

Ferment at the National Film Board

"While I understood the integrity of the film-maker, I felt that the film, in the rather extreme direness and pessimism with which it viewed our society, concluded that the only way this society could be fixed up would be by its complete destruction."

Thus spoke Sydney Newman, Canadian Government Film Commissioner and Chairman of the National Film Board, to a Montreal *Star* reporter in the wake of his controversial decision to halt work on Gilles Groulx' latest film for the NFB, **Vingt-Quatre Heures ou Plus** (Twenty-Four Hours or More).

The Québec press was quick to react with all its fury, and the Montreal film community held a protest meeting shortly before Christmas. Some of those in attendance were Michel Brault, Arthur Lamôthe, Jean-Claude Labrecque, Jacques Leduc, Louis Portugais, Mireille Dansereau, Gilles Groulx and Roger Frappier.

Frappier, a socially committed 27-year-old free-lance filmmaker (**Un Grand Film Ordinaire, Allo Tout L'Monde**) and one of the organizers of the meeting, said that the Groulx affair was just the tip of the iceberg, and that all Québec filmmakers, whether working free-lance, for the NFB, or for private industry, are trapped in a system which forces them to obey the canons of federal and capitalist orthodoxy.

Gilles Groulx' most recent film (of his earlier works, **Le Chat Dans Le Sac** is best known) was shot in 1971, and chronicles events in Quebec during the months of November and December. But those were especially explosive months, and obviously **Vingt-Quatre Heures ou Plus** reflects this.

Sydney Newman bowed to the pressure somewhat and has allowed completion of the film since then, but he also stated publicly that in order to get distribution, the film's sombre tone and political stance will have to be modified. Otherwise, it will join Denys Arcand's **On Est Au Coton** and Jacques Leduc's **Cap d'Espoir**, as yet another NFB film, finished and officially forgotten.

"Of course I regret the loss of the money that it cost," explained Newman. "I can only say that if each year we make about 140 films... I doubt if it represents more than one or two per cent of our total production money. So it's not a significant amount...."

On official orders, even the press hasn't been allowed to see the film, and that's a bit too much, considering the fact that it was made on public money. Gerald Godin, the editor of Québec *Presse*, snuck into an NFB projection booth, and managed to see most of it. He reported that one of the points made

by Groulx is that "it is necessary to overthrow capitalism and establish the new society." The film shows scenes of violent demonstrations during the strike at the Montreal newspaper *La Presse*, and the huge labour rally at the Montreal Forum, where Louis Laberge, president of the Quebec Federation of Labor, urged Québec workers to break the system.

A woman whose husband is accused of killing three supervisors at the Dupont Chemical Company plant in Montreal is interviewed at length. Québec Premier Robert Bourassa is shown in his swimming pool and afterwards talking about how he makes decisions while in the water. Groulx' position is that "to condemn capitalism is not to condemn democracy. In fact, it is a defence of democracy to show that capitalism has become so greedy and rapacious that it is no longer acceptable."



Newman still claims that he is acting in the best interest of the majority of Canadians in keeping them from seeing this film. "I simply have to contain the more exuberant notions about social organization. I want to rock the boat... but I've got to watch that we don't capsize in the process. One of the problems here is trying to defend the Film Board from extreme public censure which might force politicians to say, 'Well, who needs this place; sure it's a beautiful place, it makes lovely films, but if they rock the boat too bloody much, let's get rid of it.' If 15 per cent of my staff are well politicized, creative people, I have to remember the other 85 per cent in whose work there's no overt political view. And I don't want to jeopardize them. It's a question of trying to strike a balance."

The NFB boss thinks that the French-section of the Film Board hasn't made enough of an attempt to make films that communicate effectively with people in English-Canada. One of his basic tenets is that the entire film board is guilty of neglecting to make films that speak "to the ordinary men, who have no particular axe to grind." In the interests of better communications between people on that level, Sydney Newman proposed a major program of 60 films, half to help people speak French, the other half to help people speak English. The NFB's bilingualism series will be ready for adult education classes throughout the country in 1974.

"Second," explains Newman, "I wanted to bring English Canada up to date with the cultural and social changes in Québec. All that Canadians generally know about Québec is that the Québec Premier is asking for more money and the French-Canadians are being difficult again. There is no reason for an Albertan to identify with a Quebecker because he has never been given the touchstones of communication. With this in mind we approached the CBC with the **Adieu Alouette** idea and said: 'How would you like 13 half-hours on Quebec?' The rest is history."

So is the Gilles Groulx affair. And the events his film chronicled. And so are reports that things aren't as smooth behind closed doors at the NFB as Sydney Newman would have us believe. The National Film Board is being decentralized under a new regionalization program, reportedly opposed by Newman. New NFB production quarters will be established in Vancouver, Halifax and Winnipeg, stripping the Montreal headquarters of some of its glory and power. There is talk of broadening the Film Commissioner post now held by the NFB chief. Distributing some of that power among the ten member committee appointed by the Secretary of State, composed of five government chiefs and five industry representatives.

"The new policy, in general, is a very long way from being implemented," explains Newman, "because it involves legislation and these things are not done overnight. At the moment there is an advisory committee... and we are meeting and discussing broad Canadian policy, but what will happen as a result of these deliberations, I cannot predict."

Things are in ferment at the National Film Board and Gilles Groulx' cries of "political censorship" are only a bit more yeast. **Adieu Alouette** is being shown weekly on the CBC to unanimous critical acclaim. But one programme managed to deal with the huge question of the Church in Québec in half-an-hour, while most controversial

Québécois films are usually two, three hours long. Self-analysis is a long, and painful process, but even some Québécois think that those films are awfully boring.

Michel Brault, on the other hand, doesn't think it's too much to expect an English-Canadian to look at the original French-version of *L'Acadie, L'Acadie* for two hours (with subtitles), instead of the English-version, which Sydney Newman decided to 'improve' by chopping forty-five minutes out of it.

And although the National Film Board of Canada is in the middle of producing several series of films to help the two sides of this bilingual country understand each other better, the head of the NFB, Sydney Newman, doesn't speak French, and has given up trying to learn. When asked by Les Wedman, film columnist for the Vancouver Sun, what he would do were the government to insist on bilingualism for civil servants, the Canadian Film Commissioner quipped "Let them fire me. Let them find another pro like me."

NFB's Adieu Alouette series great critical success

The National Film Board's 13 part series on Québec, presently being shown on the CBC television network, has met with unanimous acclaim from the critics. Its title is derived from the theme of saying 'good-bye' to stereotypical misconceptions about Quebec and its people, as typified by the song 'Alouette.' The films are designed to enable English-Canadians to get to know their québécois neighbours better by focusing on the present state of arts and culture in 'la belle provence.' Ian McLaren is executive producer of the series. The films are:

Yvon Deschamps: a loving look at 'the most famous entertainer in Canada' who never performs outside Québec, but there enjoys immense popularity — directed by Ian McLaren.

Québec Film Industry: an exploration of the different aspects of this young industry in terms of culture and new phenomena — directed by Michael Rubbo.

Le Devoir: an hour-long film showing the role played by Québec in the Confederation through its main means of information, the newspaper *Le Devoir* — directed by Roger Blais.

Gilles Vigneault: another hour-long segment of the series (possibly shown in two parts) on the well-known Québec poet and artist, Gilles Vigneault — directed by John Howe.

Roch Carrier's Roots: Québec novelist and playwright (*La Guerre, Yes Sir!*) tells the poignant and absorbing story of his hometown village of Ste-Justine. Also called "The Ungrateful Land", this half-hour, colour record of

rural Québec life was directed by Cynthia Scott.

The Catholic Province: takes a look at the influence the Church had on Québec in the past, and how it's losing its hold on the people today — directed by Bill Weintraub.

The Revolutionaries: portrays the changes in attitudes among the revolutionaries of Québec — directed by Pierre Lasry.

Québec Theatre: a film on Michel Tremblay and André Brassard and their theatrical universe — directed by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre.

Québec Youth Involved in Social Action: describes the participation of young québécois in different projects of social action — directed by Jack Zolov.

La Gastronomie Québécoise: shows why Quebec is known for the best restaurants in North America — directed by Doug Jackson.

The French-Canadian Woman: a contemporary picture of the importance of women in Québec — directed by Les Nirenberg.

The Radicalization of Labour in Québec: depicts the feelings and attitudes of two participants of the labour movement — directed by Fernand Dansereau.

The films were shot in 16mm, colour, and constitute the first third of a larger planned series, which will focus on similar characteristic cultural features, coast-to-coast.

Two features to be shot in B.C.

Kelly Duncan reports from Vancouver that there might still be some hope on the horizon: two feature length films are to be made by Vancouver production houses.

Ray Bentley, President of Tracker Productions, is writing a script with the help of Harold Nuber, on a forthcoming musical comedy called *Summer of Peace and Love*. Another Tracker project in the planning stages is *Valley of the Vanishing Men*, to be shot in the Nahani Valley of the Northwest Territories.

Tracker produced *Legend of Nahani*, a full length colour feature shot in the same location five years ago, and still in U.S. distribution. The film is about the fabled territory of Nahani, "The Headless Valley", and as the legend goes, a shangri-la of tropical climate and vegetation in the Far North. The myth was shattered by subsequent explorers, but Tracker Productions is still getting mileage out of it, now twice around.

The other feature to be shot in B.C. is *Arrow Beach*. Gary Conway, President, and Steven North, Vice President, of Geo Star Productions, hope to have the script, written by Wallace Bennett, in production very soon.

But the biggest flurry of excitement on the West Coast concerns the National

Film Board production facility being set up in Vancouver. Even Sydney Newman was exuberant about it on a recent trip there.

"The present government has opened its purse to us," he is quoted as saying, "which has enabled expansion of the Vancouver production office from one man and a secretary to 17 people, with eight films already made here in the past year and eight more to be made this year."

"And they're not being made by people from Montreal parachuted into Vancouver, but by local blokes," said Newman.

One of the 60 NFB language-films, called *The Egg Story*, was scheduled to start shooting late January, with Eugene Boyko as executive producer. He returned to Vancouver from Montreal to supervise production there. The films will be shown in schools, universities, and on television to teach Canada's two official languages. Bernard Devlin, a Québec filmmaker, is moving to B.C. permanently to work for the regional NFB office.

While in Vancouver, NFB boss Sydney Newman announced plans for two more groups of films to follow the *Adieu Alouette* series, 13 films on different sections of Canada, and another 13 within three years.

"That will mean 39 films as a virtually complete look at exciting personalities of Canada, industrial know-how, tensions of labour; a complete, up-to-date program," explained the head of the Film Board. The films will include an in-depth study of British Columbia.

British Columbia: "SOCIALIST WIN MAY HYPO FILM BIZ OF VANCOUVER"

That's a headline obviously lifted straight from *Variety*, made up by an old-time, Hollywood-movie, cigar-chomping journalist, pounding on his antique typewriter. The article under it goes on to prophesy a resurgence of independent filmmaking in British Columbia, as a direct result of the NDP victory there.

It seems B.C. has drawn some twenty million dollars worth of motion picture production in the last ten years. Needless to say, most of the movies made were American, with some Canadian participation on the technical end. But even this activity has ceased in the past year, and the new government is trying to do something about the slump.

Provincial minister Ernest Hall has already contacted the British Columbia Department of Industrial Development, Trade, and Commerce, to investigate the possibility of making film production in the province a secondary industry, eligible for government support. He feels that motion pictures could become an important secondary industry in B.C.

Under an NDP government, this might mean that the province would become a small investor, with the workers also sharing!

How this arrangement would apply to a high-risk industry like films is not clear. But *Variety* points out an interesting statistic: if government subsidies are granted freely to the mining industry, into which investors sink millions each year to find that only 1 out of 15 mining stocks ever pay off, then what's to prevent the province and the same investors from putting money into films? Surely, the speculative ratio of motion picture investment isn't any worse than that.

The True Nature of Bernadette finally opens in Toronto

Gilles Carle spent a day in Toronto recently. His visit coincided with the opening of *La Vraie Nature de Bernadette* (The True Nature of Bernadette), in French with English subtitles, at one of Toronto's smaller movie houses, Cinemalumière.

Carle seemed tired at a reception held in his honour at Joan Fox' place. Ms. Fox, who's doing publicity for *Bernadette*, had specific instructions not to 'lionize' the Québec director. Toronto's best-known filmpeople still queued up informally to pay their respects to Carle.

Meanwhile in France, the influential magazine *L'Avant Scène-Cinema* paid a well-deserved tribute to *Bernadette*, and a high-brow jury there chose Carle's film as one of the year's ten best. All this in the wake of a lengthy run at five different theatres in the French capital! And Gilles Carle's enchanting motion picture has been sold to nearly thirty different countries, and more sales are being negotiated.

Back in Toronto, where *The True Nature of Bernadette* was the most honoured picture at the Canadian Film Awards not so long ago, it will be lucky to get a five week run at a 300-seat theatre. Barry Allen, who manages Cinemalumière through Premier Operating Corporation Ltd., said that attendance at the two showings per day was "very encouraging, better than we expected." For the first Toronto showing of the film, starring Canada's best actress for 1972, Micheline Lanctôt, there was a fifty-percent average house during the first week. He said that there are no plans to exhibit *Bernadette* at other theatres in the Premier Operating chain (with better locations), other than afternoon showings twice a week for organized school-children outside Toronto. "It is extremely hard to sell a Canadian film," Allen concluded. (He thought *Mon Oncle Antoine* was "schmaltzy,"

and played several weeks longer at one of his theatres only because it appealed to the 'maternal feelings of older ladies.'")

But at least Premier Operating is playing some Canadian films. There appears an ad for *Bernadette* in the *Toronto Star*, and a recorded message from the theatre attempts to convince callers of the obvious merits of Carle's work. Of course there is none of the hoopla that accompanies the opening of a movie from the U.S. or England, no posters can be seen sending the multitudes off the beaten path to Cinemalumière, no TV or radio spots to generate bigger attendance. But at least it *has* opened and *is* being shown.

Aside from the lack of even adequate promotion, there are other reasons why films like *Bernadette* can't seem to find their audience in English-Canada. Foreign control of exhibition outlets and distribution is an obvious one. But a less apparent factor was brought to light by *Rowdyman* director Peter Carter at the ACTRA/CFDC panel held at the King Edward hotel in Toronto recently. After listening to speaker after speaker talk about the problems faced by Canadian films, Carter went to the microphone and asked those in the audience who have seen *La Vraie Nature de Bernadette* to raise their hands. Out of the 400 or so representatives of the Canadian film industry, less than 25 people answered in the affirmative. At that point it had played for only a week, but still, if those working within the motion picture business in this country do not bother to rush and see a Canadian film as soon as it opens, the general public can't be expected to queue up either. At present *The True Nature of Bernadette* is the only Canadian film playing in Toronto, and I'm afraid by the time you read this, the "is" ought to have been changed to "was." Just in case not, Cinemalumière is at College and Spadina.

Kaczender's U-Turn ready for Spring release

George Kaczender Productions Ltd. of Montreal announced the imminent release of their major dramatic motion picture, entitled *U-Turn*. Produced and directed by George Kaczender (*Don't Let the Angels Fall*), the film is based on an original screenplay by Douglas Bowie.

Shot in Panavision 35mm colour, with a crew of twenty-five, the picture had a budget of half-a-million dollars. Investors include the Canadian Film Development Corporation, Bellevue-Pathe and Briston/Creative Films of Montreal, as well as private investors.

The film was completed on a 7 1/2 week schedule during August and September of last year, at some 30 loca-

tions in Ontario and Quebec. There are 45 speaking parts in *U-Turn* and in addition, dozens of extras were used, many of them local residents from the small towns where the shooting took place.

The story of *U-Turn* is described in the press release as being "for anyone who has ever been fascinated by an unknown face across a crowded room, by a strange girl on a bus, by a beautiful figure passing unexpectedly on a crowded city street." In *U-Turn* the protagonist acts on an impulse to embark on a search for a strange, beautiful girl he saw only once, for a couple of minutes.



U-Turn - left to right Douglas Bowie, writer, Paul Guest, assistant cameraman, Mike Lente, director of photography, and George Kaczender, director.

"*U-Turn* is the story of his search and the encounters and consequences it occasions. It is a romantic, exciting, sometimes funny, sometimes sad film about the pursuit of an elusive ideal. It is about the chasm between dreams and reality and, just once in one's life, trying to bridge it."

Mr. Kaczender was born in Hungary, came to Canada in 1956, and spent twelve years at the National Film Board, where he directed many distinguished short films. His first feature, *Don't Let the Angels Fall*, was the first Canadian film ever selected for showing in competition at the Cannes film festival. (1969).

U-Turn's Director of Photography was Miklos M. Lente, CSC, and the picture stars David Selby (Barbara Streisand's co-star in *Up the Sandbox*), Maud Adams, Swedish-born top New York fashion model, and Gay Rowan, the young, Toronto actress. Also featured prominently in the film are Canadian actors William Osler, Diane Dewey, Mike Kirby, Robin Ward, and George Robertson. More on *U-Turn* in the next issue of *Cinema Canada*.

Hour-long TV special on the shooting of *Lies My Father Told Me*

An in-depth portrait of the creation of a major Canadian film is being prepared for national and international release on television by Sky Company of Toronto. Producers Jonathon Reid and Peter Walsh have been working closely with Jan Kadar, director of *Lies My Father Told Me*, to create an hour-long documentary that communicates the process by which a screenplay (by Montrealer, Ted Allan) is transformed into a feature by a major international director.

The documentary crew of eight has been shooting for a period of six weeks, during which they explored every aspect of the production. Seldom revealed topics, such as the conflict between the need to remain within the budget, and the artistic demands as perceived by the director, are touched upon. Intimate glimpses into the tensions which develop between the director, writer, actors, crew and producers are viewed with frank honesty.

Lies My Father Told Me deals with Allan's childhood in Montreal circa 1925. The cast is headed by Israeli actor Yossi Yadin, with Canadians Len Birman and Marilyn Lightstone as principal performers. The film introduces 6 year-old Jeff Lynas of Toronto in a lead role.

The film's budget is approximately seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000), which places it among the more costly Canadian productions to date. Costs are reflected in production values such as the recreation of the 1920's through art direction which is evoking and precise in every detail. Also, shooting took an unusually long time, over 14 weeks.

The film was financed by the CFDC, Famous Players Ltd., The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (the second bank to invest in Canadian feature films! This will hopefully become a trend!), Bellevue-Pathé Laboratories, Cinevision, and a group of private investors in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, and Calgary. The production company is Pentacle VIII Productions Ltd. of Toronto.

The documentary about the shooting of the film is due to be completed soon for release to television. It is not designed to provide only entertainment, nor is it merely a promotional vehicle to lure people to the box-office. Hopefully, it will give insight into the making of a major feature film, as well as be a learning experience for those concerned with becoming more fully acquainted with every aspect of that long, agonizing, but in the long-run, very rewarding process.

New NFB feature premieres in Montreal

Taureau, a new French-language feature, produced by the National Film Board and starring many top Quebec actors, opened February 1 at Montreal's St. Denis theatre.

According to producer Marc Beaudet, *Taureau* is now being versioned in English and will be ready for release within a month and a half.

Written and directed by Clément Perron, who wrote the award-winning screenplay for the NFB's highly acclaimed *Mon Oncle Antoine*, *Taureau* is a powerful and moving love story starring Monique Lepage, André Melançon and Michèle Magny.

Set in a small village in Québec, the story involves a virile and mysterious young man named *Taureau* (André Melançon) whose family represents, for the villagers, all that is evil in their midst.

The desire of the village women and the envy of the men for this young man reaches a boiling point when his secret love for the young and beautiful school teacher (Michèle Magny) is revealed.

Taureau was filmed by George Dufaux, and its music was composed by Jean Cousineau. More about the film the next issue of *Cinema Canada*.



André Melançon and Clément Perron.

Films about and/or by cats

Intercat '73 needs cat films for their spring festival in New York. This is the Second International Cat Film Festival, and it really does want only films about and/or by cats. In 1969, Pola Chapelle, the organizer, showed four hours' worth of cat films, ranging in style from *Cinéma-Verité* to educational films. Joyce Wieland's *Catfood* was one of the high points of that year's showings. The Festival will be shown in London on February 14th, then in Paris and Berlin. After these showings, it will get to New York by late April, and will most probably be held in the Elgin Theatre. If you have a legitimately 'cat' film, whether you are amateur, professional, you will be assured of receiving a prize. All guage films are accepted, and proceeds go to people who feed and house

stray pussycats. (By the way, if you know of such good souls, send this information.) But hurry, because the deadline is almost here, and write to CHAPELLE-INTERCAT 29 West 89th Street, New York City 10024.

Senior citizens producing film on federal grant

The New Horizons programme of the federal government has been instituted to help Canadians aged 55 and over to do the same kind of things younger people are doing with LIP and OFY grants. Ten million dollars has been set aside in the current fiscal year to finance project proposals, from individuals or senior citizens' groups, that range from raising bees to forming oldsters jazz bands.

A \$13,000 grant went to 65-year-old Herbert Phillips of Brechlin, Ontario. He's using it to produce a film on the history of steam boats on the Muskoka Lakes from 1866 to 1958. About 75 senior citizens will be involved.

A theatre group in Toronto for retired actors and writers - the Jubilee Theatre Arts group - has received \$7,420 to produce plays featuring senior Canadians. And 67-year-old Alf Sumpter of Agincourt, Ontario, will receive a total of \$11,600 to teach photography to other senior citizens.

Travel Industry Association of Canada honors the best travel films

The TIAC Travel Film Contest has been sponsored annually by the Travel Industry Association of Canada since 1962. If you are proud of the work you have done in terms of having made a travel film, then your work belongs in this year's competition. The Maple Leaf Award is presented for the best film, and the Canuck Award for the runner-up.

Motion pictures on travel or recreation in Canada are eligible for the contest. Entries may include travel promotion films, travelogues, and films on leisure time activities. The contest is open to any sponsor or producer of such films, including films for television.

There are no categories. You may enter a 16mm or a 35mm print. Films must have been produced or released for general showing during the period between March 6, 1972 and March 9, 1973. Deadline for entry forms is **March 9th, 1973**. Films must arrive at the office of the Travel Industry Association of Canada, prepaid before March 14, 1973. The address is: T.I.A.C., 1016-130 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G4.

Film industry in flux — panel discussions flourish

In the wake of the Toronto Filmmakers' Co-Op panel on the unions within the film industry (see *Cinema Canada*, issue #5), other segments of the film community are organizing large meetings to continue the dialogue: how can we build a better motion picture producing alliance in Canada?

That might be a roundabout way of saying it, but 'alliance' might be closer to the truth than industry, with its implications of factories and heavy machinery. Hollywood might have been an industry once, when pictures were coming off the assembly line, one every two weeks, and Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland were being pumped full of uppers and downers by Louis B. Mayer, so they could keep up with the gruelling schedule. But to use the terminology to describe the Canadian scene is a bit inaccurate. However, we still use it, and shall continue to do so, for want of a more precise, definitive word. 'Alliance' is as good as any other.

But forgive the digression. First there was the St. Lawrence Centre meeting, which focussed on the emerging feature business and the problems of distribution. (See elsewhere in this issue.) Then the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) co-sponsored a panel with the Canadian Film Development Corporation in late January.

This one was called to discuss "How Canadian Should a Canadian Feature Film Be?" in terms of Canadian performers. ACTRA wanted to test its belief that a 100 per cent quota for acting talent in CFDC sponsored films wouldn't be a bad idea, while the CFDC was about to invest in ten new features with 20 foreign performers in leading roles. On the panel were Paul Siren of ACTRA and Michael Spencer of the CFDC, co-chairmen, a producer (John Bassett), a director (Peter Carter), an actress (Patricia Collins), a casting director (Patti Payne), a producer 'not involved in feature films and therefore with an objective view,' (Fletcher Markle of CBC drama), and for the Quebec viewpoint and experience, a talent agent and distributor (Pierre David, head of Les Films Mutuelles).

As it happened, the discussion veered into the general topic of the two previous panels: how can we do it right, how can we avoid costly mistakes, how can we make every segment of our loose alliance happy and at the same time serve our own self-interest? Almost no one in the audience supported the 100 per cent Canadian performer idea (could *Wedding in White* really have succeeded without Donald Pleasence and Carol Kane?) but at the same time very few



Michael Spencer



Paul Siren

people in the audience of 400 had gone to see the only Canadian film playing in Toronto at the time, *The True Nature of Bernadette*.

Patricia Collins asked Michael Spencer why the CFDC allowed the total take-over of *A Fan's Notes* by Warner Brothers, and she never got an answer. Pierre David explained how his company is spending eight, ten, twelve thousand dollars to 'launch' French and English-Canadian films in Montreal and Vancouver, even if they lose their shirts doing it. (At a previous panel, George Destounis of Famous Players said that the only time his company interferes with promotion for a Canadian film is when the distributor decides to do something foolish like spend six or eight thousand dollars.) John Bassett assured everyone present that his brief to the Ontario government would solve all our problems, at least in Ontario. Then he went on to talk about how you *have* to have international stars in order to raise money for a feature.

But the highlight of the evening was when it became apparent that the CFDC had its own Catch-22. Sandra Gathercole of the Toronto Filmmakers' Co-Op asked Michael Spencer whether the CFDC has a consistent definition of what a Canadian film is. Spencer replied: "A short answer to your question is unfortunately no. A Canadian film has not yet been defined. The only thing we can say is that any film in which the Canadian Film Development Corporation has invested is significantly Canadian in content, on the ground that the Corporation has in fact invested in it." (followed by stunned "Oh's, laughter, and a smattering of applause.)

Spencer became defensive and explained that the CFDC does in fact have guidelines that either the writer or the director of the film has to be Canadian, but then one has to define what a Canadian is, whether a citizen or a landed-immigrant with several years standing, whether the person resided at

all in Canada in the past ten years, etc. So he really couldn't answer Ms. Gathercole's question. And in practice the guidelines must be very lax, since *Lies My Father Told Me* got CFDC money, on the basis that at least the writer was Canadian. Ted Allan only recently moved back from England, after fourteen years abroad. It's all to the good that Jan Kadar made a film in Montreal, and there were many Canadians in the cast and crew. But it's hard to gauge how Canadian or universal in theme that film will be. And who's foolish enough to suggest that such intangibles as theme should be legislated?

Complex issues are never resolved at mass meetings, and the ACTRA/CFDC panel was no exception. Most participants went away believing whatever they adhered to all along, but at least some light was shed on who's rooting for what and what's in it for everybody. And one could always hope to air one's views at the next panel. The Toronto Star Forum on "Censorship in Film" which will be held on February 13th at the St. Lawrence Centre Town Hall. And don't let the title fool you. The film community is just trying to find out how we can all work better together.

Canadian filming in Israel

Not only is former CBC-producer Norman Jewison shooting the \$3.5 million rock-musical, *Jesus Christ, Superstar*, in Israel's Negev desert, but farther north he has put Canadian Ted Kotcheff to work directing *Billy Two Hats*, a western, being shot near Tel Aviv. A western being shot in Israel? "Why not?" Jewison is reported as saying. "I don't see why all westerns have to be shot in Italy or Spain, when Israel has just as hot weather, just as beautiful terrain, and almost the same kind of geographical locations. Maybe we'll replace the 'spaghetti western' with the 'sabara western.' Why not?"

Canada's contribution to **Jesus Christ, Superstar**, besides director Jewison, includes Rob Iscove, twenty-five year-old choreographer from the National ballet, along with four Canadian dancers. Jewison is a tireless director, shooting days begin at six a.m. and end around midnight. His ribcage bandaged after a bad fall, he reportedly ignores the blistering desert heat and guides the production of the huge effort without outward signs of fatigue.

Mon Oncle Antoine gets another award

The New York based National Society of Film Critics presented Claude Jutra's now-classic film **Mon Oncle Antoine** (My Uncle Antoine) with an award, reserved for a film of 'outstanding achievement,' and also judged not to have received sufficient recognition at U.S. box-offices.

The prize was accompanied by a \$2,000 cheque to Director Jutra, who's in France at the moment arranging for the opening of his latest feature, **Kamouraska**, starring Geneviève Bujold. Antoine cost \$450,000 to make, and has grossed \$750,000 to date, as much as it cost to shoot **Kamouraska**.

Anglophoto Ltd. appointment announced

Gerry Blitstein, Director, Professional Products Services Group, Anglophoto Ltd., wishes to announce the appointment of John O'Hara to the position of technical consultant to the Professional Products Services Group. Mr. O'Hara, who will be based in Toronto, will also serve as instructor for the Nikon School.



Before embarking on his professional career, Mr. O'Hara studied photography at the Brooks Institute of Photography, Santa Barbara, California, from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Professional Arts Degree. He also attended the United States Army Photo School from 1966 to 1969, and served as an army photographer and photo lab instructor during his military tour. Samples of Mr. O'Hara's work have been exhibited in galleries in Stuttgart and Heidelberg, Germany.



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NFB film director Julian Biggs dies

Well-known film-maker and former director of English Production at the National Film Board of Canada, Julian Biggs, died at his home in Montreal on December 4, following a brief illness. He was 52 years old.

Mr. Biggs was born in Port Perry, Ontario. He joined the Canadian Army in 1939 and while overseas transferred to the navy where he served on minesweepers until the war ended.

After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1950, he joined the National Film Board as production assistant. During his long and brilliant career at the National Film Board he was involved in producing or directing more than 200 films, many of which won international awards. Included among them are "Herring Hunt", "The Shepherd", and the "History Makers" and "Perspective" series for television.

He became director of English Production at the NFB in 1966 and returned to active film directing in 1968. In 1970 his profile of Joey Smallwood, "A Little Fellow From Gambo", brought him honors as best director of the year at the Canadian Film Awards.

Filmpeople, filmpeople, filmpeople

Neil Young, who's the son of Toronto sports columnist Scott Young, as well as being a rock superstar, has made an autobiographical film called "Journey Through the Past." An album of the same name was just released. His surprise appearance at the Mariposa folk festival last summer brought fans running from all over the island. Every performance on his recent Canadian concert tour was sold-out well in advance.

Margaret Atwood, best-selling Canadian author, has been signed by the Ontario Educational Communications Authority (Toronto's educational television station) as a consultant to its "True North" series. She accepted, because the programme fits her theory that mere survival is at the core of Canada's identity. We're very grateful to her for mentioning "Cinema Canada" as a film-source-tool in her fast-selling guide to Canadian literature, *Survival*.

Denis Harvey, tough-talking executive editor of the Montreal Gazette, was appointed chief news editor for all CBC-English language TV news operations. He is replacing Bill Cunningham, who left the CBC after a twenty-year stint to head CTV's W-5 programme. A huge expansion of news service is planned by Knowlton Nash, the CBC's director of TV information programmes, and Harvey was chosen to attempt the operation. Good Luck!

Geneviève Bujold will perform the speaking-role in "Kiddish No. 3," the Leonard Bernstein prayer-for-the-dead, dedicated to the late John F. Kennedy, at Toronto's Massey Hall in April. Her new film "Kamouraska," directed by Claude Jutra, will open in Montreal in the Spring. (See next issue of Cinema Canada.)

O. J. Silverthorn, Ontario Censor Board chief, and a man reportedly more inaccessible than Howard Hughes, has refused to allow any showings in this province of the Jack Christie and Michael Hirsh epic, *Voulez-Vous Couchez Avec God?* The Roxy Cinema in Toronto was ready to show the film. The Censors usually indicate the parts of the film they object to, but in this case it was a blanket rejection.

Bob Huber, last reported in these pages as having left Cinemalumière in a row over programming, is doing well at the Revue Cinema in Toronto. In addition to excellent international classics, the Revue has started showing Canadian films, such as "The Only Thing You Know" (Clarke Mackey), and "Neon Palace" (Peter Rowe). We hope this will become a trend on the repertoire circuit. With very few exceptions, they've been ignoring Canadian films long enough. (The Revue Cinema is at 400 Roncesvalles Avenue in Toronto.)

Norman Jewison's "Fiddler on the Roof" finished its opening run of 57 weeks at the University Theatre in Toronto. It grossed \$1,176,000 in the director's home town. Jewison at one time reportedly drove a cab here to stay alive.

Bruno Gerussi has returned to Toronto from Vancouver, where production of his series "The Beachcombers," has been terminated. He'll appear once more as Louis Riel in a CBC "Man Alive" episode.

John Bassett Jr., defending his decision to have a big-name foreign star play Louis Riel in his upcoming feature film, was extremely candid and to the point. "Bruno Gerussi could play Louis Riel also quite well, almost as well as Richard Harris. The simple fact of the matter is, I'd love to get a million and a half dollars to make that picture with Gerussi, but when I go to Los Angeles and I go to London to raise the money, I can't get a dime out of it. Those are the simple, practical facts of a producer's life that he has to live with." At the same time Bassett submitted quite a 'radical' brief to the Ontario government. (See Film News.)

Ben Nobleman, a Borough of York (Toronto) alderman, was the man at a recent ACTRA/CFDC panel, who attacked Bassett for by-passing big-name Canadian actors for foreigners to play Louis Riel, a Canadian hero. "Why not have John Vernon... why not have William Hutt... or Paul Harding? Why not have a little courage and faith in our Canadian actors and actresses and make them stars? Why not try to raise the money from Canadian businessmen? (applause) It seems to me that the gravy in all the movies being made here is going to Americans and the crumbs are going to Canadians. And it's up to Canadian producers like Mr. Bassett to twist the arms of businessmen who are living here and making profit here to produce Canadian movies, featuring Canadian stars."

Paul Bradley, one of the stars of "Goin' Down the Road", and "Wedding in White", is collaborating with Ted Allan on a movie script. Bradley is a great story-teller, and has also worked on the plot of a film treatment with his "Tobias Rouke" co-star, Henry Beckman.

Paul Almond, meanwhile, is off on a European holiday, resting up after the trials and tribulations of launching "Journey". Chances are he'll investigate European distribution possibilities for his film.

Larry Dane, producer of "The Rowdyman", is negotiating a New York opening for that movie. He's also hired Canadian writer Paul Wayne, now living in Hollywood, to do the screenplay of his next picture, for which Dane devised a plot outline. It's about a priest, a minister, and a rabbi, who conspire to commit a robbery. *The Rowdyman* has grossed \$400,000 to date.

Sandra Gathercole of the Toronto Filmmakers' Co-Op is still busy lobbying for a Canadian content quota (see the Co-Op brief elsewhere in this issue). She's also part of a newly formed women's film producing company, being incorporated as Fromunder Films (It's about time we got out from under...). The group plans to produce films and TV programmes exclusively on women. Members include Sylvia Spring, Lorna Forman, Janine Manatas, Patricia Gruben and Roz Michaels.

John Trent, producer of the Jalna series which he is re-cutting for future repeat broadcast, is scheduled to fill executive-producer chores on Quadrant Films' latest venture, "The Night Walk", to be shot in Florida for \$300,000. All financing is Canadian, creating a novel situation, whose reverse is more often evident.

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CANADIAN FILM NEWS



Jean-Pierre Lefebvre

CFDC — announces investment in six new low-budget feature films

The Canadian Film Development Corporation has just announced the acceptance of six new proposals under its special programme for low-budget films with total budgets less than \$100,000. The English-track projects chosen for the allocation of the remaining \$360,000 in the fund for fiscal 72/73 are *The Hard Part Begins*, to be directed by Paul Lynch (Derret Lee, producer), *Moss Tarts*, directed by Robbie Malenfant (Eric Till, producer), and *Killing Time*, to be produced and directed by Morley Markson. Quebec films getting CFDC approval are *Blanc Noël* by Michel Bouchard (L'Association Coopérative des Productions Audio-Visuelles), *L'Île Jaune* by Jean Cousineau (CINAK), and *On N'Engraisse Pas Les Cochons L'Eau Claire* by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, to be produced by CINAK, in association with Prisma Films.

The Corporation has agreed to invest \$60,000 in each of these films, provided the filmmakers comply with normal CFDC policies and requirements. These investments, added to the \$240,000 previously awarded, constitute the entire low-budget motion picture fund for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1973. The first deadline for applications for the next six hundred thousand dollars is April 1st, 1973. Filmmakers requesting funds under this programme can receive application forms and addi-

tional information by contacting the CFDC office in Toronto (Suite 18, Lothian Mews, 96 Bloor Street West, Toronto 5, Ontario — (416) 966-6436), or in Montreal (Suite 2220, P.O. Box 71, Tour de la Bourse, Montréal-115, Québec — (514) 283-6363).

Canadian Film Development Corporation's Annual Report

Being that dissemination of information by government agencies is very, very slow, a copy of the CFDC's Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1972 just recently made its way into our office. Gratien Gélinas' *Report of the Chairman* has some revealing facts on the size of the emerging Canadian feature industry. (As a public service, we have chosen to reprint this in its entirety further back in this issue!) The figures on the Corporation's Balance Sheet make interesting reading as well.

One finds out, for instance, that the Corporation's operational expenses were nearly \$300,000 for the year under review. Two-thirds of this amount were spent in salaries and expenses for the members, executive officers, advisors, and staff of the CFDC, with the remaining one hundred thousand eaten up by overhead. In the same period the CFDC invested a total of \$2.7 million in Canadian features, and granted \$70,000 toward the completion of short films by independent filmmakers.

No explanation is given why Toronto area filmmakers got only \$10,000 of this amount, while their Vancouver and Montréal counterparts received considerably more assistance. Nor is it explained anywhere in the Report why the CFDC decided to cut its investments from \$2.7 million in fiscal 71/72, to just above \$2 million during the current fiscal year, even though its budget was increased by an additional ten million dollars.

Another puzzling part of the report is Chairman Gélinas' citing a drop in theatre attendance as a reason for seeking alternative markets for Canadian features. What he fails to mention is that Paramount Pictures (leisure division of Gulf & Western, the U.S. oil conglomerate) reported pre-tax profits of \$31,200,000 (*that's profits!*) for fiscal 1972, and that Famous Players, 'Paramount's Canadian theatre arm' (Variety's way of putting it) was again the second largest revenue-producer

with the \$65 million it earned for the mother company. Paramount's profits represented a 55 per cent increase from the previous year — pretty good, considering the alarming 'drop in theatre attendance.'

Granted, *The Godfather* was largely responsible for the huge percentage jump, but then the previous year Paramount had *Love Story*, which had comparable gross earnings. But the reason for us citing all this is not because we're against seeking alternative markets (i.e. network and cable television) for Canadian feature films — it's simply our wish to see them primarily where they belong, in *Canada's motion picture theatres*. And the only way to do that is to break the monopolistic stranglehold that a few foreign corporations have on Canada's exhibition outlets.

(It is interesting to note that while the United States has strong anti-monopoly legislation preventing Paramount, a major producer and distributor, from owning its own theatre chain in that country, Canada has no laws barring such ownership, thus the existence of Famous Players!)

Other eye-opening facts gleaned by reading the CFDC report: the Corporation has yet to recoup a penny from its investments in *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, a film which had impressive box-office grosses all over the world. The reason? It seems MGM is involved not only as a distributor but also co-financier and any profits are constantly tied up and reinvested in its Hollywood bureaucracy. The CFDC's two joint ventures with Warner Brothers (*Eliza's Horoscope* and *A Fan's Notes*) are equally disastrous, and thus "during the year in review... foreign investment decreased by \$300,000. This reflects the Corporation's policy not to involve U.S. distributors as co-producers, since the returns on such investments have proved disappointing."

Gratien Gélinas provides more figures in his Report to the Secretary of State: total investments in Canadian feature films assisted by the CFDC since its inception in 1968 to mid-1972 amounted to \$17.7 million, for a total of 64 features. (During that period there were 83 motion pictures produced in Canada, 19 without CFDC participation, 41 were in French, 42 in English, but ten of the latter were produced in Quebec, making use of French-speaking performers, technicians, and creative staff.) The Corporation's share of the

\$17.7 million was \$6.7 million, private Canadian investors contributed \$7.3 million, and the balance came from outside the country (mainly major U.S. film companies).

"At the end of the year, 34 of the 64 CFDC backed feature films were in distribution and represent a total Corporation investment of \$3,384,000. The cumulative return so far on these films has been \$600,000, with 3 of the films recovering their full production costs and reaching profit positions."

The return on the investments is astoundingly low, considering that among the titles the CFDC has backed are *Two Women in Gold* (grossed \$2.5 million in Quebec alone), *L'Initiation*, *Pile ou Face*, *Love in a Four Letter World*, (all Cinepix skin-flicks) *Act of the Heart*, *Goin' Down the Road*, *Les Mâles*, and *Tiens-toi biens après les Oreilles à Papa* (which did uncommonly well at the Québec box-office).

Finally, the report sheds light on the size of the emerging Canadian feature industry, even though the figures are almost a year old now:

"Of the \$17.7 million invested in feature film-making over the past four years, \$4.2 million went to Canadian laboratories and technical services and \$4 million to film-makers and other creative contributors to the Canadian film industry. The balance has been largely expended in Canada on other aspects of film production. This film-making activity has created 1,574 engagements for actors and actresses, 791 jobs for technicians, and about 361 other jobs to date."

More feature production planned

We must again refer to the last issue of *Cinema Canada* (#5) for a full list of feature films due for release, being edited, or having been shot just recently in Canada. It is truly an impressive number, and is always increasing.

Some new additions to the list of those films in the planning stages are:

Why Rock the Boat?, based on William Weintraub's comic novel published in 1961 about a young, energetic, and questioning newspaper reporter, to be filmed by Montreal's Potterton Productions.

The Great Canadian Novel, Harry Boyle's best-seller, might be filmed by producer Harry Rasky, who's also conferring with Chinese representatives about a film on the life of Dr. Norman Bethune, to star Christopher Plummer as Bethune. A television version of George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (with Plummer and Geneviève Bujold) is also in the talking stage.

How Do You Say Goodbye, playwright Max Shoub's murder/mystery scenario is reportedly to be filmed by a Montreal production company.

The Trigger, a U.S. financed movie, was hastily shot in Toronto in December, mostly at the CFTO studios using videotape. Then the tape was planned to be transferred to 35mm color film using the Lowry process. The story concerns an attempt to assassinate the U.S. president. Director was George McCowan, and the lead roles were given to U.S. actors.

Montreal promoter gets Cinevision Ltée into the production business

Montreal financial consultant Irving Kott has engineered a deal whereby eight feature films would be produced jointly with Ely Landau and heavily involving Cinevision Ltée, one of his clients.

Called American Film Theatre, the scheme involves making motion pictures of the major dramatic works of our time (John Osborne's *Luther*, Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming*, Ferenc Molnar's *Liliom* and *Lost in the Stars*, Robert Shaw's *The Man in the Glass Booth*, and Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*.) O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, and Albee's *A Delicate Balance* have already been filmed by the group. The films in the series will be shown to the public on a restricted basis, by subscription. Major stars are lined up for the plays, including Katherine Hepburn, Lee Marvin, Paul Scofield, Zero Mostel, Fredrich March and Joseph Cotton.

Only *The Man in the Glass Booth* is definitely set for filming in Canada, but perhaps Cinevision can exert some pressure for its \$3.1 million investment. As a result of the move, Cinevision stock (the company went public just recently) jumped from one to eight dollars per share. The stock exchange suspended trading pending agreement with the Ely Landau organization. Both own circa half of the business venture.

Top caliber directors for the films include John Frankenheimer, Tony Richardson, Tom O'Horgan, and one would hope eventually a Canadian will be announced. Landau said approximately 500 theatres throughout Canada and the U.S. are expected to participate in the project. Each film would be shown only four times a month at regularly scheduled Monday and Tuesday screenings, commencing next September.

Bassett announces major 'Canadian' production on the life of Louis Riel

Agincourt International, a film-making subsidiary of CFTO-TV in Toronto, and John Bassett's home turf, has produced features like *Face-Off* and *Last of the Big Guns*. A press conference was called to announce the production later this year of a major motion

picture based on the life of Metis rebel Louis Riel.

Louis L'Amour, who has written fifty-six western novels (most of them published in paperback) that have sold over 35-million copies, will write a hard-cover book on Riel, which in turn will be turned into a screenplay by a Canadian ("We're hoping for Bill Fruet" commented Bassett.) L'Amour, whose stories have accounted for thirty-five feature films (*Hondo*, *How the West Was Won*), is an American, but he feels close to the subject, nevertheless.

"Up in North Dakota, where I grew up, Louis Riel was a household word. In fact, my grandfather was very hot about the whole thing. There was quite a movement at the time to make Minnesota, North Dakota and Manitoba a separate state. My grandfather was against it.

"A man called Enos Stutzman was involved in Riel's movement, and will probably be a minor character in the story. Stutzman County, North Dakota, where I was born, was named after him.

"My father was a veterinarian and used to spend a great deal of time traveling in Manitoba. Before him, my grandfather was a soldier turned farmer. I don't know if he met Riel but I do know that he could sing all of the songs connected with the movement.

"We used to talk about Riel around the dinner table and I found Louis Riel to be one of the truly exciting stories of this continent."

Agincourt International has secured motion picture and television rights for the story. Arthur Hiller (expatriate Canadian director of films like *The Hospital*, with George C. Scott) was mentioned as possible director for the Riel feature, and both Louis L'Amour and John Bassett thought of Richard Harris for the lead. This caused quite an

John Bassett



Photo: Tom Urquhart

uproar at the ACTRA panel held during the same week. The obvious question was why aren't Canadian actors being considered for the part. (see filmpeople item later on in Film News.)

Canadian participation seems to be a weak point in the entire announcement. At the press conference Jack Miller of the Toronto Star asked some pointed questions about the involvement of a Los Angeles production company in the Riel project. It turns out that as a co-production between Agincourt International and the American concern, the Riel film will be the first of several major undertakings, one of them another movie, to be shot hopefully in Vancouver. This is in keeping with Bassett's whole philosophy to produce for the international market big budget motion pictures, whose Canadian content in some cases might be limited to the picture being shot on Canadian soil.

"Last of the Big Guns" slated for April release

John Bassett, sporting a new mustache and dapper in an expensive suede jacket, talked briefly with *Cinema Canada* following a recent press conference.

When is Last of the Big Guns to be released?

"It will be finished and completed by April 15th."

What plans do you have for its release? Canada first, and then...

"I haven't made up my mind. I'm going to show it to American distributors and to English distributors, before I make up my mind whether I'll open it here or elsewhere. . . ."

Do you have a Canadian distributor?

"Yes. Yes I do. But I have control over the distribution, so if I don't want it to open, they can't do it without my permission."

Who's the Canadian distributor?

"Lions Film Distribution. They distributed **Rip-Off** and **Face-Off** and **Marjoe**." (At the ACTRA/CFDC panel Bassett told the audience that he solved his distribution problems in Canada by setting up his own distribution company.)

Is Face-Off still playing?

"Yes, it's playing in 21 countries. Other than **Goin' Down the Road**, it's the most widely distributed English-Canadian picture that's ever been made."

How much money has it made so far?

"I don't know how much it's made. I know that its advances from foreign territories is over a hundred thousand dollars, and of course we got a hundred thousand dollars for it for America, from the American distributor when we started, and we grossed in Canada about seven hundred thousand bucks at the

box-office. I can't tell you off the top of my head how much we got back. We don't get back as much as we'd like to get back. And we haven't sold it for television yet anywhere. We may get our money back from it, which for a Canadian picture about hockey with no stars in it is not bad, but we may not. And I would think that we'll probably get half our money back on it."

There were reports that you re-cut it for U.S. distribution?

"Yes, there were reports. What I did was I shot a more adult scene for the U.S. audiences but after I saw it I decided not to use it. So it's not in the picture in the States."

What about the report of the Ontario committee on film which you're in charge of?

"I finished that and I've submitted it Monday morning to the Minister. My committee haven't seen it, you see, because the report was sort of a distillation of all their reports. I had various people in the committee doing different functions. And then I got them all in and made my own summary in place of them all, and I have a meeting here next Monday night with them to go over it."

At this point *Cinema Canada* brought up the matter of its LIP application being turned down. "Why were you? That's not a bad magazine. It's good, it's interesting." It was explained that LIP considers filmmaking "low-priority."

"If some of my recommendations on this commission to the Ontario government are accepted," Bassett concluded, "then a magazine like yours would be very favourably effected. And if we get support for the ideas, then I'm going to help everybody in the business. Some of my ideas are kind of revolutionary, when you consider who they came from."

Report urges content quota in Ontario theatres

The film study group headed by John Bassett and commissioned by former Ontario Minister of Industry and Tourism, John White, has submitted its recommendations to White's successor.

The report deals with seven recommendations. The major one which grabbed the headlines is calling for a quota system compelling every Ontario movie house to show Canadian-made films for at least eight weeks every two years.

Another major recommendation is that half of the current 10 per cent provincial tax on tickets should be rebated to theatres when they are showing Canadian films, and the other half should be rebated to the film's producer if the film was made in Ontario.

The Bassett report, as it has already been tagged, also calls for the abolition

of censorship by the province (it's about time!) and the establishment of a classification system (hmmmm. . .). It recommends the setting up of an Ontario Film Office to take over the functions of the current provincial Theatres Branch, plus assume the additional duties of classifying films of all widths (8mm to 70mm) and video tape when exhibited to the public, as well as administering the other points of the report, if implemented. This new Office would be responsible for judging which films would qualify as Canadian for the tax rebate program.

The last three points of the report are the development of a major international film festival which would incorporate the current Canadian Film Awards, the establishment of a film school of limited enrolment aimed at top university graduates, and the creation of a script development fund of \$250,000 a year.

Bassett's committee consisted of lawyers Robert Macaulay, Richard Roberts, and Julian Porter, producer Budge Crawley, filmmaker Peter Rowe, publicist Joan Fox, television personality Carole Taylor, and Dr. J. H. Walters, who is described as a film buff from London, Ontario.

The report makes the point that well over 90 per cent of the films shown in Ontario are non-Canadian. "Canada is a ripe target for feature film distributors from other countries to walk in and harvest dollars without any requirements for reforestation." This last reference to the exploitation of our natural resources by foreign concerns is more than apt. "We accept without question that feature film is an integral part of Canada's identity," the report goes on, noting that if Ontario sets the pace by requiring exposure of Canadian-made films, the other provinces would be sure to follow.

If anything, John Bassett's report to the Ontario government does not go far enough. At the rate feature films are being produced in Canada, eight weeks per two years in Ontario theatres will not be enough time to show them all. The CRTC had guts enough to require a much higher percentage of Canadian content as a compulsory measure in the broadcast industry. Most of us still think in terms of only a handful of Canadian films being produced each year. We better wake up to the fact that the number is closer to fifty major productions annually, each of them just aching for exhibition outlets. And once Canadians realize how good most of these films really are, they'll start demanding **them**.

But just in case that's just wishful thinking, a quick implementation of the study group's recommendations by Ontario's legislators would be seven steps in the right direction.

(For a complete text of the Bassett Report, see page 34.)

Toronto Star editorial endorses Bassett report

The *Toronto Star*, in an editorial on January 27th, wholeheartedly endorsed the report submitted to the Ontario government by the special 'exploration team' into the problems of the film industry in the province, headed by John Bassett.

"Canada," says the paper, is now the only country, other than the United States, which does not have a quota system to protect its film industry."

"Canadians, in fact, are largely unaware that this country now has a growing feature film industry with first-class directors, actors, and technicians...."

Despite these achievements, the Canadian industry is still in a precarious position. The theatre industry in Canada is dominated by two large chains, both foreign controlled. In selecting pictures for exhibition, these organizations give preference to American, British, and other foreign productions. As a result, Canadian films are seldom shown in the larger theatres and potential customers are unaware of their existence," continued the editorial.

"The quota proposed by the commission is a modest one, but it would at least give Canadian movie producers a chance to show their wares to the Canadian public. Once they are given this chance, there is every reason to believe that they can win and hold audiences on their own merits. If Ontario takes the lead, other provinces will follow its example, and the industry

"The Ontario government can perform a real service to Canada by acting promptly on the commission's recommendations," finishes the insightful and much welcome *Toronto Star* editorial.

Ontario spending \$250,000 a year on IMAX productions

North of Superior, the staple attraction during the tourist season at the Ontario Place Cinesphere, will eventually be seen by everybody more than once, and then what? To make sure that the novelty of IMAX doesn't wear off, the Ontario government has budgeted a quarter-of-a-million dollars per year to produce a major film for Cinesphere's truly big screen.

There were some rumours that the figure was in fact higher, but we managed to contact the right departments, and found that \$250,000 a year was tops for Ontario. Rumours persisted that the figure is nonetheless considerably greater, but government officials aren't willing to make it all public yet, since legislators are discussing it behind closed doors. Make of it what you will. But some people are already writing scripts.

Women's Film Festival

This dream looks like it will soon become reality. The festival organizers have already secured grants from L.I.P. and from Toronto City Council, and are well on their way to getting the rest of the funds necessary to implement such an ambitious project. The Women's Film Festival will be in Toronto at St. Lawrence Centre from June 8th to 17th. It will then tour 9 major Canadian cities, and show approximately 130 films along with videotapes and photography exhibits.

Many of their plans are a result of studying the short-comings of other festivals. For example, the women will have free day-care, lounge areas, and seminars and workshops on many relevant issues: The image and status of both women and men in television and films will be discussed, and the question of whether there is a female film aesthetic.

The entire Festival will be videotaped and edited into an educational film series for the public by the Women's Involvement Programme of Toronto.

The Festival's organizers are very interested in receiving information on any film that: was made largely by women, explores a special aspect of female sensibility, goes beyond traditional stereotypes, or simply turns people on by celebrating the human-ness of either sex. To find out the exact dates that the tour will get to other cities, and any other information, contact Deanne Taylor or Jill Frayne c/o Women & Film 9A Charles Street West, Toronto M4Y 1R4. (Cinema Canada will be covering the Festival and any future developments concerning it.)



New York Film Festival Awards

CTV Television Network President Murray Cherkover and Daniel Bertolino, director of "People of the Fly River" accept awards at the 15th New York Film and Television Festival. "Primitive

Man - People Of The Fly River" won a silver medal in the Educational Films category, while "The Human Journey - Where We Live" won a bronze medal in its class.

CFDC withdraws investment from La Guèrre, Yes Sir!

Eric Till is having another run of bad luck. After *A Fan's Notes* was rushed into Montreal as a fill-in prior to a wave of Christmas premières, the CFDC decided to withdraw its \$200,000 investment from Till's next project, *La Guèrre, Yes Sir!*, based on Roch Carrier's novel dealing with English-French relations. Filming was supposed to have commenced in January, simultaneously in both languages.

Producer Lester Persky was quick to charge that the production had been blocked because of political consideration. He claimed that the CFDC suddenly felt that the film should be produced in French only, since there would only be a limited market for the English version. (An English-language stage production of the story was well-attended at Stratford.) The CFDC claimed that Persky hadn't produced necessary private financing by a set deadline.

However, months ago it was announced that everything was finally set, the CFDC and a British group of investors were picking up the tab (\$750,000) and that Nicol Williamson would be brought over from England for the lead role. Jean Duceppe and members of Le Theatre du Nouveau Monde were to have rounded out the cast. So somebody must be pulling somebody's leg.

The CFDC has precious little money remaining in its current fiscal year, or so they claim. (Balance at the end of the last fiscal year was \$12,682,565, so the Corporation's pleas of poverty have to be taken with a grain of salt. What they actually mean is that they've spent all the money they decided in advance to spend.) But Britain's Hemdale Group was ready to invest \$400,000 in *La Guèrre, Yes Sir!* So apparently most of the money was together, counting the CFDC's two hundred thousand. Was it really the language, was it the lack of the hundred and fifty thousand, or was it a political move?

Persky implied that the film might be made outside of Canada. "We're all bitterly disappointed," he said, "and we're making plans to keep this alive."

We hope somewhere, sometime, somebody can explain how yet another major Canadian motion picture project was allowed to abort.

In the meantime, Eric Till has been invited by CBC-TV to direct the dramatic portions of "The National Dream" series, due to begin production in March.