

Allarcom gets green light

OTTAWA - In a series of decisions issued Jan. 5, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission reaffirmed its July '83 decision allowing Allarcom Ltd. to extend its Superchannel signal to Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the North-west Territories.

Asked by the federal cabinet in September to reconsider that decision, the CRTC, following a public hearing in Vancouver Nov. 29, confirmed "without change, variation or alternation" Allarcom's amended pay-TV license as defined in the July decision. This comprised regional obligations to:

- produce or acquire six hours per week of programming in Alberta, and a further two hours per week in Manitoba and Saskatchewan
- establish creative development offices in Manitoba and Saskatchewan with 1983 budgets of \$100,000 rising to \$260,000 by 1987
- an regional advisory council in each province
- a separate production fund for each province, with at least 20% of each fund to be spent in the province of origin.

Given the small size of the Man., Sask. & NWT's market - 6% of all Canadian cable subscribers -, and the high operating costs, required to serve that market, the Commission considered that its decision did not give Allarcom an undue competitive advantage, but did allow it to share operating costs over a larger subscriber base, permitting it "maximum flexibility to innovate and experiment," and the possibility to benefit from "certain economies of scale... necessary to ensure that licensees are financially capable of fulfilling ... Canadian content commitments..." In Allarcom's case, the Commission had stipulated that 35% of revenues be expended on Canadian programming.

Allarcom was the only applicant both at the original April '83 public hearing and the more recent Vancouver hearing. First Choice which had originally supported Allarcom's application to provide service to Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the N.W. Territories, argued against the extension at the Vancouver hearing. However, the Commission noted, First Choice's was the only submission against the Allarcom extension which was supported by 37 submissions, including that of the government of Saskatchewan.

In two related, yet more controversial, decisions, also on Jan. 5, a majority of the Commission's members approved

the transfer of effective control of B.C. regional pay-TV licensee Aim Satellite Broadcasting Corp. originally licensed to serve B.C. and the Yukon to Allarcom Ltd., and allowed Allarcom to extend its regional license to include B.C. and the Yukon on an interim basis.

Limiting Allarcom's shareholdings in Aim to 50%, the Commission stipulated that Aim's board of directors "be comprised of a clear majority of residents of British Columbia and the Yukon." Furthermore the CRTC made it a condition of approval of the transfer that "Aim spends 45% of its total revenues... on Canadian programming in each year over the term of the license." Also the Commission approved a proposal submitted by the applicant to increase weekly programming hours to 168 from the applicant's original 60.

As a condition of approval of the transfer, the Commission required that Aim:

- expend a minimum total of \$12 million in Canadian pro-

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Premier Choix: TVEC jockeys for position

MONTREAL - In the latest round of what Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) chairman Andre Bureau has termed "applications for survival measures," Canadian pay-TV action shifted abruptly from the west to the east.

Now it was the turn of Montreal's two financially desperate French-language pay services to petition the CRTC for approval of a corporate and managerial realignment.

The events that led up to the CRTC public hearing Jan. 13 were a complex series of manoeuvres as the parties involved jockeyed to define the terms to be debated at the hearing.

- On Dec. 15, national French licensee First Choice/Premier Choix and regional licensee TVEC announced their intention to fuse into a new company called Premier Choix: TVEC. The fusion would be made possible by \$3 million from the Quebec government's cultural industries bank, SODICC, which would also be a partner in the new venture.

- The following day, Premier Choix and TVEC asked

the CRTC to approve management of the two existing services by a new committee made up of the three partners as an interim step toward consolidating a single service.

In the same breath, First Choice asked the CRTC to amend its license requiring it to provide a separate and distinct national French-language service.

Concerned with the national availability of a national French pay-TV service and unclear as to SODICC's role in the proposed consolidation, the CRTC called for a public hearing Jan. 13.

- On Jan. 3, however, First Choice/Premier Choix, TVEC and SODICC unveiled amendments to their initial Dec. 15 agreement, decreasing SODICC's power on the Premier Choix: TVEC board, and making First Choice the key player with 40% of the board.

Also made public for the first time was extensive financial information disclosing Premier Choix and TVEC's combined deficits of over \$20 million for 1983-1984. The fusion of the two companies, however, as well as SODICC's \$3 million, would increase the new venture's credit margin considerably. With a combined subscriber base of just over 90,000, the new venture could break-even with 114,000 subscribers by December '84, and become profitable by 1986. Projecting income of \$17.5 million by 1988-89, the new venture promised half that amount to largely Quebec-originated Canadian content product.

These optimistic projections would all be revised downwards at the Montreal hearing by First Choice counsel Peter Grant.

Finally, the hearing opened before CRTC chairman Bureau and commissioners Jim Robson, Monique Coupal and Marc Gervais. In a faithful reflection of the uncertainties of Canadian pay-TV, the hearing was a combination of figures that changed with blurring speed and cumulative weariness before the regulatory process. As one disgruntled observer put it, "They wear you out with figures so that by the time they get to the programming content that's really important, everybody's too tired to care."

Opening the hearing, Bureau, with a recent copy of the Quebec TV guide, "TV Hebdo" in hand, wondered why Premier Choix: TVEC was appearing before the CRTC since the new company had already listed its programming schedule.

The banter was sometimes biting as key First Choice shareholder Harold Greenberg ob-

served that he had spent both his birthday and his wedding anniversary before the Commission, indeed that since his involvement with First Choice, it seemed that he done little other than appear before the Commission.

Bureau refrained from wishing Greenberg happy birthday, observing that the last time a CRTC had wished happiness on an applicant the latter had not obtained a license.

There were moments of acute embarrassment, as when in response to grilling from Bureau, no-one from First Choice, Premier Choix or TVEC knew what the proposed new company's total fee to a subscriber would be.

Harold Greenberg made an impassioned pitch for "a new and exciting pay-TV" where one could see "Tootsie, Gandhi, every major feature film in a proper window in advance of television." Part of Canadian pay's difficulties, Greenberg said, stemmed "from a national mentality to fight pay-TV in every area." The programming pay-TV had expected in the past, he went on, "just wasn't available. Now it is."

Above all, there was plenty of old-fashioned horse-trading, with the Commission attempting to draw the applicants into making commitments, and the applicants attempting not to.

(cont. page 23)

Telefilm Canada to promote

MONTREAL - Although no one is willing to talk about it officially, deputy minister Robert Rabinovitch at the department of Communications is carefully following a project entitled Telefilm Canada - a revised version of the Film Canada project which failed so dismally last year.

Telefilm Canada, according to insiders, would be the new division of the Canadian Film Development Corporation, responsible for the promotion and marketing of Canadian films abroad. Most probably, it would also take-over the work of the Film Festivals Bureau which, at present, operates at arm's length from all other federal agencies.

The Film Canada project, originally an umbrella group including the CFDC, the National Film Board, CBC/Radio-Canada and various provincial bodies, received a resounding vote of no-confidence from the private sector which felt 1) excluded in its formation, 2) that the group, with its governmental producers like the NFB, was in competition with the private sector and 3) had little confidence in the staff of Film Canada.

Although the actual goals and make-up of Telefilm Canada have not been made public (and most probably will not be revealed until the federal

film policy is announced), at least the arrival of Armand Cournoyer at the CFDC as the person responsible for distribution has shored up the staff component of the equation.

Meanwhile, in what may or may not be construed as Telefilm Canada's maiden voyage, the CFDC is mustering a large contingent to attend the American Film Market in Los Angeles in March. Among staff members heading for L.A. will be CFDC president Ed Prevost, general director Andre Lamy, head of the Broadcast Fund Peter Pearson, head of Distribution Armand Cournoyer, Information agents Karen Lawrence and Claude Daigneault, and Distribution Co-ordinator Ann Brown.

Buying and selling at the American Film Market is a closed shop, and only members of the AFM are allowed to deal during the market. From Canada, only Andre Roy of Filmaccord is a member of the AFM. The CFDC, like other foreign government bodies, is an associate member of the AFM and, although not authorized to do any concrete business there, is encouraged to show the flag and make contact with others participating in the market. As of Jan. 18, the CFDC still had no list of Canadians planning to attend the AFM.

Combines report put off until March

TORONTO - The delay for Combines Act investigator Lawson Hunter's six-month report on changes initiated last July in Canadian film distribution and exhibition practices has been extended.

Hunter was due to present his report to the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission Jan. 1, but asked for and received an extension to Mar. 1 to assess industry activity over the Christmas period.

Last June, while acting on behalf of a complaint by Cineplex Corp. that the U.S. Majors were favouring the country's two largest chains, Famous Players and Canadian Odeon, with their first-run product, Hunter asked the RTPC to postpone a scheduled hearing after the Majors agreed to certain undertakings to change their distribution practices.

The undertakings, in effect, introduced a bidding system on first-run movies.

The RTPC agreed to the postponement, but among other conditions requested for a six-month progress report.

Bureau reaffirms CRTC's pay intentions

OTTAWA - Wanted: a distinctive, competitive-model, Canadian pay-television system that will maximize opportunities for the funding of Canadian programming.

In a major statement Jan. 5 reiterating its commitment to the development of "a strong distinctly Canadian pay-television system," the Canadian

Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) through its recently appointed new chairman, André Bureau, outlined its recognition of "the fragility of this evolving new industry" and gave notice it would be "sensitive and flexible", approaching the fledgling industry with "minimal regulatory

constraints."

Reviewing the general evolution of the year since Canadian pay-television's official launch Feb. 1, 1983 through the public hearing on regionals in Vancouver Nov. 29, the Commission, in a defence of its original March '82 pay-TV decision, reaffirmed its belief that "the principle of a distinctive Canadian pay-te-

vision... will evolve over time." Noting that "virtually all... the participants" at the Vancouver hearing "supported the Commission's pay television objectives, market structure and regulatory approach," the CRTC statement - in a series of documents entitled "Decisions and notices related to pay television" - gave warning that "participants in the industry must assume *primary responsibility* for the viable development of pay television."

Pay-TV licensees, the Commission stated, had not "fully explored "a number of avenues available to them." Licensees were urged to review their marketing strategy and affiliation arrangements with cable companies, and were advised to reduce "the fierce and heavy-handed head-to-head competition that has... characterized the marketing behaviour of general interest licensees..." The Commission also noted that it was "concerned" with the high rates charged to pay-TV subscribers and encouraged distributors and exhibitors to seek ways reduce fees. However, the Commission announced that it "does not wish to engage in pay television rate regulation *at this time*," adding that its regulatory constraints on the pay-TV industry would be "minimal" and "flexible."

The CRTC drew a generally positive picture of pay-TV's first "turbulent" year of operation, noting that Canadian pay had attracted some 500,000 subscribers and that some licensees had "actually exceeded their projections."

The statement characterized the industry as having seen "the emergence of two strong participants," and that firm financial commitments to the value of \$100 million had been made to Canadian programs, providing employment opportunities for Canadian writers, directors, producers, performers and technicians.

Reiterating its belief that Canadian pay-TV "was beginning to provide programming diversity and expanding viewing choices in most regions across the country," the statement stressed that "the primary objective of the pay television system is to create a distinctively Canadian service." Canadian programming, the Commission said, "is... a vital element distinguishing the national and the regional licensees."

The message, in short, was clear: it was up to the licensees to provide a pay-TV system that lived up to these objectives. To the extent they did just that, the CRTC would "impose... minimum regulatory restrictions..." In the contrary case, what the Commission could do will no doubt become clear during Canadian pay-TV's second year.



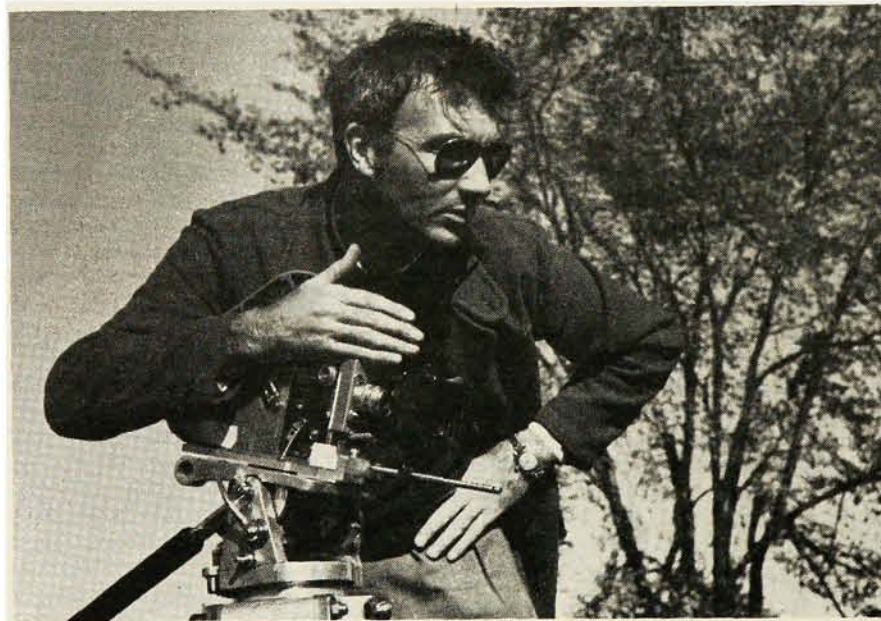
National Film Board of Canada

Office national du film du Canada

NEWS

DIRECTOR OF FRENCH PRODUCTION NAMED

Daniel Pinard has been named Director of French Production. His appointment, effective January 17, follows on a long career of media experience. Pinard attended Montreal schools, and then studied and taught sociology at Rutgers University in New Jersey (1972). Since then he has worked as a writer for *Maclean's*, as a journalist/interviewer on Radio-Canada for "le 60," "Telemag," "Au Point," and "Sciences-Réalité." He also worked as a producer in French Production at the NFB in 1979 and earlier as a scriptwriter and researcher for several filmmakers at the Board. Pinard replaces the former head of French Production, Jean-Marc Garand, who will become head of the NFB's office in Paris, February 1.



Norman McLaren, seen above on location for *Neighbours*, will be honored in Boston in March.

CANADIAN STORIES '84

Atlantis Films of Toronto in collaboration with the NFB have begun production on 8 half-hour television dramas adapted from some of Canada's finest short stories. Shooting for the series, tentatively titled *Canadian Stories '84*, began on January 30 in and around Montreal and will continue until June with locations in Montreal, Edmonton and Calgary. Casting is complete for the first two stories; Mordecai Richler's *Bambinger*, to be directed by Academy Award-winning NFB filmmaker Beverly Shaffer and Sinclair Ross's *Painted Door*, which will star Linda Goran-

sen, Eric Peterson and August Schlenberg will be directed by award-winning Toronto filmmaker Bruce Pittman. Other stories in the series are: Morley Callaghan's *A Cap for Steve* (Director: Robert Duncan), Sinclair Ross's *One's A Heifer* (Director: Anne Wheeler), Guy Vanderhaeghe's *Cages* (Director TBA), David Walker's *A Good Tree That Christmas* (Director: Giles Walker), W.P. Kinsella's *John Cat* (Director: Wolf Koenig) and Morley Callaghan's *All the Years of Her Life* (Director: Don McBrearty). To date, the series has been presold to Global TV in Ontario for prime-time telecast. The series is being made with the participation of the C.F.D.C.

McLAREN TO BE HONORED IN BOSTON

A gala film program honoring Norman McLaren will be held in Boston at the 1100-seat Exeter Theater on Thursday, March 8. The evening is sponsored by the Boston Film/Video Foundation and the Canadian Consulate General in Boston. Senior state and city officials and the public will attend a screening of McLaren's films which will include his latest work, *Narcissus*, and his Oscar-winning short *Neighbours*. Donald McWilliams, McLaren's biographer and technical assistant on *Narcissus*, will attend the event on Mr. McLaren's behalf.

APFQ prez steps down

MONTREAL - Pierre Lamy has stepped down as president of the Association des producteurs de films du Québec (APFQ) following his recent appointment as a commissioner for the new Régie du cinéma. Lamy, who recently produced Claude Jutra's latest feature *Le silence*, became president of the APFQ in the summer '83.

The APFQ's new president will be announced in the week beginning Jan. 22 after a meeting of the association's executive committee.

NFB Offices in Canada:

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CRTC Can-content announcement due April 1

OTTAWA - As first reported in Cinema Canada No. 102, the Canadian Radio-television and telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has officially announced the postponement of the implementation date for the new Canadian content television certification proposals.

Originally slated to go into effect Jan. 3, the Commission, in a public notice Dec. 13 announced that the new proposed implementation date would now be April 1, 1984 "as the Commission has not yet completed its consultation with industry representatives on this matter."

The Commission gave notice of the imminent release of "a further announcement concerning the definition of a Canadian program early in 1984."

In a related public notice on Canadian content in television, the Commission Nov. 24 proposed certain amendments to its Television Broadcasting Regulations, including Canadian content regulation, to take effect Oct. 1, 1984.

Revoking paragraph 6(2) of the Television Broadcasting Regulations, the Commission proposed to change the reporting period for the measurement of Canadian content from an annual to a semi-annual basis, as well as a change in the method of measuring Canadian content to a minimum percentage requirement of Canadian programs instead of a maximum allowable percentage of non-Canadian programs.

Thus, during each six-month period commencing Oct. 1 and April 1 of each year, the total amount of time devoted by any station or network to the broadcasting of Canadian programs "shall not... be less than 60% of the total time devoted to... broadcasting" during the hours of the broadcast day (up to 18 consecutive hours from 6 a.m. to one a.m. the following day).

Between 6 p.m. and midnight, Canadian content for public license-holders must be not "less than 60% of the total time devoted" to the broadcasting of programs, or, in the case of

private license-holders, not less than 50%.

The Commission also proposed to allow station or network operators an additional two minutes of advertising during any clock hour between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. "if that additional... material is made up entirely of advertisements for upcoming Canadian programs..."

While the Commission's proposed guidelines for Canadian program recognition are based on a point system similar to that used for Canadian recognition of feature films, more details won't be available until the CRTC has completed its deliberations.

MONTREAL - The National Film Board of Canada has named Daniel Pinard director of French production.

A former NFB producer, scriptwriter/researcher, and television journalist, Pinard replaces Jean-Marc Garand who Feb. 1 goes to Paris to head the NFB office there.

Rogers drops \$15 million

TORONTO - Rogers Cable Systems Inc. reported a loss before extraordinary items of \$15.1 million for the fiscal year ending Aug. 31, 1983, in a statement released Jan. 12 in Toronto.

The \$15.1 million loss compared with a restated loss of \$9.9 million in 1982, and loss per share was 84 cents compared to a restated loss of 65 cents the previous year.

Rogers reported gross revenues of \$364.2 million compared with \$244.4 million in 1982. Operating income increased to \$125.8 million compared with \$85.1 million the previous year. Company assets

at fiscal year's end were reported at \$917 million, and long-term debt \$637.4 million.

Results for both 1983 and 1982 include 100 percent of the operations of Rogers UA Cable Systems, said the statement. The assets and liabilities of Rogers UA were divided Aug. 31, 1983, between Rogers and United Artists Communications Inc. of San Francisco. Financial statements from Sept. 1, 1983, onward will reflect only the results of cablesystems retained by Rogers, which serves approximately 1.9 million subscribers in Canada, the U.S., and Ireland.

Premier, TVEC sue for union

(cont. from p. 21)

The Commission's key areas of concern, as reflected in the commissioners' questions, seemed to be:

- a search for guarantees that Premier Choix: TVEC would not in a mere matter of months be in the same financial predicament as Premier Choix or TVEC

- an attempt to minimize the role of the Quebec government in the proposed new entity's decision-making structures and programming by enlarging the Premier Choix: TVEC board to include Francophones from outside Quebec

- a guarantee that if the new entity could not meet its commitments to provide a national, French-language service, that obligation would immediately revert to First Choice as a condition of license

- assurances that Premier Choix: TVEC's commitment to the Quebec production industry would in reality involve more than the dubbing of American films into French.

How adequately the applicants were able to satisfy the Commission will become apparent in the forthcoming decision, which the applicants stressed had to be rendered by Jan. 31 at the latest.

The Premier Choix: TVEC application was supported by five interventions from Quebec producers, distributors, technicians and cable operators and, from outside Quebec, by Ontario Superchannel president Steven Harris.

Most of the Quebec interveners were unanimous in urging the CRTC to make sure that the new entity would live up to its financial and Canadian content commitments.

CRTC renders Western decision

(cont. from p. 21)

grams during the term of its license, with \$1 million to be spent in the first year of operation

- a script and concept development fund, with a \$500,000 investment in immediate seed money, and the subsequent allocation of 2.7% of gross revenues

- a program production fund to be established from the profits, 75% of which is to be invested in regionally-based projects

- the investment of 100% of the company's profits over the first five years of operations in Canadian productions

- the establishment of a B.C. creative development department

- the allocation of 6% of total revenues in the acquisition of regional productions

- a minimum of eight hours per week of programming acquired in the B.C./Yukon region

(for an across-the board regional total of 16 hours in programming)

- a seven-member regional advisory committee of B.C. and Yukon residents to recommend on the use of the program production fund

- the initiation of six feature films in the B.C./Yukon region during the first year of operation

- 18% of all feature films distributed to be Canadian

- 12.5% of the 168 hours to be children's programming

- the restriction of adult movies to a maximum 12 hours per week (not before midnight).

On the basis of these commitments, the CRTC authorized Allarcom to provide interim service to B.C. and the Yukon until Sept. 30, 1984. The Commission made it a condition of approval that Allarcom "spend 45% of its total revenues from its overall Western Canada pay television operations on Canadian programming during this interim period."

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Snow plays across Canada

TORONTO - *Snow*, a 15-minute live action fantasy produced by Toronto independents Tibor Takacs and Stephen Zoller, has received substantial theatrical play over the holiday season in both Canada and the United States.

The Christmas-themed short, produced last summer for \$100,000 and premiered at the 1983 Festival of Festivals, was handled through Famous Players in Canada and the United Artists Theatre chain in the U.S. Producer Zoller reports screenings of the film to date in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax.

The producers plan lots of promotion for both Canada's Genie Awards and the Academy Awards in Hollywood since the film is eligible for nomination in both competitions.

For the Oscars, *Snow* qualifies in the best live action short category. But for the Genies, all shorts - live action, documentary, and animation - are grouped into a single category, and among this year's entries is the NFB's *If You Love This Planet* - an Oscar winner last year as best short documentary.

Zoller worries the NFB film's advance reputation will hurt *Snow's* chances. "The question is, will people vote for *If You Love This Planet* without seeing it?" he wonders. He would like to see the Academy of Canadian Cinema follow the Oscar format for short films, offering live action, documentary, and animation prizes.

With the Canadian feature film industry slumping badly, Zoller sees theatrical short film production as perhaps an opportunity for young Canadian filmmakers - if only short films would come back. "People say, 'Why get excited over a short film?', but it's a form we really enjoy," he said. "A 15-minute production can be high quality."

Zoller describes *Snow* as "a throwback to the pre-World War II era, to films like the Three Stooges, live action entertainment shorts. I think American audiences are picking up on that."

TORONTO - Cineplex Corp., moving to better compete in the first-run movie market, has announced plans to build three new theatres as well as renovation plans for four existing sites and the acquisition of an existing theatre.

Cineplex president Garth Drabinsky announced Jan. 16 in Toronto the company's plans to build two new theatres in Toronto and one in Vancouver at a total cost of \$2.25 million.

Bureau takes firm hold at CRTC

MONTREAL - Observing the CRTC's new chairman Andre Bureau at work, one gets the uncanny impression that the legendary Pierre Juneau has returned to his old haunts.

In part the resemblance is physical: both men are slight and hawk-nosed, and with their half-glasses on convey a similar look of chilling severity. Like Juneau, Bureau appears to have mastered the complexities of the federal government's most visible regulatory agency with consummate speed. At his second public hearing since becoming CRTC chairman Nov. 16, Bureau seemed completely at ease, on top of a mountain of financial information that he had digested more thoroughly than the applicants themselves.

A lawyer from Trois-Rivieres, Bureau, prior to his appointment as CRTC chairman by Communications minister Francis Fox, was president of Canadian Satellite Communications Inc. (CanCom), and a former, unsuccessful pay-TV applicant with Telemedia and Astral Bellevue Pathe.

Bureau's insider knowledge of Canadian pay-TV was apparent at the recent Montreal CRTC hearing where on two separate occasions he embarrassed applicants First Choice/Premier Choix and TVEC on the unreliability of their financial information.

"The quality of the decisions, we render," Bureau said in his opening remarks at the hearing, "is the measure of the information we receive."

On repeated occasions, Bureau stressed that the CRTC wanted to "be reassured that the problem we have not be transferred to a new entity. We want to solve the problem," he continued, suggesting that such a solution was largely dependent on the applicants' readiness to fully disclose information.

Bureau seems to clearly want to distinguish the responsibilities of the regulator from those of the industry. In the area of pay-TV, Bureau has stated that the industry itself must bear "the primary responsibility" for the successful operation of Canadian pay.

"Too often," said Bureau at the Montreal hearing, "once the licenses have been granted, it's not the licensees that get hell."

Shifting the onus of Canada's pay-TV controversy away from the regulator and back onto the industry, then, would seem to be the thrust of the Bureau strategy so far. To do this, Bureau has offered the industry a carrot of minimal regulation and a set of general objectives that characterize Canadian pay-TV as distinctly Canadian, national (in French and English), yet strongly regional at the same time.

It's an offer, some observers feel, that the industry can't refuse.

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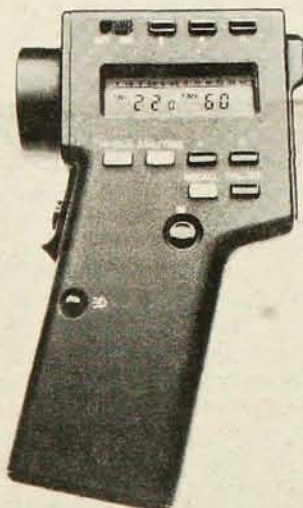


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The Grey Fox to steal show on CBC

TORONTO - CBC will televise the Genie's 1983 best picture *The Grey Fox*, Sunday Feb. 5 at 9 p.m. est.

Winner of seven Genie awards in 1983, *The Grey Fox* stars Richard Farnsworth and Jackie Burroughs and tells the true story of aging stagecoach robber Bill Miner's discovery of a new line of work after 33 years in a U.S. jail. The story of Canada's first train robber was directed by Phillip Borsos.

Ontario counts 36 features produced in 1983 for \$55 million

TORONTO - Thirty-six theatrical or television features were filmed in whole or in part in Ontario during 1983, according to the Ontario Film/Video Office.

Of those 36, well over half - 11 theatrical features and 10 made-for-TV movies - were filmed in Toronto, according to the City of Toronto's Film Liaison Office.

The Ontario office boasts Toronto as North America's third largest film and TV production centre, behind only Los Angeles and New York, and says an estimated \$55.1 million was spent locally on last year's productions.

For every film dollar spent in Ontario, the office estimates \$1.50 to \$3.00 are put into the Ontario economy.

Headed by Sandra Johnson, and staffed by Gail Thomson and Lynn Jemison, the Ontario Film/Video Office's job is to persuade Canadian and foreign filmmakers to produce in Ontario. Their latest successes have been to persuade MGM, with its \$10 million feature *Mrs. Soffel*, and the Canadian producer-director team of Peter O'Brian and Phillip Borsos, with another big budget project *Father Christmas*, to shoot in Ontario.

The Toronto Film Liaison Office, headed by Naish McHugh and staffed by David Plant and Rhonda Silverstone, issue permits for all filmmaking activity within the city.

Total budgets of the 11 features shot in Toronto last year totalled \$44,200,000, and the 10 TV movies totalled \$9,680,000. Of this total (\$53.8 million), McHugh estimates \$18 million was spent in the city on hotels, talent fees, meals, equipment rentals, and other expenses. An average shooting day usually costs producers \$35,000.

McHugh points out that almost \$100 million worth of commercials were shot in Toronto in 1983. Other activity included three independent TV series, three documentaries, and two independent TV spe-

cial, as well as location shooting for CBC, CTV, and Global TV programs which need to pick-up the occasional exterior shot.

Of 11 features shot in Toronto last year, three were Canadian produced: *Loose Ends* (producer Damien Lee), *Unfinished Day*; The Ladd Co. made *Police Business* (Don Owen and Annette Cohen), and *Thrill Kill* (Tony Kramreither). Canadian producer Robert Cooper made *The Guardian* for Home Box

Office, and John Eckert and Bruce Raymond produced *Blacklight* for CBS. Two Pakistani films, *Doryabi Keyabi* and *Kamyaki*, were made. The remainder were American projects: MGM produced two, *A Christmas Story* and *Martin's*; *Academy*; David Puttnam shot part of Warner Bros., *The Killing Fields* in the city.

TV features included three by RSL Films, *Bedroom Eyes*,

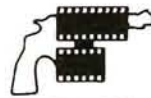
Heavenly Bodies, and *Overdrawn at the Memory Bank*. Others were *Between Friends* (produced by Robert Cooper/HBO), *Reno and the Doc* (Rose and Ruby), *Toronto Trilogy* (City-TV), *When We First Met* (Sunrise Films/Learning Corp. of America), *Wild Fire - The Story of Tom Longboat* (David Tucker), *Willmar 8* (Orion TV), and 1995: *Quebec-Canada* (Primedia).

Independent TV series shot

in Toronto include *Sons and Daughters* (Atlantis Films), *SCTV* (Old Firehall Prod./Allarcom), and *The Edison Twins* (Ventura Pictures/Nelvana). Documentaries include *A Movie For Kate* (Sky Works), *John Kim Bell* (Anthony Azzopardi), and *Modern Country* (Tad Jaworski). Television specials include *My Own Way To Rock* (Simcom) and *The First Howie Mandel Special* (Velvet Productions).

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Quebec's top film brass in place, \$10 million ready for April 1

MONTREAL - With a flurry of nominations made just before Christmas, Quebec has put in place the infrastructures upon which to hang the three parts of its new Cinema Law.

Basically, the Cinema Law created three new agencies: the (new) Institut Québécois du Cinema (IQC) which will consist solely of a 12-member board and a full-time secretary; the Société Générale du Cinema (SGC) which will be fully staffed with people presently working at the old IQC and headed by a president/general-director and a board of four directors; and the Régie du Cinema whose current staff consists of a president and two commissioners.

The three bodies have distinct, if sometimes tangential, mandates. The IQC is a policy body, having strong representation from the film milieu, that must articulate the direction in which Quebecois cinema should go in any given year, and counsel the minister on all cinema matters.

The SGC is the executive branch, and will deal daily with the administration of programs touching all domains, giving aid to production, distribution, exhibition, dealing with foreign markets, etc. In the first year, the SGC will receive \$10 million from the province.

The Régie is essentially a regulatory body that will monitor box-office sales through a national "billetterie," will license producers, distributors and exhibitors, and examine contracts pertaining to distribution, etc. It is also responsible for the classification of films, and for any complaints which might be leveled concerning distribution or exhibition of films.

In announcing the presidents of these three agencies, Cultural Affairs minister Clement Richard chose three people whose long-term commitment to the milieu is unquestioned, and who have been present during the 20-years process which led to the creation of the current law.

Fernand Dansereau will head the IQC. Dansereau, recipient of a Canadian Film Award for his out-standing contribution to Canadian film in the '70s, was one of the members of the Fournier commission which produced the study which eventually led to the Cinema Law. Past president of the Directors Association, Dansereau has produced documentaries both at the National Film Board and independently, and last year saw his theatrical feature *Les doux aveux* in general release in Quebec.

At the SGC, Nicole Boisvert (see p. 5) brings broad knowledge of all aspects of the business to her job. Serving with her on the Board of Directors is Robert Daudelin, director of the Cinematheque Quebecoise; Jean-Guy Decarie who heads his own real estate company; Pierre-A. Deschesnes who is president of the Société de Développement des Industries de la Culture et des Communications (SODICC) which invests provincial monies in cultural projects like Premier Choix; TVEC and Les Films Rene Malo; and Honey Drescher, a communications consultant who represented C Channel in Quebec and has done extensive work with the CRTC.

To become president of the Régie, Andre Guerin moves over from his post as president of the Cinema Supervisory Board, Quebec's intelligent "censor board." His reputation as a diplomat and film connoisseur precedes him. (Witness the fact that during the directors strike of 1975, when the filmmakers closed down the distribution/exhibition industry for two-weeks to pressure the government into legislating a cinema law, they chose to occupy the Bureau de Surveillance, and Guerin graciously made them feel at home.) Gu-

erin has been consulted by the government in every step of the process, and is held in great esteem by those who work in the industry. Claire Bonenfant, currently president of the Council on the Status of Women, and Pierre Lamy, current president of the Association des Producteurs de Films du Quebec, have been named commissioners.

What is remarkable in these nominations is the continuity they represent.

In naming Dansereau, Boisvert and Guerin, the government has chosen to consolidate the gains made from past experience. Each of the new agency-heads knows the industry well, and has participated in all the debates over a long period of time.

Because of the complex administrations which must be put in place, especially at the Régie where little exists today, it is not thought that the Cinema Law will become totally effective before April 1985. Nevertheless, 90 of the 211 articles of the law have already been promulgated, and Boisvert expects those articles which will allow the SGC to begin taking over from the old IQC to be promulgated by Feb. 15.

Coupled with the promise of

the 150% tax shelter, the governmental interest in the creation of a Cinema City on the old Expo '67 site, the push for a film promotion office and the long-awaited federal policy, it would seem that activity in Quebec should step-up sharply. And soon.

Hallis' Africa to PBS

MONTREAL - Montreal filmmaker Ron Hallis' *Nkuleleko Means Freedom*, a half-hour documentary on returned refugee schools in Zimbabwe, will air on the American PBS network Feb. 14 at 10 p.m.

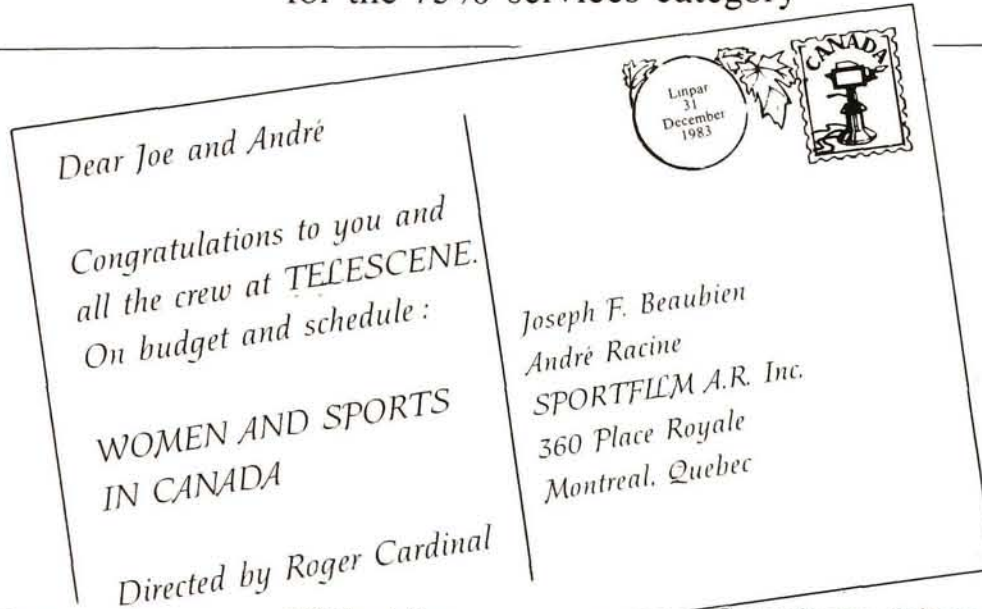
Produced in 1982, with direction, camera-work and editing by Hallis and wife Ophera Hallis, *Nkuleleko* includes an interview with Zimbabwe leader Robert Mugabe, and is the second of a series of films on the post-colonial transformation of the Zimbabwe education system.

Hallis plans to shoot two more hour-documentaries in Zimbabwe this year between May and August, including a longer interview with Mugabe focussing on recent development projects as well as problems with the new nation's South-African backed dissidents.

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Specialty CRTC hearing in Hull

OTTAWA – Eighteen applicants for licenses to originate Canadian specialty programming services will appear before the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commis-

Sat-cable religion

OTTAWA – In response to requests for postponement, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has extended to May 1, 1984, the deadline for filing applications for a satellite-to-cable interfaith religious programming service.

In June '83, the Commission called for applications for a national religious interfaith programming service for a September deadline, but had extended that deadline to Jan. 3.

In December, the consortium Interchurch Communication requested a further extension of the deadline. The request asking for a postponement was supported by letters from the Anglican Church of Canada, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, the Canadian Baptist Federation, the Lutheran Council in Canada, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Roman Catholic representative on Interchurch Communication, and the Greek Orthodox Church of Canada.

sion (CRTC) at a marathon public hearing in Hull Jan. 24 that observers expect will last two weeks.

In addition, the CRTC has received 300 written interventions related to the applications and over 30 detailed commentaries in response to its Dec. 29 call for clarification of the major issues. In a three-page public notice, the CRTC had asked for written responses from the applicants on seven proposed questions relevant to specialty services. (For example, whether and under what conditions the applicant would consider tiering his service with a Canadian pay-television to be a positive or negative marketing factor.)

In October, the CRTC rejected, on grounds of insufficient Canadian content, the 41 applications it had received in answer to its May '83 call for applications for discretionary Canadian specialty programming.

The 18 applicants now scheduled to appear before the CRTC at the Hull hearing are: CMTV Canadian Music Television Ltd., Montreal (video music); Jean Paquin, Montreal (arts and public affairs); 125053 Canada Inc., St-Laurent, Que., (video music); Chinavision Canada Corp., Don Mills (Chinese language programming);

Michael Sheridan, Don Mills, (video music); Emilio Mascia and Jack Price, Hamilton, (Italian and Spanish language programming); Andrew Shaw, Ottawa (sports); De Janos Enterprises, Ottawa (public and political affairs); Roger Price, Ottawa (children's); Ghost Lake Productions, Perth, Ont. (video publishing); Action Canada Sports Network, Toronto, (sports); Canadian Health Network Ltd., Toronto (medicine and health care); Chum

Ltd., Toronto (video music); Michael Rinaldo, Toronto (health and medical awareness); MTV Broadcasting System Inc., Toronto (multilingual programming); Rogers Radio Broadcasting Ltd., Toronto (video music); Wah Shing Television Ltd. and partners, Toronto (Chinese language programming); and World View Television Ltd., Vancouver (multilingual programming).

The hearing will open with

the presentation of 15 (out of 30) general commentaries from applicants or related intervenors. On the second day, the Commission will hear the 18 applicants' presentations. Each presentation will be followed by questions from CRTC commissioners, and after the applicants have been heard, they will be asked to comment on their fellow applicants. The last phase of the hearing will hear 30 outside intervenors (out of 300).

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CFDC expands funding, staff, space

MONTREAL - The Canadian Film Development Corp. is in full expansion, matching the volume of its production funding with internal growth and reorganization.

Bill Litwack is the most recent acquisition of the CFDC. He replaces Judith McCann as head of Planning there, having recently served at the National Film Board as Director of Distribution. Seconding Armand Cournoyer in the distribution/information sector is Claude Daigneault, who, as information officer, has opened direct lines between the CFDC and the press for the first time.

In other changes, Ronald "Pete" Legault moves from head of the Montreal office to Director of Co-Productions, anticipating a substantial increase in co-productions in the

coming year. André Picard will become head of the Montreal office in his post of Director of Production-Montreal.

Legault reports that CFDC staff has grown from 25 last Spring to about 37 people currently (Montreal, 21; Toronto, 14; Vancouver, 2). The Montreal office has increased its size by over 20%, moving from under 4,000 sq. feet of useable space in the Tour de la Bourse building to about 5,500 sq. feet in the new Banque Nationale building. As one of the first residents in the new building, however, Legault reports a lower rent per square foot than in the previous locale.

As for investments from the Broadcast Production Fund, the most recent figures (Dec. 14) note that 38 projects have received combined backing of

\$12 million from the CFDC. This money must be matched by investments from a broadcaster, and from a third source. Total production budgets reach \$52 million.

From its nearly depleted Regular Fund, the CFDC has spread \$2 million over 59 projects, having budgets which total \$17 million. Another \$4 million was invested from the Interim Fund into 26 projects with total budgets of \$22 million.

Currently in Paris, CFDC director André Lamy announced a boom year in co-productions with France, citing productions totalling \$40 million in 1983. The bulk of these co-productions were produced through I.C.C. last year (*Louisiane, The Blood of Others, The Bay Boy, Le crime d'Ovide Plouffe*).

CBC commitment to Fund still under wraps

TORONTO - The long-awaited announcement of how much money the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. will make available to independent producers participating in the Broadcast Program Development Fund is now expected from CBC president Pierre Juneau in late January.

CBC executives in Toronto, tight-lipped because Juneau frowns on pre-emptive reports of major CBC announcements, would neither confirm nor deny newspaper reports that the English-language network will pledge \$14 million for fund-related projects - with four-fifths of that ticketed for drama.

But word is that Juneau's announcement, once made, will get the ball rolling for CBC-

supported Broadcast Fund production and that independents with proposals now before the network should begin getting broadcast-commitment letters (necessary to access the Fund) in early February.

Juneau, in a speech before the Broadcast Executives Society Jan. 18 in Toronto, only mentioned that the Fund money

announcement would be made "shortly."

Juneau had intended to make the announcement right after the Broadcast Society luncheon and the CBC had called a press-conference to that effect. But the conference and the announcement were cancelled as a result of leaks to *The Toronto Star*.

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**CBC evaluates
regional programs**

TORONTO - The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. has appointed a task force to evaluate regional programming produced by the network's owned-operated TV stations.

Denis Harvey, CBC English network vice-president, and head of regional programming Doug Ward commissioned the task force in December. Chaired by Ron Devion, director of CBC Vancouver, its members include Maritime regional director Dodi Robb, network programming director Trina McQueen, and Montreal-based executive producer Mark Blandford.

The group will visit all 19 regional production locations across Canada, reviewing each one on the basis of its community and regional programming and its status as a producer of network and inter-regional programming.

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Gold Lust wraps Brazil shoot

TORONTO - Filmmakers Robert Maclean and Neil Hollander of Adventure Films in Toronto have completed a 15-day shoot in Brazil on *Gold Lust*, a one-hour television documentary on the present day South American gold rush.

Produced by Maclean and written and directed by Hollander, the film examines the prospecting activity at Serra Pelada, an open-pit mine on the eastern Amazon where 100,000 people are searching, digging, and fighting for fortune. To date, the mine has produced \$300 million worth of gold.

Hollander describes the film as a look into an area thought by many to have passed. "It looks like the Klondike '98 transformed to the Amazon," he said. "I think we've got some amazing footage."

Are people really coming out with gold? Hollander says 'Yes,' and claims he held a 50 kg. nugget in his hands while in Brazil. "The odds of finding gold at Serra Pelada are about

one in five thousand," he said. "Those are a lot better odds than the lottery."

The film, currently in post-production in Toronto, will be narrated by Orson Welles, who narrated the company's 1983 project, *The Last Sailors*, a three-part documentary series on working sailboats around the world, which has been broadcast on Great Britain's Channel Four and sold to Dutch and German television.

The company also exploits its filmmaking activity and research to produce book versions of their film, with a *Last Sailors* book published in New York by St. Martin's Press and another planned for *Gold Lust*.

The company has a third project, a one-hour TV drama *The Great Game*, written by Anthony Currie, in development.

Ladies at Yuk-Yuk

TORONTO - *Take My Husband ... Please*, a one-hour entertainment special produced, directed, and co-written by Corrine Farago, was taped Jan. 16-30 at Yuk Yuk's comedy club in Toronto.

The Poundmaker Productions show written by Farago and Mark Breslin builds its storyline around performances by female stand-up comics and stars Katie Ford, Nancy White, Phyllis Diller, Marjorie Gross, Sheila Gostick, Marla Lukofsky, Debbie Denomy, Carol Leifer, Gay Claitman, and Breslin.

Executive producers are Barry Pearson and Gerald Soloway.

Canadian independent station City-TV has purchased Canadian TV rights and has licensed a prime-time broadcast for 1984, enabling the producers to access funds from the Broadcast Program Development Fund.

Orion still no show

OTTAWA - Despite discussions with the officials at the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA), Orion Pictures Corp. of New York has still not filed an application with the agency. Its first request to do business in Canada was refused in Sept. Nevertheless, the American distributor continues to operate from its Toronto office.

DGC wins battle with MGM

TORONTO - The Directors Guild of Canada (DGC) has won a dispute with the producers of the MGM film *Mrs. Soffel*, scheduled to start shooting Feb. 6 in Toronto, over the production's hiring of an American first assistant director.

On Jan. 15, the minister of Immigration backed the DGC and decided not to issue a working permit to American 1st a.d. Ron Bosman. The decision followed six weeks of discussion and negotiation between the producers, the DGC, and Immigration officials.

The production has hired Scott Maitland, a Canadian working in Los Angeles and a joint DGC/Directors Guild of America member, to replace Bosman. Maitland's recent credits include *Never Cry Wolf* and *Harry Tracy*.

Immigration Minister John Roberts made the decision after meeting with the producers Jan. 11 and with the DGC Jan. 13. The producers and the DGC met for some final negotiations Jan. 12 before handing the decision over to the minister.

"The guild, and its members, are very pleased with the decision," said DGC business agent Mickie Currie.

"This decision is an indication to foreign producers

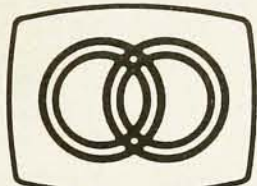
coming into this country that, like in Great Britain and the United States, only heads of departments can cross borders," Currie said. "We have a lot of good assistant directors in this country - who aren't working."

David Nicksay, the film's executive producer, said his company respected the minister's decision. "We are pleased to be here and want to make a film. That's all I have to say."

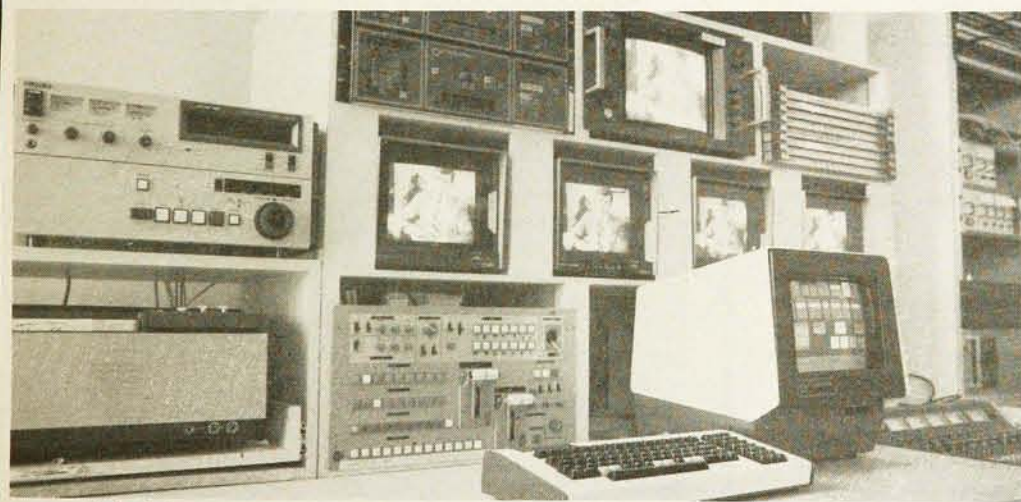
The film's producer, Edgar Scherick, was unavailable for comment.

Mrs. Soffel, a period drama set in 1902 Pittsburg, stars Mel Gibson, Diane Keaton, Matthew Modine, and Ed Hermann. The \$10 million production is scheduled to shoot for 11 weeks in Toronto, Elora, Ont., and at Toronto International Studios (Kleinberg). Written by American screenwriter Ron Nyswaner, the film will be directed by Australian Gillian Armstrong, whose films include *My Brilliant Career* and *Star Struck*.

TORONTO - *Liquid Sky*, the 1982 independently-produced U.S. feature by Russian director Slava Tsuckerman, will open Feb. 10 at the Bloor Cinema in Toronto, distributed by Creative Exposure.



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Cinema Canada

ESPN to First Choice sked

TORONTO - First Choice has signed a deal with the Entertainment Sports Programming Network (ESPN) which will provide Canadian subscribers with 14 hours per week of the U.S. all-sports channel's programming.

In the deal, announced Jan. 6 in Toronto by First Choice executive committee chairman Harold Greenberg and then-president Don MacPherson, First Choice bought exclusive Canadian rights to ESPN and, beginning Mar. 1, will telecast 14 hours per week of programming selected from material to which ESPN holds Canadian rights.

ESPN's schedule of Canadian Football League games, will be unavailable to First Choice since nearly every CFL game is broadcast on Canadian network television. But other events, notably National Basketball Association games, golf, tennis, auto racing, amateur events and European sports will be available.

ESPN, a 24-hour cable service,

is seen each month in 30 million U.S. homes. The First Choice package will be telecast also on Premier Choix/TVEC.

Harold Greenberg said the ESPN material has been added in response to programming research undertaken by First Choice which revealed consumers wanted more diversification, fewer repeats, and more sports on pay-TV.

Previously, First Choice had applied to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to bring ESPN's full service into Canada and market it in a package with its own service whose programming originates primarily from U.S. sources, turned them down.

On Jan. 12, First Choice announced that since the news of the ESPN deal and the free previews run Jan. 8 by cable companies, it had added 10,000 new subscribers, bringing totals for both First Choice and Premier Choix/TVEC, to approximately 350,000.

Rogers still to file for Bravo OK

TORONTO - Rogers Cable Systems Inc. has yet to file its application with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to bring the U.S. arts pay-TV service Bravo to Canada.

Rogers has hired Audrey Cole, former programmer at C Channel, to prepare the application. Cole told Cinema Canada the company hopes to file by Jan. 20.

Rogers announced in December it had paid C Channel receiver Price Waterhouse \$12,500 to apply to the CRTC to surrender the license to a Rogers subsidiary. The company's plan is to market Bravo, a 60/40 mix of feature film and performing arts, in a package with existing Canadian pay-TV services.

Klinkhammer heads pay station

TORONTO - Don MacPherson, who had been with First Choice since the company's inception, has resigned as the national pay-TV service's president to become head of TV sports for the CBC English network.

MacPherson's new status was confirmed Jan. 16 by CBC English network vice-president Denis Harvey, ironically, the man MacPherson is replacing. MacPherson's departure had been widely rumoured in Toronto media circles since mid-December - after the Astral/Hees International buyout of First Choice placed Astral boss Harold Greenberg as chairman of First Choice's executive committee.

MacPherson, 51, returns to the CBC after a four-year absence. In November, 1979, he resigned as vice-president and general manager of the corporation's English division to become president of Barber Greene Productions and vice-president of the Global TV Network. He left Global in July, 1981, to become First Choice president.

On Jan. 18, First Choice chairman of the board Victor Mashaal and Harold Greenberg, chairman of the executive committee confirmed the appointment of Fred Klinkhammer as the new

First Choice president and chief executive officer.

Klinkhammer's appointment, already widely rumored, becomes effective Mar. 1. As CEO, Klinkhammer replaces Mashaal who steps down Jan. 31 remaining on as chairman of the board.

Klinkhammer, president of Cablenet Ltd. of Toronto and its U.S. subsidiary in Chicago, which owns and operates 10 cable-TV systems in Canada and 12 in Illinois, has had wide experience in radio, TV and cable-TV.

A former senior executive with Toronto's CITY-TV station from 1978 to 1983, Klinkhammer began his career as a radio announcer in Cambridge, Ont.

French flicks to Beaux-Arts in Mtl

MONTREAL - A retrospective of 30 years of French experimental cinema (1950-1980) runs from Jan. 12-Feb. 5 at the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, the Cinematheque québécoise and the Cinéma Parallele. The 173 films by 134 filmmakers include works by Jean Mitry, Kenneth Anger, Jean Cocteau, Nicolas Schöffer, Robert Lapoujade, and Marguerite Duras.

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Animation Fest to Toronto

TORONTO - The Canadian International Animation Festival will take place in Toronto from Aug. 13-18, thanks to the ardent efforts of Kelly O'Brien and Frederik Manter.

In 1982, the festival had been held in Ottawa, under the auspices of the Canadian Film Institute of which both O'Brien and Manter were then employees. In 1984, the same festival will be produced by the Canadian International Animation Festival Inc., whose board includes six founding members: three from the CFI (Michael Spencer, Jacques Gosselin and Peter Mortimer) and three others (Ron Leach, Louise Beaudet and Harris Kirschenbaum). This board has hired O'Brien and Manter, who left the CFI last year, to run the festival.

According to Manter, who is producing the festival, the CFI had long planned to move the festival from Ottawa to Toronto, having outgrown the capacity of the theatre at the National Arts Centre, and finding the reception of the city of Ottawa to be "cold." O'Brien's CFI office was moved to Toronto in 1981, says Manter, and all business was conducted from that city despite the fact that the actual festival was held, once again in 1982, in Ottawa.

Now in 1984, Manter reports that the Ryerson Theatre, with its 1250-seat capacity, has doubled the capacity for the festival. "It will be much bigger this year, and Toronto, with its sesquicentennial, is open and enthusiastic about hosting the festival."

The founding board of the festival has been increased to include the following members, says Manter: Sam "The Record Man" Sniderman; John Tomlinson, vice-president of Hayhurst Advertising; lawyer Wil-

liam McMurtry; and Toronto Life business editor Alexander Ross. Ron Leach is chairman of the board.

As for the festival's finances, there is some controversy about certain aspects. Leach told Cinema Canada that the target figure of \$340,000 for 1984 would no doubt come down as contra-offers were made for services. However, the festival is also responsible for the deficit left by the 1982 festival and, according to Manter, the final amount of this deficit has still to be established.

Manter told Cinema Canada that he has never seen the final figures for 1982, although he was the executive director of the CFI during that year. He reports that CFI chairman of the board Harry Gulkin had said the deficit for the festival stood at \$70,000, but that according to his (Manter's) personal notes, the actual deficit was more like \$3,500 dollars. Meanwhile, the deficit is being negotiated and revised, and Manter says the last figure he saw was more like \$20,000.

Gulkin, on the other hand, told Cinema Canada that the festival's deficit was in excess of \$40,000, but never near the \$70,000 figure quoted by Manter. Through negotiations between the CFI and the festival group, the CFI has agreed to absorb part of the deficit, says Gulkin. He agrees that the final figure will be around \$20,000.

Ron Leach reports that most of the financing for this year's festival is in place. Of the total, \$75,000 comes from the Film Festivals Bureau in Ottawa.

On the creative side, festival director Kelly O'Brien reports that participants - especially the Europeans - are ecstatic about the move to Toronto. Working out of her home,

O'Brien is looking forward to moving into proper offices, and is happy that the larger festival will be able to welcome the public as well as animation professionals. "As a competitive festival, it's important that the public can also participate."

O'Brien's responsibilities are

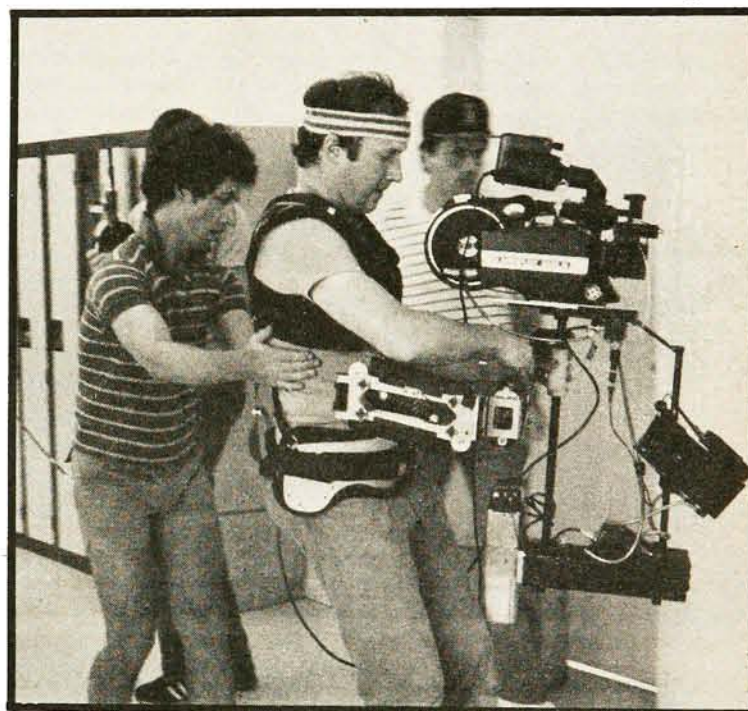
programming the festival and organizing the participation of the guests ("Frederik raises the money. I spend it.")

It was in large measure due to her efforts last year, working for her own company, the International Animation Group Inc., that pressure was brought to

bear on the concerned authorities (the Festival Bureau, the Association International des Films d'Animation-ASIFA, and the CFI) to allow the animation festival to be continued this year under the auspices of the new corporation and not as an activity of the CFI.

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O'Brian/Borsos remake Capra

TORONTO - Peter O'Brien and Phillip Borsos, the producer-director team who made last year's best Canadian picture, *The Grey Fox*, are set to begin another project, *Father Christmas*, a \$10 million comedy scheduled to start principal photography Feb. 27.

Shooting is planned for 11 weeks in Toronto and Meaford, Ont., on the film, a remake of Frank Capra's 1946 masterpiece *It's A Wonderful Life*. Thomas Meeham, co-author of the Broadway play *Annie* and screenwriter on Mel Brooks's recent film *To Be or Not To Be*, has written the script.

O'Brien will co-produce with American producer Fred Roos (previously partnered with Francis Coppola and Zoetrope Studios) and associate producer Paul Tucker. Robert Spiotta is

executive producer. Borsos will direct.

A spokesman for the production company, The North Pole Picture Company of Canada, classified the project as an American-financed picture using Canadian talent. Among the crew are production designer Bill Brodie, art director Carol Spier, and d.o.p. Frank Tidy. No casting has been set.

At presstime, a distribution deal was in negotiation, and it is expected a U.S. distributor will sign to handle the picture.

TORONTO - Spectrafilm will release the Canadian feature *Latitude 55*, produced and directed by John Juliani, Feb. 3 in Toronto and Feb. 24 in Montreal and Ottawa.

Super8 Fest spotlights France in fifth year

MONTREAL - The fifth Montreal International Festival of Super 8 Films gets underway Feb. 21 at the Cinematheque quebecoise.

The five-day event, organized by the Association pour le jeune cinema quebecois (AJCQ), features the most recent work of Super 8 filmmakers from Quebec and some 20 participating countries in Europe, Africa and Latin America.

About 80 films in all, reflecting current tendencies in international Super 8, will be screened in three official competitions: intercollegial, national and international.

This year's fest will focus on recent French Super 8 filmmaking.

"The Montreal festival," full-time Festival director-general Michel Payette told Cinema Canada, "is part of a triangle of major festivals held through the International Federation of Super 8 Cinema. There's the Caracas festival in August, Bruxelles in November, and Montreal in February.

"Since the Festival began five years ago, it's had a tremendously stimulating effect on Quebec Super 8 filmmakers. For the past two years, Quebec films have been coming back with prizes, and are today considered among the best in the world. At Bruxelles, for instance, Quebec Super 8 films took the prize for universality of film language."

In addition to screenings, Payette, aided by organizing committee members Jean Hamel, president of the AQJC, Chantal Ethier who'll handle communications, and technical director Sylvain Bernier, have put together an impressive program of workshops, special screenings, and discussion panels. Among the highlights will be a retrospective of works by British Super 8 animator Louis Cooper. Also attending will be the young Argentine director Mario Piazza, along with other foreign guests and international Super 8 luminaries.

One of the key workshops, Payette explained, will focus on the future of Super 8 filmmaking and the impact of video technology. "What's going on now in Super 8," Payette said, "is similar to what happened with 16mm filmmaking in the '60s. There's a tendency towards greater specialization. We hope the workshop will provide an occasion for a consensus, for greater precision of our needs as independent filmmakers."

As in previous years, the prize-winning films at the Festival will tour Quebec throughout March. Screenings are planned in Quebec City, Rimouski, Chicoutimi, Sherbrooke, Hull, Drummondville, Trois-Rivieres and Laval.

During the festival itself (Feb. 21-26), there will be three screenings per evening, while the days will be devoted to conferences and workshops. Tickets are \$2 per screening.

Plans for Film Office in Quebec

MONTREAL - If Mychèle Boudrias and Danièle Rohrbach have their way, Quebec will soon have its own Film Promotion Office, following Ontario, Alberta and B.C. into the international production sweepstakes.

On Dec. 20, Boudrias and Rohrbach, both of whom have long production credits, gathered together representatives from half-a-dozen provincial ministries to unveil their three-part plan to put Quebec on the international production map. The representatives from the ministries of Intergovernmental Affairs, Communications, Cultural Affairs, Foreign Trade and Tourism, accompanied by members of the Institut Quebecois du Cinema, were "enchanted" with the idea, according to Boudrias, and ready to work together to make the project a reality.

Boudrias and Rohrbach hope to have the first part of their plan, the publication of "Le guide du Quebec cinematographique," ready for distribution at the Cannes festival this May. With luck, the second component of the plan, a film about the advantages of shooting in Quebec, will also be ready. With these elements in hand, the creation of an actual

promotion office should not be far behind.

The economic advantages of attracting foreign production are clear to provincial authorities, and with the municipal government also enthusiastic about the creation of a Cite du Cinema on the islands which housed Expo '67, the time seems ripe for such a scheme.

Currently, meetings are ongoing with authorities to raise the \$487,000 needed to proceed with the guide and the film. The ministry of Cultural Affairs will act as the liaison between Boudrias, Rohrbach and the other provincial ministries and agencies involved.

TORONTO - In Vancouver, David Cronenberg's *The Dead Zone* grossed \$6,900 after three weeks and \$1,200 playing another week at Famous Players theatres. The film grossed \$42,516 in Winnipeg, playing a Landmark house for eight weeks, and grossed \$41,300 in Edmonton playing at Famous Players' Westmall for 6 weeks, and another \$30,000 at the Avenue there the same period. In Toronto, the film made \$119,980 over nine weeks at the Cineplex Eaton Centre and another \$18,278 in the same nine weeks at Warden Woods.

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Canciones with National Ballet in can

TORONTO - Toronto production company Mossanen Film Productions has completed principal photography on *Canciones*, a half-hour dance film for television produced, directed, and adapted by Moze Mossanen.

A National Ballet of Canada work choreographed by Constantin Patsales, *Canciones* stars Veronica Tennant, Kevin Pugh, and Sabina Alleman.

Shooting wrapped after a six-day shoot Dec. 12, and post-production is being done at Sunrise Films in Toronto by editor Pia DiCaula. Executive producer is Ron Folkes, with production manager/1st a.d. Allan Magee.

The production made innovative use of Steadicam, used perhaps for the first time in a Canadian dance film by cinematographers Bob and Dave Crone.

Canciones is the company's second in a series of dance films. The first, *Illegal Acts*, premiered at the 1983 Festival of Festivals. A third, longer project combining drama and dance is in development for the fall.

Atlantis makes adult Can-lit series

TORONTO - A series of eight half-hour dramas, produced by Toronto independent production house Atlantis Films in collaboration with the National Film Board and licensed for broadcast by the Global TV network, will start shooting Jan. 30 in Montreal.

The dramas, like 13 previous TV half-hours produced by Atlantis, are based on stories from Canadian literature, but this latest series is aimed at an adult, rather than a children's, audience, according to coproducer Michael MacMillan.

Announced are the first three episodes, all to be shot in Montreal. The first, *Bambinger*, based on a short story by Mordecai

Richler, will shoot Jan. 30-Feb. 7, directed by Beverly Shaffer and starring Louis Negin. Gerald Wexler adapted the screenplay.

Second up is *The Painted Door*, Sinclair Ross's story adapted by Joe Wiesenfeld, to shoot Feb. 13-20, directed by Bruce Pittman. Following that, Giles Walker will direct *A Good Tree that Christmas*, a short story by David Walker adapted by Gloria Demers, to be shot Feb. 23-Mar. 2.

The project has received financing from the CFDC-administered Broadcast Program Development Fund, and shooting will take place in Quebec and Western Canada.

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Densham/Watson wrap U. S. feature

TORONTO - Canadian filmmakers Pen Densham and John Watson, who founded Insight Productions in Toronto in the early 1970's and later left for Hollywood, have finished principal photography on a U.S. feature *The Zoo Gang*.

The light-hearted, low budget comedy wrapped Dec. 22 after a 7-week shoot in Prescott,

Arizona. The Densham-Watson team directed and wrote the picture and co-produced with Richard Lewis. Executive producers were Kerry Hersch and Mike Hersch. Director of photography was Canadian cinematographer Bob New.

The film stars Ben Vereen, Jackie Earle Haley, Ramon Bieri, and Tiffany Helm. No distribution deal has been signed.

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