America and production has expanded to fill the spaces available on television, our vision has collapsed, reduced by the medium on the one hand, and corrupted by the lack of government will on the other.

Inadvertently, misguidedly, or simply cynically, the federal government had so orchestrated its policies and agencies that it had delivered the Canadian industry into the hands of the American marketplace. The ultimate irony was clear when, at the close of the recent Gemini awards, the prize for the best television program went to Night Heat and its two producers, Jacobson and Grosso - Americans both - got up to thank Canada for all it had done for them.

Let's hear it for the domestic market

From the beginning of the '70s, the cry has been “domestic market.” It was simply offensive in the '70s at the Cannes festival to be considered an integral part of the United States. It is still offensive to have branch offices of the Major American distributors working in Canada while the foreign offices are, by definition, offshore. It is unacceptable to have both the major movie chains in Canada responsible to American interests.

There is only one marketplace in which Canadians can sell domestic production, and that is in the United States. There is nothing to suggest that the U.S. market is all interested in Canadian national cinema. It wants product. It is ready to package: it packages deals, and people and ideas. And it offers great financial rewards.

Our government, despite all the rhetoric to the contrary, has accepted this situation. It has promoted it. Through a lack of toughness about the Federal Investment Review Agency (remember the Orion adventure?) it opened our doors. It has failed repeatedly to take necessary steps. The classic example will always be Francis Fox’s film policy in which, after articulating the extent of the American hold over our industry, he, as a minister of the Crown, meekly asked the Majors to help us right the situation. It is offensive, now, to be reassured that our cultural sovereignty will be untouched by free-trade when the Canadian distribution industry has always been wide-open and is sorely in need of protection. And it would seem a bit of sophistry for the government to maintain publicly that it is willing to move on distribution when the Meche Lake accord diminishes its clout over the provinces, and when culture is a provincial concern at any rate.

What bright lights?

In some sectors, there is considerable enthusiasm about the productions of last year. I’ve heard the Mermaids Singing, Family Viewing, Life Classes, and Artie Shaw: Time is All You’ve Got from England Canada (to which I might add Dancing in the Dark of the previous year) are the films which, along with Quebec’s Le Don, Le Jour, Anne Treister and Le Depart de l’Empire amercain are one indication of the extent of our film talent. They are also the films the government, through Telefilm Canada, takes on the festival circuit to impress the world with our ability.

The fact is, these films come from the margins.

The English films are independent: independent of the producers who dominate the scene, independent of the packagers and promoters who tap into the big money in the real world. The French films are the product of public support through government agencies; they are not industrial products of a healthy, private industry.

Ironically, they are all author’s films, the result of one person’s vision, brought to fruition, often through sheer will.

Meanwhile, there were others. What has become of the George Mihalkas, the Rafael don’t, their independent views won’t be worth the film they’re printed on.

Jan Birnie, June 1977

On Grierson from the seminar

Ingenious? Whoever manages to speak of evil and decadent forces or even of healthy elements with so little attempt at definition . . . is guilty of the worst naiveté, however well-intentioned his humanist concern. And so he did and so he was. But with this saving grace, Grierson enunciated the primary principles of the documentary idea for good and all when, late in life, he reaffirmed that with which he began: today, he said, the materials of citizenship are different and the perspectives wider and more difficult, but we have, as ever, “the duty of exposing them and of waking the heart and will in regard to them.”

Sept. 1977

Innocents abroad

Michael Spencer of the CFDC, writer Ted Allen and producer John Kemeny are off to China in early October to try and persuade the Chinese to allow shooting on location for Kemeny’s $10 million feature on Bethune. . . Kemeny wants the government to invest $3 million in the film as a special project, and so will probably need Cabinet approval.

Oct. 1977

Low budgets

Outrageous is a low-budget feature shot in 16mm which succeeds because of the quality of its conception and execution, not because of international stars and big bucks. . . Filmmakers cannot seem to understand that an audience of non-filmmakers just does not notice the grain or the background noise of camera. I think that it is essential for Canadian filmmakers to begin to understand that technical perfection is not nearly as crucial as the quality of their ideas.

John W. Locke, Oct. 1977

Wanna have a revolution?

Courage - holding on to the importance of ourselves as individuals - becomes the key to it all. If we all give in to the financial blackmail that we’re subjected to, then those that have the power and the money automatically have all the power and dictate what happens in the world. If the world is to have any freedom at all, there has to be a limit to that in everyone’s life. If the situation becomes bad enough and people respond enough, you get a situation where you have revolution. That’s what revolutions are ... people eventually saying ‘we’ve had enough.’ Because we live in a stable country, in a rich country, most of us can spend most of our lives avoiding the question.

Robin Spy, Oct. 1977

On the front lines, in p.r.

We are now starting Angels. The Uncanny I did simultaneously. Then there was The Disappearance. Then there was a lull... So I came down actually for a holiday, but which coincided with the last four days of Sophia Loren, to wrap it up. And Denis Héroux said, “Prudence, we want to work with Claude Chabrol.” I said, “Denis, I have committed myself to Coup d’Etat.” He said, “Well, I don’t mind. You at least launch it, and I have Robert Lussier who is very good, who can take over from you when you go.” So I said, O.K. “And Denis, I adore anyway. He’s a lovely person to work for. So I did that, then I went back to Toronto and did Coup d’Etat and then came back here to do Tomorrow Never Comes. Prudence Emery, Nov. 1977

Just paradise

That is a totally unexpected and delightful surprise. The first time I realized children were enjoying the film Growing Up at Paradise was during the final editing. I expected to have to entertain this little girl while her mother watched the film. But she was mesmerized. She was giggling and laughing. And when I showed it at the Pacific Cinematheque, a couple of seven-year-olds howled with laughter throughout.

Sandy Wilson, Nov. 1977

But not in the theatres

Everybody is outbidding everybody else. It got so that one guy who wanted a picture, he even offered to give them a percentage on the candy bar. On the candy bar! The only things that’s kept the theatres going. It’s a heyday for the film companies ... They can get anything they want now for a picture. There’s a shortage of pictures.


A not so silent partner

(Garth) Drabinsky, who describes himself as “an entertainment entrepreneur with a backing in law” is unfailing in his enthusiasm for film... Drabinsky sees himself playing a major role in the development of the film industry in this
country. Though claiming not to seek the limelight like some other producers, he feels that
he possesses both the credibility and the financial clout to produce top-notch movies of
international stature here in Canada...

A sham
As everyone present at this year's Canadian Film
Awards knows, the event was an embarrassing
exercise akin to a high-school prom. As a
producer with a film in nomination, my
instinctive reaction was outrage. On the spur of
the moment, I promised myself never to allow
another one of my films to be a part of such an
amateurish sham.

I quit (almost)
I was both a jurist and a distributor of many films
tested this year ... From the point of view of
being a part of the jury, I am really distressed
that the Awards came out the way they did ... but
the organizing committee should have
realized that the bastard child of the academy
system and the jury system had to be either
without a voice (and hence no control), or
a wildly unrepresentative democratic
blunder.

A sober thought
Over the past three years, the Canada Council
has been extremely supportive of my cinematic
endeavors, and I had thought that I would make
that public in the event of our winning at the
1977 CFA. My reason was that the council offers
a much needed and little praised ‘assistance to
artists plan’ and I had hoped to support them
the way they did me. Unfortunately, not being
completely sober, and forgetful at the best of
times, I completely neglected to voice my
appreciation publicly. I would therefore like
to thank the council for their support, in this letter,
and state that I wouldn’t have made many films
without them.
Philip Borsos, Feb. 1978

That was then
Linda Beath has not always been the most
popular distributor in town. Back in 1974, when
she took over the management of New Cinema
in Toronto, the company had just produced
Cannibal Girls, gone through bankruptcy and
been sold to a group of neophyte investors, none
of whom planned to work in the company.
Linda was young, smoked cigars and said what
she wanted. 
Feb. 1978

The Cabbagetown Kid
See, I don’t think there’s anybody who’s made
movies about his family as much as I have, and
have made them really successfully. People
really like them ... Young filmmakers practically
never think of making films about the things
they know. But to each his own, you know. It’s a
competitive business. We do it our way. They
did it their way. Films get done every day.
Hundreds of them. Somebody’s doing
something right, right? Clay Boris, Feb. 1978

And the script?
TV writers aspire unashamedly to Honor,
Riches, Fame and the Love of Women. Real
Writers aspire secretly to all of these, except the
last, for which they substitute the Love of a Good
Old Lady. This does not, except in odd cases,
refer to their mother. When a Real Writer has the
Love of both a Good Old Lady and a Big Old Dog,
truly great art almost invariably results. If he has
also spent time in jail, a Real Writer is
occasionally able to transcend himself and
become a country and western singer. There is
no known instance of a TV writer becoming a
country and western singer. A Real Writer has a
Swiss Army Knife and knows the value of a
Good Sharp Stick. A TV writer wishes he had a
Swiss Bank Account and knows the value of a
Good Sharp Accountant.
Douglas Bowie, Feb. 1978

Producing for Harlequin
As for the production process itself, I found it
both frustrating and yet very similar to what I
had been doing before. Prior to my experience
with Léopard in the Snow, I had been in the
investment banking business, specializing in
mergers, acquisitions, corporate financing and,
from the structuring standpoint — the legal, and
financial dealings — a lot of it just came very
naturally.
Chris Harrup, Feb. 1978

Oh, say! Can you see?
For one reason or another, Canadians have been
pushed, or pushed themselves, out of their own
country. Nearly every report from the Aird
Commission in 1929 on down to today have
decreed the Americanization of Canada. This
process has been abetted by governments too
fearful to interfere with American control of our
cultural markets, and businessmen who see
greater profits and fewer risks acting as branch
plant agents for foreign companies instead of
taking their own initiative.
April-May 1978

The making of a star
That same strange thing happened when L’Ange
et la femme (a wonderfully puerile film by Gilles
Carle, starring Carole Laure and Lewis Furey
who scored both that film and The Babber Gun)
had its premiere. It was by invitation only,
which meant that the bulk of the audience was
French, and (Steven) Lack, who had five
minutes in the film, and the only English lines,

Zellinskas, the Clay Boris? Why are Paul
Lynch, Bill Fruet, Don Shebib and Don Owen
not able to make those films many of us thought
they would? There is a sense of waste, of
opportunities passed by.
The size of the horizon
We are not able to see very far these days. Just as
the marketplace has grown to encompass all
of North America and production has expanded to
fill the spaces available on television, our vision
has collapsed, reduced by the medium on the
one hand, and corrupted by the lack of
government will on the other.
The disarray at Telefilm Canada is more
symptom than cause of the actual malaise.
If there were any feeling of connectedness, any
sense of a common project around a common
will, the industry would not have allowed things
to deteriorate as they have.
The fact is that producers have accepted the
reduction. Many feel relieved to be able to work
in television, relieved of the burden of film and
its fastidiousness.
Never has there been so much money
circulating, nor so many people at work. Never
have there been so many foreign sales of
Canadian programs, nor so many companies
which seemed solidly structured to persevere.
Today, the provincial governments have
come to the federal to second the industry.
Alberta and Quebec have signed a co-production
agreement, while Ontario and Quebec consider
the same. B. C. finally has a film fund to create space
for indigenous filmmakers.

A Canadian firm has become the largest
exhibitor in North America while pay-television
and specialty networks multiply the outlets for
distribution of our production. Provincial
educational networks can now license programs
which qualify for Telefilm funding, bringing in
another partner.

For all the industrial progress, for all the
increased numbers of partners, the promise of a
truly national Canadian film industry has never
seemed so distant. The horizon stretches south.

That’s entertainment
How do you add up quantity and quality? How
does one measure the effectiveness of the
policies which have pertained?
What does seem clear is that the Canadian film
and television industry is working and
identifying with the American entertainment
industry, making economic strides at the
expense of a national, cultural vision. From an
economic point of view, there’s nothing
wrong with this.

The catalyst in all this activity, however, is the
$115 million available through Telefilm Canada,
an agency with a cultural mandate. That
mandate harks back to the early days when film
was a first line of defense against American

incursions into our cultural space: defense of
identity, of otherness, of sense of worth.
Over the years, Telefilm has come to accept
the primary role of the producer, reversing its
original impulses to back first-time directors,
to hold juried competitions for development,
and to consult all filmmakers through regular
committee discussions. These policies of the early
’70s have yielded to market rhetoric,
placing the merchants and packagers at the
center and marginalizing the creative forces.
Today, the main energies follow the money
to television production. Much of it, like much
of all television production, is mediocre from a
creative point of view: competent, to be sure, to
fill the airwaves and attract a public, but unable
to touch us deeply, to communicate ideas,
visions and emotions which might help
galvanize us into a passionate country.

Today, the industry is a subsidized industry.
Granted, some producers work without
government funds, but their work is too often
commissioned by others like Mattel, Hal Roach,
the American networks and pay stations.
Without the financial backing of the
government, the Canadian film and television
industry would wither once again, having used all
the funds available yet having failed to secure
its own market to support its efforts.

To conclude
The federal government is still aware of its
responsibility toward the distributors even as it
refuses to move on the issue. As if there were
any question of the dynamics in force, the
adventure of Broadcast News in Quebec (see news
story) is there to remind us that the Americans
control our market and mean to manipulate our
legislators to ensure their privileged place.

In a final effort to deal with distribution, the
department of Communications has encouraged
Telefilm to multiply its financial aid to
distributors through corporate loans, assistance
to version films, aid for launches, etc., failing
to once again confront the reality that no amount
of money thrown at this particular problem will
resolve it.

So that leaves us with a production industry,
working in the American marketplace, or
working within the confines of government
subsidy in Canada. We still have no real way to
launch a Canadian film on 100 screens across
Canada on the same day, supported by the cover
of Macleans and a $500,000 launch budget.
We still have no way of knowing what might happen
if we could vigorously bring our films to our own
market, though there’s lots of evidence that the
public is interested.

What we have lost in the time Cinema Canada
has published 130 issues is the sense of
connectedness, the sense that our vision
mattered and that we wanted to communicate it.
Some of the young filmmakers still have it, and
they are indeed our hope. But they are working
in the margins, still mounting their films as
guerrilla manoeuvres while those with easier
received unanimous and spontaneous applause after his lines. Stunned again. I looked at Jack who looked like a cynical five-year-old on Christmas morning who just got more than he had asked for.

F.M. Masse-Connelly, April-May 1978

An Oscar

My most important asset as a filmmaker is that I am a really good interviewer and am genuinely interested in people. I’m not that much of a talker myself, but I can get people talking about themselves. I ask very specific questions which a lot of people are dying to know but they’re afraid to ask because they’re too polite.

Beverly Shatner, April-May 1978

As Spencer leaves the CFDC

To Michael Spencer, we all owe a significant vote of thanks. He stood and weathered the storms, kept the doors open and the dialogues possible, allowed the difficult films to be made and pushed that they be seen. Now, it’s his turn to rest up. Ninety per cent of his life has been behind closed doors. He should let us in on his life as a magazine editor for Budge Crawley, as head of security at the Film Board, as ongoing dupe to Secretaries of State. He’s probably too discreet to tell what happened when Bob Roberts went into Cabinet with a lion of a film policy and emerged with kitty litter. But he has a yarn to tell. And we’re all interested.

A gracious man, he has served us all honorably.

Peter Pearson, April-May 1978

The elusive policy

When it came to the central problem of foreign control of the educational and theatrical markets, the policy was a dead loss. The core of fiscal measures had been stripped out and the problem had been thrown back on the provinces... Roberts repeated the diagnosis of the ailment offered in his November policy: it was the remedy which had changed: “It is not acceptable that the present system works so overwhelmingly to present foreign films and so little to develop a market for Canadian material... I expect them (distributors) to find methods... to provide a better distribution of Canadian films... I intend to renegotiate an improved voluntary quota to ensure that Canadian films have better access to our cinemas.”

Sandra Gathercole, June 1978

Back to the barricades

Canadians are so themselves that they don’t get overwhelmed by working with big people, and the wonderful thing is they’re very friendly and very first-name basis – so you get these big stars coming to Canada – they’re in your hands because without you they don’t know where to go or what to do. You’ve got to make sure they’re happy. Marilyn Keach wanted to go for secondhand clothes, Marissa Pavan wanted a fur coat, Karen Black wanted 20 pillows for her baby, Jean-Pierre Aumont was interested evenings.

Douglas Leopold, Oct. 1978

A shock house?

“The CBC was licensed by the Canadian public to provide broadcasting services, but “it was never given a mandate to produce all the programs it does,” and, “The CBC thinks it needs to supply its own facilities; it has no mandate for that either!” He (Richard Nielsen) cites the astounding figure of 140 producers on staff at CBC Toronto. "What publishing house would put novelists on staff? A shock house!" He adds, “Such a sinecure is a bad environment for producers and expensive to the taxpayer because of the bureaucracy.”

Oct. 1978

A tale of two cities

The Festival of Festivals knew how to sell its product. And the Ontario Censor Board gave it just the send-off every festival organizer dreams of by cutting the first film. The overflow audience for In the Pride of Older Woman, and the news which resulted from the screening scene, made participating in the festival a social must for many... In Montreal, the receptions were sumptuous. Iran, which didn’t have a film in the festival, but which had many domestic problems, threw a feast at its Expo pavilion, and the French outdid themselves at a sit-down lunch high in the Chateau Champlain. In context, the Indians, whose reception would rate high above CH Investments’ cocktail in absolute terms, didn’t come off so well in Montreal.

Nov.-Dec. 1978

Women working

More and more feminist filmmakers are exploring ways of distributing their low-budget films on alternative circuits. This is much easier in the U.S. ... In France ... than in Canada where a much more widely scattered population and a colored distribution system are double handicaps for alternative filmmakers.

Nov.-Dec. 1978

Highballin’ along

When asked how hard it was to put a feature together in Canada at this time, (Jon) Slaw was straightforward in pinning down what he felt to be the weak spot in the industry. “It’s no problem... that’s the problem. The Security Commission is legitimizing business transactions that in other businesses would be called swindles. We need standards and guidelines. Right now anyone can take a script, engage a name actor– usually the only way to get a low budget to go to a lawyer to put in a prospectus. They don’t go to a studio or a network for backing because the script and the budget would be scrutinized for their level of authenticity and professional standard.

Feb. 1979

The end of the Toronto Co-op

My feeling is that the Co-op ran on people. If they were there, the place worked. There were conflicts and friction, but things happened. When the Co-op became more commercial and professional, less “Mickey Mouse”, when it became a bit like a small Film House, it lost the energy it used to have.

Patrick Lee, Feb. 1977

Closing the door

It embarked an effort to establish revenue-generating programs. These new programs significantly changed its character. Equipment that could not be paid for from rentals at rates “experimental” filmmakers could afford was purchased. In order to meet the costs of this equipment, the Co-op had to make great efforts to attract commercial filmmakers. As a result, the nature of the Co-op changed. It became more important for small businesses than a collective of filmmakers.

Bruce Elder, Feb. 1979

The making of Bear Island

It was the second time we did the avalanche and the sun was shining, but there was a pretty wicked wind. After checking another camera position ... I pulled out my thermometer, held it away from the wind – 25 degrees below; tuned it into the wind – 35 degrees below. Dale looked at me, “Cold, eh?” What else to say? Suddenly, he started to jump from one foot to the other, chanting “Ka-o-pee-tate” as he did so. So there was Sandy, Dale and myself, thawing our feet and arms yelling “Ka-o-pee-tate” in unison.

Don Sharp, the director ... calls over on his walkie-talkie. We’re about ready, what’s going on over there? I replied, “Just keeping warm,