

THE FUTURE OF THE CANADIAN FILM INDUSTRY

The British Kinematograph, Sound and Television Society recently made a submission to Sir Harold Wilson's committee on the British film industry, which included some very interesting statistics on the different categories of film production in the UK.

The BKSTS report starts out by saying that when the term "British film industry" is used, it refers usually to that sector of the industry producing films for theatres. But a survey made by BKSTS shows that the British film industry is far greater than that sector; at the present time theatrical film production is only a small part of total film production.

The statistics show that out of the total percentage of screen time - that is, if every exposed foot of 35mm and 16mm was used - theatrical production would amount to only 4.5%, while television production would add up to 70%, documentary, sponsored, training films, etc., 20.5%, and film commercials 5%.

The BKSTS report identifies what is termed the services sector of the film industry - the large number of companies providing services, such as equipment and film stock manufacturers, equipment rental agencies, processing laboratories, optical effects, camera, lighting, sound and editing services and so on. Many of the smaller film laboratories obtain all their work from the non-theatrical sector of the industry.

Training also comes in for rather extensive consideration in the BKSTS report. The emphasis is on technical training, in the expectation that the moving picture maker of the future will have to be equally familiar with, and proficient in the use of electronic

and photographic equipment. The report endorses previous committee recommendations that the British National Film School should include television, up to full broadcast standards. Training people for employment, BKSTS contends, is an industry responsibility, and the Society is formulating a scheme to provide validation panels for training courses.

(A summary of the Society's submission to the Wilson Committee appears in the December 1977 issue of the BKSTS Journal).

The Canadian film industry could usefully follow the lead that has been given by BKSTS. There is a need to identify the different sectors of the Canadian film industry, as BKSTS has done in the UK, to ascertain the extent of the contributions being made by each sector, especially in terms of employment and income opportunities.

Enormous amounts of time and effort and millions of dollars have been poured into theatrical film production in this country. Much of the money has been put up by the public, directly, through the Canadian Film Development Corp., or indirectly, in substantial tax benefits for investors. In these days of high unemployment and cutbacks in public spending, this would be a good time to assess the results of all these efforts, to determine where the benefits have gone, and the extent to which the film industry as a whole has gained, mainly in job opportunities and income.

If, in fact, theatrical film production in Canada turns out to be less than 5% of the total for the entire industry, as is the case in the UK, then the need for a reallocation of public funds would seem to be called for. If, for example, the expenditure of these large amounts of public money has opened up no more than 5% additional job opportunities in the film industry, a more equitable method for distributing the benefits should be devised. Whatever is done in that direction, we should not have to be reminded that there is a great deal

more to the Canadian film industry than theatrical production.

A very large segment of the industry is the production of television programs on film, by the television broadcasters and by independent production companies. The support services for this type of work give employment to considerable numbers of people, and much of the income of film laboratories comes from this source.

The decision at an early stage by Canadian television to utilize 16mm in all film operations has had a significant effect in raising this format to fully professional status. Television programs being made in this country with 16mm film run in prime time on Canadian stations, and can be directly compared with 35mm program production in the USA by simply switching from one television channel to another. This should be recognized as a major technical accomplishment by Canadian filmmakers.

When television broadcasting started in the US, the 35mm theatrical production sector of the film industry, centered in Hollywood, lost no time in making available their very extensive facilities for making television programs on film, and the 35mm format has been predominant in prime time network programming ever since. In Canada, at that time, there were well-organized and highly competent 16mm production services already in existence, but only limited 35mm production capability. Canadian broadcasters turned to the 16mm sector as the most promising source of programming materials for television.

It is interesting to note that in the UK, the British Broadcasting Corp. adopted the 35mm format at the start, mainly because of the existence of highly developed theatrical film production facilities in that country. But, in the course of time, a gradual transition to 16mm has taken place so that now there is very little 35mm film in the system.

The BKSTS report to the Wilson Committee devotes a good deal of at-

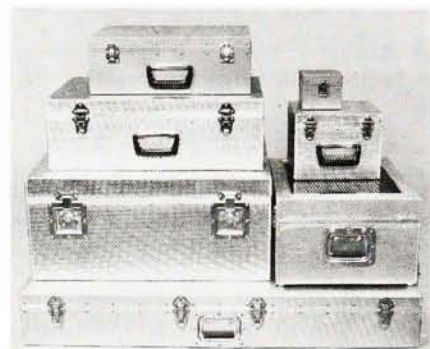
Long time Supervisor of Technical Film Operations at the programming centre of the CBC, Mr. Ross is the author of two books, Television Film Engineering and Color Film for Color Television, has won the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal, awarded by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, and is presently chairman of the SMPTE Board of Editors.

tention to new technology, especially the possibilities of theatrical production on videotape, followed by transfer to film. In this country, the prospects would appear to be much more favorable for original production on film and then transfer to videotape. As the trend initiated by ENG (electronic news gathering) towards all-electronic television broadcasting accelerates, telecine equipment will be utilized by filmmakers and program producers to transfer their films to videotape, and then distribute the programs to the broadcasters on tape instead of giving them fully timed and color-corrected prints. At the same time, transfers made to the various helical scan commercial videotape formats would open up new markets and new opportunities for Canadian filmmakers. Taking this route has the very great advantage that the original film recordings can be made on any

film format, and transfers can be made directly from the originals to videotape without going through the costly and time consuming processes of making duplicates, optical effects and prints.

Already, several videotape production houses have acquired telecine facilities and are offering what they call "custom film transfers", that is, electronic modifications to obtain the best possible television pictures from the films supplied by clients. In the US, motion picture laboratories have been acquiring telecine and videotape equipment to expand their services for customers. This trend likely will continue until most film laboratories will be able to offer electronic transfer and program assembly on any videotape format, as well as the usual laboratory film processing and printing services.

filmmaker how to come up with professional quality results, making use of inexpensive equipment. It would be helpful if these technical bulletins, which come out irregularly, could be produced in a standard format that would fit in a three-ring binder for ready reference. They are well worth saving.



Aluminum carriers from Image Devices

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Note to Canadian distributors: We would like to include the names and addresses of Canadian distributors of equipment and services mentioned in this section. Please ask your suppliers to give Canadian sources in their publicity releases. Ed.

Frezzi Viewfinders

Frezzolini Electronics Inc. introduced production line models of the Frezzi Viewfinder at Film '77 in London, England in July. Originally designed for use on the Frezzolini Frezzi-Flex Model FR16 cine cameras, the viewfinders are available also for the

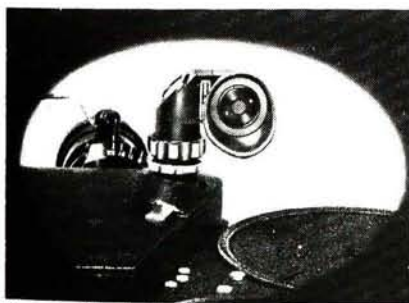
CP reflex cameras as well. The Frezzi viewfinder has a length of less than one inch from the film plane, ideal for "off-the-shoulder" filming. Other features are large magnification, approx. 10:1; mirrors instead of prisms to provide brighter images, and an eyepiece with backlight shutter (dowser). The viewfinder can be locked in either of two positions. For further information contact Kingsway Film Equipment Ltd., in Toronto, tel. (416) 233-1101.

Super 8 Notes from Adams & Associates

Adams & Associates, 1645 Bank St., Suite 202, Ottawa, puts out a most unusual and informative technical bulletin on Super 8. The latest issue (no number or date) features on the front page "Stripe on Contact Prints", which gives a great deal of practical information on applying a laminated magnetic stripe, as well as what is called a "paste stripe", and various techniques for transferring sound to the stripe. Inside there is another article on "Filming Graphics". This is also an excellent article, telling the

Airline-Proof Carrying Cases

Equipment cases for valuable and fragile apparatus with a favorable strength/weight ratio are available from Image Devices, sole distributor, 1825 NE 149 St., Miami, Fla. 33181. Fourteen stock sizes, most based on 14x10 in. with different depths, and other sizes can be custom made to users' specifications. Strength is given to these cases with the Samcine rigidizing process that produces a lenticular surface to resist crushing and scarring. Can be supplied in 14-gauge metal where weight is chief consideration. Prices can be figured by adding the three dimensions (length, width and depth) and multiplying by \$2.75 for stock items or \$3.00 per inch for tailor made units (US). Extra for recessed handles and catches and locking catches.



Frezzi Viewfinder: operator's standard viewing position

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