

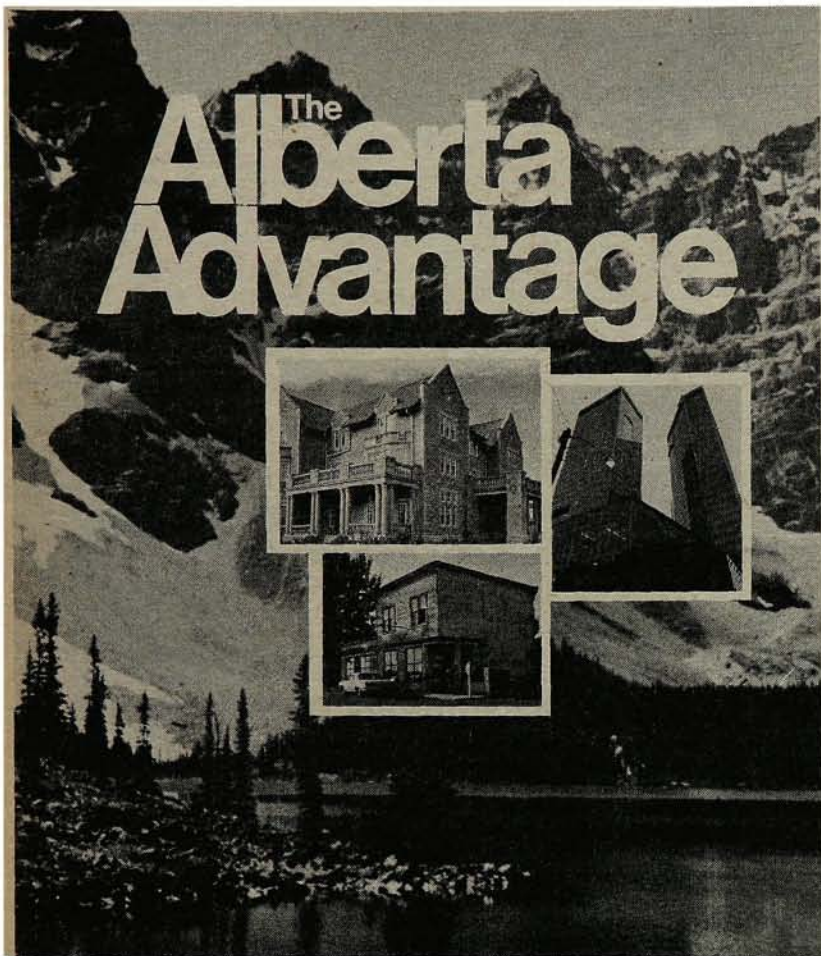
SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecek

CALGARY—Alberta, like the rest of Canada, is suffering from a slow-down in production due to the gloomy investment cli-

mate, the NABET strike, and the U.S. strikes which stalled American location shoots. However, bright lights on the

horizon include government support and incentives for the industry, a green light for the construction of Tri-Media stu-



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dios, and the high profile of the Banff International Festival of Films for Television.

Films shot entirely or partially in Alberta in 1980 included *Powerheads*, *Death Hunt*, *Firebird*, *Kelly*, *Harry Tracy: Desperado*, *Pure Escape* (which suspended shooting for financial reasons), *Ghostkeeper*, and *Latitude 55*. In addition, Fil Fraser's *Hounds of Notre Dame* (which recently brought leading actor Tom Peacocke a Genie) was shot in Saskatchewan.

By January 1, 1981, *Ghostkeeper* had completed an arduous three week shoot at Lake Louise, and was in post-production. Jim Makichuk directed the Badlands Pictures thriller for producer Harry Cole. The cast and crew were mainly Albertan, with editing by Stan Cole, assisted by Rick Benwick.

Cole reports that an eight-minute trailer of *Ghostkeeper* was well received at the American Film Market in L.A., and that, although there are no U.S. sales at the moment, "the majors are looking at it," and a Canadian deal would follow a U.S. sale.

John Juliani directed the three week shoot of *Latitude 55*, filmed on the outskirts of Edmonton, with a long-awaited blizzard sequence picked up in the spring. Fil Fraser was executive producer on the *Savage God One Production*, filmed with the assistance of the CFDC.

In April, *Dante's Inferno* steamed through a rapid Calgary shoot. The low-budget, non-union comedy was financed by millionaire Hymie Singer.

At time of writing, ITV in Edmonton was in production on *Stoney Plain*, a contemporary western mini-series originally titled *Lonely River*. Directors include Ken Jubenville, Arvi Liimatainen, and Michael Berry.

On January 1, producer William Marsden officially moved into his government position as the director of the Film Industry Office of Alberta Economic Development. The Office has been largely responsible for the numbers of films lured to shoot on location here in the last nine years.

In addition, last November the City of Calgary established its own Film Development Office under the management of Malcolm Harvey. The Provincial Office and the Calgary Office work in close cooperation, the Edmonton office dealing with the Alberta industry, and location shoots throughout the Province, and the Calgary office concentrating on film activity in the Calgary area.

AMPIA (the Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association) elected a new executive, with Arvi Liimatainen taking over as President from Eda Lishman. The organization of film and video companies, plus indivi-

dual professionals, totals over 500. AMPIA publishes a quarterly, *Shoot Alberta*, and recently co-hosted the *Superman II* premiere parties with the Motion Picture Pioneers.

Also, on January 1, the new Alberta Branch of the ACTRA Writers Guild became official, creating a total of three branches in Alberta. The Southern Alberta and Northern Alberta branches of ACTRA continue to represent professional performers (plus some broadcasters and writers).

In the spring, Thunder Road Studios, a new sound recording studio, film mix and lab facility, opened in north-east Calgary. President Ron MacCallum reports that Thunder Road has taken over the Calgary operation of CineAudio. Frank Griffiths is vice-president of film operations.

Meanwhile, Tri-Media Studios Ltd., the multi-million dollar studio complex to be constructed west of Calgary, continues its efforts to begin development.

President Alan Waldie reports that, now that the initial hurdle of annexation approval has been passed (ending the jurisdictional squabble with the Municipal District of Rockyview), the final drawings are in circulation with the City, with the necessary explanations of land use. The three documents involved (Area Structure Plan, Studio Complex Outline Plan, and Development Plan) will come before the City Planning Commission on September 16. Waldie hopes construction will begin in mid-October or early November, with a projected January 1983 completion date. "We'll be ready to roll as soon as we get City Council approval," Waldie promises. Tri-Media is locally financed by 32 shareholders with interim financing for the \$30 million complex from the Royal Bank of Canada.

Possibly, the most positive development is recent legislation by the Alberta Government. Bill 24 (passed by cabinet in June) will create a motion picture development corporation for Albertans, thanks to the efforts of Minister of Economic Development Hugh Planche, with input from AMPIA representatives and Bill Marsden. The Government will match money raised in the private sector, with funding determined by criteria established by the board of directors. This board, an advisory committee, and an executive director will be announced in the next months, with the funding agency operative by late 1981 or early 1982.

The Banff International Festival of Films for Television (Sept. 20-30) already supported by Alberta Culture, has received a major donation of \$150,000 from the Bank of Montreal.

Finally, Alberta producers, like others across the country,

(cont. on p. 46)