

CANADIAN FILM NEWS

On the U.S.' Independence Day, 1974 – Secretary of State Hugh Faulkner appeared at a campaign meeting with other candidates in his Peterborough riding.

It seems that the long awaited Phase II of the federal film policy could come up with only three suggestions –

ONE – Increasing the capital cost allowance for investment in feature film production from 60 per cent to 115 per cent

TWO – Opening discussions with the Provinces concerning quotas

THREE – Changing the CFDC mandate to allow them funds for promotion and distribution.

When Kirwan Cox asked Mr. Faulkner what assurances the film community had that these promises would be kept, in view of the fact that, "I really believe that Mr. Faulkner's record is so dismal in this area". Faulkner replied, "Well, your assessment of the record is your personal view. You're entitled to it." After listing the achievements of his office, Faulkner continued, "What I brought out tonight reflects not 18-months' gestation as you suggest, but the discussions we had following the report of the Film Advisory Committee – which I assume you've got – which reported to me about a month and a half ago. As I indicated to everyone in the film industry, Peter Pearson and a range of others, before I would do anything I would talk to them and get their reaction to some of the suggestions.

The most pressing problem mentioned to me from people in film was One – the private sector was withdrawing because the loophole had been closed by National Revenue. That has been remedied to the extent I could. Two – a problem with distribution. Canadian films are being produced but they're not being seen by Canadians. They're not having access to Canadian theatres. As you know, last year I negotiated with the Department and the two major foreign owned theatre chains in Canada – Odeon and Famous Players – a voluntary arrangement, which was an improvement of where we were. I talked to the people of the film industry and there's some uneasiness about whether this is really working. So they came to me and said, "Maybe what we should do now is try to move in with a system.

Negotiate with the provinces, who have the ultimate jurisdiction over the theatres, a more permanent quota system." I still think it's going to help. And I would suggest to you that that's a measure of where we've gone in the brief time that we've had since the Film Advisory Committee Report.

The achievements Mr. Faulkner pointed to were basically the voluntary quota, the Festivals Office, and broadening the CFDC's mandate, "... particularly in the areas I've mentioned tonight and in possible other areas. We've looked at the possibility of them getting into television specials or, particularly television specials."

When asked why the president of one of the foreign-owned theatre chains sits on the Film Advisory Committee and why those meetings are held in secret, Faulkner replied, "As you know, the composition of the committee was formed before I was Secretary of State. I'm not sure what the thinking was behind the various appointments. I would have the thought that Destounis was on there because he was, in fact, the person who had some considerable experience on the exhibition side. That would seem to me the reason. I don't know. Why they decided to meet in camera? That was the decision they made and I think it's probably a more fruitful way of working. In fact, what we've done – there are a lot of people who have a very clear idea of what's in the Advisory Committee on Film and I'd be rather astonished if you haven't seen it. We haven't been hiding the evidence. A number of people, Jack Grey, Peter Pearson, know what's in the thing. I'd been fairly open with them about it but what I feel the committee should do is that about six or seven of them get together and try to thrash out something. Then I take it out to the film industry. That's how I operate. I think it's a more effective way of doing it."

Despite odds, some feature production underway

What does one do when one has to compile a list of Canadian features either in release or in production? One goes slightly insane trying to keep up with the changing tide – facts, title changes, personnel changes, the flux of life itself as imprinted on this very fragile in-

dustry involved in the manufacture of cinema. Not any cinema, mind you, but this very elusive dream above the 49th parallel, our own Canadian movie making.

The following lists were compiled with the assistance of half a dozen hopeless idealists from Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, who keep tabs on what productions are at what stage and who's doing them. It is a fruitless task, since many producers would prefer to forget about projects started and never finished, others designed for pure profit and some grandiose promises never fulfilled. Even though avid perfectionists, such as D. John Turner collaborated on the major task of compiling data, errata do slip in now and then. Others we should thank include Pierre Latour and his successors at New Canadian Film, Philip McPhedran who was co-founder of this very publication in its second incarnation, and Harris Kirshenbaum, whose knowledge of film is wide-ranging and invaluable.

Omissions include features shot prior to 1974 that haven't yet been released, and there are scores of them. That list could then be broken down into films that will definitely see a movie screen this year and others condemned to dusty shelves for the rest of their celluloid life. Until one day some young visionary breaks through the rusty crust and decides to release the now blotched, scratched, warped and tainted footage either as experimental art or an archival classic.

Last year 49 feature length motion pictures produced in this country played in our theatres; so far this year 29 have reached our foreign-owned silver screens. And even though Peter Pearson is fond of saying that in 1974 only one major English Canadian feature has been shot, a closer scrutiny turns up titles like *Why Rock the Boat* and the current mucho misterioso Xaviera Hollander epic, *Gabrielle*. Both of these are majors by anyone's definition, and more are being produced in Québec. These major budget theatrical features are given a single star (*), whether or not the CFDC is involved, while the CFDC sponsored low-budget films are denoted by two stars (**). The major budget ones and some medium budget ones are shot in 35mm colour, while most of the others are 16mm colour.

