

Trade News

Crawleys faces difficult times

OTTAWA – Financial difficulties are forcing Crawleys Group Inc. of Ottawa to drastically cut staff and restructure the entire organization. Bill Stevens, chief executive officer and co-owner of the holding company, says the company has suffered badly since an \$8 million international co-production deal fell apart last year.

"It's the saga of the Canadian production that went down the toilet," Stevens told *Cinema Canada*. More than 100 employees have been laid off, reducing the staff at Crawleys to seven. The company's general manager, Derek Fower, was laid off February 3rd. "Everyone is being hurt in this situation," Stevens said. "The company is having trouble meeting its payroll."

The problem started in 1987 when the Montreal-based Via Le Monde signed a co-production deal with Belkopi of France to produce 26 half-hours of the animated series, *Ys le magnifique*. Via Le Monde "felt secure in the deal", said producer Catherine Viau. They had licensing commitments from Radio Canada and the Global Network and the support of Telefilm. In France, the state broadcaster Antenne, had licensed the series.

Belkopi was to do 60 per cent of the work, while the other 40 was to be done in Canada. Via Le Monde was experienced in co-production deals but not in animation. They turned to Crawleys Animation. "Crawleys were the Koreans on the job," Stevens said. "We were not part of the original deal, but we acted as a subcontractor for Via Le Monde." The contract was worth \$2.7 million.

On the strength of the contract, Crawleys borrowed a million dollars from Telefilm and work began. Then, with 10 half-hours almost complete, the deal began to fall apart. Belkopi, one of the oldest animation studios in France, was bought out by Bayard, a French media giant.

Bayard took a hard look at the company and found it badly managed. According to Viau, there was about "\$8-\$12 million missing to finalize the work on the series." At the end of 1987 Bayard wrote off Belkopi as a loss and put the company into receivership, cancelling all its contracts. Via Le Monde spent most of 1988 trying to put the deal back together again. It finally found a Japanese partner but the company holding the rights didn't want it produced outside of France. Viau met with the French ministry responsible, but they only "kept us waiting." The whole deal turned into "a disaster", she said.

"With about half the series left to do, Via Le Monde terminated the contract," Stevens said. "At that point we fell into default with Telefilm. We were not in a position to pay them back. Crawleys was completely hung out to dry through circumstances. We couldn't get new projects going and we couldn't continue with other projects."

"For a long time it was a stalemate. Telefilm didn't have the information. Maybe we didn't approach them right, I don't know. It was just sitting there. We've had to renegotiate projects. We have lost rights. We have lost fees. Over the last few weeks Telefilm is just beginning to see this snowball rolling and have stepped in. A little late to save some things, but not too late to save others."

Stevens plans to sell the old Crawleys studios and move to a new location. He wants to rebuild along more conventional lines. "We're sort of built like the old studios. We have a lab, a sound mixing studio, a camera department etc. When I took over I should have cleaned house, got rid of all the extra stuff, but I thought it was nice to have it all at my fingertips. But we're going to be more realistic now and just be your basic producers."

Stevens and partner Chislain Bolduc bought the company from its founder, the legendary Frank "Budge" Crawley in 1982. Previously Stevens had acquired Atkinson Film Arts which is now the animation arm of the Crawleys Group. The other divisions include Crawleys R and D, distributor Crawleys International and the production company Crawley Films.

Ironically, this is the 50th anniversary of the founding of Crawley Films by Budge in 1939.

Dragon burns box office records

MONTREAL – Box office records in Quebec were broken during the weekend of Feb. 17 to 19 by Yves Simoneau's latest film *Dans le ventre du dragon* (*In the Belly of the Dragon*).

This comedy feature starring several of Quebec's best known actors drew \$82,778 on four Montreal screens during its first weekend.

"This is unheard of," says Irene Loewy of Alliance/Vivafilm, the film distributor.

"It is an absolute all-time record for any film ever shown in Quebec."

Loewy attributes the initial success of the film to advertising, star-power and the directing talent of Simoneau.

"He is able to combine comedy and science fiction and make it work," says Loewy.

Box office at four theatres after three days are as follows: Berri (\$34,913), Laval (\$18,530), Brossard (\$19,481) Paradis (\$9,854).

The stars of *Dans le ventre du dragon* are Rémy Girard, Michel Côté, David Lahaye, Marie Tifo, Pierre Curzi, Monique Mercure, Andrée Lachapelle and Jean-Louis Millette.

Loewy expects that the film will premier in English at the Toronto Festival of Festivals in September.

Stevens is frustrated and very upset about what has happened to the once proud Canadian independent. "When I took over the company it was in bad shape," he says, "and I worked hard to build it back up. Now this happens. I guess I'll have to work hard again. A friend in the government told me recently, "Gee, it must be hard running a national trust without government funding." We are not bankrupt or insolvent. We just have one huge, huge cash flow problem."

Ontario commits \$34.3 million to film production

TORONTO – In an effort to bolster Ontario's billion-dollar film industry, Ontario Minister of Culture and Communications Lily Oddie Munro announced \$34.3 million in new money for film production in Toronto on February 12.

The move is seen by some as way of prodding the federal government to do something affirmative for the film industry in the upcoming federal budget. Federal Communications Minister Marcel Masse was in Toronto making an informal round of visits to the arts community at the same time as the announcement. Ms. Munro told a hastily called gathering of reporters and industry representatives, "We hope the federal government will develop a meaningful national approach that will make provincial programs unnecessary."

A cash infusion of \$30.8 million is for the creation of an Ontario Film Investment Program (OFIP). It will provide investors with a rebate of up to 20 per cent on their investments in Ontario-based productions. The Ontario industry has been increasingly nervous about the potential drainage in production dollars to Quebec, where investors receive a 166 per cent tax break when investing in Quebec films.

Munro said, "Our new program is essential to counter the federal government's decision to significantly reduce the tax incentive to invest in Canadian films. Individuals within the film industry and industry associations tell us that film production in this province could well fall by half if nothing is done. Our government will not let this happen."

The OFIP is designed as a two-year program which the ministry expects to generate a minimum of \$75 million in private sector investments in the first year and roughly \$120 million in total film production. It will have a strict set of eligibility criteria to make the program accessible to productions with the greatest degree of Canadian content while at the same time ensuring that the greatest percentage of production and distribution dollars remains in

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Masse: great expectations

MONTREAL – The appointment of Marcel Masse as federal minister of Communications is good news for the Canadian film and television industry. Insiders agree that Masse showed strong nationalistic tendencies when he served as minister between 1984 and 1985, having initiated several studies including a reappraisal of the Broadcast Act.

Indications are, they say, that the government will stand behind a strong minister. Masse will chair the new Committee on Cultural Affairs and National Identity.

Louise Baillargeon, executive director of the Association des producteurs de films et de vidéo du Québec, characterizes Masse as "a fighter". The Quebec producers' association stands firmly behind the appointment, says Baillargeon.

"We are very happy to see him back in this portfolio," she says.

"He has done a lot for the industry in the past, he has our best interests at heart and you can be sure that he is strong enough to be heard by the rest of the cabinet. As a Quebec minister he is aware of the special problems that the (French-language) industry faces including a limited market situation."

PETER MORTIMER, ACFIP

"I think it's great. He did prove himself to be a really enthusiastic supporter, very concerned with the difficulties of the film industry, as well as the cultural aspects. I think he's a person with considerable passion and energy and certainly previously demonstrated a vision for the direction which the industry should go. It's a changed environment. There are obviously going to be some restrictions in what he might feel to do because of the free trade agreement. He is very committed to the Roth-Raymond Task Force report. Basically, Flora worked away at a number of initiatives that he started. The wheel has turned a full circle. It's reasonable to assume that he might pick up his old agenda where he left off. He's going to be faced with the problems of the results of his cutbacks to the CBC. In a sense he is going to have a clearer playing field than he had before with Juneau stepping down. I think financially the CBC is overall worse off than it was before."

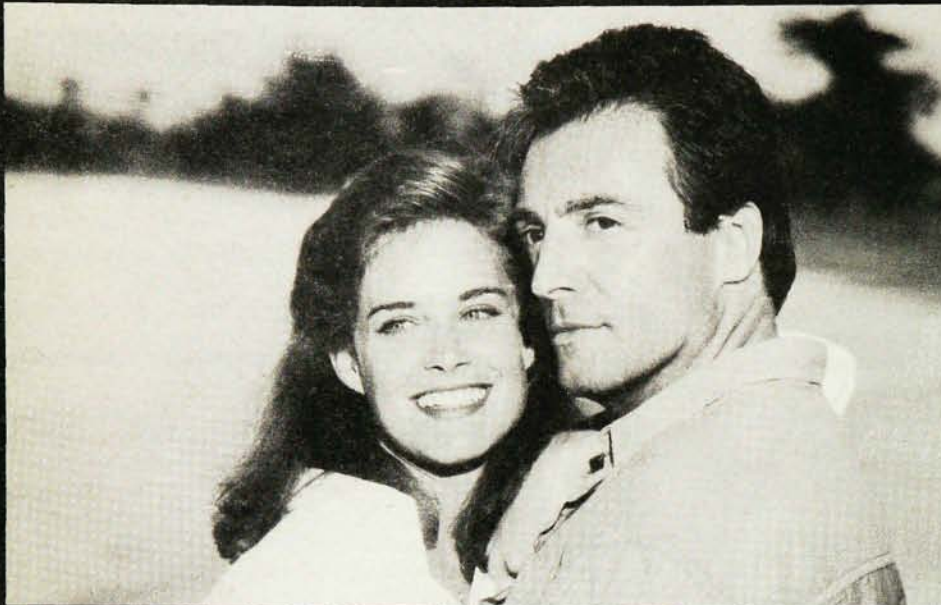
MICHAEL HIND-SMITH, Canadian Cable Association.

"We're pleased. With his responsibilities for culture and national identity, we hope that he would remember that many of these businesses in which we all are, are still businesses and they won't work unless they remain businesses. But certainly we welcome his appointment."

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Ontario. The cash will be rebated after the production has been completed and audited.

The rebate, a percentage of the investment, will be determined on the basis of the number of Canadian personnel in key creative and artistic positions, much like the current criteria set by the federal certification office. The OFIP will be available only to Ontario investors in certified Canadian films produced by Ontario production companies. The program will be administered by the OFDC.

A further \$2 million will be going to the OFDC

to increase its investment in television, primarily to performance arts and multicultural production. A \$1.5 million non-theatrical film fund was also announced, which will be administered by the ministry.

Jonathan Barker, the OFDC's executive co-ordinator of legal and business affairs, told *Cinema Canada*, "The key to the administering of the OFIP will be drafting of the guidelines which will take place over the course of the next month in consultation with the industry. We're aiming for a late April date before we can have the doors open."

David Silcox, deputy minister for the MCC, said that the operational plan for the OFIP will determine a film policy for the province. "I think it's fair to say that our programs reflect what is necessary and are part of a larger film policy for Ontario. The pieces are coming together with the OFDC, the Centre for Advanced Film Studies and now this."

It was suggested at the press conference that a "co-production treaty" with Quebec might be possible. "There is no sense pressing for a federal policy without an Ontario policy, said Wayne Clarkson, OFDC chairman.

Maclean Hunter sells off Selkirk after buyout

TORONTO - Maclean Hunter Ltd. (MHL) took barely six weeks to sell off those parts of Selkirk Communications Ltd. it doesn't want or were in conflict with existing MHL holdings. MHL bought Selkirk November 21, 1988 for a reported \$594 million, making it the largest takeover play in Canadian broadcasting history.

Just prior to Christmas MHL sold to Vancouver-based Western International Communications Ltd. (WIC) a 41 per cent interest in British Columbia Broadcasting Co. Ltd., a 50 per cent interest in Okanagan Valley Television Co. Ltd., CFAC-TV in Calgary and CFAC-TV7 in Lethbridge. Included in the deal as well were radio stations CJCA-AM and CIRK-FM in Edmonton. As a result WIC now owns 100 per cent of CTV affiliates CHAN-TV in Vancouver and CHEK-TV in Victoria and 100 per cent of the CBC affiliate CHBC-TV in Kelowna, B.C. WIC's purchase price was \$217.5 million.

Under an agreement reached in early January, MHL will sell to Rogers Broadcasting Ltd. (RBL), a subsidiary of Rogers Communications Inc., a further 11 radio stations previously owned by Selkirk. These include CJVI-AM in Victoria, CKWX-AM and CKKSFM in Vancouver and CJIB-AM in Vernon, B.C. In Alberta the stations are CFAC-AM in Calgary, CJOC-AM and CILA-FM in Lethbridge, CJPR-AM in Blairmore, CJEV-AM in Elkford, CFHC-AM in Canmore and Banff, and CFGP-AM in Grande Prairie. This purchase by communications giant Ted Rogers is in line with his stated corporate goal of moving away from cable and into the telecommunications and broadcasting industry. Last year he sold his U.S. cable operations to the Texas-based Houston Industries Inc. for \$1.26 billion (U.S.). RBL paid \$24.5 million cash for the 11 MHL stations.

In Ontario, Maclean Hunter has said they will sell Selkirk's Hamilton station, the longtime independent CHCH-TV, to The Blackburn Group Inc. of London Ontario for \$68.5 million. Blackburn currently owns the newly independent CFPL-TV in London. All this activity leaves MHL with the key parts of Selkirk that it wants to keep: two cable operations with a total of 200,000 subscribers in Ottawa and Florida, and the CFNY-FM radio station in Brampton, just outside of Toronto. CRTC approval of all this corporate juggling is still pending.

TORONTO - CBC and NABET have averted a strike by 2,100 technicians after reaching an agreement that is satisfactory to both parties after a long round of negotiations. The main issue in the dispute was money.

OFFPA speaks out

OTTAWA – The Ottawa Feature Film Producers' Association (OFFPA) is a new organization looking for a place on the regional map of Canadian film culture. Ramona Macdonald formed the association about a year ago with Hull producer Normand Allard of Talisman Films and filmmakers Frank Cole (*A Life*) and Peter Evanchuck (*Cowboyz*). She wanted to address what she perceived as the problems of the Ottawa-Hull being a "disadvantaged region" in terms of feature film production.

"Ottawa right now is just like Halifax was 10 years ago," says Macdonald. "There is a lot of vitality and co-operation, but people don't know about us yet." The National Film Board only operates a distribution office in the region, and since Algonquin College closed down its film program in 1984, there is a scarcity of production equipment. When Macdonald first came to Ottawa from Halifax she was told that the last editing bins in the city were being used as flower-pots.

Macdonald points to Telefilm's policy of funding regional centres of excellence as being part of the problem. "I don't think Telefilm is personally against us. But we are under extreme pressure to team up with outfits in other regions. I don't think Telefilm is anxious to see the startup of another regional centre. Yet none of us has the time or money to constantly travel to Toronto or Montreal."

The group is active, and according to Macdonald, "we're into each other's pockets all over the place." Evanchuck is completing the editing of his second feature, *Cowboyz*, at Macdonald's Dooomsday Studios while Macdonald is putting together a deal on *Silver Water, Golden Sand*, a \$3-million feature she has written. Allard has been developing *McGregor Queen*, also a \$3 million feature, although a recent "thumbs down" from Telefilm has put the project in doubt, and Frank Cole is preparing to return to the Sahara to shoot his second feature-length documentary, *Death's Death*.

"One of our objectives is to get the National Film board to recognize that there is film being made in Ottawa, and like Halifax, it should be considered a region of some importance," Evanchuck told *Cinema Canada*. "The NFB used to have production offices for French and English. The last to leave was the ONF and when they left there was nothing."

Evanchuck used to teach film production at Algonquin until it closed its doors to film and before that he was the editor and publisher of *Motion* magazine. His first feature *Platinum* was screened at the 1987 Montreal World Film Festival and picked up by German, Swedish and Australian distributors, but it still hasn't been released in Canada. Cinephile has picked up the rights to *Cowboyz*, a docudrama about a homeless street musician in Ottawa. The film cost \$300,000

to produce and Evanchuck still needs a further \$20,000 to compete the post-production. The Canada Council recently turned down his request.

Frank Cole agrees that Ottawa is a more difficult part of Canada to make films because "there are no labs here and no equipment suppliers which means we have to go through Toronto or Montreal." However, he doesn't mind this because he's happy to make his films in Ottawa and the Sahara Desert. "I decided in 1981 that I wanted to do the first east-west crossing of the Sahara by camel. *A Life* was a small part of that goal." *Death's Death* will record the actual trip, 4,000 miles over 10 months, which Cole expects to begin later this year, starting at Port Sudan, Sudan.

Normand Allard was in the telecommunications business until four years ago when he started his own film production company. He has developed a number of projects including the *McGregor Queen* which Cineplex has agreed to release when complete. However, Allard claims that "Telefilm has refused to look at the project." He feels trapped in a no-man's land of Quebec-Ontario regional politics. "The Quebec government doesn't want to have anything to do with me because I produce in English and they believe the Hull area is part of Ottawa. And if I go to Toronto, they say I'm from Quebec."

Allard feels the OFFPA will give a certain recognition to the Ottawa filmmaker/producer and make people aware "that not only Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver produces movies." Ramona Macdonald is optimistic about raising the association's profile nationally. "We're all very much independent filmmakers. When the industry is young like this, it's very exciting. I think there will be a lot of production coming out of here just like there is in Halifax. I think Ottawa will be the next hotbed of film."

Lance et compte producer Claude Héroux and Radio-Canada part ways

MONTREAL – Communications Claude Héroux Inc., producer of the highly successful hockey/drama series *Lance et Compte* has dropped Radio-Canada (CBC) for the private broadcaster Télé-Métropole.

At a press conference in early February Héroux announced that he would produce 6x90 minute *Lance et Compte* specials with TM beginning this summer.

Héroux said that this switch of allegiance after three seasons is the result of protracted negotiations with Radio-Canada and insufficient development funding.

Radio-Canada served notice on Héroux that the main characters of the popular series, who will each be featured in one of the six programs, are the property of Radio-Canada.

However, at press time Jocelyne Doris, spokesperson for Communications Claude Héroux Inc., told *Cinema Canada* that there is no litigation and that Héroux and Radio-Canada are discussing their differences.

The fourth season of *Lance et Compte* programs will be directed by Richard Martin who is currently directing *La Misère des Riches* for Héroux produced in association with TM. This eight-hour mini series is expected to be completed in April.

Doris said Héroux is continuing to develop a mini-series based on the book by Alexander Solzhenitsyn called *The First Circle* in association with Radio-Canada.

CBC's Canadianization plans in "serious jeopardy"

TORONTO – Financial constraints are threatening CBC's ongoing plans to replace foreign, mainly American, programming with Canadian shows. "With the financial problems we are facing, it could seriously jeopardize Canadianization plans," Richard Chambers, director of Public Relations for the CBC told *Cinema Canada*. "We are doing our budget planning for 1989-90 and CBC's financial situation is not as healthy as we would like."

The CBC is facing a \$136.9 million deficit in its upcoming budget and the planning and allocations committee has proposed that \$17.5 million earmarked by former Communications Minister Flora Macdonald for Canadian program be diverted "to protect the current level of service from further erosion."

Last year Macdonald pledged extra money every year specifically to help the corporation's English and French networks increase Canadian content in their schedules to 95 per cent over the next five years. In the first year, starting April 1, English CBC-TV is to get \$10 million and Radio Canada, \$7.5 million.

Chambers said that "no decisions have been taken yet on CBC's total budget for 1989-90. How much is going to be allocated internally, how much is going to English television, English

radio, French television etc. We're still working on that."

The Canadianization plans are for 95 per cent by 1994 in prime-time English television and 90 per cent in the overall schedule. However, a new telecommunications tax which comes into effect in the near future could very well absorb any new funds. And because Ottawa has cut back on the CCA, the CBC finds itself, like Telefilm, faced with independent producers with projects and no matching private investment.

Chambers was noncommittal about these problems. "We're still in the planning stages," he said. "We're still forecasting advertising revenue for '89-90. Advertising revenue is playing a very significant role in CBC's financial picture. We have to increase the ratio of advertising revenue to government appropriation, but obviously that revenue picture is very important to us in making any sort of projection. It's just too early to tell how the pie is going to be divided."

Sources say CBC's board of governors has rejected any plans to cut back on the Canadianization priorities and the issue will be dealt with again at a March board meeting.

Praise for Bureau

OTTAWA – No approximate date has been set for the appointment of a successor to André Bureau.

Giving family reasons, Bureau recently announced his resignation as chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, effective March 1. He also stated that it was prudent to resign before the reintroduction of the Broadcasting Act and let a new chairman handle that dossier from its inception. He was serving a seven-year term until Nov. 1990.

Marcel Masse, Minister of Communications, recently thanked Bureau for his contribution as head of the regulatory agency for five years.

"Under Mr. Bureau's tenure, the commission has made fundamental and often difficult decisions which will affect our telephone rates and what we hear and see on television and radio for years to come," said Masse.

During Bureau's term, the CRTC revised its broadcasting regulations and was instrumental in the regulation of pay television, Canadian content, and extension of services.

Michael McCabe, president of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, called Bureau "a man of great vision and integrity."

"The system he has shaped over the past five years gives consumers more programming variety than any other country in the world. He has managed to keep it strongly Canadian," said McCabe.

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GARRY NEIL,
ACTRA

"I guess on the positive side, there is the fact that he has already gone through the initiation period. It often takes a new minister a while to understand all of the ramifications, all the basic issues. He's a Francophone minister and one of the problems the first time around with Mr. Masse had been that while he was very active in

the Quebec cultural scene, he was not familiar with the very different needs of the English cultural community. He's also been sensitized about the differences between English Canadian culture and French Canadian culture. I'm sure our Quebec colleagues have the same problem when Anglophone ministers are appointed, about that feeling that they don't understand the Francophone culture in the country. On the other side, the first time around, he didn't really do much. People tend to forget that all he did was set into motion all the various task forces, studies, committees and examinations of issues,

and was not really around when those reported. So we don't know if he will follow through; he doesn't yet have a track record in the industry. He seems to be a nationalist and seems to believe that there should be a strong cultural expression. So that's quite positive. He doesn't seem to understand the need to have an arm's-length relationship between the government and the cultural agencies. This could cause some difficulties. So there are some good and bad comments, I guess on summary the balance is, we could have done a lot worse."

GERALD CAPLAN,

Co-chair of The Task Force on Broadcasting Policy.

"I am hopeful but skeptical. I believe he is an activist, nationalist Minister in a government that has few intentions of giving extra money to the areas that I feel need them, like the CBC, and not interested in taking on Americans in areas like film distribution. So I think it's a real challenge to Mr. Masse and I pray he succeeds. Whether he gets tough with the cable industry, which is an important part of our recommendation that Flora McDonald did not heed at all, I cannot guess. I can only hope."

STEPHEN ROTH,

Cinexus, co-chair of Task Force on Film Policy

"I think it's a fairly clear indication of the direction that the government wants to take with respect to the film and television industries, and cultural industries in general: one of strong support. I think they would not have reappointed Marcel Masse unless they felt that. His position of support for the industry, particularly in the light of the free trade issue, has been pretty clear. If the rest of the government didn't support that position, they would have made their lives a lot easier by not appointing him. So I'm fairly optimistic."

WAYNE CLARKSON

Ontario Film Development Corp.

"Pleased to have him reappointed as minister. That means that he can go into the position running when his feet hit the ground, because he's experienced now, having been there before. It's always advantageous in that regard. We're not going to require two or three months to get the minister up to speed under the circumstances. I always think it advantageous to have a Quebecer in the cultural industry, because they have a much stronger sense for the need for cultural independence. For Ontario I'm concerned about the regionalization of the Federal Government's policies especially with regard to Telefilm's fund. I don't think regionalization of government is by definition a good thing. I certainly hope Mr. Masse will take a serious look at that. I think he's going to be a very good minister. I think there's going to be difficult and contentious times ahead as we resolve the finer points of the free trade issue. I think to have a strong minister like Marcel Masse is advantageous. We certainly had excellent working relationships with his department and himself when he was there before, and I'm certain it will continue."

Famous revenues up

TORONTO - Famous Players Inc. showed box office revenues of \$40.9 million for the first quarter ending Jan. 26. This compares to a record \$41.4 million during the same period in 1988.

Rendez-vous a success

MONTREAL - The number 101 is significant in Quebec. Not only does it figure in the centre of a language dispute; it also represents the number of indigenous films made in Quebec in 1988 and screened at the seventh annual Rendez-vous du Cinéma Québécois, Feb. 3 to 11, in Montreal.

Michel Coulombe, director of the Rendez-vous, says 1989 was the year this film event came of age.

"It takes years to really figure out what you want and this year we realized what we want to do. You will have to look hard to find a festival that pays the same attention to shorts and documentaries as it does to feature films. We will continue to show everything made in Quebec in French and English," says Coulombe.

There were 12 English-language films shown this year.

Coulombe says the number of films (101) is purely coincidental. What is significant, he says, is that last year there were only 68 films shown. He says the number of films could increase to 150 next year with Quebec's new tax incentive program.

Attendance reached a record of approximately 6,000 compared to 4,000 in 1988.

Kalamazoo, directed by Marc-André Forcier, won the \$5,000 L. E. Ouimet-Molson Prize, the top prize of the event. *Aliens Will James* by Jacques Godbout was the contender.

Jean-Claude Lord and Robert Morin were the winners of *Les primes à la qualité* - an investment of \$100,000 in each of the director's new films - for *La Grenouille et la baleine* and *Tristesse modèle réduit*, respectively. This prize is offered by la Société générale des industries culturelles.

No fewer than 18 films qualified for this prize by having a commercial theatrical release in 1988.

Michel Langlois won Le Prix Normande-Juneau for best short film with *Sortie 234* and Maurice Bulbulian won le Prix André-Leroux for best film between 30 and 60 minutes with his *L'Art de tourner en rond II*.

Both prizes are awarded every year by l'Association québécois des critiques de cinéma who are also responsible for naming the winner of the \$5,000 Prix L. E. - Ouimet-Molson for the best Quebec feature in 1988.

The critics also chose *Comme hier matin* by André Turpin as the winner of the la Bourse Claude-Jutra - a \$1,000 purse offered to a young filmmaker between the ages of 18 and 35 years by l'Office Franco-québécois pour la Jeunesse. The prize includes a professional séjour in France in 1989.

Actress Marie Tifo won L'Prix Guy-L'Ecuyer for her work in *Kalamazoo*.

The critics themselves did not leave the award

ceremony emptyhanded. André Roy of *La Revue 24 images* won le Prix des Rendez-vous worth \$1,000 for the best critical text. *Cinema Canada's* Maurie Alioff was nominated for the award based on his review of *Un Sourd dans la ville*.

Highlights of this year's event included a homage to filmmaker Anne-Claire Poirer, a new section of children's films, a special evening of photo exhibits to mark the 50th anniversary of the National Film Board, a special presentation to mark the 25th anniversary of the Cinéma-thèque québécoise and several film premieres.

CBC shows best of NFB

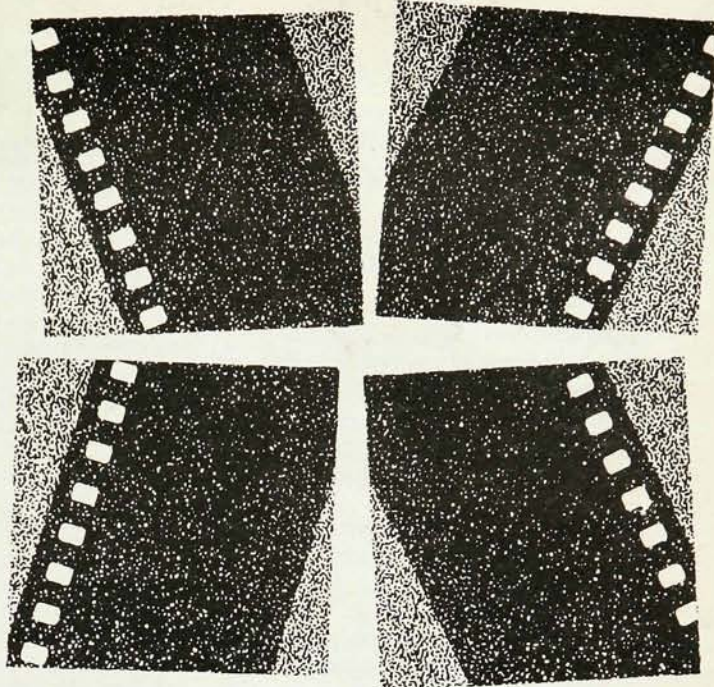
MONTREAL - The CBC is paying tribute to the National Film Board of Canada with the *NFB Thursday Night Movie Series* at 8 p. m. This seven-part movie showcase commemorates 50 years of filmmaking at the NFB with a selection of its best works.

Gordon Pinsent narrates the series offering NFB anecdotes, updates on the filmmakers and previews of current NFB productions.

Mon uncle Antoine by the late Claude Jutra began the Thursday night series on January 26 followed by *One Man* on Feb. 2 and *Nobody Waved Goodbye* on Feb. 9.

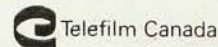
The Heat Wave Lasted Four Days: Feb. 16. - *The Drylanders*: Feb. 23. - *The Ernie Game*: March 2. *Animation Special*: March 9.

The series is produced by Athan Katsos. Alex Barris is the writer.



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Shoot Alberta

LINDA EARL & CHARLES MANDEL



Independent filmmakers in Calgary are starting small but dreaming big. 1989 promises to be one of the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers (CSIF) most productive years. The 10-year-old collective has grown from a dedicated core to 100 members. The 16 mm and super 8 films they produce are as diverse as their backgrounds. The executive director of CSIF is Marcella Bienvenue, the 'grandmother' of performance art in Western Canada. CSIF functions under an artistic mandate with regard to the production and exhibition of film. Operations and equipment funding comes from the Canada Council.

Ghost stories

Less experimental in concept are the market-driven projects by CSIF alumnus Douglas Berquist. With seed money from the Alberta Motion Picture Development, Berquist (The Media Works Group) has spent the last two years developing a one-hour television drama by award-winning Calgary playwright (and now Theatre New Brunswick Artistic Director) Sharon Pollock. Financing on *This is Now* is expected to be in place for a March shoot in and around Calgary.

Jean-Pierre Lefebvre will direct what Berquist calls "a pilot for an anthology series called The New Canadian Cinema. On a smaller scale is Berquist's CSIF project, *Soldier Speak*, a half-hour ghost story adapted from a 1940s radioplay now set during Louis Riel's Battle of Batoche. Berquist hopes it will lead to the development of a ghost stories series.

West Sky entertains

On the other end of the industry scale is West Sky Entertainment Group, a curious upstart on the Calgary indigenous filmmaking scene. West Sky, which is financed solely by private money, (principally a silent European investor group) is going from the one million dollar formula "B" Movie video market into the five-six million theatrical release game. "Scripts have been coming in the door daily," says Scott Jones, a former video distribution company executive, and Vice-President in charge of marketing and production. West Sky passed the financial litmus test this fall when *Personal Exemptions*, a lightweight comedy starring Nanette Fabray, and *The Ranch*, a romantic comedy directed by Stella Stevens and starring her son, Andrew Stevens, (a prominent cast member on the CBS series *Dallas*) sold to 30 countries around the world. *Personal* and *Ranch* are expected to be on Canadian video shelves by April. Pending distribution deals on the next two "A" films, Jones is talking a summer shoot in Calgary and Vancouver and says, "We're here for the long run".

Every film, "A" or "B", big or small, that shows off Calgary scenery to the world and other producers is just what David Parker, the City's Film Commissioner wants to see. Since Parker took on the job in June he has pushed for higher industry visibility. "My job is to keep Calgary crews and talent working," says the upbeat former advertising executive. To this end Parker has been instrumental in the formation of a Media Club watering hole (Tuesday nights, upstairs at the Rose and Crown) where the fragmented community can share contacts and gossip.

Meanwhile in Edmonton

In Edmonton the weather may be getting colder, but the film industry is heating up. Plenty of projects are off the back-burner and, overall, there's a lot of fingers in many pots.

The much-publicized film *Bye Bye Blues* is undergoing post-production, as executive producer Tony Allard, producer Arvi Liimatainen, and co-producer/director/writer Anne Wheeler scramble to get the \$4.5 million film ready in time for the Cannes Festival. Shooting ended in mid-December, and the movie is scheduled for a fall release and is to be distributed by Allacom.

Also in Edmonton, but rushing around instead of screening rushes, is the National Screen Institute of Canada's Jan Miller. Miller is in the final throes of organizing the third annual *Local Heroes* film festival and symposium. This year's theme is Bibles to Bucks. And for the first time, *Local Heroes* combines forces with the Alberta Motion Picture Industries of Alberta's (AMPIA) 15th annual award ceremonies. Will AMPIA members be local heroes? Will Jan Miller win an award? Stay tuned. Full coverage next issue.

It appears one AMPIA member has been doing some pre-production work herself. Executive Director Joanne Riediger-Duebel goes on maternity leave at the end of March. Kate Dunbar will look after the office in the interim.

Looking further ahead, in Edmonton in 1990, AMPIA will host *Input 90*, the international industry forum for TV programmers. This year's conference takes place in Stockholm. Skol!

The Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation (AMPDC) presents the *Breakfast Club*. No, it's not a brat pack film, but rather a series of seminars delivered by the people who influence and shape the film and television industry. The speakers, scheduled for four dates over the next four months, include Roger Frappier, co-producer of *Un Zoo la Nuit*; and Arthur Weinthal, vice-president of entertainment programming for the CTV network.

NFB: Studio D shuffles staff

MONTREAL - Reduced federal government funding has claimed another victim at the National Film Board of Canada. Studio D, the award-winning women's studio-will disband as of April 1.

Six filmmakers on staff will join other NFB studios. Studio D with a production budget of \$795,000 will remain a source of funding for women freelance filmmakers across Canada.

In an interview with *Cinema Canada* before the new year, Rina Fraticelli, executive producer of Studio D, said that ways and means to address the problems faced by the studio were being studied and that a decision was imminent.

"It is no mystery that the NFB is radically underfunded by the federal government and that it is on a collision course with its own mandate as a public filmmaker," said Fraticelli.

The 15-year-old studio was barely able to operate with reduced government appropriations. Unkept government promises created false expectations amongst freelance filmmakers who depended on Studio D, she said.

These expectations included improved training and employment equity programs and long-term contracts for independents.

"Expectations grow in light of government rhetoric as our means to fulfil these expectations are diminished," said Fraticelli.

"These problems imposed by the government and its priorities are the net effect of the privatization of culture," she said, adding that the NFB cannot hope to serve its mandate while being governed by the laws of the marketplace.

Fraticelli has agreed to extend her two-year term in order to oversee the reorganization. Kathleen Shannon, founder and former head of the studio, will return from a one-year sabbatical.

The recently released annual report of the NFB shows a large budget deficit in 1987-1988 due to an unsuccessful bid for a specialty channel licence. The cost of the proposal was in excess of \$800,000 from the parliamentary appropriation.

The Canadian Non-Commercial and Public Television Inc. including former Film Commissioner François Macerola, had proposed to operate TV Canada - a national nonprofit general interest network in both French and English on basic cable. The proposal was rejected by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission.

Mireille Kermoyan, director of communications at the NFB, admitted that the overspending was contrary to the Federal Administration Act. She explained that the deficit was a fraction of the current budget of \$76 million and that the NFB justified the expenditure by calling it an advance on next year's parliamentary appropriation.

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CKVR disaffiliates from the CBC

BARRIE - Under a proposed twin-stick arrangement with the CBC, CKVR-TV in Barrie will become an independent station. It would mean giving up the 50 hours a week of CBC network programming it now carries as an affiliate. If the CRTC approves the application, viewers in the CKVR broadcast area will receive a revamped CKVR in

addition to CBLT-TV, Toronto's local CBC station, which will be rebroadcast from three newly built transmitters.

Ron Waters, CKVR's vice-president and general manager, told *Cinema Canada*, "CBC wanted to disaffiliate. So we came to an agreement with them for a twin-stick operation which would have a regional independent CKVR, that would be the same license we have now, and we would rebroadcast the full CBC service only in this region and not in Toronto. I think it works well for both of us.

"It's a great opportunity for us. We'll be doing all our national news ourselves and purchase feeds to get the international news. Our main service area is Barrie and we will continue to carry excellent local coverage as we have done in the past. The format for our station will be quite a bit different than it is now. We'll key on areas such as nature, science, recreation and world exploration. We'll be more of a narrow cast station."

The application hearings are being held in Toronto in March and Waters hopes to have his new format on air by September.



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Fronts West

MARK O'NEILL



The Vancouver International Film Festival is making room for all the features that have been made in B.C. over the last year. Festival Director **Alan Franey** is introducing two new series to the 1989 VIFF, 'Western Canadian Showcase' and 'The Screenwriter's Art'. He's also scheduled the Festival a couple of weeks earlier than 1988; from September 29 to October 15.

Franey says "So much enthusiasm has been generated by the sudden prosperity of B.C. production... the Festival's commitment to showcasing the broadest field of this year's production will produce rewards for filmmakers and audiences alike." It's worth noting that VIFF audiences last year voted *The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick* Most Popular Film.

'The Screenwriter's Art' series will feature visiting writers from Canada and around the world. They'll be at screenings and will also take part in public discussions. Franey says the visitors will "also provide a framework for this year's lively archival series, a selection of 'The World's Wittiest Films'."

There are two new members of the VIFF Board: **Bill Millerd**, artistic director of Vancouver's perennially successful Arts Club Theatres, and lawyer **Arthur Fouks**. The Festival is also establishing an Advisory Board, the first member of which is **Dianne Neufeld**, the B.C. Film Commissioner.

The Year of the Script

The provincial funding agency, BC Film, has dubbed 1989 as 'The Year of the Script' and is backing up the idea with three new or expanded programs.

American TV and film writer **Robert McKee** brings his 'Story Structure' seminar to town March 3-5. It costs \$300 but BC Film is offering a \$100 subsidy to qualifying participants. The agency is also participating in the new CBC training program for visible minorities and has upped its commitment to the popular Screenwriting Internship Program. Up to \$600 per week is now available for experienced writers who want on-the-job film experience.

Glick's the flick

About 100 Vancouver-area members of the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television showed up to see *The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick* at the opening night of Genie screenings at the Ridge. All were invited to watch the awards at a special dinner party, March 22 at Sami's restaurant in Kitsilano. Price isn't set yet but will include a multi-course dinner and live, large-screen telecast of the goings-on in Toronto.

Speaking of *Max Glick*... producer **Stephen Foster**'s feature opened across the country in February (as well as film festival screenings, it's also been shown for a week in Montreal to meet Genie requirements). Foster has left Northern Lights to work for his own company, Fosterfilm Productions.

First priority is a half-hour CBC TV series based on the further experiences of young Max "growing up in a prairie town with a weird sort of ethnic mix". Veteran TV producer **Paul Saltzman** is working with Foster on the project; *Glick* writer **Phil Savath** is also on board developing a bible and the first half-dozen scripts. If CBC likes the material, shooting could begin this summer for broadcast next season.

Writers FUND'ed

B.C. writers scored a respectable share of the latest cash offerings from FUND, the Foundation to Underwrite New Drama. **Ralph Burdman** is working on a comedy called *Daytona Beach Roomba* about an elderly love affair. **Parajayo Robert Reece**'s *My Secret Son* is a father-and-son tale. And novelist **Raymond Spence** is working on *My Brother's Elastic Winkle*, a post-war comedy set in Port Moody.

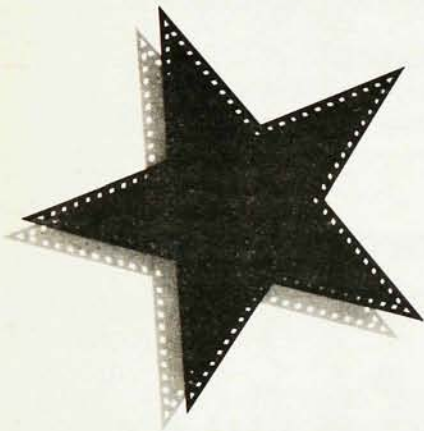
FUND also gave some bucks to two Toronto writers for their project *Hollywood, B.C.* in which a small town awaits the arrival of an American film crew. As well, **Stephen Reid**'s novel *Jackrabbit Parole* is being adapted for film by **David Young** of Toronto.

Women in Focus

Women in Focus and the NFB are busy organizing a film and video festival to be held in Vancouver in November. 'In Visible Colors' will feature films by women of color and from Third World countries. As well, there will be a two-day symposium on the social and economic realities of producing and distributing women's cinema.

Submissions are invited and information is available from **Zaineb Verjee** at Women in Focus, #204-456 West Broadway, Vancouver, V5Y 1R3, (604) 872-4332.

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Opportunity for writers

MONTREAL - A new opportunity for French-language screenwriters has been made available by Radio-Québec, Telefilm Canada, la Société générale des industries culturelles and the National Film Board.

The new program called *Fictions 16/26* is designed to find new Quebec filmmakers and boost the production of short fiction films. The overall budget is \$5 million for the development and production of 16 x 26-minute dramas to be shot in 16mm colour and to air on Radio-Québec in the fall of 1991.

The majority of the proposals selected will be from writers between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

Writers are required to present their scripts to the production company of their choice or the NFB which will produce three of the 16 films. The producers will then in turn submit the proposals to *Fictions 16/26*.

For more information contact *Fictions 16/26* 1755 boul. René Lévesque Est, bureau 200, Montréal, Québec, H2K 4P6, (514) 873-7393. Collect calls will be accepted from anywhere inside Québec.

Atlantis to develop family dramas

TORONTO - Atlantis Films Limited has signed an agreement with the CBC to develop a series of family dramas for the network. According to Jeremy Katz, director of publicity and promotion for Atlantis, the plan is for an anthology series of 13 one-hour dramas similar to their successful series, *Sons and Daughters*. Shooting is tentatively scheduled to begin in the spring, with broadcast anticipated in the fall. Several of the dramas will be adapted from Canadian short stories while others will be original scripts.

Smoggies: ecology, sells

MONTREAL - *Smoggies*, an animation series which touches on ecological/environmental issues has been renewed for another 26 episodes by the Global Television Network and Antenne 2, France.

This Canada/France co-production is produced by Micheline Charest and Ron Weinburg of Cinar

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Films in Montreal and Jean Cazes of the Initial Groupe in Paris, France. Gerald Potterton is the director.

Cinar Films is currently producing *Favorite Song*, a series of six animated half-hour specials for television and home video which has been sold to Media Home Entertainment in the U.S.

MONTREAL - Jean-Paul Paré has been appointed director of financing and administration at Telefilm Canada. Paré will be in charge of administering all Telefilm funds.

Germans show interest in twinning

MONTREAL - The German/Canadian Co-production Agreement, signed in 1978, has been modified to include television as well as film subject to approval by both governments.

A mixed commission was held in Berlin, recently, at which Louise Beaudoin of Telefilm headed the Canadian delegation.

To coincide with the meeting, the Berlin Senate hosted a coproduction seminar

moderated by Berlin producer Michael Boehme and addressed by Pat Ferns, Claude Héroux and Bob Linnell from Canada.

The seminar focused on the Canadian concept of twinning.

TORONTO - Diana Foster, managing director of Distribution for Oasis Pictures of Toronto (formerly North Park Film Distribution), is putting a new twist on an old form of commerce, bartering. Oasis Pictures will give a program free of charge to a network or syndicated broadcaster in return for the rights to sell the broadcast time to advertisers.

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Prairie Pulse

GREG KLYMKIW



The Monster in the bin

Jack Horowitz is ecstatic. Horowitz is an Executive Producer in the Film and Video Program of the Department of Supply and Services (DSS). His department, under the recently-formed Non-theatrical Film Fund, has kicked-in matching funds for a new half-hour drama which is currently shooting in Winnipeg. The pic, entitled *The Monster in the Cool Bin*, is the first film produced in Manitoba under the new fund. As well, it is the Fund's first flick done in conjunction with a non-profit organization (Executive Producers are the Winnipeg Film Group collective) and the first drama to be produced in Western Canada with DSS sponsorship. Horowitz was bowled-over by the project. "It's a highly unique and innovative film," said Horowitz, "and reflects the abundant talent on the Prairies." Pic is a family drama produced by Tracy Traeger and directed by Allen Schinkel. Schinkel's previous work includes the 13-minute festival-fave *The Caretaker*. Total budget of *Monster* is 91,000 beans and toplines eight-year-old Adam Smoluk and popular actress C. Roscoe Handford. Other sources of funding include the Manitoba Arts Council (MAC), Winnipeg Film Group (WFG) and Canada-Manitoba Cultural Industries Development Office (CIDO). Pic is slated for release to non-theatrical markets. After helming-chores are done on this project, Schinkel returns to development of his feature film, *The Road*.

The Mob hits town

Cement Shooz Productions, two-million-dollar feature *Mob Story* began a six-week shoot in Winnipeg on February 6. Writer-producer-directors Gabriel and Jancarlo Markiw have scored a top-flight cast for their action/comedy. Al Waxman, John Vernon, Kate Vernon (John's daughter) and Margot Kidder.

Word has it this will be Kidder's last acting role for awhile. Apparently, Kidder wants to be a big-time movie director. Good luck, Margot. Other cast members are comprised of numerous Peg-thefts. Solid support is imminent from two Peggars in particular. Neil Lawrie (previously seen as the psychotic Dr. Jolly in John Paizs, *Crimewave*) and Michael Gottli (last seen as Gunnar the Rotund in Guy Maddin's cult-hit *Tales From the Gimli Hospital*). Director of Photography is Gilles Corbeil. Executive Producers are Tony Kramreither and Don Haig. Funding players include Canada-Manitoba Cultural Industries Development Office (CIDO) and Telefilm Canada.

The Last Winter

Aaron Kim Johnson's three-million-dollar feature, *The Last Winter*, begins shooting on March 13. The pseudo-autobiographical family drama will be set and shot in the Virden-Oak Lake area of Manitoba. Pic is produced by Johnson, Jack Clements and Ken Rodeck. Johnson, in addition to helming, wrote the original script. D.O.P. is Ian Elkin, with scissor-job to be performed by Lara Mazur. Distribution has been secured with Modern Cinema Marketing of Vancouver. Funding players include National Film Board (NFB), Canada-Manitoba Cultural Industries Development Office (CIDO) and Telefilm Canada.

Revolution in Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Film Development Project (SFDP) just wrapped a seven-day February shoot on the Ken Mitchell-penned half-hour, *The Great Electrical Revolution*. Larry Bauman helmed the tele-pic which boasted an 85 per cent Sask-based crew. SFDP project co-ordinator and co-producer Barbara Stewart reported that the event was a great success. Stewart pointed to such non-Sask stalwarts as editor Frank Irvine (*The Grey Fox*), art director John Blackie (*Bye Bye Blues*) and director of photography Andreas Polson (*Henry Ford's America*) as being excellent resource people for the Sask-based crew. "Building on existing skills is the key to our professional development in Saskatchewan," said Stewart. Key tech personnel on pic were also SFDP workshop leaders. Stewart claimed that the flick's set was the "largest ever built in Saskatchewan." In total, 23 trainees are benefitting from on-the-job professional development. Delivery date for final product is June 1 of this year. Flick's other co-producer is Kevin Dewalt.

Sask, shorts / feature tour west

The Saskatchewan FilmPool kicked-off its Western Canadian tour in Winnipeg. Other locales included Alta's Pincher Creek, Whitehorse, Victoria, Edmonton, Brandon, Calgary, Regina, Vancouver, Kelowna and Saskatoon. Included in the tour are a bunch of indie-Sask shorts and the Gerald Saul/Brian Stockton-helmed feature *Wheat Soup*.



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Cnd. animators in line for Oscar

LOS ANGELES - Two Canadian animators have been nominated for Oscars in the 61st annual Academy Awards.

Cordell Barker, a freelance animator with the National Film Board (Winnipeg), has been nominated in the animated short film category for his first film, *The Cat Came Back*, produced by Richard Condie.

Richard Williams has been nominated in the visual-effects category for his work on Walt Disney's *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. As art director on the film, Williams created several of its leading characters. For this he was awarded a special achievement Oscar in early Feb. He won an Oscar in 1972 for an animated version of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

Banff honors French-language TV

BANFF - The 10th annual Banff Television Festival, June 4 to 10, will salute la Communauté des télévisions francophones (CFI) on opening night.

CTF is an association of 14 French-language television networks from five countries. Canadian members include Radio-Canada, Société Radio et Télévision Québec, Télé-Métropole Inc. and TVOntario.

"In today's changing broadcast environment, such associations play an important, unifying role in defining cultural identities through the medium of television," said Carrie Hunter, executive director of the festival.

Street Legal: fourth season

TORONTO - A successful third season has led to a series of scripts for a fourth season and contract options for the principal actors in *Street Legal*.

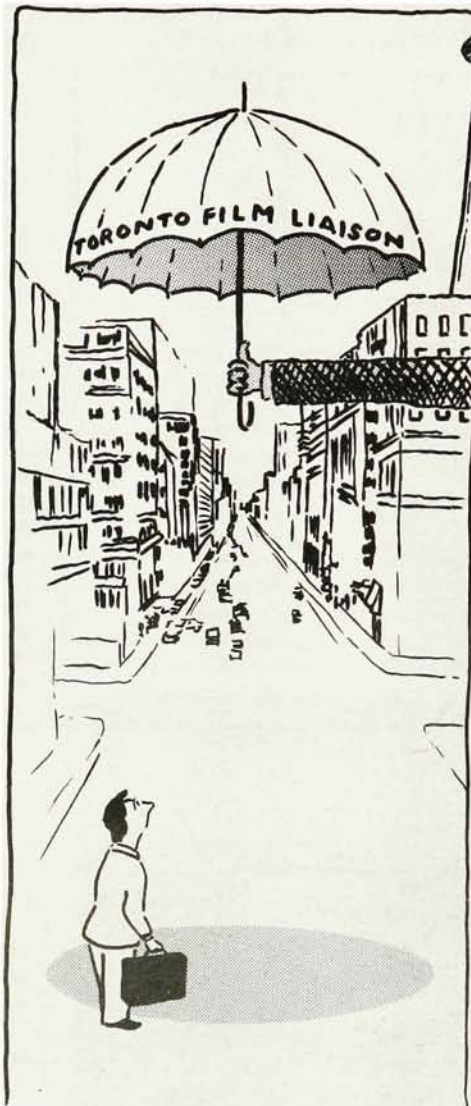
According to the CBC, audience numbers have increased with each episode in the third season and have recently topped one million with an audience share of 17 per cent.

Slotted at 8 p.m. on Friday night, *Street Legal*, a legal-dramatic series, stars Sonja Smith, Eric Peterson, C. David Johnson and Cynthia Dale.

Executive Producer Maryke McEwen says the series has "tried to reflect realistic Canadian legal stories to Canadian viewers."

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Image gets Hopper film

LOS ANGELES - Image Organization has acquired all foreign distribution rights to the Tobe Hopper thriller *Spontaneous Combustion*.

The screenplay, based on 10 years of research into the phenomenon of spontaneous human combustion, was written by Hopper and Howard Goldberg.

The acquisition was announced recently by Pierre David, chairman and CEO of Image Organization.

Tricker hot and cold

MONTREAL - *Tommy Tricker and the Stamp Traveller*, the seventh film in the family-oriented *Tales For All* series produced by Rock Demers, has scored high in the French-language box office and low in English.

The French-language version took in over \$400,000 (in 28 theatres) during the Christmas holiday season but, despite critical acclaim, grossed \$35,000 in English Canada with 35 openings following an unusually elaborate and expensive promotional campaign estimated to cost over \$500,000.

Malarek opens

MONTREAL - *Malarek*, a \$4 million feature film based on the autobiography of *Globe and Mail* reporter Victor Malarek, produced by Jamie Brown and Robin Spry and directed by Roger Cardinal for Telescene Productions, will open across Canada on March 4. The film stars Elias Koteas, Al Waxman and Kerrie Keane.

MONTREAL - The OWL Centre for Children's Film and Television has been awarded \$250,000 by The CRB Foundation of Montreal.

CBC: programming delays on two fronts

MONTREAL - Members of the House of Commons want more time to weigh the pros and cons of enhanced television coverage of the House of Commons.

Thus, the CBC and representatives of the Canadian Cable Television Industry have asked the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission to delay its hearing of an application to operate a national programming service called the Canadian Parliamentary Channel (CPaC). The hearing was originally scheduled for Feb. 7.

The CBC has also faced delays with its *CBC Newsworld*. This 24-hour news channel has been rescheduled for an on-air debut in August.

According to the CBC, advertising revenues of over \$5 million for the first year of operation are already secured. Administrative and operational staff are in place.

The original launch date was this February 15, however discussions with the cable industry raised the concern that subscribers would be confused and annoyed by a second increase of cable fees. The first increase followed the launch of new specialty channels on September 1, 1988.

Cable systems across Canada are not obligated to carry *CBC Newsworld*, a satellite-to-cable service. Cable operators who do carry the service will charge a fee that goes back to the CBC. An estimated \$20 million in the first year will be covered by subscriber fees.

The future of the all-news channel was placed in doubt in Dec. 1987 when Flora MacDonald, then minister of communications, suspended a decision by the CRTC to grant the CBC a licence for an all-news channel. Opposition to the CRTC decision was led by Allarcom, a private sector broadcaster based in Edmonton. Allarcom, which made its own bid for the all-news channel, argued that CBC would gain a monopolistic hold on news broadcasting.

Those who supported the CBC application argued that the CBC and the CRTC should be independent of cabinet interference.

The application for an all-news channel was re-endorsed by the federal government on the eve of the federal election in mid-October.

Family Channel exceeds expectations

TORONTO - Family Channel, the pay service jointly owned by Allard Pay TV Ltd. and Astral Bellevue Communications, has exceeded its subscription target by 50,000, according to a company spokesman. Dennis Kwasnicki, director of Sales and Marketing, said that the original target for January was 160,000. "We now have 210, and expect 300,000 in the next 12 months," he said. Family Channel went on the air in October, 1988.

Kwasnicki credits the rapid growth of Family's subscription base to a number of factors. "The timing of the launch was good," he said. "The fall network schedule was delayed because of the U.S. writers' strike and we gave the service away free in the month of September. There was a lot of hype with Mickey's 60th birthday. Also the cost of attending a film now with a family is very high."

Family Channel has negotiated agreements with over 200 cable operators, giving it a

potential 93 per cent penetration of all the cable subscribers in Canada. Sixty per cent of Family's programming is provided by the Disney Channel, while the remaining 40 per cent consists of 25 per cent Canadian and 15 per cent from international sources. The broadcast signal is carried on the Anik C3 satellite. The uplink facilities are located in Edmonton.

HDTV makes headway in Moscow

TORONTO - Major broadcasters from around the world, including Joe Colson, CTV's vice-president of engineering and operations, met in Moscow January 12-13 to consider a worldwide High Definition Television (HDTV) studio standard. Over 25 experts from around the world agreed to conduct technical tests of high-definition standards with the stated goal of "unimpeded and unimpaired HDTV program exchange among all nations."


The tests will include experiments on basic system performance, transfers to and from film, and ultimately the conversion to various HDTV transmission systems to be used in different parts of the world. The participants in the Moscow group unanimously endorsed the need to achieve a single worldwide HDTV production standard.

HDTV is the latest and the most advanced form of television with the potential of nearly three times the scan lines found on normal North American television and a wide-screen aspect ratio with vastly improved colour quality. It is hoped that this electronic medium will be useful both in the production of television programs and for the cinema.

First Choice expands its closed-captioned programming

TORONTO - First Choice pay service will be increasing the number of closed-captioned movies broadcast every month, according to Paul Gratton, First Choice's vice-president of programming. "The hearing-impaired are not a large group numerically", said Gratton, "but they are an important group with political clout. We just want to make the service more attractive."

First Choice now has direct access to copyright machinery that has been developed in the U.S. and expects to increase the service over the next three to six months. Hearing-impaired viewers who want the pay TV service will be able to use their current Telecaption Adapters.



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NATPE a limited success for Canadian sellers

TORONTO - Veteran marketgoer Ismé Bennie, president of Paragon International, says she was "a little less humbled than usual" at this year's NATPE market in Houston, Texas. "We were doing business, not with the American syndicators because I don't think what I carry is suitable for them, but with American and U.K. home video companies, Scandinavian broadcasters, and the U.S. armed forces. I came out of there pleased with what I did. We did some more business with *The Raccoons* and we saw all the major cable operators in the States."

NATPE is primarily a U.S. syndication market and generally the buyers and sellers are only interested in the big money spinners such as *Cosby* or *Dallas*. Cathy Ellis, director of marketing for Ralph C. Ellis Enterprises, says she got a lot of interest from a lot of people for her game show, *Wild Guess*. "NATPE was fairly successful this year. There was a lot of international people because the U.S. syndication market is soft at the moment."

The next major market for Bennie is Monte Carlo where she hopes to do better. "It's easier to sell on the European market because Canadian programming is very well accepted. We are already established. In the States, Canadian product is only beginning to make inroads."

Butler buys rights to Davies' *Fifth Business*

LOS ANGELES - Canadian producer/writer Rick Butler has bought the movie rights to Robertson Davies' best seller, *Fifth Business*. Butler describes Davies as the Canadian author "with the broadest international appeal."

Butler paid \$250,000 (U.S.) for the rights, which, he believes, is a record for a Canadian novel. He plans to produce the film in and around Toronto, Ottawa, and maybe Quebec City. Right now he's developing a revised screenplay for Stephen Roth's Cinexus Corporation.

Butler has already had success with his television adaptations of Canadian plays, *Maggie and Pierre* and *Balconville*. He began working on a screenplay for *Fifth Business*, the first installment of Davies' *The Deptford Trilogy*, with American Nicholas Meyer (*Star Trek II*), but the two had a falling-out over the direction of the script. Butler then bought the property outright from Meyer who had owned it since 1976.

Davies' story of two young boys from a small Ontario town and their life long rivalry, has sold 200,000 copies in Canada alone since its publication in 1970.

Cineplex produces *Rooftops*

TORONTO - It would appear that Garth Drabinsky is getting back into the production of movies. New Visions Pictures of Los Angeles, a 50 per cent-owned joint venture between Drabinsky's Cineplex Odeon and New Visions Entertainment Corp., is releasing its first production *Rooftops* in March. New Visions Entertainment Corp. is owned by producer/director Taylor Hackford (*An Officer and A Gentleman*, *Hail, Hail Rock 'n' Roll*). The entertainment giant MCA Inc. owns a 49 per cent minority share of Cineplex.

New Visions Pictures recently secured a \$50 million bank commitment from Pierson Holding and Pierson NV and Credit Lyonnais Bank Nederland NV. The five-picture deal covers 100 per cent of the production costs and 50 per cent of the prints and advertising expenditure. *Rooftops* is a teenage action/romance set in New York City with lots of contemporary music. Director Robert Wise covered the same territory 28 years ago with *West Side Story*. New Visions' next film will be *Defenseless* with Barbara Hershey. Production began in late February.

New series by Claude Héroux

MONTREAL - *La Misere des riches* (*Misfortune of the Rich*) a \$5 million, eight-hour mini-series, is being co-produced by Claude Héroux of Communications Claude Héroux Productions and Jacques Dercourt of Télécip, Paris.

This story about a wealthy Quebec family fighting for control of a steel empire will be shot in Montreal for 10 weeks by Richard Martin.

Martin directed two seasons of *Lance et Compte*, the television series produced by Héroux that set a ratings record in Quebec.

The series is being produced in association with Télé-Métropole, the TVA Network, TF-1 (France) and Telefilm Canada.

Héroux enters this project following the unprecedented success of *Lance et Compte*, the hockey-drama series that has earned the highest ratings in the history of Radio-Canada.

Nielsen ratings show that 3,147,000 viewers watched the second episode, Jan. 12, of the third and final series.

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With productions such as *The Bell Ringers*, *Blizzard Island*, *CODCO*, *George's Island*, *Justice Denied*, *Lighthouse Island*, *The Midday Sun*, *There's Nothing To Do Here* and *Vacant Lot* all in production last fall, there was more activity here than most producers or craftspeople might have imagined in their wildest dreams. Almost every film-person of any ilk found a niche in one or several of the productions. While grateful for the work after a long dry summer, the flurry of activity also brought to the surface a host of questions which have been lurking in the back of many filmmakers' minds.

"When I signed on for this job did it include working 16-hour days? How come the guy next to me on the set, who's doing the same job that I am, is getting paid twice as much? If that dolly drops on my leg, who's going to pay the rent while I sit home recuperating? How am I going to survive with no productions in sight during the cold winter months?"

These issues came to the fore in an open meeting called by the Atlantic Independent Film and Video Association (AIFVA) in which a broad cross-section of producers and craftspeople sat down in the same room to try and hammer out the parameters for working relationships in the film industry of this region. Chaired by producer and AIFVA activist Terry Fulmer, the meeting got off to a brisk start and it was evident that there was real concern on the part of the craftspeople with respect to issues such as pay scales, working hours, working conditions, safety, accident compensation and the overall climate of producer/employee relations. It was clear from remarks all round that base lines on these issues needed to be formulated.

AIFVA has, for a variety of reasons, come to be perceived by craftspeople here as a "producers" association although activist producers such as Bill MacGillivray, Lawrence Carota, Bill Skerrett and Duncan Moss were quick to point out that its mandate and structure is to represent all the parties in the independent film and video sector. As such AIFVA presented its case for being the forum for the articulation and resolution of these issues urging craftspeople to join and help develop industry standards, although the ability of the association to 'police' any such regulations was acknowledged to be... well, minimal.

Bill MacGillivray argued that as a pioneer industry we had the ability to shape and control the climate and relations here in ways which are appropriate to this region and not import external styles and standards. Lawrence Carota emphasized the commonality of purpose by pointing out that producers and craftspeople were from one and the same pool of talent. Luciano Lisi emphasized that he was here as a producer for the duration and keeping good relations with the technical community was in his long-term interest. "I'd be happy if all of you drove Porsches," said Lisi, a statement which was immediately construed by some as an actual offer...

Between the lines there was clearly an anxiety on the part local of producers to avoid the polarization which characterizes relations between producers and craft unions in many jurisdictions. Many emphasized their common position in trying to develop a fledgling industry which would provide a livelihood for all parties concerned. The past position of ACTRA, with its lack of accommodation for regional conditions and realities, was a paradigm for such a breakdown of communications. Local producers often found that they simply could not afford to hire ACTRA talent, people who thus found themselves excluded from many interesting projects which they in principle supported. An ACTRA spokesman at the meeting emphasized his union's changed stance and its interest in working with AIFVA or other parties to develop a policy designed to benefit the entire regional industry.

Nevertheless a certain skepticism remained with some craftspeople uncertain of whether their interests could be well represented in a joint organization. Chuck Lapp, speaking for an informal coalition of craftspeople who had met prior to the meeting, said that their consensus had been that a separate organization should be formed to determine their needs and demands. This organization could then negotiate with producers either within AIFVA or separately. Although there seems to be a clear preference, at least at this point, not to go the route of affiliation with the currently existing craft unions, there is certainly an awareness of this option. Lapp mentioned that local producers were already bringing in union crew members from other regions with whom local craftspeople had to coexist on shoots. Others expressed concern that in bringing up contentious issues, they might find themselves labelled as "troublemakers" and cut out of work.

This suggestion brought a wave of response from AIFVA producers who would like to see AIFVA as the industry voice in the region with respect to lobbying the CBC, NFB, Communications Canada, Telefilm and the provincial governments - a sphere where the organization has been very active in the past. Bill MacGillivray felt that it would be a major step backwards to divide and that the perception of producers and craftspeople as representing two opposed parties was an outdated one. Fulmer chorused that it was difficult enough making the production community's viewpoint felt in government circles and that two would weaken rather than strengthen the impact.

Cinefair closer to reality

VANCOUVER – An Asia-Pacific film marketplace in Vancouver is another step closer to reality. Marketplace Communications, the company investigating the idea, has received a \$176,000 commitment from the federal Western Diversification Project.

The event, to be known as Cinefair, would focus on films of the Pacific Rim including Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, China, India, the United States and Canada.

"Our product will be mostly television although with some motion picture component," Marketplace president Crawford Hawkins explains. "The demand is for television, I mean eight companies did 89 per cent of the gross billing in theatrical motion pictures last year so fighting for 11 per cent doesn't make much sense. Television is where the need is.


"Demand by Asians for English-language product and the demand here for Asian-language product seems likely to grow over the years," he added. "There was a market held in Australia that didn't do very well. One of the reasons Vancouver seems more viable is that in Australia there's nowhere else to go. If somebody comes here they can do business in Los Angeles, they can go to Toronto or go to New York and visit their money, but once you get to Australia you're in Australia."

Marketplace is budgeting \$196,000 for research into the viability of Cinefair which, if it goes ahead, would open in the Autumn of 1990. The federal-provincial Asia-Pacific Foundation has also committed funds to the project. Former Vancouver International Film Festival director Hannah Fisher is already at work; she was travelling in India when the announcement was made in late January.

ACFC-Manitoba joins the Mob

WINNIPEG – Cement Shooz Productions have signed a collective agreement with the Manitoba chapter of the Association of Canadian Film Craftspeople (ACFC) on the two-million-dollar feature film *Mob Story*. Signing occurred January 18, at Cement Shooz' production office in Winnipeg.


A significant number of Manitoba film craftspeople will crew the Winnipeg-produced action/comedy. Co-producer/director Jancarlo Markiw expressed delight over the signing. "The ACFC represent the 'A' crew of Winnipeg," said Markiw. "They're a fine bunch of people." Markiw also noted that the ACFC



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TV COVERAGE

Never have NFB productions received such wide visibility on television as during this its Golden Jubilee Year. It began on January 14 with a four-hour tribute to the Board on TV-Ontario and continued with a seven-week series *NFB Thursday Night Movie* hosted by Gordon Pinsent and aired on the CBC Network. Vision-TV premiered a weekly series of NFB films in January which continues throughout the year while First Choice has reserved a monthly slot for Film Board features. Radio-Canada has devoted a complete evening on April 2 to the Board and TV-Ontario (French) will include NFB films in three of its weekly slots throughout the year. Other Canadian carriers to highlight NFB productions are: Radio-Quebec, Family Channel, YTV, Superchannel, and Radio-Canada Atlantique. TV exposure of Film Board productions in both the United States and Europe has also reached a new high.

It's the fiftieth for the NFB

OPEN HOUSES

NFB offices across Canada, including its operational headquarters in Montreal, will be open to the public at different periods throughout the year. The Montreal open house will be for a four-day period beginning April 29 and 25,000 visitors are expected.

McLAREN TO BE HONOURED

The National Film Board's most respected filmmaker, Norman McLaren, who passed away in 1987, will be honoured next May when the Board's Cote de Liesse building in Montreal will be dedicated to his memory.

FESTIVALS

Over twenty-five international film festivals around the world will honour the National Film Board's Fiftieth Anniversary with special tributes and retrospectives. To date these include the festivals of: Berlin, Los Angeles, Oslo, Anancy, Melbourne, London and Manheim.

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was "a great non-union union," due to their combination of collective expertise and ability to negotiate on a project-by-project basis.

Leon Johnson, president of ACFC-Manitoba, agreed with Markiw's assessment. "This is a new union working with new producers," said Johnson. "The union is populated with the most qualified Manitoba film craftspeople and it is encouraging that the producers are willing to grow with such a new union."

Producer/directors of *Mob Story* are Winnipeg-based O'Meara Productions' Gabriel and Jancarlo Markiw.

Winnipeg fest runs one month

WINNIPEG – The worst of prairie weather in January did not deter the Winnipeg Film Group in its efforts to host a month-long celebration of the best of Manitoba Film.

We're in the Movies, Jan. 5 to Feb. 5, was the name of the celebration which drew over 1,000 people to the 120-seat Cinematheque on Arthur Street in Winnipeg.

Scheduled events included screenings of classic films, the best of 1988 produced by the 15-year-old Winnipeg Film Group and the premiere of 15 Manitoba-made films and video productions.

There were lectures, special guests, a film critic's forum, workshops, an open house and receptions.

"For the first time there was a general feeling that people wanted to see films because they are Canadian films. This is an essential connection if we are to create a film culture," says Bruce Duggan, executive director of the WFG.