

"It is quite evident to me that the United States has resolved to do all they can, short of war, to get possession of the western territories, and we must take immediate and vigorous action to counteract it. Until the railroad is built to British Columbia and the Pacific, this Dominion is a mere geographical expression."

Sir John A. MacDonald,  
National Dream

"British Columbia: Big ... Sprawling ... Spectacular! Filling the eye with a thousand vistas! Holding a thousand mirrors to the sun!"

Franz Russell, narrator,  
Mirrors to the Sun

The B.C. Department of Travel and Industry don't mind the troops of U.S. tourists that invade that province. In fact, they try to encourage them by spending close to a quarter of a million per annum producing films that tell the B.C. story to audiences all over the world, but especially to California residents, where tourist recruitment is a booming business. Their latest effort to keep those travellers' cheques coming is an award-winning eye-filler, *Mirrors to the Sun*.

Producer/cameraman Norman Keziere CSC, took the trek to Toronto twice recently, once to accept the Best Documentary prize from the Canadian Society of Cinematographers for his film, and then to receive a further compliment from that group, those three prestigious letters after his name. Bob Brooks CSC introduced Norm to a Bellevue-Pathé screening room packed to the projectors with the Society's growing membership, adding that they had been stokers in the Navy together. When he film came on, even the most seasoned cinematographers were duly impressed.

*Mirrors to the Sun* is truly a thousand vistas jammed into a 25-minute celluloid tour de force, each scene trimmed to fit an upbeat tempo and most optically doctored to be 'spectacular.' Utilising the split screen, both vertically and horizontally, West Coast Optical must have used every trick up their mechanical sleeve to earn their four to five thousand dollar special effects bill. One aerial shot of the Fraser River rapids is flipped to mirror the rushing waters upside down in the top half of the frame, providing an effect similar to the now classic 2001 time warp sequence.

It certainly is a rapid fire film, aided in no small measure by the synthesized soundtrack composed, compiled and played by Ralph Dyke, a local keyboard whiz. Attempting to kaleidoscope the passing of the seasons in the varied regions of the province, the visuals show roads and rivers, swimmers and skiers, ripe harvests and rocky hilltops, bronco busting cattlemen and nuzzling giraffes. The music ranges from snatches of silent movie tunes to calypso beats (in B.C.?) to good ol' country fiddle type sounds to majestic operatic entrance themes - from pompous to amusing in a matter of seconds. All padded with a rich array of sound effects designed to make sure you don't switch the channel on that snoozy Sunday afternoon when most travelogues are aired on TV.

Keziere admits that the new NDP regime enabled him to go all out with the effects, B.C.'s output having been more staid and stodgy under the Socreds. But he believes that Barrett and company should do more for film in the Province, along the lines of Alberta's attempts to woo more Hollywood production.

One of three full time travelling cameramen/producers roaming the rich terrain of Canada's Pacific coast for the government, Norman Keziere has been at

his present job five or six years preceded by twenty-five years in the Navy, part of that as a still cameraman. He foresook a much higher paying career in Ottawa and Toronto to settle with his wife and two daughters in Victoria - and be on the road year round as well. Just as a country doctor might have sacrificed a higher level career in specialty medicine, so Norm chose the life of a perennial tourist with a camera, in favour of working with big crews under more sophisticated filming conditions.

Fiftyish, resembling Peter Gzowski in appearance, Keziere usually tours alone with his Arriflex, picking up shots as he sees them. Sometimes a driver accompanies him, and in rare cases he'll hire a second cameraman (he has great respect for Doug McKay). But most often he has to do his own unit managing and lugging, and talks wistfully of cinematographers who only have to worry about frame, focus, and composition, as opposed to the thousand and one details he has to keep in mind. As producer, he carries the project from start to release printing, picking the best people available for crucial, post-production collaboration.

The success of *Mirrors to the Sun*, and Keziere emphasizes this, owes a great deal to Gordon Grant, "one of the most talented creators on the west coast." Ernie Perrault wrote the scenario and narration, read in a more gentle Lorne Greene style by Russell. Dick Colby was the deputy minister in charge of the project, and Jack Ross was the pilot who got within yards of the treacherous rapids to take our breaths away.

Whereas he's scared of underwater filming, Norm has a great affection for flying, and would like to have a helicopter (or a fleet of them) for himself, eventually making a spectacular bird's-eye-view movie of British Columbia from the whirlies.

Norm Keziere and his helpers had a vision and through the magic of silver images captured one of the loveliest spots on the globe, truly as the sun would see it, sliding over woods and waters, snow and glaciers, mirroring their pride in their province at every turn. *Island Eden*, a previous Keziere award-winner, has a sound track by Paul Horn, who touched the Taj Mahal with his flute and soul but chose to live on an island off Canada's Pacific coast, along with a growing number of other creative artists who truly appreciate the Eden aspects of British Columbia, before they "pave Paradise and put up a parking lot."

*Eden* now has 350 prints in circulation, mostly available through the National Film Board's Travel Film Library, but directly from the provincial ministry as well. *Mirrors to the Sun* is being printed in 200 copies, which is the average for a B.C. travel film, but Keziere hopes it will eventually catch up to its predecessor. Only Statistics Canada can say how many tourist dollars the \$45,000 total production budget will return to provincial coffers. But Keziere has another, not-so-secret wish: to be able to enter *Mirrors* in the upcoming Canadian Film and Television Association (formerly AMPPLA) Awards. Right now he's barred by the restriction designed to keep CBC and NFB films from flooding the competition. "I'm very hot about this," confided the pleasant-mannered producer. Since Nova Scotia is the only other province with a similar film production arrangement (all the others farm out film production to private companies which ARE eligible according to CFTA rules) perhaps that group can make an exception in these cases to give hard-working creators like Keziere the chance for peer-group recognition. To him, being lauded for his abilities by Canadian cinematographers means more than all the international prizes his films have garnered through the years. □

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