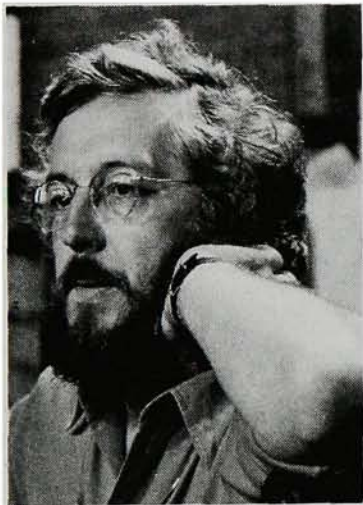


FILM NEWS

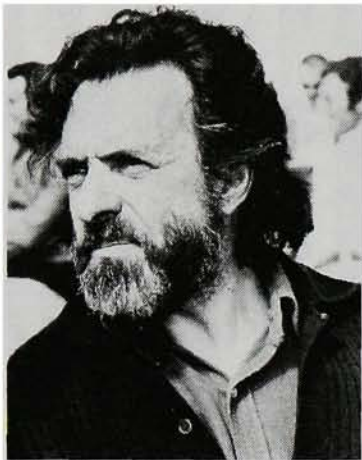
Production

One of the most interesting developments in feature financing has just been announced: Allan King has secured two-thirds of the budget for **Who Has Seen the Wind?**, to be shot in Saskatchewan, from the CFDC and the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation in equal parts. It's the first time a province has invested in a feature, and the arrangement, it is hoped, will set a precedent. Shooting is planned from August 16 to October 15, from a script by King's wife Patricia Watson, with Budge Crawley as executive producer. King will produce and direct. The million-dollar budget will be spent partly in Saskatchewan — at least one-third of it — thus returning the government's contribution as an investment in the province. It is also hoped, according to John Messer, the minister in charge of the crown corporation, that the government participation will stand as a way of preserving Saskatchewan's rural life.



Allan King

The film will be shot on location there and as many Saskatchewan film people as possible will work on it. As part of the agreement, the company will also hold filmmaking workshops at the University of Regina while shooting. It's been a long time coming for Saskatchewan-native King, who's been trying to put the project together for years, but couldn't come up with the budget; it now looks like he will. At one time he tried to interest the CBC in a five-



Arthur Hiller

part serial, which would subsequently be re-cut into a feature, but they refused.

The CFDC, as of April 1st, has officially raised the total budget amount for the low-budget program to \$145,000. And they're trying to establish a mid-range level somewhere around two hundred and fifty thousand for special participation.

Other projects now fairly set are **Goldenrod**, set to go in Calgary on May 24 with Harvey Hart directing and Gerry Arbeid producing for Film Funding; Daryl Duke is shooting **Shadow of the Hawk** in B.C. for John Kemeny; a four-month shoot is planned for Harold Greenberg's **David Copperfield** musical in Victoria this year; and CTV and Fil Fraser of Edmonton have two more projects in planning stages after **Why Shoot the Teacher?** . . . Larry Dane plans to shoot **The Hunt** this year; pic was postponed last summer. . . Allan Eastman would like to produce a CFDC low budget suspense script that Peter Jobin has written. . . Arthur Hiller is scouting B.C. locations for a railroad pic. . . Bob Schultz has three feature projects in the works in Toronto. One is **The Monkey**, a gothic tale based on a short story by a Danish writer, and George Jonas is working on the script. Schultz works in commercials and TV, having recently made a CBC **Musicamera** show of a children's opera. . . Otto Preminger has hired Ring Lardner Jr. to write the script for his Norman Bethune feature, to be titled **Blood on Wheels: The Story of Norman Bethune**. Preminger

bought the rights to Roderick Stewart's recently published biography of Bethune.

In TV land Kate Reid is currently working in a **Sidestreet** episode and an hour drama for CBC. . . Jack Humphrey and Louis del Grande, now writing and producing **King of Kensington**, have written and are casting a comedy pilot called **Three's a Crowd**. It's about a Vancouver woman who feels finally free, until her two grown-up children move back in. . . David Cronenberg is writing and directing a half-hour drama for the **Peep** slot on CBC. It's about motorcycle mania. . . Nancy Ryley is spending two years working on her CBC documentary on the Group of Seven. . . Donald Brittain's ninety-minute NFB-CBC special on writer Malcolm Lowry, **Volcano**, is to be shown in April, and features Richard Burton as the voice of Lowry. Burton was chosen because Lowry's wife Marjorie says they sound alike. . . CTV has begun a weekly half-hour show with singer-comedian Rolf Harris. Time slot is Sunday at 6:30.

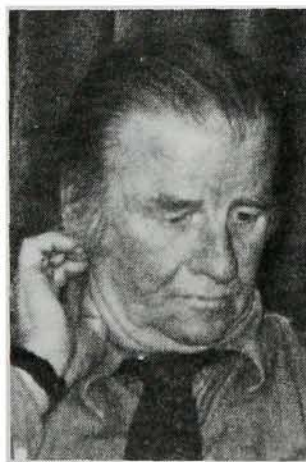
International Film Distributors has picked up Ed Hunt's **Point of No Return** for distribution. . . Don Shebib's **Second Wind** is set to open the Plaza II

cinema in Toronto as the inaugural attraction at the new Famous Players twin. Date is tentatively April 9.

Patrick Lee will direct **Pulling Phones**, a half-hour comedy about those 'unsung heroes' contracted to remove phones from just-vacated premises. Camera will be handled by Mark Irwin, sound by Bryan Day, editing by William Purchase, and Scott Crane will be production manager.

Festivals

ANIMATION. Canada has scored a coup in the international festival field by landing the World Animation Competition for 1976. To be held in the National Arts Centre from August 10-15, as part of Ottawa 76, which is run by the Canadian Film Institute, it's the first time the fest will be held in North America. Previous sites have been Anney and Zagreb. The fest will be operated by the CFI with co-operation from many public and private sector film agencies. The official sponsoring groups are the Association internationale du film d'animation (ASIFA) and the Fédération internationale des associations de producteurs

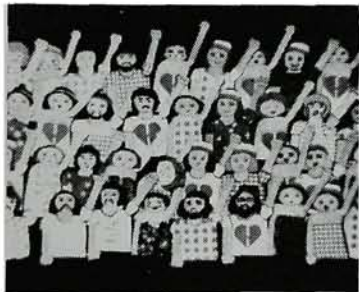


Our heartiest congratulations to Budge Crawley who was awarded an Oscar for his documentary feature *The Man Who Skied Down Everest*. In his words, this American prize, given to a Canadian film

made by a Japanese crew on the Nepalese mountain of Everest, may seem incredible but it's true. And it seems a fitting prize for a producer, so long devoted to making films — all kinds of films — and so actively interested in the growth and development of the Canadian film industry.

de films (FIAPF). It's the objective of the fest to further development of animation as an art and as a business. An international jury - there's no pre-selection jury - will see all the films entered and will set its own regulations for which films will be shown out of competition. Categories will be announced; this year an additional category, animation for commercials, has been added. The daily program will include morning and afternoon retrospectives, out of competition screenings, study sessions, and, during the evenings, competition screenings. Improved projection facilities will be installed in the Arts Centre in time for the fest. Festival Director is Wayne Clarkson; Frederick Manter is Executive Director of the CFI, and Harris Kirshenbaum is Director of Public Relations.

AMATEUR FILM. The Canadian International Amateur Film Festival will be held in Ottawa July 21-24, and entries are invited. Deadline is May 1, and judging will take place during June, with finalists to be screened during the fest, and the winner announced and shown on Awards Night July 24. A tour of some of the films will follow. Three of the judges have been announced: *Movie Maker* editor Tony Rose, Mrs. M. Conneely of Chicago, and Jack W. Rudell of Toronto. For more info write Mrs. Betty Peterson, 4653 Dundas St. West, Islington, Ontario M9A 1A4.



Les Films Québec Love

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY and Quebec Love Films are organizing Canadian Animated Film Week at Cinéma Elysée in Montreal from July 4-10. It's to be part of the festival of Canadian films running at the cinema during July. Deadline for entries is May 1, and any frame-by-frame film for cinema or TV in 16 or 35mm is eligible. Write 842 de Lagachetière est, Montreal H2L 2N2.

REFOCUS is the biggest student-run photography, film and video festival in the U.S., and it's held at the University of Iowa in the spring and fall. This April 16-25 will feature a strong Canadian contingent, along with the regular American efforts and premieres. Claude Jutra and Don Shebib will appear in person, and among the Canadian films shown will be **Second Wind, Goin' Down the Road, Between Friends, Bikers, Good Times Bad Times**, all by Shebib; **Pour le meilleur et pour le pire, Mon Oncle Antoine, Wow, Kamouraska, A tout prendre**, and selected shorts, all by Jutra; and **Wedding in White, Duddy Kravitz** and others...

The Toronto Public Libraries sponsored a free Canadian Film Festival at various branches from March 15-19. Shown were Peter Pearson's **Paperback Hero**, Allan King's **A Married Couple, Legend, Bloodsugar**, and **La tendresse ordinaire...**



La tendresse ordinaire

At Hemisfilm 76 in San Antonio, Texas, during February, **Mon Oncle Antoine** gathered three Awards: Olivette Thibault for Best Actress, Claude Jutra for Best Director, and Jacques Gagnon for Exceptional Juvenile Performance... Rory MacLean's **The Photo Arts Centre** has been selected for showing at the 1976 Los Angeles International Film Exposition... Peter VanUum of Vancouver won first place in the Advertising and Sales Category, Best Cinematography, and overall best in the show at the 17th Annual Industrial Photographic Awards in New York. The film he entered was **Because It's Home**, made for the B.C. Government.

The All-American Press Association, a New York-based group of foreign and domestic journalists, held their 17th Awards recently, and named **Lies My Father Told Me** as Best Foreign Film and Jan Kadar as Best Director... Mean-

while **Lies** has received an Oscar nomination for Ted Allen's screenplay... And the film has been given the Christopher Award by the U.S. Roman Catholic assembly.

Random Notes

The Council of Canadian Filmmakers has submitted a brief to the Royal Commission on Corporate Concentration. It summarizes the Rocca situation and the recent application to the combines investigation, and concludes, "We would like you to consider the market system of the film industry in Canada because we believe it is an outstanding example of corporate concentration which excludes independent Canadian participation and operates contrary to the interest of the Canadian filmmaker and exhibitor, and, by extension, to the public interest."

On another High Level, the Nova Scotia Government will definitely appeal the Gerald McNeil decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. Watch the big time lawyers gather, paid for by the taxpayers... On the Highest Level, the top brass at the CBC, ever adventurous, pulled Michael Tait's **Fellowship** from its scheduled Sunday evening spot, and gave it to individual stations to program as they wished; CBLT in Toronto made it a late show. Despite protests by John Hirsch and Tait and other drama workers, the Brass felt the content to be too *risqué*. Directed by Paul Almond, it's about an Anglican Church breakaway sect that worships evil, and features a crucifixion scene and a scene where a defrocked priest is seduced by a young girl. The keen observer would note that (a) it is based on a true story (b) it was performed on stage at Stratford last year, in prime time (c) on the same night the announcement was made about the change, on the CBC's *House of Pride*, in prime time, viewers witnessed, and were corrupted by, a scene between a couple, unmarried, lying in bed, wherein he, who is a newcomer to the country, offers an exchange: he'll teach her about sex if she teaches him English.

More CBC Notes: The Corporation was subjected to a series of rotating strikes in mid-March, as CUPE signalled their disapproval at the lack of contract negotiations. Negotia-

tions quickly resumed. But soon after, they broke down, both sides remaining at an impasse. The CBC is offering 12.5% and 11.5% in each year of a two-year contract, while the union accepts factfinder Stanley Hartt's proposal of 17% and 8% with a cost-of-living increase in the second year. 4500 employees are affected... CBC internal rating surveys, done by canvassing twenty thousand households, show a drop in *Performance* viewers from 1.2 million to 750,000 as well as a much lower 'Enjoyment' rating in general for the series. *King of Kensington*, on the other hand, boasts over 900,000 viewers and an enjoyment rating higher than that of *Phyllis*, which has twice the number of viewers. This 'Enjoyment' rating indicates how many in the audience liked the show, and it's a more important way of measuring success, because the CBC is not after numbers, but success with the audience a given program is aimed at. But surely the index is a misnomer; you can 'appreciate' a heavy drama without 'enjoying' it, and the index results reflect this...

Contests: The Second CBC TV Drama Writing Contest for College Students is now on. One-hour video scripts - not film - should be submitted by June 30. Judges John Hirsch, David Helwig and Bena Shuster will award three prizes: 3rd is \$500, 2nd is \$750, and 1st is \$1000, which is an option for a year to produce the winning script. Send entries to College Writing Contest, CBC TV Drama Department, Box 500, Station A, Toronto M5W 1E6.

Meetings: The Canadian Society of Cinematographers held their March Toronto meeting with guest Ed Malec, a Technical Sales Rep for Kodak, and reminded members that the deadline for nominations for the executive for out-of-towners is May 8 at the Annual General Meeting... The Toronto Filmmakers Co-op sponsored two evenings in February on the topic Income Tax and the Filmmaker. Guests answered questions on film financing and personal income tax.

Grants: The Ontario Arts Council has announced its annual Screenwriters Grants, worth up to \$3000 each for an individual. Thirty applications were received for this round, and seven were awarded: Ernest F. Boggs, Peter Cooke, Brian Damude,

Larry Fineberg, John Lapointe, Robbie Malenfant, John A. Turnbull... Norman Klenman and A.M. Louis Portugais received Senior Arts Grants in Film from the Canada Council...

Canada Council Explorations Program grants were awarded for film projects to L.A. Ewas-shen of Creston, B.C. for a Doukhobors film; P.A. McDonnell of Regina for a film on children's playgrounds; Martin Heath of Toronto for a mobile cinema/theatre to tour isolated areas; Vortex of Toronto for a film exploring different facets of man's relationship with space; Love Films Animation of Montreal for research for a film of a picture of Montreal through the language of its people; Raoul Volant of Sept-Îles for a video documentary of the Montagnais people...

The Video division of the Council awarded grants totalling \$220,000 to groups and individuals. Organizations include Vidéographe of Montreal, Art Official of Toronto, Teled Video Service Association of Halifax, Metro Media Association of Greater Vancouver, Sonographe of Montreal, and Institut d'art contemporain of Montreal. Individual recipients include Richard Boutet of Montreal, Howard Alk of Ottawa (director of Crawley's *Janis*), Helen Goldwin of Vancouver, Kim Andrews of Toronto, le Group Télécap of Montreal, and Christian Chazel of Montreal.

Aid Request: The B.C. Early Film Project, funded by the Canada Council Explorations program, is looking for information about any film made in B.C. before 1939. The goal is to catalogue the films, not acquire them. Any gauge is being sought, even home movies. Researchers will visit if you contact the Project at Box 171 Saanichton, B.C. V0S 1M0 or (604) 652-2719.

Literati: The Canadian Film Institute in Ottawa has published the third volume in the series cataloguing Canadian Feature production. This part covers 1964-69, and was compiled by Piers Handling... Eleanor Beattie's revised *Handbook of Canadian Film* is due soon... Bob Fothergill's thematic examination of Canadian film was to have been published by Peter Martin, but has been postponed indefinitely... Martin Knelman has left the Film Critic position at the *Toronto Globe and Mail*; he wants to concentrate on freelancing, his column in

Weekend and theatre articles for *Saturday Night*. He'll be replaced by Robert Martin, who now covers rock music for the paper... The *Toronto Star* brass, defending the paper's coverage of the arts to a group of theatre people, stated that space allowed has been increased by three columns. And an examination will verify that claim. Of course, all the new copy is right off the Associated Press wire and covers American entertainment news.

Appointments and Honors: Claude Jutra celebrated his birthday in March on a CBC set where he's filming *Ada* on location in Toronto. Time was 7:30 a.m. and official guests included Don Shebib, Natalie Edwards and Joe Medjuck... Harry Boyle is officially head of the CRTC, with his term running to 1980... Norman Jewison has been made a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in Toronto. Only fourteen filmmakers have been so honored since the origin of the Academy in 1880... CBC producer Harry Rasky (*Tennessee Williams, Chagall, Jerusalem*) was himself the subject of a one-hour ETV show in New York... CTV has appointed Vicki Blake as manager of its Educational Film Distribution Department... Lionel T. Remillard is the new Director of French Programming in the Educational Media Division of OECA... Norman McLaren was the subject of a film retrospective at the Ontario Film Theatre this winter; his drawings were also displayed... Film musician Charles Hoffman is Artist-in-residence at the Alberta College of Art. His program consists of a series of demonstrations with the overall title of Exploring the Audio-Visual Arts.

Here and There: CTV's Olympic series has been purchased by the BBC. ...*The Neptune Factor* was shown on ABC on March 12th, and for TV was retitled *The Neptune Disaster*... Jack Webb is developing a potential TV series on the RCMP. Of course, it will then be bought by a Canadian network... Harris Kirshenbaum reminds you all that he is accepting films for the CFI-NFB New York programs of showings of independent filmmakers' work to gatherings of distributors. Contact him at the Canadian Film Institute, 75 Albert St., no. 1105, Ottawa K1P 5E7...

Actor Robert Silverman was seriously injured by a car driven by a drunken driver in Toronto recently. He's still in hospital and will take a long time to mend... *Sprockets* returned to CBC Thursday at 10:30 p.m., now that the *Peep* series is over for this year. Sebert Productions' *Just Lather, That's All*, was shown March 11, and the March 25 show featured Julius Kohanyi's *Rodin* and John Gould's *Ancestors III*.

If you're already counting the loot from your film sale to Canadian TV, it would be best to cancel the villa in Spain and cut the yacht down to a rowboat. Rough estimates for prices paid are as follows: For a half-hour show CTV pays \$1500-2500 and CBC \$2500-4000. An hour show will bring \$3000 - 5000 from CTV and \$5000 - 8000 from CBC. A feature sale produces \$10,000-40,000 from CTV and \$8500-12,000 from CBC. For example, CTV purchased several showings of *Why Rock the Boat?* for a reported \$30,000.



Stuart Gillard in *Why Rock the Boat?*

Canada Firsters Take Note: A full-page ad in a recent issue of the show biz bible *Variety* trumpeted a feature as a "100% American Action Picture" with stars Stuart Whitman, John Saxton, and Gayle Hunnicut. It added that the picture was filmed entirely in New York, Montreal and Toronto. And in the centre was a photo of an Ottawa police badge.

Stephen Chesley

ONTARIO

THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD Regional Production Centre is still in process, but certain guidelines are appearing, most of them influenced by budget, which in this case is tight indeed. Work will be done in Super 8, 16mm, and in three-quarter-inch color video. The goal is to involve as many freelancers as possible, and to keep equipment purchases, besides editing, at a minimum. And to try and finance the films on a sponsored level. Head Don Hopkins is currently travelling back and forth between Toronto and Montreal setting things up, and no final decision has been made yet as to space acquisition. So the April 1st start date is obviously not going to be met.

THE LAW has not been idle lately. Representatives of the guardians of our public morals have tramped through the snow of Ottawa to pull the film *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* from the hardtop Rideau Theatre and the Britannia Drive-In. Lest corruption spread, the Rideau replaced *Texas* with *Jaws*, and the Britannia put in a porno flick... And in Sarnia the

manager of the local movie palace showing *The Story of O*



The Story of O

was told by the police to find more suitable fare. The manager had received one complaint about the film, and the police declined to give reasons for the order to withdraw the film. The manager didn't like the picture anyway... The long arm of the law had its fingers slapped in a court case, though. Action had been brought against the former late show on Toronto's CITY TV, *The Baby Blue Movie* show-

ing of **Boccaccio**. The court dismissed the obscenity charges. But of course the damage had already been done. What was to many people a good laugh, and to the financially strapped station a source of high ratings, was taken off the air soon after the charge was laid last year. Another victory for the forces of Right and Justice.

WINTARIO. All of a sudden Wintario has opened the coffers to a flood, and in one day about fourteen million dollars was given out, very little of it to professional cultural organizations... And in Toronto the City Council, despite protestations by Metro Arts rep David Silcox, froze cultural grants at their former level. The interesting thing is that no arts groups protested the freezing, even though total grant requests are double the budget. So now the groups are fighting to get a bigger share of the same size pie.

GLOBAL TV has reported a profit in the last quarter of

1975, mainly due to seasonally high advertising. Overall the network will still show an annual loss, although it will be substantially lower than expected. The goose may be ready to start laying the inevitable golden eggs... And whatever happened to Al Bruner?... On the ratings level Global has moved up significantly, mainly due to Wintario shows and reruns or new foreign shows... CBC and CTV have increased their ratings in the crucial Toronto battleground, but most of the increase comes from American shows.

THE TORONTO FILM-MAKERS' CO-OP has revised its fee schedule, to charge ten dollars for membership on a quarterly basis, instead of annually... Filmmaker Kenneth Anger visited Cinebooks, York University and The New Yorker Theatre in February, to promote his book *Hollywood Babylon* and to screen some films.

Stephen Chesley

by Brigitte Sauriol but today it is ready to give up its distribution rights. The same story is heard at Cinepix which invested \$15,000 in Pierre Harel's **Vie d'ange rapt de star**.

TI-CUL TOUGAS, which promises to be one of the more successful of the low-budget efforts, and which has a \$30,000 investment from Les Cinémas Unis (The Famous Players branch office in Quebec), has just lost its distributor, Prospe. Produced by ACPAV, directed by Jean-Guy Noel, the film has yet to line up another distributor.

FRANCE FILM seems to be honoring its commitment to distribute **La piastre** by Alain Chartrand. The opening is scheduled for the Complexe Desjardins but the building isn't yet finished, and so the opening has been postponed. The target date now seems to be April 16. What is needed for all these films is a distribution system adapted to the audience which is receptive to them. No one seems ready to invest the \$15,000 or \$20,000 necessary to have a Montreal première with all the appropriate publicity. At the CFDC the search is going on for this new system, and the experience of **Jos Carbone** in Chicoutimi will be watched with interest.

ASTRAL-MONTREAL. After six years with Astral, Claude Chené is leaving his post as general manager for Quebec. The new head of Astral (the distribution branch of Astral Bellevue Pathé) will be Maurice Attias.

SNC. The Syndicat National du Cinéma has sent a letter to Robert Andras, Minister of Manpower and Immigration, deploring unemployment among film technicians, and taking Ms. Marie-Josée Raymond to task for employing a non-union crew with a majority of foreign technicians for her co-production **Diane**. The SNC states that 60% of its members are looking for work and living from unemployment compensation. It wonders why it was not consulted by the Manpower Office before work permits were given to the foreign technicians, stating that precedents for this consultation were established when **Tony Saita** and **The Little Girl Down**

the Lane were shot in Montreal. In these latter productions, the quota established by the SNC (1 foreign technician for 3 Québécois technicians) was respected. Producer Raymond answers simply that the co-production agreements do not oblige producers to go through the unions to find technicians, and that as the investments in the film are 70% Italian and 30% Canadian, this proportion of technicians was respected. She mentions also the difficulties in dealing with the SNC since the union hoped to force acceptance of a collective agreement on April 1 which the producers found totally unacceptable.

RADIO-QUEBEC, the provincial educational television agency, will have to get along with a reduced budget this year if the National Assembly adopts the budget submitted to it for the fiscal year '76-77. Down 3% from \$16,345,000 to \$15,818,000, the budget reflects the transfer of government sponsored films from Radio-Quebec (Ministry of Communications) to the Ministry of Education. Last year, the production of these films cost \$1,164,000. Communications Minister Denis Hardy has stated that next year should be one of "reflection" for Radio-Québec so that it may become the "most powerful expression of the Québécois community".



M. Denis Hardy

DGCA. Meanwhile, the Direction Générale du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel is becoming that bureaucracy which was promised by the Law Concerning the Cinema, voted last June. With nearly 200 on the staff, the DGCA will have a budget of \$2,832,400 for its operations. This is an increase of \$1,524,000 over the combined budgets of the various agencies which did similar tasks last year. \$1,319,200 is set aside for the coordination of governmental productions (as opposed to

QUEBEC

RSL PRODUCTIONS has acquired the rights to Stephen Vincer's novel **In Praise of Older Women** and plans to turn it into a \$1.5 million film, directed by George Kaczender. This is the first film by RSL, and Robert Lantos will be producing with Stephen J. Roth as associate producer. Filming should start in the fall; the CFDC is participating.

DISTRIBUTION. Quebec's low-budget features are having a tough time getting to the people. The latest distribution victim is **Chanson pour Julie** whose première was scheduled for March 26. Not only has Films Mutuels put off the opening of the film, it has backed out of its distribution deal, leaving the film without a distributor. And all this despite the press conference which Mutuel had given to announce the opening and to introduce Jacques Vallée, director, to the press. Although Pierre David, president of Mutuel, will make no comment other than to say that the rupture had nothing

to do with the quality of the film, it seems that personal difficulties between David and Jacques Ferland, the songster-star-and-screenwriter for **Chanson**, led to the break. Cinepix is now evaluating the situation.

JOS CARBONE is another low-budget film; it opens simultaneously in Chicoutimi and Jonquière in the Lac St-Jean area where it was filmed by Cinémond with Hugues Tremblay directing. Not having been able to find a Montreal distributor, ACPAV (Association Coopérative des Productions Audio-Visuelles), which helped in the production, is responsible for the regional distribution aided by the CFDC.

THE CFDC has long since given up insisting that low-budget films have confirmed distribution before they are produced. But the result, at least in Quebec, seems to be that these films may well be denied any normal distribution and promotion. Distributors, even those who have invested in the films, are wary. Mutuel put \$10,000 in the ACPAV production **L'ab-**

\$627,900 last year) and \$1,120,700 for distribution (compared to \$256,400 last year). The distribution monies should permit a wider circulation of the films made by the defunct Office de Film du Québec, and will help to build the Cinémathèque Nationale foreseen in the law. Only \$392,500 is earmarked for "information". This money will go to the classification and information sector which replaces the Cinema Supervisory Board and thus represents a reduction of \$31,200 compared to last year.

L'INSTITUT. No mention is made, however, of the budget

which should go to the Institut de Cinéma Québécois. The Institut is made up of representatives of the private sector, and should have about \$4,000,000 to allocate for the production and distribution of films. The members of the Institut have not been chosen though the word has gone out that they will be announced before April 1.

APFQ. The Association des Producteurs de Films du Québec will hold its annual convention on April 9, 10 and 11 in Quebec City. Guest speakers include Denis Hardy, Minister of Communications in the prov-

ince, who will open the convention Friday evening, and André Fortier, Under-secretary of State, who will speak Saturday night. The convention includes two days of discussion and the topics include labor relations, governmental agencies (especially the re-organization of the Direction Générale du Cinéma) and the future of production for television.

RETROSPECTIVES. The Cinémathèque Québécois is organizing a retrospective of Gilles Carle's works. It has published the program, which will run from March 30 to April 9, and

some accompanying texts written by Carle. Meanwhile the Cinéma Outremont ran a series of films by Arthur Lamothe from March 26 through March 30. These included **Carcajou ou le péril blanc, chronique des Indiens du Nord-Est.** The showings were concluded by a discussion, organized by the Conseil Québécois pour la Diffusion du Cinéma entitled "Are We Collaborators in a Genocide?"

Connie Tadros

CBC Drama-ACTRA Confrontation

by Stephen Chesley

If you take an incredibly unsophisticated political move and position it against a bureaucratic weight, what do you have? A CBC Drama-ACTRA confrontation, of course. The situation played itself out in full public view, and all the real issues, and the chances to air them, were lost.

During the second week in March, casting was completed for a CBC tape drama based on the life of Canadian suffragette Nellie McClung. The lead role was accepted by American actress Kathleen Widdoes, and when the word went out, several members of the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) picketed the CBC Drama building in Toronto to protest the choice of an American to play a Canadian heroine. Drama chief John Hirsch replied that twenty-four actresses had been considered for the role, and, because of other commitments or aesthetic reasons, none were suitable. So Widdoes was offered the part.

Radio host Peter Gzowski, usually level-headed, contacted Widdoes in New York and fairly castigated her for taking the place of a Canadian; he said that Frances Hyland had only earned \$12,000 in her best year, and wasn't it disgraceful that Widdoes was denying the opportunity for a Canadian actress to work? Widdoes replied that she, too, was unemployed at the time, that she earns the same amount every year and has to fight for work too, and made some other points, all in a lady-like manner.

Events escalated when ACTRA decided to deny Widdoes a work permit to appear in the show, and simultaneously made any ACTRA member who appeared with her subject to a fine. They couldn't appear with her anyway, because the immigration department wouldn't let her in the country; the CBC relies on the ACTRA permit to bring foreigners in (twenty roles out of several hundred cast last year, not including extras).

CBC brass cancelled the show, stating that the reason was ACTRA's refusal to grant the permit to Widdoes, and adding that any further questions should be addressed to ACTRA.

But the real story is not as simple, and it involves crucial inhibitions on CBC Drama and ACTRA people. To begin with, this confrontation was probably more severe because of a minor skirmish that took place recently over the casting of another American, Lois Smith (Who?), in the role of Stacey, the character created by novelist Margaret Laurence, and to be the subject of a one-hour drama. At that time, the CBC Casting Department went through the same futile search in Canada, and felt they had to go to the States. It's interesting that both Stacey and McClung are in the same age group for performers - about forty years old. If you consider that any actress of that age has made a definite mark in her profession - as opposed to thirty-year-olds who are still in the establishing process - and if she has not, has left the profession entirely, the number of actresses to choose from is not great.

And if you check a calendar and a list of summer festival companies, you will see that most of the actresses in this age group are committed solidly to rehearsals in March for summer festivals of theatre; and the main site is Stratford, whose massive company needs all this type of talent it can get, and which is already on tour in March.

If you're arranging a TV shoot based on a Canadian heroine, there is no doubt that a Canadian actress should be used. Why, then, does the CBC not simply re-schedule the show to accommodate the right performer? They can't. Every piece of equipment and every crew is so tightly booked that re-arranging a schedule, especially in tape, is not even considered. It's a matter of budget and dollars, and the squeeze is on CBC's inadequate facilities and inadequate budget to such an extent that they are virtually forced to go with a show in a time slot assigned much too far in advance.

The answer is to cast the part, if it is so crucial, and then assign the slot, and do it way in advance, certainly. But the real issue is whether John Hirsch and CBC who are supporting Canadian efforts, despite some grave lapses in judgment, can be expected to



fulfill such a large mandate with the financial and physical resources at their disposal.

They are trying, to be sure. And if Hirsch's first fifteen months have proven anything, it is that there is an incredibly large, varied, and talented fund of creative personnel in this country.

But ACTRA blew it, too. After letting the Stacey episode go by with only a murmur, they pounced on Widdoes. But Widdoes performed last summer at Stratford; no protest was lodged. And Jessica Tandy is going to play a character based on a Canadian bestseller, the novel *The Book of Eve* at Stratford this summer; no protest was lodged. The wrong choice was made to publicize a weighty situation, and thereby lost a great amount of effectiveness. A better opportunity would be the CBC-ACTRA contract negotiations; the current agreement expired this March, and the timing couldn't be better to raise the issue of who plays whom.

The rest of the McClung company aren't too happy about the cancellation. Twenty support roles were cast, and no actor would dare work in the production. ACTRA forced CBC into a position that left Hirsch no choice, given all the other circumstances I've outlined. And nowhere was any mention made of the influence of aesthetic considerations: ultimately the producer, director, and CBC Drama brass do the casting, and it's reality that personal opinion, prejudice and judgment are as important as the actor's agent's hustle, the timing of the shoot, and so on.

ACTRA does, however, have a legitimate grievance (although not really against the CBC directly) that has been completely overlooked. The jump on Widdoes was severe for another reason, and nationalism is put aside when discussing it. For years Americans have had easy access to Canadian film and especially to stage roles. There are really no bars at the border to them.

But if a Canadian actor wants to work in the U.S. he has to build up his reputation illegally. The Americans won't issue the coveted 'green card' unless a long period of starvation and a great deal of political pressure are both achieved, and it must be done in Hollywood. So the Canadians you see on U.S. TV are, if in small roles, probably getting paid through a legal friend, and, if in major roles, such as Susan Clark's recent successes, issued the cards after much high level influence, from Americans.

It's a perfect opportunity for CBC to support ACTRA in the union's efforts to either close the border to Americans or open the U.S. to give Canadians equal opportunity to cross. The most glaring example is the touring stage garbage that visits the city arts centres from the U.S. If those American companies would be barred, the pressure by American producers and Canadian theatre operators would make ACTRA's quest more obtainable.

As it is, the union's energy is being squandered and is being applied in a manner that, in a production, would be called amateurish. □

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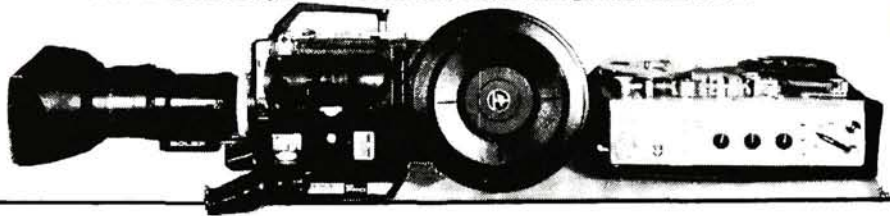
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