

# EDITORIAL

## Making the best even better

Welcome to the new Cinema Canada, a publication which combines the newsworthiness of CineMag with the variety of features, interviews, opinions and reviews you're used to reading in Cinema Canada.

Four years ago, the industry heated up beyond the point where Cinema Canada could handle the news. In its old format, the printer needed a week (and sometimes more) to produce the magazine and, in that time, the news became stale. With the newsprint-tabloid format, however, he could produce a paper in 12 hours, and so we began to publish our trade paper. For years, we have been meeting three deadlines a month, churning out CineMags and Cinema Canadas to cover all aspects of filmmaking in Canada.

A lot has happened in that time. The industry has experienced an unprecedented expansion, and is now in the throes of a shake-down. Some producers are allying themselves closely with American distributors while others are making low budget features, hoping to make ends meet with television sales. The situation in Quebec is critical, and no French language theatrical features are expected to be produced this year. The profile of the distribution industry is changing rapidly, the American majors gathering strength against the independent Toronto-based distributors. In Quebec, the independent distributors are faring better, but legislation is pending which may change that. Meanwhile, a cultural review committee is reviewing Canadian policy for the first time since 1950.

For most, 1981 is a year of consolidation; a year in which to take stock and plan a strategy to carry on through years which may be less lush than those just past. It is also, necessarily, a year of reflection, a year in which to act on lessons learned.

For those who read only one or the other of our publications, the view is necessarily limited. The news from CineMag is half the story, but the content of Cinema Canada rounds it out, providing depth and comment to the bare bones of that news. And often, Cinema Canada breaks ground long before stories have become 'hot.'

Over a year ago, in March 1980, Cinema Canada ran an interview with Francis Mankiewicz, a profile of Marcia Couëlle and Claude Godbout who were producing his film *Les bons débarras*, and an illustrated section on the special effects in *Scanners*. The films were happening then; they've only become 'hot' today. Two months later, we printed one article on Max Fischer, the director who just picked up a Genie for his participation on the screenplay of *The Lucky Star*, and another on Micheline Lanctôt who was making her first feature, *L'homme à tout faire*. Again, neither were as well known then as they became after their success at Cannes.

By combining CineMag and Cinema Canada, we are improving on what are already the best film magazines in Canada. The new format will allow us to get the news out quickly while providing us with the space to add interviews, comments, reviews and the rest.

From the beginning, Cinema Canada has been the magazine of the film industry. It began as the house organ of the Canadian Society of Cinematographers and grew to encompass all aspects of filmmaking. With this first issue of the new Cinema Canada, we salute the cinematographers and their newly formed union CAMERA.

We are grateful for your continued support and welcome submissions and comments from readers and writers as the new Cinema Canada gears up to meet the challenges before us all.

The editors

## LETTERS

### A towering complaint

I act for Harry Alan Towers, who is the subject of an article in your November 24 Edition (CineMag), on page 6.

Mr. Towers takes great exception to the article. He thinks it is most unfortunate that you failed to discuss with him or with me the content thereof before publishing it. I understand that you did speak to Stephen Chesley, but that the article is not reflective of the facts given to you by Mr. Chesley.

Mr. Towers specific complaints are as follows:

Your headline states 'Towers faces U.S. Sex Charges.' That statement is

technically inaccurate and practically inaccurate. Mr. Towers was never arraigned on any of the sex charges that had been made 20 years ago. All of them were dropped by the prosecution and he was informed before he entered the United States that all of them would be dropped. There has never been any evidence to support them.

I have difficulty understanding the relevance to your article of John Turner being the Board Chairman of CFI Investments Inc. That company has marketed films by other producers. Mr. Towers obviously had nothing to do with the company until long after the legislation for capital cost allowance was in place.

You state that CAMPP was not consulted by the Department of Immigration when Mr. Towers was granted immigrant status, and suggest that that was an unusual state of affairs. Prior to being granted landed immigrant status, Mr. Towers had applied for approval of his Canadian investments by the Foreign Investment Review Board. In connection with that application, CAMPP advised that it did not approve of foreigners operating in Canada, but that it did not object to Mr. Towers becoming a landed immigrant and taking up residence in Canada. When that position was on public record with one Ministry of the Government of Canada, it is not surprising that another Ministry relied on it. It is normal for the Canadian High Commissioner in London, England, to grant landed immigrant status without reference to the Minister, but in Mr. Towers' case the Minister was given an opportunity to comment.

Mr. Towers' difficulties with the United States are now at an end. The only charges he "faced" were those arising out of his leaving the jurisdiction in a panic 20 years ago, a panic I may say caused by irresponsible journalism...

Karl D. Jaffary, Q.C.

### Each to her own

A couple of comments on Barbara Halpern Martineau's "Leading Ladies Behind the Camera." Her statement that I came to Canada from the U.S. is true, if misleading. I was born and raised in Denmark, coming to the U.S. as an immigrant in my teens. I did not speak fluent English until I was nearing twenty. I mention this because the article, though probably as carefully researched as one could hope for in this unexplored area, has a number of similarly true but misleading statements. (Notably the ones about Kathleen Shannon and the NFB's Studio D Women's Studio).

It is true that Kathleen once worked with George Stoney. It is also true that Studio D has "grassroot inclination," as Barbara calls it. However, the causal connection she makes between those two facts is not only misleading, it is anti-feminist in its implicit assumption that Kathleen merely continued lamely in the tradition of her (male) mentor. It's a case of heads I win, tails you lose: when Kathleen does "good," as in producing the very useful Working Mothers series, she is aping Stoney; when Kathleen does "bad," as in supposedly deviating from Stoney's methods and "retaining control," she is aping her "lumpish NFB father."

I have been an independent filmmaker since 1971. The funding for my films has come from grants, from government bureaucracies, from corporations. My preferred relationship with institutions is a tangential one, at most. I believe I have tried just about every available avenue for film funding that this country offers. Right now, I am so jaundiced by what I have to go through to get a film financed that I am seriously considering chucking the whole mess. In all these years, the *one* avenue I have found consistently open to both my feminism and my non-establishment way of working is Kathleen Shannon and her Studio D. I have also sent many other women filmmakers to Kathleen for advice and/or help, and I have never had anything but favourable reports back from those women.

I therefore take really great exception to Barbara's charge that Studio D exploits independent women and that it "sits toadlike in the way of a genuinely alternative production/distribution network for feminists." I would like to say two things about Kathleen Shannon: (1) In the 13 or so years that I have been involved in feminism, I have found very few women who so consistently and sincerely try to actually live the feminism they intellectually embrace. (2) That is saying a great deal in itself. When one adds to that the fact that Kathleen is managing to do this as the head of a Women's Studio in a patriarchal institution that to all appearances would rather do without such a studio, I think her way of being is all but heroic.

There are some women in key positions within bureaucracies and institutions who try to put their feminism into action where it just might do the rest of us women some good. I have seen most of them get practically ground into the dust from the masochism of being in so frustrating and draining a situation. I think such women deserve better from us than Kathleen got from Barbara.

A final comment on those "glossy" documentaries shot in "beautiful 7247" because of the NFB "obsession" which makes technology become an end in itself. This is a very tricky argument from a feminist perspective. Certainly, we do not want to ape the worst male traits of control-oriented and supposedly "objective" filmmaking. However, there is also such a thing as respect for one's craft. It is no sin to shoot 7247, it isn't even that much more expensive. To light well is also not a sin; it requires care, not necessarily elaborate lights. A camera which "wobbles or changes focus" is not necessarily "subjective," it is usually just undesirable. If it is a product of inexperience, fine; but let us not make it some kind of aesthetic imperative.

Bonnie Kreps  
Serendipity Films Ltd.

### Shipshape

I read with interest the article by Mr. E. M. Lynas in your January/February issue. I feel that I must point out that the story "The Boat that Jacques Missed" does contain a few inaccuracies.

First of all, the recent visit of Jacques Cousteau and the Calypso to Canadian waters was not "sponsored" by the National Film Board. The project is a co-production of the NFB and the Cousteau Society and is financed 50-50 by the two organizations. Revenue from the three one-hour documentaries will likewise be shared 50-50.

It may be true that "few Canadians know that there are populations of whales in the St. Lawrence" but it did not really take "Jacques - on television to tell them so." Anyone who saw the prize-winning NFB film 'Pour la suite du monde' (Moontrap) which was released in 1964 would know this. By the way that film was produced by Jacques Bobet who is also the producer of the Cousteau-NFB films.

I'm afraid that Mr. Lynas' figure of \$4 million is somewhat exaggerated. The project is budgeted at \$1.4 million (\$700,000 investment from each partner).

Although the National Film Board did not avail themselves of the service of Mr. Lynas nor Mr. John Stoneman of Mako Films, it was not because they are Canadians as Mr. Lynas states. The Board did

(cont. on p. 40)