

Fear of Major reprisals, weakened options pervade

MONTREAL – Quebec distributors and exhibitors fear the worst. They say the U.S. major studios will not tolerate recent amendments to the Quebec Cinema Act (Bill 109).

In an effort to increase the number of films that French-speaking citizens of Quebec can see in their own language and to make those films available sooner, the Quebec government has amended section 83 of the Cinema Act.

Section 83 limits to a single copy the number of prints of an English-language film that can be exhibited in Quebec cinemas unless French-language versions are released simultaneously. This amendment is embodied in Bill 59 which has not been proclaimed in Quebec's National Assembly.

Thus, it is still uncertain whether the amendment will, on balance, serve the francophone filmgoer or bring down the wrath of the U.S. majors on the backs of distributors, exhibitors and the Quebec dubbing industry.

Harold Greenberg, chairman of Astral Bellevue Pathé Inc., which is involved in production distribution, lab work and dubbing, says the government has clearly chosen the wrong route in trying to meet its objectives.

"Less films, not more films, will be available to the public in Quebec under this legislation whether they be French or English-speaking," says Greenberg in a letter to Premier Robert Bourassa and Cultural Affairs Minister Lise Bacon.

"Like it or not," says Greenberg, "there is often a significant delay in dubbing English-language films into French. American distributors will not delay the release of films in New York, Los Angeles, nor will Canadian distributors in Toronto, to await dubbing by Quebec distributors."

Greenberg says that unless the government rethinks legislation and consults the Quebec film industry at length, Montreal and its filmgoers "could be banished to the backwaters of the world."

Roland Smith, vice-president of Cinémas Famous Players, the Quebec branch of the Canada-wide exhibition chain, shares Greenberg's concern from an exhibitor's point of view.

"If the Quebec government is not careful," says Smith, "the majors will treat us like a colony and we will get first-run English films six to eight months late."

Not only will it be next to impossible to get dubbed versions for the national release date (when huge promotional investments by the majors are at stake), Smith says the dubbing

industry in France lags months behind film openings in North America.

Like Greenberg, Smith says that the original article 83 serves the purpose. He suggests that a code of ethics ensuring that distributors comply with both the spirit and the letter of the law would suffice in place of the proposed legislation.

(Prior to the amendment, distributors were showing several English-language prints without any intention of using a French-language version at the end of a prescribed 60-day period, despite the availability of the version in some cases.)

What is alarming is that this warning of things to come by Greenberg and Smith is shared by Millard Roth, president of the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association which represents the U.S. major studios in Canada.

Roth told *Cinema Canada* recently that unless the Quebec government withdraws the offending amendment and studies other ways to address its language concerns, Quebec cinemagoers, in both languages, will suffer.

"To comply with this law will mean putting Quebec on the same footing as Europe with respect to substantially late releases," says Roth.

Roth explains that although the majors are sensitive to the Quebec government's concerns, only 50 per cent of all major titles released in any given year are judged to be sufficiently viable for distribution in the French-language markets of the world. (Most of these are dubbed in France due to strict protectionist laws in that country which shut out all foreign – read Quebec – dubbed product).

Where the less prosperous 50 per cent of major studio releases are concerned, says Roth, the doubling up of dubbing costs for the markets in Quebec and again in France can't be justified given the size of the Quebec market unless there is a major subsidization program for dubbing and exhibition.

"Nobody is going to go through this exercise to recover the cost of dubbing," says Roth. "We are in the business of making a profit."

Micheline Charest, the new president of the Association québécoise des industries techniques du cinéma et de la télévision Inc., representing the dubbing industry in Quebec, says that any legislation that promises to create additional work will be supported by her association.

However, she says, it is difficult to second-guess how the majors will respond to the amendment.

One possible scenario, she says, is that the majors will pressure France to give Quebec an equitable share of the market in France. Such an arrangement could serve to offset the cost of dubbing in Quebec.

Given the comparable sizes of both French-language markets – 50 million viewers in France and five million in Quebec – Roth says he has "strong doubts" that pressure will be

brought by the majors in order to accommodate the Quebec dubbing industry.

The dubbing industry in Quebec is currently the subject of a two-month study by Secor commissioned by the federal and Quebec governments.

Broadcast News stirs up language fears

MONTREAL – On Feb. 19, the film *Broadcast News* disappeared from Cineplex Odeon theatres in Montreal shortly after receiving several Oscar nominations. It continued to play, however, in the Princess theatre in Cowansville, owned by Jean Colbert, a partner in Aska Distribution.

Cineplex Odeon released a statement, claiming "Since the French version of *Broadcast News* is not yet available, Cineplex Odeon is obliged to remove *Broadcast News* English version from its screens." The communiqué made reference to Article 83 of Bill 109 which requires a French version be available within 60 days of the opening of a non-French language film.

Sources at the Régie de Cinéma told *Cinema Canada* that morning that it had, in fact, approved a French subtitled version and issued a permanent visa to the film Feb. 12.

This news was confirmed at the end of the day when the minister of Cultural Affairs made a statement, repeating that Astral Bellevue Pathé (which handles the film for 20th-Century Fox in Quebec) had every legal right to screen the film. She "wonders what the real reasons are that the distributor should want to provoke Quebec's cinéphiles."

In an effort to confirm the news, *Cinema Canada* called the Astral offices, which referred us to 20th-Century Fox in Toronto who, in turn, asked we call Los Angeles, ironically underlining the reasons Quebec is trying so hard to repatriate film distribution.

At the Cineplex offices in Montreal, booker Guy Gagnon was answering the phone but could not comment except to confirm the contents of the press release. The Toronto office was referring calls back to Montreal. Confusion abounded.

A call to the offices of the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association confirmed that executive director Millard Roth, the lobbyist for the American Majors, was in Montreal, but his secretary would not say where.

Cineplex did say that a dubbed version was expected by March 4, at which time the film would return to the screens.

The whole episode seemed calculated to stir up fears over the application of the new amendments to the Law. Nevertheless, André

Guérin, director of the Régie, commented that the minister had promised public hearings before Article 83 would be made operational and that, at any rate, the bylaws had not yet been written which would allow the law to be applied.

"Even in war there are rules," he told *Cinema Canada*. "I never thought they (the American distributors) would resort to tactics like this."

Non-theatrical distributors greatly concerned

MONTREAL – John Fisher of Visual Education Centre Ltd. says the proposed amendments to the Quebec Cinema Act, as articulated in Bill 59, could have "grave consequences" for smaller companies in the non-theatrical film industry.

"On one hand we are hoping things will be worked out and on the other hand we are scared as hell," says Fisher, whose Toronto-based company is a member of the Educational Media Producers and Distributors Association of Canada (EMPDAC).

Fisher says that many of the smaller companies will not be able to withstand the prohibitive costs of versioning film required by the proposed amendments of article 83.

These costs (\$40,000 to \$100,000 for a commercial feature film) are based on the economics of commercial feature films that gross millions of dollars at the box office, says Fisher.

"Normally we might sell 20 16mm prints in Quebec which would generate a few thousand dollars but the cost of the Cinema Law would be the same for us as for Warner Brothers," says Fisher.

Thus, says Fisher, proclamation of the amended Cinema Act would deny the English-language school system in Quebec of a "substantial body of learning materials."

Besides the cost of versioning, Fisher explains that audio-visual materials used in the English and French-language school systems are different because the same subjects are not always taught at the same grade level.

"Over the past five years, we have versioned into French over 200 films and have found that it was necessary to adapt beyond just translation. Vocabulary needs are different and teaching concepts vary."

Marc Brissette, a lawyer for the Régie du cinéma, confirmed for *Cinema Canada* that the principle of the amended article 83 is such that all cassettes and prints of non-theatrical films "presented in public" must have a visa in compliance with the amended article 83 which has not yet been decreed as law.

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Schools and libraries, he says, are public places.

Brissette warns, however, that the amended article 83 will be subject to bylaws to be incorporated in the Cinema Law (article 168 paragraphs 16 and 17) which will determine conditions of exception from the law, duration of a visa, the number of copies per visa.

These bylaws, says Brissette, will not be adapted before extensive consultation (expected to continue through the summer) between the film industry in Quebec and the Quebec minister of Cultural Affairs.

Thus, he says, the panic and rumors that have beset the industry since the amended article 83 was introduced in the National Assembly in December 1987 are premature.

"Obviously, most people have panicked before reading the law. A good discussion of principles is taking place but we must wait for the bylaws before we can understand the law," says Brissette.

Film Board caught short by Bill 59?

MONTREAL - The National Film Board of Canada is waiting for the Quebec government to come to its senses and reconsider Bill 59, article 83 which requires a dubbed French-language version of every English-language film for commercial use in Quebec.

François Macerola, chairman of the NFB, says he is confident that the government of Quebec will soon desist in treating the NFB like an American major.

"I don't believe the government will retract the amended version (of article 83) but I am quite sure it will consider the particular status of the NFB as a public producer/distributor," says Macerola.

Macerola told *Cinema Canada* that ongoing talks with Cultural Affairs-Quebec should yield favorable results by mid-March.

In the meantime, close to 2,300 copies of 235 English films have been delivered to the Régie du cinéma (the Quebec government's regulatory agency for film) for visa approval in compliance with with article 83 of the Cinema Act (Bill 109) as amended by Bill 59 assented to on Dec. 17, 1987.

These films represent the majority of the English-language films released by the NFB since April 1, 1987 when the NFB became subject (by permission from the Régie) to Bill 109 proclaimed in Oct. 1985.

Article 83, not yet proclaimed, (i. e. put into operation) by the government, limits to a single copy the number of prints of an English-language film that can be exhibited in commercial

venues unless French-language versions are released immediately.

According to the NFB, this means that all prints and cassettes arriving into the NFB distribution system or produced as a result of a sale as of April 1, 1987 must be given a visa which requires a dubbed version (or the promise of within a reasonable time period) or a temporary 60-day visa for special events.

Given the present rate of issuing visas, it has been estimated that the NFB backlog will not be cleared until Feb. 1989. The NFB puts an average of 100 prints per month into its distribution system and the Régie has the capacity to classify only 30 copies per week.

Macerola says that although he has gone on record in support of the Quebec Cinema Act where Canadian versus U. S. domination of the Quebec marketplace is concerned, the failure of the act to make a distinction between theatrical and non-theatrical will hurt the non-theatrical film industry.

Thus, in order to service schools and libraries, for example, the NFB must comply with the new visa requirements in article 83 and pay the inherent costs.

Eric Cosgrove, until recently head of sales and marketing at the NFB, agrees with Macerola that the act, intended to limit the market share of the U. S. majors in Quebec and strengthen Quebec distributors, is particularly damaging to the non-theatrical industry in its amended form.

"The overriding sense is that the bill was written by people ignorant of the non-theatrical industry," says Cosgrove.

"If they had taken the trouble to learn about the non-theatrical industry or the implication of this bill for the NFB and had they included a distinction between commercial and non-commercial use we would have been free to serve the education system and libraries. We are not."

The Fly generates twins

MONTREAL - Astral Film Enterprises is boasting the highest guarantee ever for distribution of a Canadian film, David Cronenberg's *Twins* which is currently shooting in Toronto.

Stephen Greenberg, vice-president of Astral, says the decision to pay a seven-digit figure for theatrical, video and television rights is the result of Cronenberg's track record. His latest film, *The Fly*, had reportedly grossed \$17,500,000 in rentals by the end of 1987.

Twins, a psychological drama starring Geneviève Bujold and Jeremy Irons, will be distributed in the U. S. by 20th-Century Fox.

Astral has also recently announced a Canadian distribution agreement with Kings Road Entertainment in Los Angeles.



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Sales make costs worthwhile at Monte Carlo

MONTREAL – The cost of keeping body and soul in Monte Carlo may be high but Canadian television producers and distributors say that Monte Carlo Television and Video Market, Feb. 8-13, was well worth the investment in 1988.

Filmoption International Inc. signed a deal with M6-TV in France for all 249 episodes of the daily soap opera *Maison Deschênes* (Les Productions Prisma) and 16 documentaries. Other sales include the Jerry Lee Lewis documentary *I am what I am* to the BBC and a selection from the *Open Book* series (also Prisma) to Germany.

Maryse Rouillard, president of Filmoption, who has been attending Monte Carlo since its inception in 1981, says the market provides an opportunity to prepare for the larger more hectic MIP-TV (April 22-May 3).

"Monte Carlo is a very good screening market," says Rouillard. "Here you have a chance to talk to your clients and get to know their future needs."

On this point, Diane Laurier of Cimadis agrees with Rouillard. Where the two veterans of Monte Carlo disagree is on the cost of living.

"Not so expensive that you want to miss Monte Carlo," says Rouillard; "It's incredibly expensive," says Laurier.

Laurier might have spent \$20 for breakfast but, she says, Montreal-based Cimadis attracted a lot of attention in the youth market with its 26 episode series *Curiosity* – a mix of science fiction and documentary material aimed at six to 12-year-olds.

The U.S., Australia, U.K., Belgium, Scandinavia and Asia, all showed interest in the Cimadis programs.

Laurier says she noticed an unusual absence of buyers from the Middle East, South America and Africa. But U.S. representatives were there in number showing a strong interest in children's and animation series among other types of programming.

Julia Frittaion, international marketing agent for Telefilm Canada, told *Cinema Canada* that the U.S. television networks are more interested than ever in offshore programming.

"They don't have the share of the market that they once had so they are looking at productions and co-ventures from other countries. This is the perceptible edge of a big change," says Frittaion, where once the market was limited to pay-TV and cable with no hope of cracking the U.S. networks.

She says Canada has found itself in an advantageous selling position in Monte Carlo with a reputation for high quality programming. Jan Rofekamp of Film Transit, has announced

his strongest market ever with the sales of *Cole Palen's Flying Circus* to French networks in Switzerland, Belgium, Algeria and Canal Plus in France. Switzerland bought *Pouvoir intime*, *North To Nowhere* and *Le Gros de la classe* (*Fat Chance*) and Film Transit's African rock variety video *Juju Music* and *So Many Miracles*, a film by Saul Rubinek were acquired by PBS in the U.S.

Other Transit customers, this time around, are Belgium, Holland, Norway, Greece, Finland and the Gulf States.

Two first-time attendees, Michel Zgarka of Concept Image J.P. Inc. and Carmella Tuttino of Feline Film, say they will return next year. Zgarka reports strong interest in his *Ovide and the Gang*, an animated television series. He says the market was well-organized.

In business since December 1987 after a long association with Cinévidéo, Carmella Tutino characterizes the market as "hard work but well worth the investment." Her properties included the 1986 feature film by Mireille Dansereau *Le Sourd dans la ville* which drew attention from Belgian television.

Indy TV production makes progress at SRC

MONTREAL – While Quebec's producers are happy with the strides made in their relations with the Société Radio-Canada, they have called for continued efforts to increase their share of the market.

These are the conclusions reached by an exhaustive study, commissioned by the Association des producteurs de films et de vidéo du Québec, executed by Michel Houle, and entitled "La production indépendante à l'antenne de la Société Radio-Canada."

In the period from 1984 to 1987, private production has risen from 12 per cent of available hours to 19 per cent. More significant, says Houle, is that private productions make up 38 per cent of all the new programming on the network if one eliminates sports and information programming.

Houle examines every aspect of the public-private programming at Radio-Canada in his 119 page document.

Surprisingly, he reports that French versions of Canadian English series occupy 50 per cent of the programming time allotted to dramatic Canadian series. He concludes that English producers are therefore receiving twice the funds.

The APFVQ has yet to make any real impact on the English language market and, hence, would like to see some rectification of this imbalance.

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Producers still waiting for major tax legislation

TORONTO - Canadian Film and Television Association president Sam Jephcott greeted the minor tax changes announced in last month's budget with two words.

"Big deal."

The "no-news" budget offered little hope to an industry that has been anticipating major tax reform for months. The ministries of Finance and Communications have continued to promise substantial changes to legislation, but so far that has amounted to very little.

"We're still waiting for major legislation," Jephcott said. "If it doesn't happen in this administration we're going to see an even greater decline in production than we've seen already."

A White Paper on Tax Reform released last June dropped the capital cost allowance granted to certified films from 100 per cent to 30 per cent. In December, Finance Minister Michael Wilson countered the strong opposition to this change

by eliminating the half-year convention on the CCA, a move many producers considered to be cosmetic. (The half-year convention spreads the benefit of the CCA over two years.)

Uncertainty about what changes producers can expect and when they will come has made for a "disastrous" situation, according to Jephcott. The probability of a federal election in the near future compounds the problem. Although both the CFTA and the Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers have received assurances of action from Wilson's office, it is becoming likely that no new bill will be passed before voters go to the polls.

"Will anything happen before an election?" asked Peter Mortimer, executive vice-president of the ACFTP. "I don't know. We want to believe yes."

Mortimer, who is also the Toronto co-ordinator of the National Ad Hoc Screen Industries Committee, has been pressing the government to phase out the CCA in favour of tax incentives. The NAHSIC plan is to increase the CCA rate to 65 per cent as an interim measure to cushion the industry against legislative shocks.

But Jephcott and the CFTA are more impatient for change. They have proposed moving

immediately to a refundable investment tax credit, which would allow producers to invest in their own production for a credit or refund based on the size of the project budget. The NAHSIC proposal, Jephcott says, is "tired, stale, and completely lacking in any sort of recognition of what's needed in tax reform."

Mortimer downplays any differences between producers' associations. "There was never any real split. Jephcott misunderstood the interim nature of our proposal."

The two groups are working towards the same end, Mortimer insists, but with different timeframes. "You can't (replace the CCA) overnight. Abrupt adjustments are the worst thing for this industry." The NAHSIC proposal would see a tax incentive replace the CCA "probably" within two to three years.

The CFTA is employing a full-time researcher to study the implementation of its refundable tax credit proposal.

But Jephcott maintains that the differences between NAHSIC and the CFTA are real and should be acknowledged. "When the split is between positive and negative, good and bad, there is some justification in allowing the split to become visible," he said.

"We still have some accountants, stock promoters etc. forming associations and chairing ad hoc committees."

Political protest in the works in Quebec

MONTREAL - The Quebec wing of the National Ad Hoc Screen Industries Committee (NAHSIC) is determined to campaign against the Mulroney government in the wake of a federal budget (Feb. 10) that did not contain any relief for a film and television production industry in need.

"There was nothing in the budget," says Charles Ohayon, producer and chairman of the Quebec tax reform committee, who had expected an increase in the Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) for certified Canadian film.

NAHSIC was formed shortly after June 18, 1987 when the government pulled the financial rug from beneath the film and television production industry by reducing the CCA to 30

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per cent from 100 per cent.

After many exhaustive meetings with federal government officials to push for reinstated support for the industry, Ohayon says he feels cheated by a budget which offers nothing but an extended exemption from non-resident withholding tax for film, TV and video royalties and interest.

"They told us that they understood our position," says Ohayon. "I remember distinctly Len Faber (Department of Finance) admitting that although 100 per cent is too high, 30 per cent is too low and it is just a question of finding something in between. I had no reason to doubt he was talking to me in good faith."

Not all of the Quebec producers in NAHSIC expected that any more relief would be forthcoming in the February budget. Among the less-than-optimistic producers was Rock Demers, president of the Association des Producteurs de Films et du Vidéo du Québec (APFVQ), who expressed grave doubts that the federal government was listening to NAHSIC when, on Dec 16, 1987, Finance Minister Michael Wilson announced that a half-year convention, which had spread the benefit of the CCA over two years at 15 per cent each year, would be removed from the 30 per cent CCA.

Today, Demers is convinced that the government cares little for the Canadian film and television production industry.

"We had hoped for a further extension of the grandfather clause (for 100 per cent CCA) from Dec. 1987 to Dec. 1988 and we had heard rumors that Telefilm Canada, the CBC and the National Film Board would be getting more money," says Demers.

This disregard for the financial viability of the industry is even more disturbing, says Demers, when one considers that this same government has promised that Canadian cultural industries will not be part of the Free Trade Agreement.

He says there is ample evidence that the government has turned its back on Canadian film and television where free trade is concerned despite promises not to negotiate cultural industries.

"When they told us that cultural industries were not touched by free trade, they were lying," says Demers.

In order to bring its case against the government to the public, three main organizations within NAHSIC - APFVQ, the Canadian Film and Television Association and the Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers - are planning a newspaper campaign of full-page ads for early this month.

"We are buying pages in newspapers to cry or yell at the government, I don't know which," says Demers.

Says Ohayon, "We want to let the public know that as things stand right now there is no hope for the private sector in the film industry. The only ones who seem to understand this is

the Quebec government."

On Dec. 18, two days after the disappointing half-year convention announcement Quebec producers found a slight ray of sunshine in an announcement by Gérard Lévesque, Quebec's finance minister, that deductions on investments in Quebec-made films would increase on Jan. 1, 1988, from 100 per cent to 133 1/3 per cent.

Based on a miscalculation, this tax break in the Quebec Stock Savings Plan (QSSP) was reduced from 150 per cent on Dec. 11, 1986.

"At least the Quebec government was able to admit it had made a mistake," says Ohayon.

Producers fronting for Americans, Jephcott claims

TORONTO - The push for new tax legislation may have opponents among Canadian producers who have found lucrative loopholes in current laws, according to CFTA president Sam Jephcott.

Jephcott said in an interview that "Canadian companies are subcontracting U.S. production with a view to selling tax shelter units in those productions."

He declined to name any of producers.

But the result, he says, is that not all producers want major changes in legislation, especially if it means an end to their "co-productions".

"The people that are doing this are not fools," Jephcott explained. "The loopholes that they've found are quite genuine."

"The snake-oil salesmen have found another way."

Jephcott admits that any new system, including his CFTA's proposed refundable investment tax credit, may be prone to the same exploitation.

"We may not be able to find all of the possible abuses, but if we can demonstrate that we have seriously committed ourselves to legislation that won't be readily abused, then maybe we can get it in place."

Cinar distributor

MONTREAL - Donna Vekteris has been named manager of program distribution at Cinar Films Inc.

Vice-President Ron Weinberg announced that Vekteris will coordinate all distribution operations.

Vekteris has been with Cinar Films since 1986 as a production coordinator.

Prior to joining Cinar, she worked as a production coordinator with CTV and wrote advertising copy for Montreal radio stations. She is a graduate of Concordia University with a degree in communications.

Telefilm announces restructuring

Overcommitment reduced

MONTREAL - In an ongoing attempt to reestablish control of its own financial situation, management practices and administration, Telefilm Canada has restructured its operations, returning to an organization similar to the one used under André Lamy's administration.

There is still no sign of a new executive director to replace Peter Pearson, who resigned on Oct. 16 1987; however, a short list of candidates is being prepared by the consulting firm of Stevenson and Kellogg and an announcement is expected by mid-April.

Interim executive director Michèle Fortin has announced the appointment of Peter Katadotis as the interim director of production and development.

Katadotis, who will continue as the director general of the English Program Branch at the National Film Board (since 1985) will fill this interim position for a two-month period.

Among his duties will be the management of the Broadcast Development Fund and the Feature Film Fund previously handled by Linda Beath, former executive in charge of operations and business affairs, who has been retained by Telefilm as a consultant to senior management.

Telefilm's reorganization plan divides all Telefilm activities among four sectors.

Although she has been appointed as director of Strategic Planning and Policies, Judith McCann, deputy executive director of Telefilm, has resigned as of April 1, 1988.

Another deputy executive director, Louise Beaudoin is now the director of the Markets sector.

Yves Beauchesne is in charge of Financing and Administration and Denise Melillo is the director of Communications and Public Relations.

Fortin calls the reorganization of the federal film funding agency a "streamlining of activities, a decentralization and clarification of client relations and an improved relationship between administrative functions and the management of funds." Ten positions within the new sectors remain to be filled.

It has also been announced that Bill Gray is the new manager of the Telefilm Canada office in Vancouver.

Gray, an entertainment lawyer and writer/actor/producer/director for radio and television will succeed Wayne Sterloff who left Telefilm in October. Bill Niven has been the interim manager.

The reorganization of Telefilm was approved at the last meeting of the Telefilm board of directors on Feb. 4 in Vancouver.

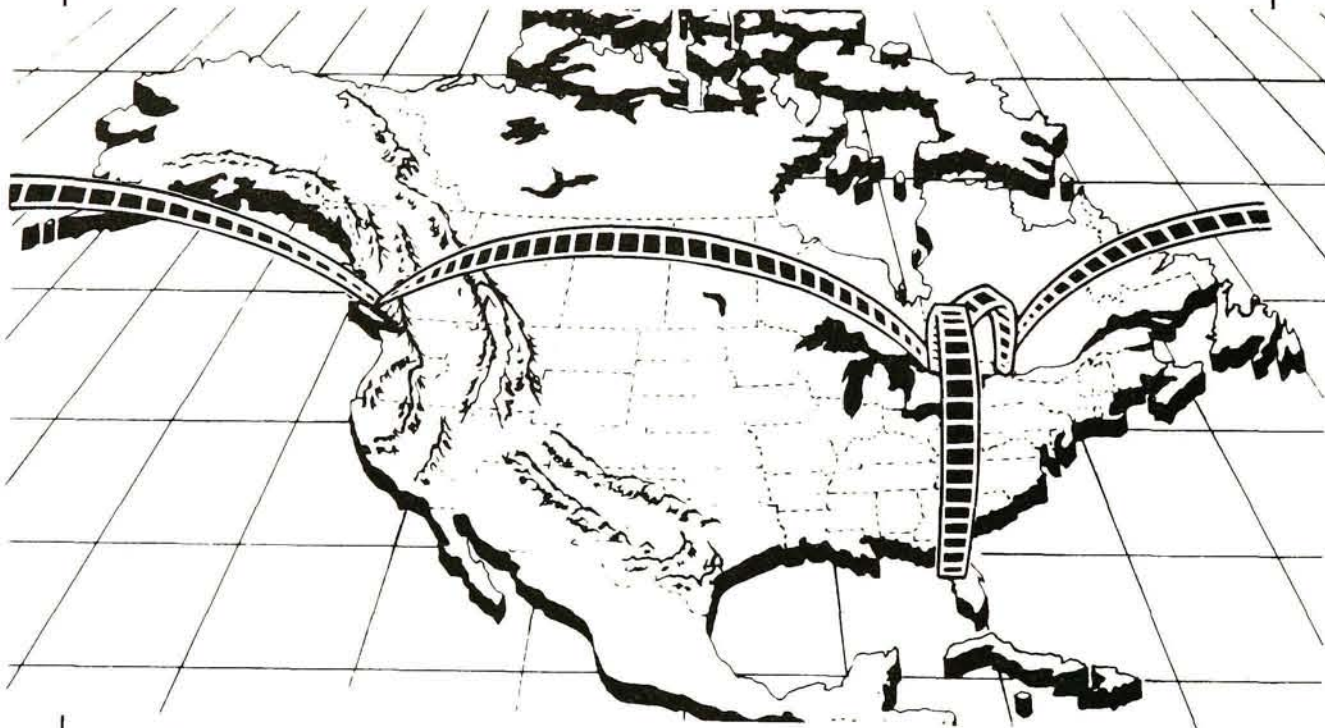
Fortin, an associate of Le groupe CGI Inc., was hired in November to reorganize Telefilm with colleague Roch Bolduc.

In the dizzying realm of finance, Fortin has recently informed Communications Minister Flora MacDonald that what once was a \$48

million over commitment of television and film funding in fiscal 1987 has been reduced to \$30

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Continued from previous page
million.

A accounting report (Thorne Ernst and
Whinney) released last October by Telefilm

revealed that Telefilm had, by Sept. 30, 1987,
committed itself to spending \$163 million - \$48
million more than its fiscal 1987 budget of \$115

million.

However, in a letter to Flora MacDonald,
dated Feb. 19, Fortin says "we are confident we

can complete this fiscal year with minimal
impact on next year's funds."

"... our most recent analysis indicates that
we will be in a position to expend funds available
in our 1987-1988 budget by the end of the fiscal
year. In fact our priority over the next two
months is to ensure maximum payments on
signed contracts and to finalize contracts for
projects already accepted."

The letter indicates that Telefilm expects to
reduce the \$48 million of commitments
anticipated as carryover to 1988-1989 to an
"acceptable level" in the range of \$30 million.

Katadotis hotly contested

MONTREAL - The two-month interim
appointment of Peter Katadotis as director of
production and development at Telefilm Canada
has raised an angry protest by producers across
Canada.

No sooner had the appointment been
announced on Feb. 17 by Michèle Fortin, the
interim executive director of Telefilm, when the
Association des producteurs de films et de vidéo
du québec (APFVQ) had fired off a letter to
Fortin objecting to the appointment of
Katadotis.

Rock Demers, president of the APFVQ, told
Cinema Canada that the 80-member producers'
organization lacks confidence in Katadotis to
administer the Broadcast Development Fund,
the Feature Film Fund and the Interim Financing
Fund for both English and French-language
productions.

Demers says the APFVQ letter states that
Katadotis lacks the experience in the private
sector to work closely with producers.

"There is nothing he can bring to the job that
can be of any use," says Demers.

"When he looks at a budget, he will not be able
to read it because he does not know how to
produce a film. At the NFB you don't learn that
because they work with a different kind of
structure."

There is also concern among the APFVQ
membership that Katadotis leans too heavily in
favor of documentaries and that, as a result, the
production of feature film and television series
will suffer.

The National Film Board has confirmed that
Katadotis will remain in his position as director
general of the English Program Branch and
Telefilm has confirmed that the interim
appointment is for two months starting in
mid-February.

Fortin has stated in a letter (Feb. 25) to various
associations within the film industry that the
position of director of production and
development - part of a restructuring of the
senior administration at Telefilm - "will not be

Continued next page

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Continued from previous page
filled immediately" and that Katadotis has accepted the position until a new executive director is appointed.

The interim appointment is necessary, explains Fortin, "as the requirement for coordination is particularly crucial in the next months."

A strong objection levelled at Telefilm by both the APFVQ and the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA) is that neither association nor the industry at large was

consulted about the reorganization and appointment at Telefilm.

"Telefilm had promised us on several occasions to confer with the industry prior to a reorganization and an appointment of senior management," says Sam Jephcott, CFTA executive director.

Jephcott says regional producers across the country have informed him of their disapproval of the appointment.

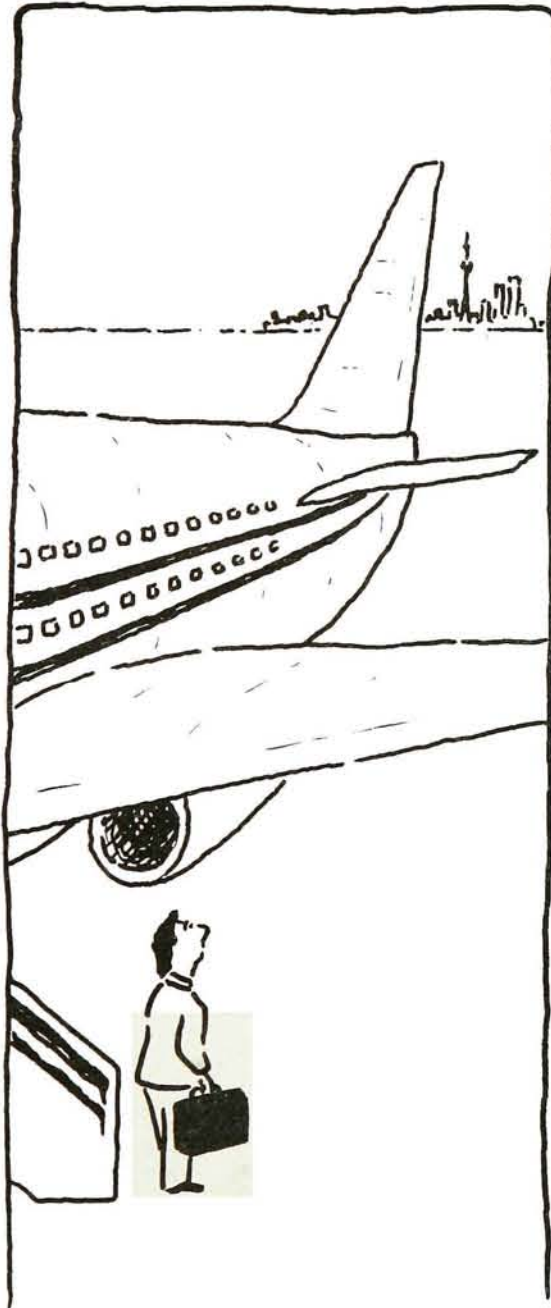
John Ross, chairman of the CFTA, has gone on record as saying that Jean Sirois has lost the confidence of the industry by breaking a promise to consult the industry and by hiring Katadotis.

Consequently, the CFTA has asked for the resignation of Sirois.

At press time, Katadotis could not be contacted for comment.

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Maple Leaf abroad

TORONTO — Boasting impressive credentials and an unmistakable symbol, Canadian television distribution has a new international face.

Maple Leaf Worldwide Distribution is the result of a four-partner venture that will attempt to connect Canadian television programming with world markets.

The partners — Ron Hastings Communications, Pat Ferns' Primedia Entertainment, Richard Price's RPTA/Primetime (U.K.) and D.L. Taffner/Ltd. (U.S.) — aim to eliminate the middlemen in current foreign sales, and "provide a profile" for Canada in world television markets.

"When we call on international broadcasters and they hear the word Maple Leaf they'll know exactly what we're about," said Ferns.

Maple Leaf will be involved in both foreign sales and domestic syndication. It will deal mostly with completed programs, but will also pitch unrealized projects to the world.

Ferns, one of the two Canadians in the partnership, sees Maple Leaf as an opportunity for sometime competitors to work together on the world stage. "The formation of Maple Leaf is going to give the production community a better shake in the world community.

"I'm a great believer in competition and a great believer in partnership," he continued. "I thought I would reconcile the two."

The Canadian partners (Ferns and Hastings) will have a majority interest in the new company.

Some of the clients already signed with Maple Leaf include: Comedia Productions (a Ferns-Taffner partnership), Evergreen Racoons, Film Arts, John McGreevy Productions, and Les productions du sept avril.

Hastings said that although this is a new venture, some, but not all of the partners' existing Canadian product "will be folded into Maple Leaf."

Opposition calls for TFC investigation

MONTREAL - Telefilm Canada may have a new executive director by mid-April but, in the meantime, the war drags on between Peter Pearson, former executive director and Jean Sirois, chairman of the board of Telefilm Canada.

The lines have been drawn with Sirois and Peter Pearson on opposite sides joined in the odd skirmish by Communications minister Flora MacDonald and Sheila Finestone (Lib. - Mount Royal) communications critic and member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Culture.

Finestone says she will continue to call for a full parliamentary investigation into Telefilm finances and the business affairs of Sirois following a series of articles in the *Ottawa Citizen* concerning a 24-page letter by Peter Pearson.

In the letter, published on pp. xx, Pearson reveals his reasons for resigning on Oct. 16 which include specific job transgressions by Sirois in the day-to-day operations of the federal government film funding agency.

At one point in the letter Pearson writes: "No examination of the chairman's expense account billing could stand public scrutiny."

To date, Flora MacDonald has managed to defend Sirois in the House while evading Finestone's demand for an investigation.

"We truly believe that we have to get to the bottom of this story and find out what the situation is at Telefilm so that the industry is not hurt," says Nancy Waugh, executive assistant to Finestone.

Of particular concern to Finestone, says Waugh, is the chairman's interference with Telefilm contracts and his expense account.

"We have asked that these particular charges by Pearson be looked at," says Waugh.

Finestone called for the Nov. 17 investigation into a \$48 million spending overcommitment by Telefilm. This investigation, says Waugh, left many questions unanswered.

Michel Côté comments on Jean Sirois

QUEBEC - As ex-federal minister Michel Côté explained himself, he was guilty of errors in judgement, not of conflicts of interest concerning the financial dealing which caused his resignation.

Meeting with party militants and the press, Côté denied having helped party faithful win

important contracts.

Mentioning a \$277,000 contract awarded to Jean Sirois (for research on a re-working of the bankruptcy law) while he, Côté was still, responsible for Corporations, the ex-minister explained that the minister of Justice awards contract to lawyers.

Denis Lessard of *La Presse* also mentions that once at Telefilm, Sirois chose Côté's former firm, Thorne Ernst Whinney, to examine the administration of TFC. The \$150,000 contract was given without tender, states *La Presse*.

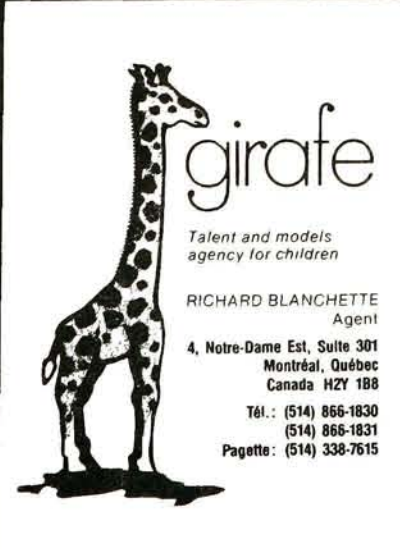
Referring to Sirois, Côté is reported to have said, "Being a Conservative surely didn't do him any harm."

Walker opens in namesake venue

TORONTO - Giles Walker's fertility-satire *The Last Straw* headlines this month's Festival of New Canadian Cinema in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Festival, which also features Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Un Zoo la nuit*, Atom Egoyan's *Family Viewing*, and Patricia Rozema's *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*, opened March 2 with Walker's film at the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis.

The two Walkers are unrelated.

Walker is also doing well across the ocean. *The Last Straw* is set for U.K. commercial release in the late spring through the British film distributor The Other Cinema. *90 Days*, the film that preceded *The Last Straw*, opened February 19 at London's Minema.



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Cineplex funds U.S. production

TORONTO - The Cineplex Odeon Corporation and New Century Entertainment will form a venture to provide funding for Taylor Hackford's Los Angeles-based New Visions Inc. New Visions has entered into a merger agreement with New Century.

Cineplex Odeon will distribute all New Century/New Visions films in all media in Canada and all territories outside the U.S.

Taylor Hackford was responsible, either as director or producer, for *An Officer and a Gentleman*, *Against All Odds*, *White Nights*, and *La Bamba*.

The Graying of TFC-West

VANCOUVER - There's a new man in charge of Telefilm Canada's Western office in Vancouver. He's Bill Gray, a native Manitoban who has recently been practicing law in Calgary. He replaces interim administrator Bill Niven who, in turn, took over from Wayne Sterloff, currently head of the new B.C. film funding agency.

Gray comes to the job via a circuitous path. Aficionados of CBC radio drama may recognize his name as a producer/director. He's also acted in film and television, written for both but admits he's never actually made a film. In an interview with *Cinema Canada* he said:

"I'm a backwards kind of person on this. I only recently went to law school, graduated in 1986. I never really intended to practice it. But after years in the hands-on part of the industry, I wanted more exposure to the business world, I wanted to look at how it all worked."

At least one law school experience should come in handy. He spent some time studying with the money-men at MGM in Hollywood. Gray also feels his radio drama years will be useful when dealing with writers and directors.

"You're really close to what your vision is, you're producer, writer and director. I've worked with experienced writers like Sharon Pollack and also inexperienced people. There's an element of script development, too."

He was unwilling to comment on the specifics of his new job at presstime because "I haven't started yet and I'm busy wrapping up a law practice." However he was looking forward to the official announcement of the new Telefilm master plan:

"In general, what I'm looking forward to is more autonomy in the Western Region as opposed to the East. As I understand the changes, they will lend more authority to the Vancouver office." He says he's always had a

biding interest in indigenous Canadian filmmaking because, "We have an enormous production machine just south of the border. Yet it's important we tell our own stories. While I was at law school, Telefilm went from a small

to a large consideration. It's the route I would have set up to establish an industry. It occurred to me that, after the crisis, Telefilm must be sitting down to reevaluate itself. So, I contacted them, heard about the Vancouver opening and

here I am."

Gray has already talked to film agencies in Alberta and Manitoba. He expects to spend some time with Telefilm in Montreal and Toronto before settling into Vancouver.



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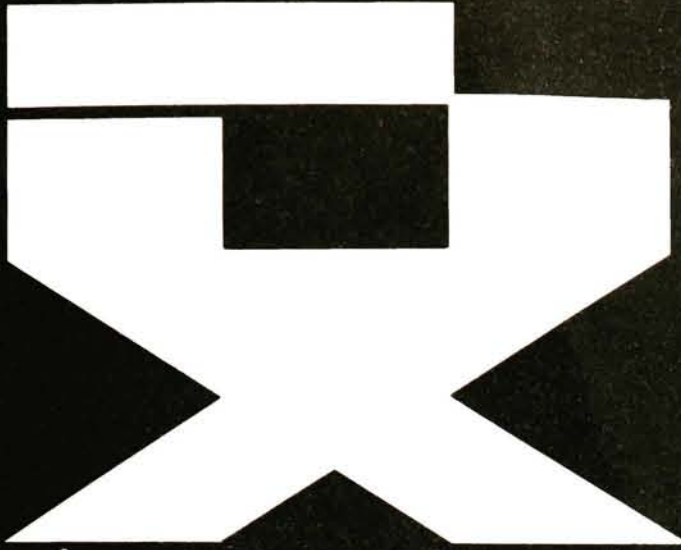
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**ACTRA objects
to all-news rebuff**

TORONTO - The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists has come out strongly against the federal government's rejection of the CBC all-news channel.

The cabinet decision, prompted largely by pressure from Western and Quebec caucus members, has become something of a *bête noire* for new ACTRA president Dale Goldhawk. Goldhawk, a former CBC journalist, is incensed at what he terms government "meddling" in the affairs of a Crown corporation.

"It is not the government's role to fix an application (the CBC) already had won. That is meddling of the highest order."

The license for the all-news channel, announced last November, does not actually take effect until September 1. Communications minister Flora MacDonald has suggested that the CBC use the intervening time to make changes in its proposal that will make it more palatable to Cabinet.

"I was amazed that the CBC accepted the suggestions of Ms. MacDonald so readily," said Goldhawk. Goldhawk's first public statement as ACTRA president was to call for the government to withdraw the "conditions" it has imposed on the CBC.

The government's three main areas of concern, stated at a Department of Communications press conference in January, are:

- *the possibility that that a CBC all-news channel would "contribute to concentration in management and operation of broadcast news in Canada"

- *the lack of any firm plans for a comparable service in French

- *the likelihood that the long-awaited new Broadcast Act "may redefine the role and mandate of the CBC."

But according to Goldhawk, "The Cabinet has violated the traditional arm's-length principle that guides relations between the government and Crown corporations.

"By directing the CBC to rework its all-news channel to incorporate private broadcasters and to seek a French-language licence, the Tories have taken the unprecedented step of interfering in the internal operations of the Corporation."

The government does not have the power to overrule a CRTC decision and award licenses to one party over another. But it can cancel a license or send a decision back to the CRTC for review.

Goldhawk admits his position as a former CBC reporter does not allow for impartiality in the issue. "I'm prejudiced because I used to work at the CBC. But so what?"

"We have to be a little more vocal than we have been in the past."

**Donaldson in
"holding pattern"**

TORONTO - When Joan Donaldson learned she was to head up the CBC's new all-news service, she admitted to being "excited, thrilled, overwhelmed and scared."

But with the setbacks the CBC has suffered at the hands of Cabinet, Donaldson has calmed down considerably. These days, among many other things, she spends her time working on the new proposal that will be presented to Cabinet in the fall.

And how does it feel to be in charge of something with so tenuous an existence?

"We're in a bit of a holding pattern, but we're carrying on," Donaldson says.

"We've got masses of work cut out for us."

**Smith waiting
Famous' turn**

MONTREAL - Roland Smith, vice-president of Cinémas Famous Players, says the announcement of new ventures in Quebec by the Canada-wide theatre chain can be expected within the next two months.

Smith says he is left unperturbed by recent Cineplex-Odeon theatre renovations and openings in Quebec.

"That's the way it goes," he says, "one day it is their turn to make a move, the next day it is ours."

Last summer, Smith sold the well-known Outremont repertory cinema prior to joining Famous Players. At that time, he said he had seen the writing on the wall which spelled the end of independently run cinemas (caught between the large theatre chains) due to a loss of buying power.

Several months ago Famous Players opened and closed its repertory cinema on St. Catherine St. East.

An art house on Parc Ave., called the Bogart with three screens, is still a going concern, says Smith.

However, two of three screens are currently showing mainstream commercial features because of inaccessibility of American classic prints from the 1940s and 1950s. Smith expects to find these prints by the late spring.

Rocky, dangerous road mapped out in free trade

MONTREAL - Free trade is already having a debilitating effect on the Canadian film industry, says the chairperson of the sectoral advisory group on international trade (SAGIT): Arts and Culture.

"What we are witnessing is an ongoing dramatic development regarding Canadian cultural industries and free trade. The fact is that film is going to be the victim," says Marie-José Raymond, chairperson of the SAGIT on arts and culture and president of Rose Films Inc.

Peter Simpson, a SAGIT member, does not share Raymond's view. The president of Simcom and Norstar Releasing Inc., a theatrical distribution company representing filmmakers and distributors in Canada, the U.S. and abroad, says the government is good on its promise to protect cultural industries where free trade is concerned.

"There is absolutely no evidence in the agreement that the government has changed its position," says Simpson.

During the spring and summer of 1986, 15 SAGIT committees, composed of key persons in the private sector, were formed to advise the federal government on matters pertaining to international trade and the Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

According to its members, the SAGIT, Arts and Culture was largely responsible for keeping cultural industries off the free trade negotiation table.

However, the wording of the current free trade document with specific reference to the second paragraph of section 2005 (the principal provision of the treaty dealing with cultural industry) combined with on going developments within the industry itself has given Raymond reason to believe that the federal government has no intention of developing a strong Canadian film industry.

"It is one thing to exempt cultural industries from the Free Trade Agreement," says Raymond, "and quite another thing to preserve the status quo of the film industry. The status quo is disastrous. We have been totally invaded by foreign products and we don't have access to our own market," says Raymond.

Not unfamiliar with the syntactic subtleties of government documents Raymond, co-author of the 1985 Task Force Report on the Film Industry (*Canadian Cinema: A Solid Base*), is bothered by the second paragraph in section 2005 which she says locks the film industry into the status quo where there is no film distribution law despite repeated promises of federal government legislation, a severely weakened and thus unattractive tax shelter for certified Canadian film and a financially emaciated Telefilm

Canada.

Section 2005, paragraphs 1 and 2 read as follows:

"1. Cultural industries are exempt from the

provisions of this Agreement, except as specifically provided in Article 401 (tariff elimination) paragraph 4 of Article 1607 (divestiture of an indirect acquisition) and Articles 2006 and 2007 of this

Chapter.

2. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, a Party may take measures of equivalent

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Continued from previous page

commercial effect in response to actions that would have been inconsistent with this Agreement but for paragraph 1."

The second paragraph, says Raymond, sends a clear signal to the the federal government that any measure to repatriate the Canadian film industry could cause retaliation of "equivalent commercial effect" against another Canadian industry.

"You can just imagine what kind of blackmail position we are in if we, for example, convince the government to pass the distribution law knowing that, as a result, the mining, lumber or fishing industry is going to be hurt," says Raymond.

Simpson, on the other hand, warns against jumping to hasty conclusions. He advocates a wait-and-see approach.

"We kept culture off the table and that is 95 per cent of the battle. This means that we can write the laws we like and they can retaliate."

Given the delicate path that the Free Trade Agreement must travel in Parliament and congress, Simpson says it is not surprising that concerned parties on both sides of the border are highly sensitive to anything in the agreement that may imply bad faith.

"There will no doubt be hiccups between the two countries. We know that U.S. trade representatives are not pleased that cultural industries was left out of the agreement. We know that the U.S. unions are up-in-arms about runaway productions in Canada and the manufacturing of 25 per cent of North American prints in Canada. Understand that this is not going to be a smooth ride all the way," says Simpson.

Joint venture to magnetize post-production

TORONTO - Standard Broadcasting Corporation, owner of the CHUM group of radio stations and the CITY-TV Much Music network, has entered into a joint venture with the Magnetic North Corporation to knit up post-production facilities in the city.

The two companies have set up The Magnetic Enterprises Corporation, which will merge the TV production and post-production of Standard subsidiary VTR Productions Limited, along with its Eastern Sound division, with Magnetic North and its Magnetic Fax Corporation.

Dan McGuire, president of Magnetic North, will serve as president and CEO of the new company.

In addition, Standard and Magnetic North have an agreement in principle to buy out 100 per cent of Toronto's Medallion Film Laboratories. The resulting conglomeration will aim at the corporate and entertainment markets with a

wide variety of services, including film processing, video transfer, editing, TV and audio production and post-production.

Medallion opens its new video division this

month, which will provide on-premises film-to-videotape transfer.

McGuire and Standard president Allan Slaight have emphasized that Magnetic Enterprises will

exist as a "core company" to focus the services of its constituent firms. Magnetic Enterprises will continue to look for partners in complementary areas of the entertainment industry.



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NEWS

NEW IMAX PROJECT

The National Film Board has begun filming a 35-minute IMAX production which will be premiered at the yet-to-be-constructed IMAX theatre in Montreal's Old Port. The dramatic film, tentatively titled **The Heart**, will focus on medical advances which have been pioneered in Canada and, in particular, Montreal. Much of the filming will take place in the Montreal Heart Institute and the Montreal Neurological Institute. The project, which will be co-produced by Lavalin Communications, will be budgeted at \$3 million and date for completion is set at June 1. The new theatre will open with the second annual Expotec, a technological exhibition on June 15. The NFB crew, much the same as that which created the IMAX 3-D film **Transitions** for Expo '86 in Vancouver, includes: directors Colin Low and Tony Ianzelo; director of photography Ernest McNabb; editor Michael McKennirey and producer Mark Zannis.

NFB IN PRIME TIME

Now in final mix, director Donald Brittain's latest production **The King Chronicle** is scheduled for telecast on the CBC. March 27, 28, 29 this year. This three-part six-hour co-production of the National Film Board and the CBC stars Sean McCann (*Night Heat*) as MacKenzie King. The dramatic series recalls the life of Canada's longest reigning prime mi-



Sean McCann stars as McKenzie King in *The King Chronicle*

nister from his student days to his death in 1950. Filmed on location in Montreal and Ottawa and on the NFB's Montreal shooting stage, **The King Chronicle** also features: Patricia Collins, Richard Farrell, John Friesen, Marion Gil-senan, David Hughes, Gary Reineke, R.H. Thomson and Sandy Webster. The series is produced by Adam Symansky.

The Gemini-Award-winning four-part series **Daughters of the Country**, produced by the NFB's Prairie Centre will be presented on CBC-Television on

four consecutive Thursdays beginning March 3 at 8:00 p.m. The first film to be televised, **IKWE** was directed and produced by Norma Bailey who produced all four films. **Daughters of the Country** is a series of historical dramas focussing on Canada's M tis people from 1770 to the late-1900s.

Internationally... this same series will be televised by both the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation and the Korean Broadcasting System this spring.

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A recent *Hollywood Reporter* story ranked the volume of film business done in North American states and provinces. California is, of course, on top, followed by New York, Florida, Ontario, North Carolina and Quebec.

B.C. was seventh having generated about \$66 million in film business in 1986. California was \$6 billion, New York - \$2.3 billion, Florida and Ontario are neck-and-neck at \$144 million, North Carolina-\$128 million and Québec is just ahead of us at \$87 million.

• Last month we reported on the takeover of Tegra Industries by Pacific Video. The Vancouver Stock Exchange has approved the details; Pacific Video of Los Angeles now owns 70 per cent of the stock. Apart from Gunter Henning's departure (he sold the stock), the Board remains intact with Crawford Hawkins as CEO. Tegra says the takeover will allow greater competitiveness in both Canada and the U.S.

• Can West Broadcasting is wasting no time moving in on CKVU-13 now that there's only one more court saddled with the chore of untangling the lawsuits launched between CanWest and 'VU founders, Daryl Duke and Norman Klenman.

President and CEO of CanWest Donald Brinton has moved into the station's sales department. Once the litigation is over Brinton will become CEO of Western Approaches Limited, the company that now owns CKVU.

Mind you, it ain't over till it's over and Duke and Klenman are both noted for their tenacity.

• Klenman is doing more than meeting with lawyers. He's writing the screenplay for an international co-production of Dostoevski's novel "The Gambler". We mean International.

The film, to be called *Passion*, is being made by American, Austrian and Soviet interests. The producer is Austrian Wolfgang Odelga (*Peter the Great*), Natassja Kinski will star and Soviet director Konstantin Khudviakov will be behind the cameras... Interiors are expected to be shot at the Mosfilm Studios in Moscow.

Might be some lessons there for hanging onto your media properties.

• MGM is in pre-production in Vancouver on a one-hour pilot for ABC. *Knights of the City*, based on the vigilante group, the Guardian Angels, will wind up shooting here in the second week of March.

Director on the project is Farhad Mann, who directed the *Max Headroom* pilot; the script is by Kevin Sullivan.

• After finishing *The Outside Chance of Maxmillian Glick*, Northern Lights Media is working to keep up the momentum. The Vancouver-based production company has "about 10 projects in the developmental stage," according to publicist Patricia La Nauze.

This fall they will begin shooting on *Hockeybat Harris*, a feature based on the story, by Geoffrey Bilson, about a street-wise English lad who is evacuated from London during the blitz to a small town in Saskatchewan. The script is by Michael Mercer.

This made-for-television film is a co-production with HTV of Bristol, England; funding is from CBC, Telefilm and HTV. Filming will take place in England and in Canada.

Another project Northern Lights is working on will be the feature, *The John Tenta Story*, the true story of a Burnaby, B.C. wrestler who went to Japan to study Sumo wrestling, and actually did quite well in the sport.

Meta Communications, which owns Northern Lights, has entered into a production partnership with Vidatron Enterprises, also of Vancouver. The new company hopes to enter into co-productions with Telefilm and B.C. Film.

• *Lighthouse*, a feature film about a couple who travel to a secluded lighthouse to get their lives back in order, and there encounter erotic poltergeists from a former love-triangle, will be in pre-production in early March, according to producer Harry Cole.

Cole, who is also the newly-elected president of the British Columbia Motion Picture Association, said the \$2.1 million feature is being made for theatrical release.

Bruce Pittman (*Hello, Mary Lou: Prom Night II*) will direct the film, which was originally scripted by Boon Collins.

Funding for the film came from Telefilm, B.C. Film and Vestron Pictures.

• Sailing fans will want to keep an eye out for two half-hour CBC-TV shows called *Sailwest*. They're produced by David Barr Mills of Pacific Barr Productions Limited.

The production highlights the spectacular experiences to be had sailing along British Columbia's awe-inspiring coast. As well as the TV versions, *Sailwest* is being marketed as a 50-minute home video in Canada and the U.S.

• Also coming to a TV set near you: The Eyes multimedia company is producing a television series on something they know a lot about, the B.C. Film Industry. The four-part series will examine technology, politics, economics and indirect benefits to the community.

• Which reminds us: The next issue of *Cinema Canada* will be a special B.C. edition. We'll be profiling both well-known and unknown talents, examining the issues and talking to industry leaders about the future.

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New ACTRA chief stands firm on IPA negotiations

TORONTO - Motivated by a new spirit of cautious defiance, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists is continuing its negotiations for an Independent Production Agreement with the threat of strike action as a last resort.

"If we can't get an IPA that the members can live with we will have no other choice," said newly-elected ACTRA president Dale Goldhawk.

A representative of the producers has promised to nip any work stoppages "in the bud."

ACTRA's Performers Guild has been negotiating with independent producers since August 1987, when it rejected a proposed IPA that had been ratified by the ACTRA Writers Guild.

The IPA is negotiated between ACTRA and producers represented by the Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers, the Canadian Film and Television Association, L'Association des producteurs de films et de vidéo du Québec, and the National Film Board of Canada.

At issue are the expanding and often lucrative secondary markets for a film or television program, among them videocassettes and world sales. Neither side is happy with the lump-sum manner in which performers are paid for these secondary uses, but an adequate formula has yet to be decided upon.

Performers Guild executive director Ray Stringer would not give details of the negotiations, but characterized them as "fairly positive."

"We're making progress," he said, adding, "I suppose I'm a tortoise more than a hare."

ACFTP executive vice-president Peter Mortimer also expressed hope for a quick settlement. But in the event of a strike, he said, "we're bound and determined that we'll nip it in the bud."

The ACFTP wants future contracts to have the flexibility to allow producers to pay performers for only certain uses of the material. In their plan a producer might pay for only the Canadian broadcast rights to a program unlikely to be shown outside of Canada, for example. This would mean a smaller guaranteed salary for the performer, with the possibility of regaining the rest in sales negotiated after the original contract.

But, according to Mortimer, without the lump sums paid to performers, more productions could be made. "That is the carrot for ACTRA's end."

"It's not in anybody's interest to chisel the performers. In the climate of free trade and tax

reform we're looking at a not particularly rosy future."

Goldhawk would also prefer a cooperative settlement, and acknowledges that many of the guild's members would be hurt by a strike. There is also some question about ACTRA's ability as an alliance of freelancers rather than a union to mount an effective strike.

Goldhawk, a veteran broadcast journalist at CBC radio and television, was elected president at the ACTRA national meetings held at the end of January. The national meetings were characterized by a new militancy among the members, which according to Goldhawk, "started with the IPA Agreement."

"They had a feeling that they were not being kept informed." The importance of the agreement to future contracts resulted in an increased interest in the alliance. "Suddenly 300 people started showing up for meetings," where only 40 or so had before.

In the face of this spirit of resistance, Goldhawk remains somewhat optimistic.

"Maybe reason will prevail. It's not impossible that we'll reach an agreement."

Pacific Rim delegation

VANCOUVER - The British Columbia Motion Picture Association (BCMPA) is helping to organize a delegation to investigate co-production, distribution and investment operation possibilities among Pacific Rim countries.

Bob Dubberley, recently appointed BCMPA executive director, said the delegation will include three representatives - one each from the investment, production and distribution sectors of the B.C. film industry.

The group will travel to Tokyo, Hong Kong, Sydney and Auckland, possibly in early May.

"The initial delegation is exploratory and the beginning of a series of such meetings," Dubberley said.

Several federal government agencies are participating as sponsors of the program, he said. The BCMPA's role is not financial but is to disseminate the delegation's report and to foster future contacts.

The idea for the delegation was originally developed by former BCMPA president Chris Bruyere.



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Lauzon produces fireworks to wrap up Rendez-vous

MONTREAL - Jean-Claude Lauzon, *Un zoo, la nuit*, might have had reason to turn down his prize, the \$100,000 Primes à la qualité at the sixth annual Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois festival, but director Jean-Claude Labrecque, *Le Frère André*, thought it prudent not to follow suit.

"This prize means something else to me. It means they recognize that my film is a good film and difficult to make," says Labrecque.

Worth \$100,000 each, the Primes à la qualité are awarded for excellence to the two best Quebec films of the year. This year, seven films were in the running compared to 16 films in 1986.

Lauzon told an awards ceremony audience that he does not like the way the Société générale du cinéma du Québec handles the prize money and film funding in general.

The provincial funding agency, he says, is too slow in supporting filmmakers who have been promised assistance.

According to Lauzon, Denys Arcand, last year's winner of the prize with *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, has not received his prize money which, according to the terms of the prize, is to be reinvested within two years in the winning filmmaker's next project.

Labrecque agrees with Lauzon that a greater emphasis must be placed on development funding. He adds, however, that Lauzon, who can afford to turn down the prize money, overstated his case.

"You have to remember," says Labrecque, "that Canada is one of the few places in the world where you can begin a production with \$100,000 in front of you."

The SGCQ has since commented that the prize money - a production investment - will be given to Arcand after the completion and approval of his latest script and that this is the standard procedure.

Two other SGCQ-sponsored prizes for \$50,000 each - *Primes au succès* - went to Malofilm Production Inc. for *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* and to Productions du Verseau for the television series *Manon 1*. Both films were recognized for cost efficiency, which means the best ratio between the cost of production and revenues.

Prix Guy-L'Ecuyer, a new prize in the six year history of the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois (Feb. 5-13), was presented to film actor Roger Lebel for his role in Lauzon's *Un Zoo, la nuit*. This prize is sponsored by France Films.

Also presented for the first time was the Claude Jutra - L'Office Franco-Québécois pour la Jeunesse prize, selected by the Quebec Association of Film Critics, for the best first-feature director under the age of 35 years.

Denis Laplante won this prize with a \$1,000 cash award and a trip to France to meet with filmmakers.

Train of Dreams by John N. Smith won the L. E. Ouimet-Molson Prize for the best Quebec film of 1987. Selected by the Quebec Association of Film Critics, this NFB-produced film was one of five films nominated.

The Prix de Normandie-Juneau (best short film) was won by Frederic Bach for *L'Homme qui plantait des arbres* and the Prix André-Leroux (best medium-length film) was won by Serge Giguère for *Oscar Thiffault*.

Marcel Jean won the Prix des Rendez-vous (best critical writing) for his article on *The Kid Brother* in *Le Devoir*, a Montreal daily newspaper. The Prix de la photographie de plateau (best still photography) was won by Jean Demers and Jean Crépo.

All 67 films produced in Quebec in 1987, including 20 features, 16 medium and 31 short-length films, were screened during the week-long event in downtown Montreal.

Young cinema celebrates

MONTREAL - Some 43 films and videos by amateur filmmakers from around the world were entered in official competition at the 9th annual Festival International du Jeune Cinéma (Young Cinema), March 1-6.

Organized by l'Association pour le jeune cinéma québécois, the Montreal-based festival includes video and films in the Super 8 and 16mm format.

Competition is divided into four categories. They are the *sélection des vidéos québécoises*, *sélection des films québécois*, *sélection intercollégiale* including films recommended by professors of cinema in Quebec and the official competition including films from West Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Canada, U.S., France, Switzerland, Venezuela and the Philippines.

Selluloid looks un-American

TORONTO - Shooting will begin in the fall on two theatrical features to be produced by Pierre Sarrazin Productions and Selluloid Screen Services.

Pierre Sarrazin will direct *Unamerican Activities* and the director has yet to be announced for *La Florida*. Executive producer is Danny Weinzwieg, president of Selluloid Screen Services and an executive with Norstar Releasing.

Both films, a humorous look at aspects of U.S./Canada relations, are co-authored by Suzette Couture and Pierre Sarrazin.

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Eastern Wave

CHRIS MAJKA

Ugh - cold season is here! Every day the weather seems to change from extreme cold, to balmy mild, to torrential rainfall, to blinding blizzards and my body can't keep pace with the fluctuations. It's fortunate my computer can't convey the congested slur of my virus ridden voice.

Life Classes has notched up five Genie Awards nominations coming in fourth after *Un Zoo la nuit*, *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* and *Family Viewing* but ahead of *Train of Dreams*. The film was nominated for Best Picture, (Jacinta Cormier), Best Supporting Actor, Best Actress, (Leon Dubinsky), Best Screenplay (William MacGillvray) Best Original Song (Mary's Lament by MacGillvray) *Life Classes*.

Life Classes is booked for a week of screenings at Wormwoods Cinema at the end of March - its first showing here since the Atlantic Festival Atlantique. And speaking of Picture Plant, their documentary on the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design is due for release any day. Picture Planter David Craig informed me that it had been picked up by CBC and that a scaled down (under 1 hour) version of it would be shown regionally. I'm hoping that we'll soon see a gala screening of it here in town.

- The Atlantic Filmmakers Co-op (AFCOOP) has just completed an ambitious series of marathon screenings featuring a retrospective look at all AFCOOP productions since 1973! I hesitate to say how many films this involved, but four evenings were required to run all the films. In any event it was a good opportunity to reflect on over 15 years of activity by one of Canada's oldest and most prolific co-ops.

- One of Halifax's most beloved screens is about to travel across town. Wormwoods Dog and Monkey Cinema is moving from its current home in the Bean Sprout Building (whose future is uncertain) to the Carpenters Hall. The leading light of cinephiles in Nova Scotia, Wormwoods has finally found a venue which will better suit its ambitions and audience. Expanding from 91 seats to an almost staggering 170, Wormwoods hopes to accommodate the throngs of loyal friends and supporters which it has had to turn away, in the past due to limited seating. Wormwoods will valiantly hold ticket prices at \$3.50, in defiance of the prices which commercial theatres charge. Popcorn and coffee will now be available to patrons as will the region's first 'crying room' where parents can bring cranky children and watch the film without disturbing other patrons. May the force be with you!

- Following the success of the 'plex' style cinema in many North American centers, Famous Players is constructing Halifax's most ambitious multiple screen venue in the new Park Lane commercial complex on Spring Garden Road. This opening will more than double Halifax's screens from seven to 15. The new complex will have theatres ranging in size from 225 to 500 seats with a total capacity of between 2,400 and 2,500 seats. Halifax currently has only 3640 seats between the Famous Players and Empire chains and Wormwoods.

Maritime regional district manager for Famous Players, Maurice Landry, is contemplating using one of the smaller theatres in this new complex as an 'art house'. Plans are not yet firm but Landry feels that there is a large untapped audience for these kinds of films, especially since the new cinema will be within walking distance of three universities. The Park Lane complex is scheduled for opening in the fall of this year and we may see both an increased availability of alternative films and a more heated competition between Wormwoods and Famous Players for Halifax's *cinéastes*.

- Eye Level Gallery, an alternate art, space here in Halifax, frequently has intriguing exhibits or installations but only rarely do these pertain to cinema. This January, however, they featured the work of Wyn Gelevnse, a Dutch-born artist, photographer and experimental filmmaker. I found this exhibit intriguing and filled with many cinematic possibilities.

Gelevnse's photo-cinema 'installations' consist of a 16mm black and white film projector showing a film loop, the image of which is usually projected in some unconventional way on an unconventional substrate. For example in one distance entitled "In the Privacy of Your Home", the image of a seated man being beaten with a stick is projected on a 'screen' within a plexi-glass model of a house. A second projector projects a scene of a man watching, as it were, home movies which are projected from the same projector onto a photograph of a screen! In another instance the projector back-projects a scene with a man in the foreground and a bridge in the background onto a screen with the photo-engraved image, shot some decades ago, of a family poised in the exact same location, the passing pedestrians and vehicles bringing to life this historical photograph. In a fourth distance a beautiful silver image of a water fountain is projected on a glass slab balanced upright in an exquisite glass bowl filled with water and sitting on a mirror. The shimmering silver images reflect in the water of the bowl and ripple in waves you can create yourself.

These installations remind me of the early works of Méliès and the Lumière brothers who awoke within the viewing public a magic fascination with moving images. It seems to me that in the works of Mr. Gelevnse today filmmakers can find some inspiration for creative ways of exploring the medium with which they work.

• • •

BARBARA STERNBERG

It's overwhelming to realize how much work goes into making a film. Sometimes I feel audiences should see a film several times, in slow-motion and with footnoted information sheets just to not miss all that's there! Especially with films like Bruce Elder's that are so visually and aurally dense – and so long. ("What? Is 12 hours long? How long do you spend reading a novel? The first time I read the *Cantos*, I took three weeks off in the summer – so what's 12 hours?")

I was speaking to Bruce just after he'd been pre-mixing sound tracks and he wondered aloud if anyone would notice the eight different car crash noises he'd laboriously been producing and combining with eight different backgrounds to appear in eight different situations throughout the film. The film in progress is *Consolations (Love is an Art of Time)*, a 12-hour film in three parts: "The Fugitive Gods," "The Lighted Clearing," "The Body and The World."

I asked Bruce first about the title's references and how this film relates thematically to its predecessor, *Lamentations: Monument to a Dead World*.

"*Lamentations* was lamenting the loss of the sense of the Holy which has been overwhelmed by the tortured life of Modernity. Modernity is a period characterized by man-made mass death, systematic extinction. It is an age which denies what is so essential to humankind; namely, to live with some sense of redemption, a belief in Grace. We rationalize such behaviour and conditions.

"One of Modernity's most deleterious features is that it has altered us, transformed all thinking into reckoning, or reckoning is the only type of thinking we recognize as valid. We have lost the sense of the importance of contemplative modes, prayerful thinking. Those very experiences that might have given meaning to the life of the ancients, can't be integrated into our life view. For the five years of making *The Art of Worldly Wisdom*, *Illuminated Texts* and *Lamentations*, I could not have believed but that the anguish around was the convulsive death throes of Being – all of reality had become image, there was an utter loss of reality. That's why so very dear to me during work on *Consolations* are the writings of Simone Weil. She reminds us that God's love is an anguished love – that through all that anguish there is love – that God can suffer.

"Christianity is not only 'God is Love', but also the Crucifixion. *Consolations* is an attempt to grasp, see into, be grasped by, the anguished love of God amidst all this torment. *Consolations* makes use of time in a different way than *Lamentations* (hence the subtitle *Love is an Art of Time*). When one abides gently with things, allows them to come into the open and accept them as gifts, then there occurs a gentling of the soul, a tenderness which can only be called Love.

"The temporal character of *Consolations* – a lingering with things – allows one to feel how both what we are and what we perceive come into existence together. That makes for a kind of thinking that is a kind of prayer. It involves an overcoming of boundaries – a Romantic thought.

I'm thinking that the conceptual paradigm on which Modernity has rested has been that of dichotomies (subject/object, mind/nature, real/ideal) with value residing on the side of the consciousness – what's 'out there' has no value in itself. Romanticism was the first thrust against the dominance of that paradigm. I hope I have found some way of getting across the sense that beings and ourselves come into being together, mutually."

Is there a relation between art and prayer, I asked? "Almost fundamentally!" *Consolations* is part of a cycle of films. Bruce mentioned that he hopes that if people see the whole cycle, they'll be changed somehow – not just partake of a bit of entertainment outside of themselves.

"One of Modernity's most deleterious features is that it has altered us, transformed all thinking into reckoning, or reckoning is the only type of thinking we recognize as valid. We have lost the sense of the importance of contemplative modes, prayerful thinking."

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A package of independents

MONTREAL – A series of 10 feature-length films by Canadian independent directors is currently in the early stages of development. Shooting, across Canada, is scheduled to begin in June.

Bachar Chbib of Canadian Film/Video Productions in Montreal will produce the \$5 million dollar series which, he says, is the logical next step to the Canadian Independent Film Tour of 10 independent Canadian feature films currently touring Europe.

Chbib, who organized the European and U.S. tour says, "The whole purpose of the Canadian Independent Tour is to promote this sort of cinema. We have shown our films across the U.S. and Europe and now we want to come back and show Canadians what we can do."

The new series, known as the Canadian Independent Feature Film Series, will be shot in 35mm for both theatrical and broadcast release. Production will take place in regions throughout Canada and will be completed by November.

"The series," says Chbib, "will represent a cross section of current Canadian cinematic styles and themes with an emphasis on straightforward storytelling."

Joining Chbib are executive producers Don Haig and Hélène Verrier. Maryse Wilder is the executive script consultant.

Each of the 1½ hour programs has been budgeted at \$500,000 with participation expected (but not approved at press time) from Telefilm Canada and private financing.

CBC has indicated interest, says Chbib, and CKVU, an independent broadcaster, has purchased the series.

Chbib told *Cinema Canada* that he is opposed to going to the provincial funding agencies because of the "hassles" involved. He says he would prefer to sell the series to independent broadcasters.

"I would rather go independent to independent but if CBC takes it I will be very happy."

His latest film, *Clair Obscur*, is the subject of a protracted funding dispute with the Société générale du cinéma du Québec, the provincial film funding agency.

The properties/writers/directors selected for the series are as follows. (At press time, not all of the directors had been confirmed by the selection committee).

Kingsgate: written by Jack Darcus, directed by Jack Darcus.

– *Dine and Dash*: written by Greg van Riel and Alain Charky, directed by John Paizs.

– *A Merry Christmas, Dukes*: written by Amy Marie George, directed by Patricia Rozema.

– *Chasing Windmills*: written by Maureen Hill, directed by Jan Zarzycki.

Ragged Island: written by Glenn Walton, directed by Glenn Walton.

– *The Archie Patterson Project*: written by

Michael Amo, directed by Peter Mettler.

Roadhouse: written by Attila Bertalan, directed by Attila Bertalan.

Electric Beach: written by Clive Holden, directed by Atom Egoyan.

– *A Roundstone Would*: written by Maryse

Wilder, directed by Dimitri Dimitrios.

Hey Now: written by Alex Klenman, directed by Alex Klenman.

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Peter Cowie's *International Film Guide 1988* covers in its 25th anniversary edition a quarter century of production in 61 countries. With his customary thoroughness and reliability, Cowie surveys leading directors and outstanding films, as well as animation, festivals, awards, publications, schools and related activities. (NY Zoetrope, NYC, \$14.95).

The 38th edition of John Willis's comprehensive pictorial and statistical record of domestic and foreign films released in the U.S. during 1986, *Screen World 1987* accumulates some 10,000 entries and 1,000 stills in a detailed and entertaining overview of movies, personalities and other noteworthy aspects of cinema. (Crown, NYC, \$29.95).

Welcomed by television viewers and cassette renters, Leonard Maltin's *1988 TV Movies and Video Guide* lists over 17,500 titles shown on the home screen. Each entry includes director, cast, production data, a plot summary and a critical review. (NAL/Signet, NYC, \$4.95).

The ninth Professional Edition of *The Video Source Book*, compiled by the National Video Clearinghouse, is an exhaustive reference volume of programs on videodiscs and/or videocassettes available from 1,000 distributors. It lists, cross-indexes and fully describes over 53,000 titles in 400 subject categories from entertainment to business and children's shows. (Gale Research, Detroit, \$199).

A study impressive in scholarship and magnitude, Richard Abel's *French Cinema* is fundamental to our understanding of film as a societal phenomenon. It considers the 1915-1929 period, when the dynamic style of American imports confronted the traditional French literary approach, an artistic clash that prodded domestic filmmaking into more relevant patterns, and gave birth to an active avant-garde. (Princeton U. Press, Princeton, NJ, \$27.50).

An engrossing collection of essays, *Currents in Japanese Cinema* by movie critic Tadao Sato, brings revealing insights into the history, genre and standards of his country's films, and the work of its leading directors and performers. Donald Richie's classic pictorial history, *The Japanese Movie*, now in an updated edition, surveys Japan's cinema in an authoritative and thoughtful commentary and a profusion of stills from representative films. (Kodansha, NYC, \$13.95 and \$27.95).

Probing the influence of cinema on Italian society, Millicent Marcus examines, in *Italian Film in the Light of Neo-realism*, milestone works such as Rossellini's *Open City*, DeSica's *Bicycle Thief* and Fellini's *La Strada*, that sought to induce moviegoers to face economic, political and human problems of their times. (Princeton U. Press, Princeton, NJ, \$48/17.50).

The life and times of Rainer Werner Fassbinder are explored by Robert Katz in an unsparingly realistic biography, *Love Is Colder Than Death*. The prolific career of the late German director - 43 films in 16 years - was marked by a compulsive drive for drugs, sex and work that was reflected in his films' cynical and gloomy image of German society during and after WWII. (Random House, NYC, \$19.95).

NEXT ISSUE

Special Book Review Section

CINEMA

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Here's a challenge to come up with a first-rate enterprise that needs start/completion money — or perhaps something in-between.

Dorothy and Oscar Burritt founded the film society movement in Canada, and this Award perpetuates the unique spirit and dedication of these true film pioneers.

The Award-winner will be notified prior to Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Film Societies to be held in Toronto, May 21-23, 1988.

1988 application forms available from the Dorothy and Oscar Burritt Memorial Award, P.O. Box 484, Station A, Toronto, Ont. M5W 1E4 (or contact a Trustee - Pat Thompson (416) 922-5772).

**Get the brain into gear NOW, because there isn't much time!
CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ENTRY FORMS IS APRIL 22, 1988.**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Administered by the Canadian Federation of Film Societies, the Dorothy and Oscar Burritt Memorial Award is registered as a charity under the Income Tax Act.

Donations to the capital fund are more than welcome, and receive a receipt for tax purposes when sent to the above address.

Concordia prepares graduate program

MONTREAL - A graduate program in film production will be offered at Concordia University in Montreal this fall, if budget approval is granted this month.

In the works for the last six years, the graduate program has been the subject of a recent series of high level meetings between faculty and administration. These meetings have resulted in a unanimous decision to implement a two-year graduate program - the second such program in Canada.

Among the principal supporters of the program are Dr. Robert Parker, dean of the faculty of Fine Arts and André Herman, head of film production.

Herman told *Cinema Canada* that he is confident the budget will go through. Information bulletins with a proviso (re: budget approval) will soon be distributed and a list of 20 candidates have already indicated their intent to enroll. Deadline for application has been set for April 15.

In the off-chance that the budget is not approved, Herman says, "If there is no budget approval, all candidates will be notified that it will be on next year. There is no doubt that it would be implemented next year. It has been approved by all university authorities."

Herman compares the idea of a graduate program to "good wine" - the longer it ages the more palatable it becomes.

The time has come, he says, to provide graduate Canadian filmmakers with an alternative to graduate programs in the United States, at the European academies or at York University in Toronto.

After 14 years of teaching, Herman insists that the art of filmmaking has evolved to a point where the student should be able to choose between education at the graduate level and apprenticeship in the industry.

"For every person interested in film production the road is slightly different depending on character and background. University is an environment in which some individuals develop the best," says Herman.

As approved, the graduate program would admit five to seven students every two years and would be physically located in the two downtown campuses where graduate students would make use of existing undergraduate facilities and resources. An exclusive seminar room, a new lip-sync unit and a new Steenbeck have been proposed for the program.

The three thesis options leading to a diploma, called Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Studio Art; option film production, are original research in an area related to filmmaking, work on a film project in a key position or a full-length feature script (or equivalent).

Herman explains that an important distinction

of this program is the emphasis on making independent films, based on the Canadian production model, rather than on the highly structured studio model commonly associated with the American filmmaking industry.

Says Herman: "Technical excellence is important but what a student puts in his film is even more important."

The need for a graduate course is made evident, says Herman, by the absence of what he calls "creative producers" who can, at once, bring together all the elements of an artistically exceptional film and make money.

With the exception of Roger Frappier (*The Decline of the American Empire* and more recently *Un Zoo, la nuit*), Herman says he would be hard pressed to name a creative producer in the Canadian film industry with the same eye for talent as Roger Corman (U.S.), or the late Henri Deutchmeister (France).

"In Canada, there are too many packagers. They find a director, a couple of stars and then they look for a script in hope of making money," says Herman.

"Most of our producers are money people - accountants and lawyers. They don't know much about filmmaking and have little understanding of film art."

The Canadian film industry also needs scripts, says Herman.

"Scripts are missing. If you are unsatisfied with the quality of Canadian films, it is not because of their technical quality, it is their scripts. If you watch the Australian or German cinemas it takes some writing if only to put ideas on paper."

The Department of Cinema was established at Concordia University (1974). It is divided into three sections, Film Production, Film Studies and Animation.

Institute up for grabs

MONTREAL - At press time, rumors were flying that Serge Losique, the organizer of the Montreal World Film Festival and director of the Conservatory of Cinematographic Art in Montreal, was interested in taking over the Canadian Film Institute.

The 53-year-old institution is considering offers from several organizations to pull it out of its \$175,000 debt. Other interested parties are said to be the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television, and the new Canadian Centre for Advanced Film Studies.

This could well mean a merger with a similar organization, says Frank Taylor, the director of the Institut who has recently submitted his letter of resignation. Taylor denied the rumor that the Institute is considering a \$200,000 takeover bid by the Conservatory.

Losique was unavailable for comment.

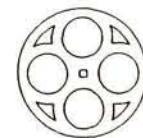
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