

FILM NEWS

Major Developments

THE CANADA COUNCIL has recently appointed a new Film Officer, Francoise Picard, and is currently engaged in budgeting for a new fiscal year beginning April first. It has indicated changes in the Film and Video section of the Visual Arts Branch. All of which may lead one to expect a new film policy, and such a policy is in the works. Details will be announced in March; the general tendency is to finally determine jurisdiction in applying for film funding aid between the Film division, the Explorations program, and the Canadian Film Development Corporation. Who you go to will depend on past film efforts, if any, and what kind of film you'll be making. As well, more emphasis may be placed on film as business by the Council, which, in the past, has left the commercial side of filmmaking up to other bodies and concerned itself only with art. The Council last year dispersed \$1.4 million in film, video, and photography, out of \$21.9 million to the Arts. Now under 'severe restraint', as they too mildly put it, increases in budgets on the next three years will only match inflation, at ten per cent.

Another Council area being re-examined is the funding of film co-ops, with a stated but as yet unofficial desire to limit funding to co-ops that produce films. Mainly affected would be the Toronto Co-op, which supplies services but does not produce. The new Council attitude stimulated the formation of an association of co-ops on a national level; see the report on the Winnipeg Film Symposium in this issue for more details.

COMBINES ACTION. An important legal battle may take place shortly. Six private citizens have accused Famous Players and Odeon Theatres as well as eight American-based distributors of monopolistic practices (see Organizational news: CCFM for all the details). The government will assume all costs, it's true, and it'll be an expensive battle: even now the distributors' association has hired an additional four lobbyists, and the lawyers will converge in droves if it goes to court. But it's a

big 'if'. The Combines Investigation Branch of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs must first determine to what extent they'll investigate. Then, if they decide to launch a full-scale investigation, seizing books and so on, it can take a year just to determine if they do or do not have a case to take to court. They may decide not to prosecute.

Time will tell, as they say.

The Combines law seems to be one of the few areas in the country where the citizen has any strength against the resources of what is clearly becoming the new Enemy: government fumbling, ineptitude, bureaucracy, and obsession with maintaining at least a status quo in its control over our lives. A vendetta second only to the Morgantaler horror is continuing in Nova Scotia, where a small victory has been won by journalist Gerald McNeil in his battle to be able to see the movies that he wants to see. On February 4 The Nova Scotia Supreme Court ruled that the provincial government lacks the authority to censor moviegoing. Only the Federal Government, under the Criminal Code Obscenity regulations, can impose censorship. The Court based its conclusions on the concept of fundamental freedom (see "Beyond Censorship" in this issue.)

The McNeil case may turn out to be a Pyrrhic victory for individual freedom. Up to now, those provinces having censor boards have seen an historically cosy relationship between the Boards and the distributors: each knows what the other one will allow, and therefore a distributor can almost pre-cut a movie to Board specifications. It's the land of the timid. If only the Criminal Code is the arbitrator of censorship, it means that a movie is shown and a citizen lays a complaint to police, who then determine if charges are to be laid. The movie can be seized and withheld from public exhibition until the outcome of the trial. So distributors can have the option of avoiding any possible hassles by simply shelving the film. And the police, not your most culturally enlightened group anyway, will, in every hamlet and town, be the ones to decide what may be too dirty or violent. Which

will cause distributors further distress, because now they pretty well know throughout a province what to expect.

THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD has announced several new appointments, and some re-assignments. Roma Franko, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan and an NFB Board member, has been appointed Vice-Chairman. Colin Low has been made head of all regional production. The Toronto Regional Production Centre, to be put into operation this Spring, now has leaders. Don Hopkins, long-time producer in the film-strip and educational division in Montreal, will be Executive Producer, and Beryl Fox, noted filmmaker, will be Regional Program Producer. Speaking of the regions, with the exception of the Winnipeg centre, it seems that the others have virtually run out of money, so until the new fiscal year in April, projects are sitting unfinished and employees are sitting drinking coffee.

CBC. Which brings me, in our continuing saga of Incredulity, into the matter of CBC budget cutbacks. As more information becomes available about the CBC's financial commitment to Mayor Drapeau's sweat marathon this summer, the recent cutbacks in programming and general financial stupidity should be cause for even greater consternation. Parliament has cut the CBC's budget by \$15 million; most of the cuts will be accomplished by postponing hardware buildup, but over two million comes out of programming (never bureaucracy, though). Drama loses \$700,000 from its already impoverished allocation. That's fifteen hours of programming over a season. In the U.S., that's enough money for about four hours on one network on one night; that's the competition the CBC faces with cable proliferation. That's no money for promotion, despite valiant efforts by CBC Drama Promotion and the creative personnel involved in the shows to publicise their efforts. That's no money for co-productions (incidentally, the CBC refused the chance to co-produce and thereby secure TV rights to Bergman's **Magic Flute**). That's no money for quality

imports to train an audience. That's cutbacks that will affect John Hirsch's greatest contribution thus far, training new talent to fill a decade-long void, and keeping them working to improve their crafts.

Ah, but the Olympics will be covered. There are two parts to TV and film coverage: Canada's domestic needs, and foreign needs. ORTO is the operating word to cover the sale of basic coverage and leasing of facilities to other countries, the full details of which present a picture of blanket coverage in the extreme. Twenty mobile units will be used; sixteen will be taken from across the country and four new ones, at a cost of about \$1.3 million, will be acquired. During July and August you'll be able to see 150 hours of heavy breathing. To achieve this, crews and people are being pulled from across the country; in Toronto, one film crew will stay with news and one for the rest. And vacations will be postponed until September, so another dry month will occur. All divisions are rushing to complete enough programming before the onslaught.

And to bring you this epic, Parliament has given the CBC \$25,000,000.

Festivals

The usual feverish festival activity is not in evidence in foreign parts during the deep winter, but the films haven't been sitting around either; late January in Ottawa thirty-nine features were screened for Cannes pre-selection. That's when a select group gathers and screens submitted features to be chosen by Cannes officials as Canada's official entries. Six are set aside for the nod, and what usually follows is that Cannes' head Maurice Bessy and his entourage arrive in Ottawa shortly thereafter, disregard the pre-selection committee's work, and take what they themselves like. And their taste runs to French-Canadian, preferably Gilles Carle's work... To be noted among this year's submissions for pre-selection is **Running Time**, which is Mort Ranson's long-in-the-

final-stages film whose working title was **Conflict Comedy**.

And it's Oscar Time. **Les Ordres** is Canada's official submission for the Best Foreign Film category; five features will be chosen as finalists out of twenty-two submissions. Two of the ten films in the two documentary categories are Canadian: **Whistling Smith**, by Barrie Howells and Michael Scott for the NFB, and **The Man Who Skied Down Everest**, Budge Crawley's recent feature release.

Recent Canadian showings at foreign fests include eight Joyce Weiland films at the New Orleans Women's Film Festival; David Acomba's CBC hour **Three Women**, featuring Sylvia Tyson, Maureen Forrester, and Pauline Julien, at the International TV Awards; **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz** at the Brussels International Film Festival, a marketplace, in January; and Rory MacLean's **The Photographic Arts Centre**, a one minute short promo for Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto where MacLean is a student, which won a Silver Medal at the Festival International du Film Amateur at Cannes...

Coming up in Fest events are the Travel Film Awards, with a mid-March deadline for entries. Prizes will be given at the Travel Industry Association of Canada convention in Quebec City May 16-19. Entries may be TV or film with any sponsor or producer in 16 or 35mm, as long as the film encourages travel in or to Canada. Write Suite 1016, 130 Albert Street, Ottawa K1P 5G4. The Second International Festival of Women's Films, to be held in New York September 13-26, is looking for entries by mid-March. Films can be either 16 or 35mm, and cannot be industrial sponsored or advertising or publicity. Write 36 West 62nd St., New York 10023.

Looking a little farther down the road, N.A. Taylor has been chosen as the Chairman of the 1976 Canadian Film Awards, which, by the way, almost insures the Fest's return to Toronto after this year's gala at nearby Niagara-on-the-Lake...

**Filmpeople
Random Notes**

Kids in Manitoba who want to see **One Flew over the Cuckoo's**

Nest must present a letter from their parents to the theatre manager, says the Classification Board. Of course, the book is on countless high school reading courses.

THE LAW'S ARM: Budge Crawley is taking Universal Pictures to court. Seems the huge American company, which picked up Crawley's **Janis** sales outside Canada, neglected to sell it, and gave exhibits its own pics such as **Eiger Sanction** instead, or simply didn't push **Janis** at all. A Florida exhib requested the picture and got **Eiger** instead, and although **Janis** made lots of money where it played, it hardly played anywhere. If Crawley wins, it'll set a strong precedent, giving independent producers a needed lift... In Canadian courts, the CRTC is again embattled, this time in B.C. A court there says anyone can apply for a cable TV license if one is coming up for renewal; past CRTC procedure has been to consider only the renewal, not new entries. The CRTC will appeal the ruling because of projected 'Administrative chaos' if everyone comes banging at the door.

DISTRIBUTION: The CFDC has hired Ken Rosenberg to assist Armand Cournoyer in distribution efforts by the government funding arm, and he has a budget of \$600,000 annually to help promote and distribute Canadian features... Astral Films are the new reps for Freemantle TV in Canada, and heading up the joint effort will be former Freemantle head Vern Ferber... Bryanston Distributors of New York, now repped by Astral in Canada, are looking around here and in the United Kingdom for stronger affiliations. It's mainly to take advantage of co-production deals. So far in Canada they've talked to Cinepix.

THE NFB Studio D, under executive producer Kathleen Shannon, commonly called the Women's Unit, is looking for scripts by women. Dramatic fiction, five to fifteen minutes long, will be considered, and if chosen, the writer will be paid the scale rate of \$600 and be able to work with directors. Send your efforts to NFB Studio D, P-43, P.O. Box 6100, Montreal H3C 3H5.

ACTRA The Association of Canadian Radio and Television Artists recently followed board

of directors' elections by choosing the new two-year-term executive. The Board met in Toronto in late January to select these National Officers and Executive. President is Toronto's Donald R. Parrish, who was re-elected. William Fulton of the Maritimes was re-elected First Vice-President. Victor Knight of Montreal was re-elected Second Vice-President. Re-elected Treasurer was Lorraine Thomson of Toronto, Executive members chosen were Roy Brinson of B.C., Jack Goth of Calgary, and Bernard Cowan of Toronto. The Writers' Council includes Jack Gray (Chairman), Grace Butt, Len Peterson, David Watmough, Robert Gardiner. The Awards Committee includes Pierre Berton, Richard Davidson and Lorraine Thomson.

CANADA COUNCIL grants to filmmakers - up to \$6000 plus a travel allowance - were awarded to Karey Asselstine of Winnipeg, Serge Beauchemin of Piopolis, Quebec, Bruce Emil-

son of Toronto, Vincent Grenier of Quebec, and Anne Pritchard of Montreal.

At the C.S.C. February meeting in Toronto the guest speaker was Professor W. Edward Carswell of the University of Toronto, and his topic was color, an area in which he's long been an expert... Ted Kotcheff will make **Dick and Jane** for corelease by Columbia Pictures. It's a 1930s comedy about a middle class couple who become robbers in order to finance keeping up appearances. The final budget is interesting: it's \$4,250,000, or three-and-a-half times what Kotcheff had for **Duddy Kravitz**. Or is it? It seems that after above the line and studio costs are deducted, Kotcheff has only \$1.3 million for actual production, not much more than **Duddy's** total budget. And he's got a shorter shooting schedule... Don't forget to watch **Home Movies** on the CBC at 8:30 March 17.

Stephen Chesley

ONTARIO

The assault against anything as frivolous as 'culture' continues in Canada's progressive province, as the government removes one foot from its mouth only to place the other one securely in. The Ontario Economic Council, a group of men with the collective vision of a mole, stated in a report that culture is a matter of economics, a luxury for rich and heavily populated countries but not something Canada can afford - and, if you can believe they really said it - especially when American culture is so readily available.

In retort, I'll just quote the usually yellowed journalism of the *Toronto Star* which said, in a rare enlightened moment, "The council simply overlooks the fundamental point that culture is basic to a nation, and that without a distinct cultural identity a nation has little if anything to hold it together. Canadian national unity and a distinct Canadian culture go hand in hand."

Pursuing the economic theme, the government, as I stated before, has ordered The Ontario Arts Council to a five percent

budget increase in each year over the next three years. With our present inflation rate, that means that in three years they'll have about 12 per cent less than they do now to work with. And no new programs can be initiated. The arts community has begun to speak up, and a combined letter from Toronto Arts Productions, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Art Gallery of Ontario, points out that if these institutions are to adhere to Federal guidelines and pay an eight per cent increase, the five per cent budget increases from OAC will oblige them to cut back activities, thus creating unemployment, and depriving people in general, too. A letter to Premier Davis from Arts Council officials protesting the limitation points out, among other things, that the allocation to the Toronto Symphony alone returns 120% to government coffers, because of taxes and such.

In another corner we see, through the mists, the brilliant work of the Ontario Royal Commission on Violence in the Media. This group is bustling about the province listening to views

from the public in a series of hearings. But the hearings begin with a film – very well done, as usual, by Insight Productions – that blatantly advocates everything from censorship to the concluding fact that of course violence in the media affects society adversely. One could ask, if they've already made up their minds, why have a commission? The answer is easy: a cheap political ploy during the recent election, and another way to waste a million dollars.

But what's a million dollars to a province with an annual budget of several billions? Let's look at the total largess of the Arts Council: about six and a half million per year, and they've been limited to only five per cent increase. In another corner, too, we have the chaos of Wintario, the provincial lottery. It's been a windfall for the government: \$29 million profit since last May. The money was earmarked for culture and recreation, and is to be dispersed throughout the province to improve those areas. But so far only \$7.5 million has been given out, and barely any of it to professional groups. One theatre group out of forty in Toronto has received money: the Arts Council has been cut back; the deputy minister in charge has been replaced; and official communication from the ministry to applicant groups is insulting. And any request involving the arts is processed through Wintario and then the Arts Council, thus increasing the paper work of OAC's already overburdened personnel.

Production

It's that time of year again, when reatures are being finished up or planned rather than being shot, and so we find Don Shebib signing Hagood Hardy to do the theme and sound track for **Second Wind** and mixing final tracks, and Murry McLaughlan filling the same role for Don Owen's **Partners**. On the planning front, David Cronenberg is working on *Mosquito*, a script he completed some time ago and which Cinepix is very interested in, and Beryl Fox and Annette Cohen have obtained the rights to Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. Latter was in American hands until the option expired recently, and Fox and Cohen picked it up. There was much furor, mostly on Atwood's part,



Jeff Lynas

that American's had grabbed the rights the first time; she complained that Canadians didn't care and wouldn't put up enough money.

Moreland-Latchford Mini-Movies, a series of fifteen four-minute films for educational use, are ready for purchase or rental. Each film covers a special theme for primary and junior students, and the purpose of the series is to encourage children to take a second look at some every day happenings around them. They come complete with curriculum guides. Series won a Silver Medal at the International Film and TV Festival... Media Lab is working on a half-hour called **The Child as Actor**, with Jeff Lynas of **Breaking Point** and **Lies My Father Told Me**. And they've sold **Wilderness Nomads** to Imperial Oil who will back a 35 mm blow-up for theatrical release.

TV concentrates mainly on tape production in these dark days, and at the CBS a new half-hour series is being made in the comedy vein by the Variety department. *The Frankie Howard Show* stars the British comedian as an immigrant confronting the rigours of new life in Canada: Like sending a letter back home, I hope... On OECA is *The Resources Game*, a ten part series begun February 8 on energy problems. Each twenty-minute show pits two contestants of opposing views against each other... On film at the CBC is another series of *Sidestreet* shows. The concept has been revamped under producer Brian Walker to allow more participation by new leads Donnelly Rhodes and Jonathan Welsh in the action. Episodes have been directed by Peter Carter, Paul Lynch and Don Haldane.

Stephen Chesley

QUEBEC

STATISTICS. Figures on the films released for the first time in Montreal are available for the year 1975 in *Inter*, Vol. X, no. 1, the bulletin of the Office des Communications Sociales.

Of the 589 films released, 212 or 36% come from the U.S.A. The other films come from (in decreasing order of importance) France (18.9%), Italy (10%), England (7.8%) and Canada (4.9%). Other countries represent 22.4% of the total.

The OCS, which is sponsored by the Catholic church and which awards moral and aesthetic points to films, has co-related the distribution company with the country of origin of a given film and its artistic merit. Cinepix leads the others with the greatest number of worthless pictures: 36 to Art-Film's 20. No cause and effect relation should be drawn from the fact that Cinepix also distributed the greatest number of Canadian films: 7 to Mutuel's 3. It should be said that Cinepix simply distributes the most films: 89 in 1975, compared to France Film's 56, Astral's 48 and Mutuels' 39. To find an American major, one must drop to seventh place in the list: United Artists with 23 films in circulation in 1975.

Another table compares the quality of films in relation to their country of origin. Canada maintains a high standard: 3-very good, 11-good, 11-average, 3-mediocre and 1-worthless. Of the 29 Canadian films shown, 23 were produced in Quebec, 4 in English. And although the U.S.A. leads the pack in quality films (3-remarkables and 9-very goods), it swamps us in trash (33-mediocre and 85-worthless). Lastly, there is a table which traces the increase or decrease of the quantity of films coming from a given country over the last 15 years.

LABOR RELATIONS. Trouble is brewing in Quebec. The technicians' union, Le Syndicat National du Cinéma, sent out its new regulations, to be effective on April 1, early in February. The response from the producers was swift and unequivocal: some forty companies sent word to the SNC that they would

not respect the new regulations come April.

The situation is at a standstill. In the past, the SNC had negotiated with the Association des producteurs de films du Québec but the negotiations were not fruitful and were terminated by the APFQ without a settlement. It was then up to each company to negotiate individually with the union.

The producers do not object to the salary demands in the proposed Collective Agreement. The bone of contention seems to be the role of the technicians and what is perceived as the usurpation of the responsibilities of the producer by the crew. At this writing, no major feature production is slated for filming after April 1.

CINEVISION. Important changes were made on Feb. 3 concerning Cinevision Ltd. of Montreal. Once the most important equipment rental house in Montreal, it has given up this activity and has as its sole asset a 50% interest in Eli Landau's American Film Theater.



Mel Hoppenheim

The rental activities of the company were put up for public tender by the accounting firm Clarkson and Gordon. Mel Hoppenheim, once president of Cinevision, acquired sole ownership of the rental division. This Quebec based company is now called Panavision (Canada) Ltée Ltd. Although Panavision has leased its name there is no internal involvement or investment in the new company. Pana

vision (Canada) continues to have offices in Toronto and Vancouver.

TRIPS. Gilles Carle, Carole Laure and Serge Losique are in Mexico from Feb. 26 to March 4 for a retrospective of Carle's films. Losique, director of the Conservatory of Cinematographic Art at Concordia University (the old Sir George Williams University), has organized the program.

Arthur Lamothe, director, is in France from Feb. 12 to March 12 showing the six films he has just finished with and about the Indians in Quebec's North-East. Louis Marcorelles, critic in *Le Monde*, has written an important article on Lamothe. The trip was organized by the French Union of Lay Educational Associations and received a grant of \$4,211 from the Ministry of Communication under the aegis of the general direction of cinema.

Distribution

NFB. The second feature by Marcel Carrière, **Ti-Mine, Bernie pis la gang** was supposed to be released in late March by Films Prospec Inc., a new independent distribution company. Unable to find theater space for the film, the release is postponed until April or September. In September, another NFB fea-

ture **J.A. Martin photographe** by Jean Beaudin should be ready for release.

MUTUEL. Denis Héroux's multi-national film **Né pour l'enfer (Born for Hell)** will be released by Les Films Mutuels in four theaters in Montreal as well as in St. Jean, St. Jérôme and Joliette on March 12. Ambassador, who has distribution rights for the English version of the film, will open in two Montreal theaters on the same evening. The film was shot in Germany and Ireland and was inspired by the murder of eight nurses in Chicago by a killer who had "born for hell" tattooed on his arm... On March 26, Mutuel will release **Chanson pour Julie**, a low-budget film by Jacques Vallée, produced by Les Productions Pierre Lamy with the help of the CFDC. Jean-Pierre Ferland, one of Quebec's most important singers and song writers, plays the lead and had a hand in the scenario.

CINEPIX has a few CFDC low-budget films in the wings. **The Supreme Kid** by Peter Bryant should be released sometime this spring. As for Leonard Yakir's **The Mourning Suit**, the promotional material is being written but the release date isn't yet final.

Connie Tadros

THE PRAIRIES

If you have ever sat on a jury picked to judge the level of craft in Canadian film, then you will know that the areas of least competence - and perhaps concern - are sound, script and music. Until the country's professional writers and composers turn their hand to film there is little that can be done to save us from the ungrammatical, the prosaic, and the ubiquitous guitar. But there are some things that can be done about the quality of the soundwork in film. The first is to make people realize that sound is as much a part of a film as image is; the second is to give aspiring soundpersons the theoretical and practical knowledge they need in order to be able to provide an editor with good sound.

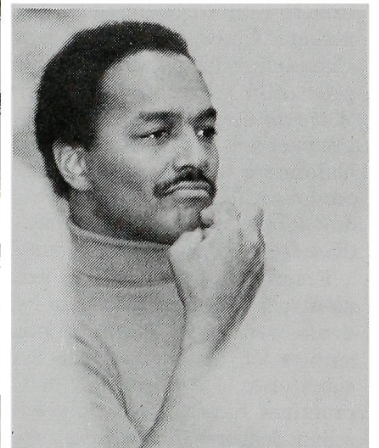
AMPIA is attempting to do both of these things by organizing a sound seminar which will be held at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in Edmonton on March 13 and 14, 1976. The principal speaker will be Patrick Spence-Thomas, who runs his own sound studio in Toronto, and he will be helped by Art Hamer of Cine Audio Ltd. and Don Paches, a freelance soundman. Mr. Spence-Thomas' expenses are being paid by a grant from the Film Development Office of the Alberta Government, for which we may thank Mr. Ross.

The seminar will cover such topics as the theory of sound, synchronization and recording techniques; and it will include practical demonstrations of the techniques and the equipment that have been discussed. If this seminar is as successful as the lighting seminar that was organized by AMPIA last year, then we can confidently expect an improvement in the quality of the sound that editors in the province will have to deal with.

In addition to the sound seminar there are two other important items of news to report. The first is that Cine Audio Ltd. is now equipped to process Eastman Color Negative (ECN 11) and Eastman Positive 11 (7383), which makes the Alberta based laboratory competitive with the laboratories in Toronto and Vancouver. The second item is that Fil Fraser of Fraser Films Ltd. has fixed March 14 as the commencement date for

the shooting of **Why Shoot the Teacher?** This feature is the first in a series of features that Mr. Fraser intends to produce with the help of the CTV Television Network: the series will include a film based upon Maria Campbell's book *Halfbreed* and one from an as yet untitled script by W.O. Mitchell.

Why Shoot the Teacher? is a film taken from Max Braithwaite's novel of the same name. The script for the film was written by the playwright James De Felice who, in addition to his work as a dramatist, has written a book on Carol Reed's film **Odd Man Out**. The director is Canadian Silvio Narizzano, whose titles include **Georgy Girl, Blue and Loot**. The first lead actor is Bud Cort, who played in **Harold and Maude** and **Brewster McCleod**; the second lead is yet to be decided. Except for the first and second leads the casting will be done in Alberta and all the backup technical crew will be from the Alberta Industry.



Fil Fraser

Fil Fraser and Larry Herzog of CTV are the producers of the film; the associate producer is Ted Kotcheff; the production manager is Les Kimber. The project is receiving its financial support from, among others, CTV, who have the television rights to the film, and Famous Players Theatres. It is both Mr. Fraser's and Mr. Herzog's goal to prove that Alberta can support a viable feature film industry. One cannot but believe that **Why Shoot the Teacher?** is one of the most important steps in the proof that has been taken to date.

Peter Haynes

Comraderie (sic) and Canadian Content

A "sister" periodical has just published its Sept.-Oct. 1974 issue. This periodical belongs to a distinguished Montrealer and receives some grants from provincial and federal agencies; but in content, heart and mind, the magazine turns desperately toward Hollywood. It's not surprising then that the information on Canadian films in this last issue totalled eight inches ... no doubt an effort to accommodate Mr. Faulkner's quota on Canadian content and to appease the Canadian nationalists!

Better yet, this "sister" publication managed to more than double its Canadian content by launching an attack on **Cinema Canada**. It seems we lack "comraderie" (sic) and are soon to be responsible for the absence of Canadian content in the "sister" publication. Needless to say, someone has an uneasy conscience.

Interested readers can write to **Cinema Canada** for copies of the attack and of our response (Cinema Canada, Box 398, Outremont Station, Montreal).