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**Good faith  
takes place of  
language law**

MONTREAL - Distributors of English-language films in Quebec are expected to act in good faith and comply with the spirit of the current cinema law while the implementation of the controversial Bill 59, Article 83, revising the Quebec Cinema Act, is put on hold until October.

Originally expected by mid-summer, the amended version of Article 83 would have limited to a single copy the number of prints to an English-language film that can be exhibited in Quebec unless French-language versions are exhibited simultaneously.

Bill 59 was passed in Quebec's National Assembly early in December, thereby updating what was known as the Quebec Cinema Act: Bill 109.

However, ongoing talks between Cultural Affairs minister Lise Bacon and representatives of the film industry in Quebec have delayed the amendment of a key clause - Article 83 which stipulates the one-copy rule.

Luc Bertrand, assistant to Bacon, told *Cinema Canada* that whether the law is enforced in October or whether a code of ethics is implemented in its place as suggested by industry representatives, will be determined by "how the industry behaves during the next five months."

"We cannot say what the measure will be," says Bertrand who discredits any suggestion that this five-month hiatus is the result of pressures brought to bear by the U.S. major studios.

"Certainly not," says Bertrand. "Everyone we have talked to has said that they agree to the main objective to bring more French more rapidly to the screen."

Bacon has warned the industry that the amended Article 83 remains on the books and can be enforced earlier than October if the distributors don't comply with the intent and spirit of the law and make available sooner an increased number of films that French-speaking Quebec citizens can see in their own language.

Indeed, prior to Bill 59, Article 83, distributors were showing several English-language prints without any intention of showing a French-language version at the end of a prescribed 60-day period, despite the availability of the dubbed or subtitled version. There was no limit in the number of English-language prints in circulation.

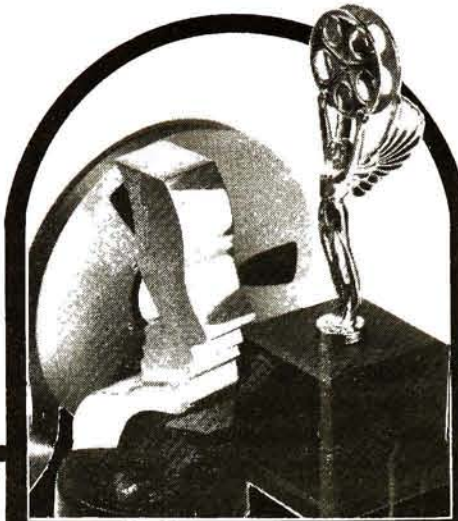
Although there has been widespread approval of the amended Article 83, several sectors of the industry have suggested further revisions while those who oppose the Bill are adamantly opposed.

Harold Greenberg, chairman of Astral Bellevue Pathé Inc. which handles film

distribution for 20th Century Fox in Canada through Cineplex Odeon, has gone on record as saying that Article 83 will result in "less films, not more films" for the French-speaking public. Greenberg was unavailable for comment at press time.

The greatest concern among the dissenting voices on record including Cinémas Famous Players and the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association is that the major distributors are not going to delay the release of films in New York, Los Angeles or the rest of Canada to await dubbing in Quebec.

Carole Boudreault, executive in charge of



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operations at Cinémas Famous Players, told *Cinema Canada* recently that the theatre circuit is willing to comply with the spirit and intent of the law but that in the final analysis what goes on the screen is left up to the distributors. "If they bring us the French-language version, it goes on the screen," says Boudreault.

The CMPDA, representing the U.S. major studios in Canada has added to the controversy by stating that only 50 per cent of all major titles released in any given year are judged to be sufficiently viable for distribution in the French-language markets of the world.

The Association of Cinema Owners in

Quebec, with over 200 screens across the province, represents a moderate voice in the controversy recommending that Article 83 be "more flexible" by allowing a limit of five to six English-language films for exhibition prior to the release of dubbed versions where a dubbing commitment has been given by the distributor. Where a film does not prove to popular, three undubbed prints should be permissible for 30 days.

Throughout the controversy, the Quebec government has emphasised the importance of a public hearing before Bill 59, Article 83 is enforced.