

TFC year end: a favorable report

MONTREAL - More money, more productions and an increase in the number of regional projects are the highlights of the 1988-1989 annual report of Telefilm Canada.

The release of the report by TFC Chairman Edmund Bovey and Executive Director Pierre DesRoches at the Montreal World Film Festival was followed by a flurry of questions on the freeze of the (1989-1990) Broadcast Fund until Nov. 1989.

DesRoches confirmed that 80 per cent of the \$78 million fund has been committed with \$8 million has been reserved for the fourth quarter which ends March 31, 1990.

"We have financed 32 projects and we will not be taking any more related funding decisions before November. This is not because we are running out of money, it is because the fall season for television places more of a demand early in the fiscal year," says DesRoches.

He said the Feature Film Fund is still viable due to less of a demand and that TFC commitments will be made through December.

"We never run out of money except between March 30 and 31st," says DesRoches.

Telefilm's 1988-1989 financial report profiles a vibrant Canadian film and television industry with a record total TFC infusion of \$145.1 million (compared to \$126.6 million in 1987-88) making 147 productions possible.

However, Charles Ohayon, president of Association des Producteurs de Films et de Vidéo du Québec (APFVQ) told *Cinema Canada* soon after the release of the report that it was too early to comment on just how favorable (to Quebec producers) the report is.

"One has to be careful with sort of report. Figures can be made to say anything you want," says Ohayon.

At presstime, Ohayon said he wanted to read the report carefully.

Telefilm funds for feature film and television (development and production) outside of Montreal and Toronto rose by 100 per cent to \$25.5 million (compared to \$12.8 million last year).

In film alone, the regions saw \$14.9 million compared to \$2.6 million last year.

Of this \$25.5 million, Vancouver took the lion's share with 22 projects in film and television for an investment of \$9.9 million (compared to \$2.4 million in 1987-1988).

Overall, the feature film fund investment was \$36.8 million in 34 films (23 films in 1987-1988) or 44 per cent of total film budgets.

The Broadcast Fund contributed \$62.2 million for television programs making 113 projects possible.

Where production funding is concerned, TFC invested \$60.1 million or 35 per cent of total budgets compared to \$76.2 million in 1987-1988. This decrease was explained by the fact that more short dramatic films and documentaries were financed in 1988-1989.

The new Feature Film Distribution Fund

provided \$12.3 million to 19 distribution companies over the last six months of the fiscal year. Of this amount, \$2.8 million was spent on the acquisition of rights to foreign films.

DesRoches reminded a questioner on this point that distributors must be able to attract foreign producers with a strong distribution guarantee and that this money is eventually recouped through the box office.

TFC revenues derived from investments and recovered advances this year totalled \$16.2 million (compared to \$20.1 million earned in 1987-1988).

On this lower rate of return, DesRoches explained that TFC no longer recoups in first position but has moved to second and sometimes third position in order to develop the confidence of the private investor.

The total aggregate budget for film and television productions supported by Telefilm was \$260 million to which TFC contributed 38 per cent. Other sources of investment were private investment, Pay-TV and increased overall investment by distributors and exporters.

TORONTO - One of this year's special guests at Toronto's Festival of Festivals is former rocker (Boombtown Rats) turned humanitarian (Live Aid) Bob Geldof. Geldof is in Toronto as part of an Irish delegation stemming from a recent Irish-Canadian coproduction agreement, as well as a filmmaker.

Northdale negotiates five pix deal

TORONTO - Toronto-based Northdale Films is on the verge of putting together a five picture deal worth \$64 million. Northdale president Hamid Bidibadi said from Los Angeles that he has finalized the financial package and will be signing with a U.S. major distributor "within a week".

Northdale was formed eight months ago by Bidibadi, head of Kensington Productions, and Light and Motion Picture Corporation, a Toronto company experienced in special effects. Kensington is a post-production facility which has been operational for six years and has produced a couple of low budget films as well as corporate videos. Bidibadi fled Iran during the Shah's downfall and moved to England before setting up business in Toronto. According to his son Ali, they were involved in film production in Iran before the revolution.

Initially, Northdale will focus on science fiction thrillers and action/adventure films. Light and Motion Picture is one of the largest special effects houses outside of Hollywood and recently completed work of John Boorman's *Where The Heart Is*. The first film to go in front of the cameras is *So Help Me God*, a thriller written by Larry Cohen (*It's Alive*) and directed by Michael Anderson (*Logan's Run*). Bidibadi hopes to start production by the end of September.

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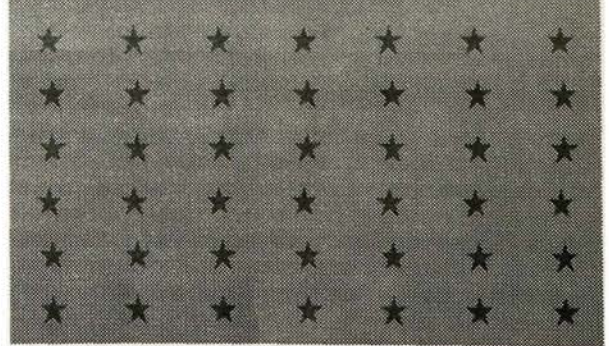
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