

while gazing with horror on the portion of his anatomy under which the breeding parasites are visibly squirming, *raise up* his body with a jerk in order to prove he wasn't using the old false-chest head-through-a-hole-in-the-bed gimmick. Keep it in mind when you see the film and it may just help you get by a bad part.

But I'm not going to tell anymore about the bugs, or the people, or the amazing and ghastly things that happen. This is a film for drive-ins, for the young, for the brave, for the silly people who like movies that are in bad taste and don't care what Delaney thinks.

This is popcorn, not fruitcake, and no one ever said it was good for you. So go, but be warned, you may have quite a time.

Natalie Edwards

### John Trent's

## It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time

A film by: John Trent. **Screenplay:** Claude Harz. **Cinematography:** Harry Makin. **Music:** William McCauley. **Sound:** Russ Heise. **Editing:** Tony Lower. **Performers:** Anthony Newley, Stefanie Powers, Isaac Hayes, Lloyd Bochner and Yvonne De Carlo. **Producer:** David Perlmutter. **Produced in 1975** by Quadrant Films Ltd. **Colour:** 35mm. **Running time:** 97 minutes. **Distribution in Canada:** Ambassador Films.

When you combine backing from David Perlmutter with Quadrant Productions and director John Trent it means a determined attempt is being made to make money with a movie. And the result in this case is a product that is aimed exclusively at the pocket, by way of the guffaw. A good laugh loosens people up; their laughter rings the bells of a thousand cash registers.

But what makes people laugh? It's always been hard to know in Canada. Is it the dirty snigger of the English low comedy, or the falling object joy of the perpetually naughty-child-teasing-Mom-ism of the States?

Winks and pokes, or crashes and chaos?

Or do we have a style all our own? Looking back over what could rather kindly be called the Canadian comedies of the recent past, we see that the embarrassed shudder with which we greet their memory is almost the best indication of their type. Embarrassment, mortification and mild dirt, mixed with meagre chaos, have in the end created a recipe that cannot fail (and has not so far) to produce a mediocre, rather mirthless comedy. **Another Smith for Paradise? The Rainbow Boys? Only God Knows? Even Why Rock the Boat?**, a rather unusually successful chuckle-headed film, finds the mockery of man of modest amusement only.

In **It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time** a desperate attempt has been made to avoid the merriment of mutter and blush, and create hearty ho-ho's out of a lovely rich olde English mixture of bathroom, bowel and bawd, touched up with some noticeably American types and Canadian comment.

So we have Anthony Newley being relentlessly exuberant and as full of fun as a drunken monkey in a banana boat, giving his all in the buff, or daringly clothed in a handclasp; Lloyd Bochner mortified and terrified by skunks and bears; Moya Fenwick stupefied and ridiculed as a semi-permanently stoned society lady; Stefanie Powers ever-fresh and sexy and manipulative; Isaac Hayes, big and black and bucking a blonde babe (didja see *that!*); and finally Yvonne de Carlo foolish and determined, and more frantic than funny, as an absurd representative of the type of citizen that fights 'progress' when it involves moving her out of her comfortable house.

It's enough to make you cheer on the developers and join the reactionaries.

If you get the impression the film is shallow, superficial, and based on more clichés than there are mosquitos on a June night - you might be right.

But is it *funny*?

Well, that depends on the audience. And what makes the Canadian audience not only laugh, but *pay* to laugh, has yet to be discovered. We can eliminate high comedy, comedy of manners, and much of class comedy and really crude comedy. But for this adolescent mixture of high-jinks, obvious targets, various goings-on that might be considered by rather sedate people as zany or outrageous, a spot of flesh, a hint of sex, a suggestion



It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time

of action, and a lot of general Poking of Fun, well—it remains to be seen.

Technically the film moves well enough, and though the editing is confined to the basic now-a-little-of-this and now-a-little-of-that technique, still it's reasonably brisk and the complicated plot fairly clear. And the cast handles their material professionally. It's also Canadian in the arithmetical sense that one Eng. and one Am. equal one Can.

Actually some may recall the days when Lloyd Bochner was frequently seen on CBC TV, and there may even be those who know that Yvonne de Carlo has some original claim to Canada, having once been born here, but generally one is not aware of a lot of Canadian talent in the film until one examines the roles of the policemen and garbagemen more closely. Is this a subtle comment on Canadian content do you suppose?

At any rate it is hard to think of the film as a Canadian Comedy, even if one knew what one was talking about. Despite a number of Canadian references, some Toronto take-offs, and some scenery that could well be Canadian, the general flavour of the film is so mixed between mid-Atlantic and borderline north American, that all it does successfully is fall between this and that, being neither goose nor gander, but rather more like a mating between Mary Tyler Moore and the Carry On gang.

And if this causes our fellow nationals from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island to hold their sides and groan for a break from the merciless joy of hilarity, we may be sorry we

ever discovered what it is that makes Canadians laugh.

Natalie Edwards

## The Man Who Skied Down Everest

**Screenplay:** Judith Crawley based on the diary of Yuichiro Miura. **Cinematography:** Mitsuji Kanau. **Music:** Lawrence Crosley. Director and editor of sound effects: Bruce Nyznik. **Editing:** Bob Cooper and Millie Moore. **Performers:** Members of the Japanese Everest Skiing Expedition, 1970. **Producer:** F.R. Crawley. **Produced in 1975 by** Crawley Films Limited in collaboration with Ishihara International Productions (Tokyo). **Colour:** 35mm. **Running time:** 88 minutes. **Distribution in Canada:** Crawley Films.

Crawley Films is following the success of its documentary feature **Janis** with **The Man Who Skied Down Everest**. The new film, less than ninety minutes long, was given a prestigious Toronto opening in September at the University, the largest cinema in the country. Although this film probably has a more limited appeal than the previous Crawley movie on the raunchy blues singer, it will be interesting to observe how this Japanese-made, Canadian-produced film fares in North America, for it's an odd little picture which builds slowly to a climax that does not serve to justify the whole enterprise and which leaves one skeptical.

Yuichiro Miura is an ace Japanese skier who has set world speed records and the film is a record of his 1970 trek through the imposing Himalayas to an icy wall 26,000 feet high, just below the summit of Mt. Everest. Needless to say, that slope is the highest ski run in the world and Miura has the distinction of taking on a patch of ice that had never been skied before and will certainly remain untouched for a very long time to come.

Miura, the Japanese crew and four-hundred natives, set off from the Nepalese capital for Everest, winding through the rocky mountain passes. The narration in the film, written by Judith Crawley and based upon the lengthy diary Miura kept on his adventure, chronicles his feelings and thoughts and it is all beautifully but

improbably spoken by Douglas Rain. The skier is described as a poet and philosopher as well as an athlete and the film is over-burdened with his musings and self-revelations.

The expedition snakes toward Everest. The going is slow and treacherous, there's a huge, menacing ice fall that must be traversed and it takes the team 40 days to move three miles. Miura reflects on the Sherpas, whose labours make the venture possible. "I wonder what will be the future of these tribesmen who have

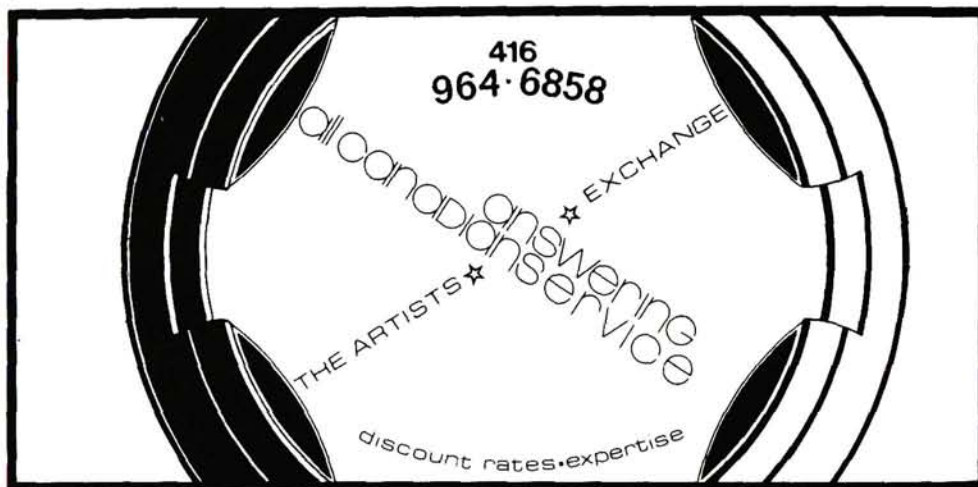
lived here for centuries," he says, "almost independent of the rest of the world. I hope their land will remain unspoiled by the ways of life we call progress." The Japanese show the Sherpas videotapes of Bonanza.

A sudden cave-in on the ice fall claims the lives of six Sherpas. The bodies are hauled down to camp and the party stands around them. Some want to turn back but the Japanese insist on continuing. "Six lives lost," Miura says, "in order to achieve a great thing."

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