

30 and going strong

Thirty years is a long time for a producers' association to hold together. Even more unusual is to see a mature association take on new strength and tackle old problems in fresh ways. The Canadian Film and Television Association is just such an association, as Patricia Thompson tells us below.

by Patricia Thompson

Thirty years ago — way back in 1948 — the AMPLC (Association of Motion Picture Producers and Laboratories of Canada) came into being, and then, in 1974, changed its name to the Canadian Film and Television Association. Forging ahead this year, a March meeting approved a re-organization.

The CFTA is “dedicated to promoting the common interests of those engaged in the motion picture and videotape production and laboratory industries in Canada by maintaining the highest possible standards in producing for industrial, theatrical or television release.” It also represents the industry in its relations with government, other associations, and the public at large.

To accomplish its aims and cover such a wide spectrum, the CFTA has ten far-reaching Divisions. Production (Tape and Film) has six areas — Sponsored Production, Theatrical Production, Commercials (TV and Theatrical), TV Programming and Educational, Animation, and Audio-Video. Productions Services covers Laboratories & Optical Houses plus Sound Studios, Post Production (Film & Tape), with Distributors & Suppliers and Supplies & Equipment making up the total. Each Division has a Chairman. Standing Committees are established as needed, i.e. Industrial Relations, Taxation & Duty Laws, Publicity, which can cut across the activities of all or several of the Divisions.

Patricia Thompson is the editor of the Canadian Film Digest Year Book, was director of the Canadian Film Awards for two years and loves film.

CFTA membership is now in two categories. Active Members (including suppliers and laboratories) pay a sliding scale of fees depending upon a company's gross annual sales. The six-step fee scale has a minimum of \$150 per annum, rising to a maximum of \$1,500. Affiliate Members are those largely retired from the industry who maintain their interest in, and support of, the Association for \$35 a year.

John Teeter, the charmingly urbane General Manager of the CFTA, was buttonholed on the eve of leaving town in late July. The 1978 Convention was being held in Edmonton in conjunction with the Commonwealth International Film Festival (the Commonwealth Games being a sidebar event, of course....).

He was asked to reflect upon the CFTA and its influence and scope in the field of 16mm filmmaking and videotape and was, as always, obliging.

“To say our organization is nationalistic is not a fair statement. We agree with many of the views of ACTRA, the CFEG, and so on, and subscribe to the points system for the definition of a Canadian film. However, we cannot rule out the necessity, from time to time, of being able to bring in foreigners for supporting roles, special effects, and other aspects. We believe strongly in the future and capability of the industry.”

Teeter went on to stress that the CFTA is aiming at better service to its members across the country, while admitting that there are certain difficulties relating to Quebec and to the

West. Maintaining and increasing membership in Quebec isn't easy, where it is a recognized necessity for Quebecers to join the provincial industry organizations. However, campaigning engenders reasonable hope that the CFTA membership will stabilize in the province. Arthur Chetwynd recently toured the West from Winnipeg to Victoria, and there is no use denying that it feels cut off, especially as the bulk of industrial activity is in Ontario.

The next step, according to Teeter, is to translate some of the Divisions into regional sub-groupings in order that better, nationwide service to members becomes a reality.

Further CFTA remodelling is evidenced by the expansion of its 1978 Awards. A luncheon function for five years since sponsored films were separated from the Canadian Film Awards, this year's Awards will span a goodly portion of Friday, October 27. The Sheraton Centre Cinema 2 in Toronto is booked for screenings during the afternoon, to be followed by a Dinner and presentation of the Awards at the adjoining Sheraton Centre Hotel. Dave Broadfoot is confirmed as M.C.

So — the CFTA looks OK kid this year. Sure, there's always the ongoing battle with CBC for better air time, better prices, higher allocation of its dollar to the private sector — and the same applying to NFB. But John Teeter is exuding quiet confidence these days, and beaming affably when talking about the CFTA's strenuous attempts to be supportive and visible, not just in Ontario, but right across the country.