

the industry's first reaction

In a rare manifestation of solidarity, the industry reacted quickly to Mr. Roberts' handling of the replacement of Michael Spencer by Michael McCabe. If *Cinema Canada* has decided to print the following telegrams, it is not so much for what they reveal about Mr. Spencer as what they reveal about the relationships between the Secretary of State and the members of the industry. Mr. McCabe will have some fences to mend: fences which were built for him by Mr. Roberts. The final telegram reprinted is Mr. Roberts' response to the ones which precede it.

The Association des Distributeurs de Films du Quebec has learned with regret that you have decided to relieve Michael Spencer of his duties as Executive Director of the CFDC.

We would like to point out that Mr. Spencer has carried out his job with great competence, diplomacy and dynamism, and has earned the respect of all who work in this complicated film industry.

We have also learned with stupefaction that you have officiously chosen to replace him without having consulted the film community or the related professional associations.

We feel that this unfortunate decision will have grave consequences on the development of the film industry. If you insist on relieving Mr. Spencer of his duties, it is essential that the film community be consulted regarding the choice of his successor. It is also important that this person be totally familiar with this industry if we don't want to be set back by several months, or even, years. We request that you immediately postpone your decision, so that we might discuss this matter with you and avoid, once again, dealing a hard blow to our industry.

Association des Distributeurs
de Films du Quebec
André Link, President
Pierre David, Vice-President

We the members of the Association of Independent and Canadian Owned Motion Picture Distributors were both shocked and disappointed to learn from the Press that you have designated a new candidate for the

position of Executive Director of the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

As wholly owned Canadian companies, we feel that our association, along with other key professional organizations, should have been consulted in any major changes affecting our segment of the motion picture industry.

This would be consistent with your conversations with us on several occasions, that consultations would take place with our association and others, for feedback purposes to any major changes.

Hoping this is not your final decision, we make ourselves available to you for further input concerning this important matter.

Association of Independent
and Canadian Owned Motion
Picture Distributors

I am sorry to have missed the opportunity of seeing you Wednesday in Ottawa. I wanted to convey to you the stupefaction of our members concerning the newspaper reports about the replacement of Mr. Michael Spencer.

It is surprising that just when Mr. Gratien Gélinas leaves and will be replaced by a newcomer about whom there has not yet been an official announcement, another apparently political choice is made. It would seem normal that, during a transitional phase, one would give him a chance to become familiar with the job and to prove himself. Mr. Spencer and his team would be an essential aid during such a transition. The filming milieu is also reacting strongly to the fact that it was not consulted as had been

the case when Mr. Spencer was nominated to his position. It is not necessary to remind you how completely the milieu supports Mr. Spencer and the work he has accomplished over the last 10 years. It has permitted the Canadian film industry to develop itself considerably, and has permitted numerous québécois filmmakers to make some very important films.

I and other members of the milieu are at your disposal to acquaint you at greater length with our position.

Denis Héroux, President
L'Association des producteurs
de films du Québec

The ARFQ wishes to publicly state that the recent nominations to the position of President and Executive Director of the CFDC and the manner in which they were held, confirm in a grotesque manner the mercantile and scornful attitude of the Federal Government towards Canadian cinema.

These nominations were made without any form of consultation, and indicate that Ottawa is yielding to the pressures of particular financial interests instead of concerning itself with the interests of the nation and its culture.

The visit between Mr. Jack Valenti, President of the Motion Picture Association of America and Mr. John Roberts, Secretary of State, as well as the recent meetings in Banff where numerous agreements were concluded between the American film industry and purely speculative Canadian interests, had a real and immediate impact. Yet, nearly 15 years of struggle and demands on the part of the Canadian film community have not succeeded in overcoming the indolence, the indifference and the servile attitude of the Secretary of State.

This strictly commercial orientation which Ottawa proposes for its film policy is, in fact, confirmed by the permissive and quasi fraudulent "tax shelter" (income tax evasion) which is just as American as it is Canadian. Moreover, it is relevant to note that it is during the reign of John Turner, then Minister of Finance and since become the

president of a film investment company, that this much abused "tax shelter" originated.

Therefore, once again, the ARFQ deplores the impotence of the Secretary of State in establishing a real film policy and denounces the auctioning-off of a national culture which is not only left unprotected, but literally placed in the hands of the basest speculative interests.

It is for this reason that the ARFQ recently withdrew from the consultative committee of the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

The Executive Committee
Association des Réalisateurs
de Films du Québec

The Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers wishes to convey to you its extreme concern regarding the abrupt replacement of Michael Spencer as Executive Director of the Canadian Film Development Corporation. During the last few years which have seen the enormous growth of the Canadian film industry, we have evolved from a small, untried and inexperienced group into a maturing, internationally recognized and applauded industry. Mr. Spencer has been an invaluable bulwark and cohort in that growth. While we have all had our reasons for criticizing the operations of the CFDC and perhaps even Mr. Spencer from time to time, our Association unanimously endorses the confidence which Mr. Spencer has earned, not only from the Canadian industry but from the rest of the world.

While we understand that Mr. Spencer had expressed his willingness to retire at the end of the first ten years of the CFDC's existence in conjunction with the appointment of a new chairman, we also understand that Mr. Spencer was prepared to stay on in some consultative capacity in order to ensure a smooth transition in the management change-over.

We are not aware of any organized research having been done by your department or any other bodies within the government in connection with the selection of a replacement for Mr. Spencer nor are we aware of any consultative process having taken place, either with the members of the CFDC or the leaders of the various component groups in the Canadian film industry in connection with this major decision.

Mr. Minister, we are appalled at the manner in which the decision on Mr. Spencer's replacement was made and the manner in which, it would appear, Mr. Spencer has personally been treated in these circumstances.

At a time when the Canadian film industry is achieving new levels of success, both artistically and commercially, a change in the management of the CFDC is of critical importance and one which we would have thought would have been considered only after exhaustive consultation.

None of us has envied Mr. Spencer's responsibility in attempting to walk the fine line of policy responsibility to your department and financial responsibility to the funding sources within the federal government. We feel that he has fulfilled this delicate position better than anyone else would have been able to succeed in doing.

Mr. Minister, we implore you to reconsider the basis upon which this decision of Mr. Spencer's replacement has been taken. While we cannot judge the effectiveness or capacity of his replacement and are in no way detracting from that individual's potential ability to fulfill the role as executive director, we urgently suggest that some means be found to retain Mr. Spencer in some significant role within the CFDC in order that that organization as well as the Canadian industry itself not lose the vast experience and confidence which he has been able to attain.

Respectfully,
Canadian Association of Motion
Picture Producers
David M. Perlmutter, President

At the March 15 meeting of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers Executive Committee, I was asked to convey to you our members' concern with the manner in which the transition between Executive Directors of the CFDC has been handled by your Department.

Without commenting on the qualifications of either Mr. McCabe or Mr. Spencer we would like to point out that this matter was dealt with in an arbitrary and abrupt manner, inappropriate to the many years of Mr. Spencer's service to the film industry. It was also accomplished without consultation in the industry and, as far as we know, without

awaiting the recommendation of the CFDC Board.

Our organization is also concerned by the fact that both the new Chairman and the new Executive Director of the CFDC have been chosen from outside the industry, and have little, if any, experience in the film industry.

Kirwan Cox
Chairman
Council of Canadian Filmmakers

We were surprised to learn through the press of the replacement of Mr. Michael Spencer as Executive Director of the Canadian Film Development Corporation by a nominee with no background whatever within the film industry.

We are surprised and disappointed that Mr. Spencer, who has served the industry all these years, learned of his replacement through the press, and we are discouraged that you did not see fit to consult the industry representatives on the matter of selecting an appropriate replacement.

We trust that there will be no confirmation of the changes until the necessary steps have been taken to consult the industry.

Harry Gulkin & Claude Heroux
Film Producers

Thank you for your recent telegram concerning the appointment of a successor to Michael Spencer. I regret very much the speculation in the press that a successor to him has been chosen. These stories are misleading.

The federal government has appointed Michel Vennat as the Chairman of the CFDC. However, no final decision has yet been made concerning the position of executive director. The appointment of a new executive director can only follow a recommendation of the members of commendation of the members of the CFDC. I shall be meeting with the members of the CFDC in the near future to seek their advice in this matter.

I regret any embarrassment caused to Michael Spencer by the recent press stories. I share your high regard for the contribution to Canadian films which he has made over the last ten years.

John Roberts
Secretary of State