

Cité du Cinéma on hold, to be studied once again

MONTREAL – It's take two for the controversial Cité du Cinéma project as federal minister of Communications Marcel Masse and Quebec cultural affairs minister Clément Richard jointly announced the commissioning of another study to assess the project's feasibility. Two earlier studies in '83-'84 were, Masse said, "not good enough for us."

"We're back where we should have been last July," Masse said at a press conference here Dec. 17, dismissing the previous government's "short-term electoral" approach to the project hurriedly announced last June and officialized Aug. 20 with an exclusive contract between the government of Canada and a private-sector consortium headed by Montreal producer Denis Héroux (See Cinema Canada Nos. 109, 111).

Both ministers emphasized the "new spirit of consultation and collaboration" that has characterized not only the relations between the two governments so far, but will distinguish the elaboration of the project as a whole. Richard went as far as to mention that Denis Héroux, who was not present at the well-attended press conference, had phoned to give both his agreement and his "complete support" to the new approach.

The \$410,000 study, to be carried out over the next 120 days by Montreal consulting firm Sécour, will inventory existing production services; study national and international demand for these services in the North American market; define in detail the Cité's program of activities; outline the facilities and equipment required; determine the services to be provided exclusively by the private sector; establish a business and marketing plan for the Cité; develop a plan to promote shooting locations in Quebec, and establish the timetable for the project's implementation.

Masse was unwilling to put numbers on the federal government's participation in the project until the results of the study are known, noting that it would be "according to the needs established." Richard, for his part, said "it is understood that there will be financial participation by the government of Quebec," but also said this would depend on the nature and budget of the project as determined by the Sécour study.

Both ministers emphasized that this time round the Cité project would be elaborated "in narrow consultation with the milieu," stressing that this

meant not just producers, but technicians and actors as well as the Quebec government. "We have to respect the inputs of the Quebec government in cultural matters perhaps more than anywhere else," Masse said. The former government, he said, had approached the project "without due respect for the Quebec government and the milieu. They had already decided where the Cité should be built. An investment like this should involve the community where it is done."

Masse also noted that the Montreal Cité could be complemented by similar production centres in Toronto and Vancouver to which the federal government would also "be ready to make a commitment if necessary."

Further details, however, will have to await the results of the study. As Richard put it, "It's hard to say exactly what it (the Cité) will be without the study. Will it be exclusively in TV or in film? All we can say is that we'll have something to do with the Cité du Cinéma."

For their part, representatives of the milieu at the ministers' press-conference seemed unanimously pleased with the rebirth of the project. "This is exactly the kind of study that should have been done in the first place," Nicole M. Boisvert, head of the Société générale du cinéma, told Cinema Canada. On July 17, Boisvert, joined by then Institut québécois du cinéma president Fernand Dan-

sereau, had called for additional impact studies (see Cinema Canada No. 110). Current IQC president Claude Fournier felt that the day's announcement "takes us much further ahead than we were in July. We're now dealing with a depoliticized, much more rational approach. The time has not been wasted."

Montreal World Film Festival director Serge Losique, one of the key members of the Liberal-backed Héroux consortium, thought that "the more active role to be played by the provincial government" would be "a good thing."

Astral/First Choice chief Harold Greenberg termed the new approach "very, very positive. I could never understand why the Quebec government had been excluded in the first place. This should have a positive impact on the industry as a whole."

For Telefilm Canada executive director André Lamy, the key to the new study would be "the development of an aggressive marketing plan, which has been something we haven't had and that other nations have been able to make effective use of."

"There's no reason," added Lamy, "why we can't give Canadian crews greater exposure and expertise by working with more foreign production. This would allow us, at Telefilm and the National Film Board, to pursue more nationalistic policies."

Masse meets with Majors

TORONTO – DOC minister Marcel Masse has met with representatives of the Majors in pursuit of the previous administration's policy of negotiations on distribution. John Watt, director of the Film Policy office of the DOC, said in an interview that "Masse is going ahead with negotiations. He has had an initial meeting with the majors."

Millard Roth, executive director of the Canadian Picture Distributors Association, the association which regroups Columbia, Paramount, 20th Century-Fox, UA/MGM, Universal and Warner Bros., confirmed that he and president of the Association Eugene Amadeo of Universal met recently with Masse. He said he was impressed with the speed with which Masse is operating. "Mr. Fox had never met us once."

The meeting, Roth noted, "was a general introductory

one in which Masse indicated his general support for the film policy as put forward by Mr. Fox. He expressed his understanding of communications between DOC and ourselves; we expressed our understanding of the film policy."

Roth said that the Majors were concerned that the Policy "alludes to the majors' ability to do more than we can do." He indicated that the Majors are also very concerned with copyright issues, particularly payments on cable retransmission.

"The meeting ended," said Roth, "with both sides agreeing to do more homework. The government will put together a model of industry yardsticks they would like to see achieved. We will put together statistical information. They have to understand what we truly represent – what we are talking about in numbers and budgets."

The two sides are to meet again early in the new year.

Broadcast Fund delivers as producers end good year

TORONTO – As 1984 draws to a close there is uncertainty about the future of the Canadian film industry. Access to the Broadcast Fund which has been the major engine of growth for the industry may be sharply curtailed by the CBC freeze with unknown effects on the production community. However, the past year itself has proved to be a good one for most sectors of the industry.

Michael MacMillan of Atlantis is pleased with their development of the half-hour drama format for CBC (*Sons and Daughters*) and Global (*Global Playhouse*). He said "Atlantis is going into 1985 with more production on the books than ever." Atlantis is currently shooting three half-hour dramas based on stories by Ray Bradbury for HBO and has a number of other projects in development.

Stephen Ellis of Ellis Enterprises said 1984 had been a very good year for the company. Their big success was *Profiles of Nature* which sold in 50 U.S. markets as well as abroad. "We're well into the black on the series," said Ellis. They've also done well on Canadian sales of the blockbuster British import, *Jewel in the Crown*, a Grenada TV production which aired on prime time on CBC. Ellis Enterprises represents Grenada in Canada.

Stephen Roth of RSL said 1984 was a successful year for RSL with the production of *Heavenly Bodies*, *Joshua: Then and Now*, and *Night Heat* among others.

Sam Jephcott, executive director of the CFTA, noted that 1984 "saw most of the Association's problems sorted out. Membership numbers are up. We go into a very busy period." The Association is about to commence negotiations with ACTRA and is committed to a continuing dialogue with the DOC. The CFTA is hoping to meet with the minister early in the new year.

Peter Mortimer, executive director of the Association of Canadian Film & Television Producers, noted that "1984 is in many ways a benchmark year. It was the year that the first time broadcasting and film and video actually got specific statements on government position. A lot of things were put in place or confirmed as being put in place. 1985 is the year of proving 1984 – we'll see what kind of bread and cakes come out of it."

At Telefilm, Bob Linnell is "concerned with the ongoing stability of the industry. Our

overriding concern is to make sure that the Fund is a useful tool for producers. The success of 1984 will be seen in 1985 as most of the 1984 productions are just beginning to come on stream."

In distribution, Dan Weinzwieg at newly-formed Norstar is delighted with the first three-month performance of his company. "We've established ourselves as a new and important independent in Canada." He said *Choose Me*, *Brother From Another Planet*, *Night of the Comet* have been striking successes. So far for 1985 Weinzwieg has lined up *1984*, *The Hit*, *The Inheritors* and *1918*. As well the Norstar line of videos will be appearing early in the new year. Norstar is also negotiating with a number of Canadian producers to become involved at an early stage in film production.

At Spectrafilm, Virginia Kelly, director of advertising, noted that the company celebrated its first year of operation in June. It now has 39 titles. Major successes were *La balance*, *Fourth Man*, *Boat People*, and *The Wars*. In 1984 the company got involved in the production end with *Paroles et musiques*, *My American Cousin* and *Night Magic*.

Millard Roth, executive director of the CMPDA, said that "business has been good for the majors. We've had a great number of better grossing pictures. We're anticipating a very good Christmas. A year's bidding is under our belt." For 1985 the CMPDA plans a new television and broadcasting section. The Association will continue to press for changes to the copyright law and will undertake further meetings with the DOC.

Masse tables broadcast amendments

OTTAWA – Minister of Communications Marcel Masse has tabled a bill to amend broadcast legislation. Tabled Dec. 20, the thrust of the bill is to reduce government regulations and to bring policy questions under Cabinet control. Similar legislation introduced by Francis Fox under the Liberal administration was never passed.

Masse also announced that he would re-consider the status of the Canadian Broadcast Program Production Fund, as administered by the Telefilm Canada.

CBC cuts trigger dismay as programming affected

TORONTO - Independent producers responded with dismay to details of budget cuts at CBC. Michael MacMillan of Atlantis said "it's possibly horrifying. It appears that Juneau is saying that there's a freeze - no more

commitments in the foreseeable future. It could have a devastating impact. It's an insane thing to do. It is completely inconsistent with Telefilm and the government's policy to encourage privatization."

Atlantis produced the award-winning *Sons and Daughters* anthology for CBC.

Stephen Roth, chairman of RSL and co-president of the Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers, expressed similar feelings. "A freeze is the worst possible thing to happen to us. Nobody knows what's happening. It paralyzes production." Roth is particularly disappointed that CBC "did not pursue a course

suggested to them, i.e. co-producing with the private sector." He suggested that the freeze may be CBC's way of mobilizing the private sector against the cuts. RSL is currently producing *Joshua: Then and Now* as a mini-series for CBC. The freeze will delay or scrap a number of RSL projects, said Roth.

Stephen Ellis, Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA) president, said "our worst fears are being realized.

We can only hope that private broadcasters become major players. Telefilm may have to bend its rules on cultural significance which almost precludes foreign pre-sales."

John Watt at the DOC's Film Policy unit said "it is not yet clear what is happening. We are looking at it with Telefilm. The implications are serious."

CBC producers were shocked by the nature of the cuts. Ray Hazzan, president of the Association of Television Producers and Directors, said "it's like dropping a neutron bomb. We wiped out the people and kept the buildings. Our group is being hit hardest. We're losing 36 network and two local producers. It's a big blow."

Hazzan is particularly enraged with a "myth that programming will not be affected. There is no way that programming will not be affected. We won't be doing the kinds of series CBC is famous for." When asked why the Association hadn't responded earlier, Hazzan noted, "we were busy doing programmes."

Hazzan was afraid that it was his senior colleagues who would be replaced. "They're moving towards daily programming, away from large productions. By inference it's the senior people, the most distinguished, who may go. The newer producers will stay because they are in a popular area." The Association does not have stringent union contracts with seniority protection and bumping privileges.

At ACTRA, Margaret Collier, national executive director of the ACTRA Writer's Guild, said, "that what is really not evident is the number of freelancers who won't be hired. Lots of actors, writers will be out of work. The CBC has been the creative and cultural base for this country. What's going to happen now?"

On December 11 Pierre Juneau, CBC chairman, announced that 1,150 jobs would be cut at the CBC. Denis Harvey, vice-president of CBC's English-language TV service commented at a press conference, "there's blood on the floor." The English television network will lose 198 positions out of 2000. Out of that 37 are management/supervisory, 36 producers, 68 CUPE producers, 31 CUPE office staff, 22 NABET technicians and four secretaries. The exact number of layoffs depends on how many employees take early retirement. By the end of the day of the announcement, lists of eliminated positions were being posted throughout the corporation. Independent production to which CBC committed \$25 million this year has been frozen. The effect on the Broadcast Fund of which CBC is a major component is uncertain.



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NEWS

NFB FILES APPLICATION FOR YOUTH TELEVISION SPECIALTY SERVICES

On November 30 the NFB submitted an application to the CRTC for children's and youth television specialty services. To be broadcast in English and French, Young Canada Television/Télé-jeunesse Canada would carry a minimum of 70 per cent Canadian programming. The majority of the material will come from Canadian private sector producers. Other sources will be existing collections along with new public and private television network programming.

The application by the NFB was made on behalf of a non-profit foundation to be established from among a diverse representation of private sector interests, citizens groups and government organizations. Assuming a favorable response from the CRTC following its hearings scheduled for early 1985, the two channels, Young Canada Television and Télé-jeunesse Canada, will be available to all Canadians subscribing to the basic cable television service.

ANNIVERSARY PUBLICATION

A special issue of "Les Dossiers de la Cinémathèque" has been released in honor of 25 years of French Production at the National Film Board. Published by the Cinémathèque québécoise under the direction of Carol Faucher, the booklet covers the emergence of



Members of the Bailey family in "The Things I Cannot Change" (1966)

French production in the early sixties through to the present. Contributors include Jacques Bodet, Werner Nold, Pierre Véronneau, Richard Gay, and Louise Carrière, René Jodoin, Michel Euvard and Gilles Carle. This valuable reference on the background and development of French production, is available for \$4.00 from the Cinémathèque québécoise and from the National Film Board's Quebec Regional office, Place Guy-Favreau, 200 ouest, boul. Dorchester, Tour Est, Suite 102, Montréal, Québec H2Z 1X4.

EIGHTEEN YEARS LATER

In 1965 the National Film Board released *The Things I Cannot Change*, a feature-length docu-

mentary examining poverty as it occurs in Canada. Set in Montreal, the film tells the story of the Baileys - the tenth child is expected, the father is unemployed and ultimately is in trouble with the police. Directed by Tanya Ballantyne Tree, this award-winning documentary is considered the forerunner of the NFB's acclaimed Challenge for Change Program. Now, eighteen years later, Tree is returning to the Bailey household to film the next generation and to discover if it is possible for a family to break out of the poverty cycle. The new film, which includes excerpts from the original, will be released in two versions; an hour documentary for general distribution, produced by Michael Rubbo; and a shortened version produced by Kirwan Cox for special telecast on CBC's *The Journal* this March.

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Bombarded by technology

OTTAWA - In the light of growing uncertainty over the future orientation of the Canadian broadcasting system, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications (CRTC)'s 1983-1984 Annual Report, released in November, serves as a useful reminder of the thrust of public policy in the regulation of national broadcasting.

"Canadians are increasingly bombarded with the economic and cultural implications of the specific effects of new and rapidly changing technology on the various sectors of the communications industry," writes CRTC chairman André Bureau in his eight-page pre-fatory message to the 85-page report. "In particular, this environment has intensified the challenge to maintain a distinctive communications service for Canadians, especially with regard to the promotion and enhancement of Canadian content in broadcasting."

The intensification of competitive pressures caused by new and emerging technologies

Bureau notes, means that industry has less time to adapt while regulators, for their part, are less able to "control the rate and nature of the importation of foreign product and technology... a leisurely approach is no longer possible."

Reviewing the sectors of regulated communications in Canada, Bureau found a slight decline "in the profitability of the radio industry as a whole," with operating revenues of AM and FM accounting for only 11% of total broadcasting revenue in 1982, compared to 20% in 1972. Television, however "is going well in Canada," with advertising revenues reaching \$708 million in 1982-83, "testifying to the vigor of the conventional Canadian television industry." Cable "is presently experiencing a flattening of growth," with 1982-83 subscriber growth at 16% compared to 30% annual growth a decade ago. High market penetration (64% of Canadian households); rate increase restraint, and the impact of

unauthorized means of reception, the CRTC chairman observed, accounted for the decline.

In the discretionary services sector, competitive pressures in the home entertainment market had also produced slow demand decline until the August 1984 First Choice-Allarc division of the Canadian market. The telecommunications sector, meanwhile, experienced "heady growth" increasing fourfold in the past decade to operating revenues of over \$9.1 billion in 1983, with assets tripling in the same period to over \$21.4 billion.

Under its operating statutes, the role of the CRTC, says Bureau, "has always been to promote a distinctive Canadian broadcasting system." Noting however that new technologies (particularly satellite and direct broadcasting satellite) have "made available alternative methods which have the potential to alter the market structure dramatically," Bureau found that in such an environment the CRTC must move "to a more supervisory role," in order to implement three key strategies "to enhance and

complement our basic mandate." These are: to encourage the Canadian entrepreneurial spirit in communications; to add to the menu of existing Canadian products and services; and provide for the orderly introduction of foreign participants in our market.

"During a period of economic, social and technological turbulence such as Canada has been experiencing," Bureau says, "it is essential that the Commission strengthen its research, strategic and policy planning areas to better anticipate and understand the

complex issues which it is facing." Stemming from that strategic orientation, the CRTC, while emphasizing its more supervisory approach, had made clear to the industry that "we must insist on strict adherence to the regulations which are in place." Bureau added that "the very nature of the Canadian market dictates a more rigorous approach to new services," unlike the United States, for example.

All of these, he said, were approaches "based largely on a renewed emphasis on public concerns," and an increased need for public information.

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Masse to review broadcast system Telefilm tours Atlantic region to get acquainted

MONTREAL - The federal minister of Communications, Marcel Masse, has called for a complete review of Canadian broadcasting policy, including re-examination of the roles of the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. and federal regulatory agency, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

Speaking here Dec. 10 at the invitation of the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, Masse steered away from journalists' questions as to the immediate future of the CBC and the eventuality of further budgetary cuts in 1986-87.

The minister, in his speech to some 125 luncheon guests, reassured his audience, however, that there would be no significant changes without the agreement of all concerned parties, a consensual process he said "could take several months."

Calling for a review of the Canadian broadcasting system, Masse wondered what should be the future roles of the CBC, the CRTC, private broadcasters, and cable networks. What, he asked, should be the defining role of government policy? How should the needs of the Canadian regions best be met, and what would be the best way for the federal and provincial governments to provide improved broadcasting services for all Canadians?

If the minister was unwilling on this occasion to answer the very questions he raised, a number of public organizations, consumer groups and unions were eager to let the

minister know how they saw the unfolding of government policy.

"The government is secretly developing policies that will totally change our broadcasting system," commented Lina Trudel of the Canadian Institute for Adult Education, one of the intervenors at the CRTC hearings on the renewal of CBC French- and English-TV network licenses originally scheduled for Dec. 10 but indefinitely postponed following the new government's budgetary cutbacks Nov. 8.

Defcon 4 sold

HALIFAX - Salter Street Films' \$2.5 million made-in-Nova-Scotia feature *Defcon 4* has sold world distribution rights to Los Angeles distrib New World Pictures, the Halifax production company announced Nov. 27.

Originally titled *Dark Eye*, *Defcon 4* (Defense Condition 4) is an action drama about three astronauts who return to earth after World War III, and stars Lenore Zann, Kate Lynch, Maury Chaykin and Jeff Pustil.

While no other details of the distribution deal were forthcoming, Salter Street spokesperson Judith Cormier said "We are very pleased with the arrangement with New World."

Salter Street Films was formed in 1979 by filmmakers Paul Donovan, Maura O'Connell and Michael Donovan. The company has since made three feature films in Nova Scotia, including the 1982 low-budget thriller *Siege*.

MONTREAL - Six weeks after the opening of Telefilm Canada's new Halifax office, Telefilm's Maritime director Bill Niven and Montreal head of production André Picard toured the Atlantic region. From Dec. 12-15 they met with independent filmmakers through regional coops and industry members in a series of information sessions on Telefilm policies and Broadcast Fund access in particular.

If the timing of the four-day tour from Halifax to St. John's, Nfld., unfortunately coincided with CBC president Pierre Juneau's Dec. 12 announcement of over 1100 job-cuts in the public-sector broadcaster, Picard nevertheless found "real willingness" on the part of CBC regional producers to collaborate with and develop independent production.

"For filmmakers," Picard told Cinema Canada, "the real challenge will be to learn to share their interests with broadcasters and come up with the financing formulas that would

allow the filmmakers to do what they want to do. So it's a situation that has to build itself up."

With two Atlantic region projects approved by Telefilm so far, the half-hour drama *Daboom* by St. John's producer/director Stuart Allan, and from Prince Edward Island, the half-hour drama *The Job*, Picard termed the overall situation for Atlantic regional filmmakers "encouraging." Picard was particularly impressed by projects which, in addition to the script, had also included a budget, financial plan, and whose producers had begun discussions either with a broadcaster or the NFB. While limited time did not allow meeting with regional representatives from the Board, Picard left that eventuality to future meetings.

Stressing that since the opening of the Halifax office, "we're available to everyone who wishes to consult with us," Picard added that "other information sessions will be forthcoming," possibly as early

as March.

For the next few months at least, Picard feels until the impact of the CBC cuts become clearer, "things are probably going to slow down for the present and our (Atlantic region) contribution will be mainly on the level of script development. However the industry will continue, and that's our main concern."

Women's fest ends

TORONTO - Harbourfront's eleven-day International Festival of Women's Films concluded on Sunday, December 2 a success. Festival co-ordinator, Hannah Fisher, said "there are plans to hold a second festival in two years." The festival attracted an attendance of between 25 and 30,000. At the festival's end a steering committee was formed for an organization of women in film and video in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

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Arts agencies trim back after budget cuts

OTTAWA – Directed by the federal government to trim its administrative costs by \$3.5 million, the Canada Council announced Dec. 6 that it would cut its budget by \$1 million, laying off 12 employees and cancelling some services.

Effective April 1, the \$1 million saving will come from scrapping the Council's Arts Advisory Board; the regional office in Moncton, N.B.; selling off Stanley House, a New Richmond, QC, building bequeathed to the Council; reducing the Council's UNESCO budget; the Council's toll-free phone line; and laying off two contract workers and 12 employees from the staff of 235.

A Jan. 21 meeting of the Council's board will determine how to cut the remaining \$2.5 million.

But according to Council film officer Catherine Montgomery, "there's nothing left to cut but the programs themselves."

So far, Montgomery told Ci-

nema Canada, the Council's \$3.3 million media arts budget, of which filmmaking accounts for \$1.6, has not been affected.

"It's a waiting game," she said, "and the government has every interest to keep us in the dark as long as possible."

Following a meeting of its board Nov. 15-16, national arts lobby the Canadian Conference of the Arts sent a telegram to prime minister Brian Mulroney and the entire federal cabinet protesting the cuts imposed on cultural agencies. But, one month later, "we have yet to receive so much as an acknowledgment," CCA national director Brian Anthony told Cinema Canada.

At the National Film Board in Montreal, hit by a \$1.4 million cut, Government Film Commissioner Francois Macerola has informed the government that the cuts would come out of the administrative structure, not out of production. Further details, as well as how the

Board intends to implement the five-year operational plan recommended by the National Film and Video Policy, would not be known until the new year, NFB spokesperson Sally Bochner told Cinema Canada.

Pope top star of CBC videocassettes

TORONTO – CBC Enterprises has entered the home video market with a bang. Their first offering is far and away the largest direct-selling video cassette in Canada. 15,000 units of *John Paul II: A Pilgrimage of Faith, Hope and Love* have been sold to date in pre-sales. The first cassettes didn't hit video clubs until November 30. An additional order of 10,000 units is to be distributed through Canadian video clubs exclusively by Video Trans Kebec. So far, the video has grossed over \$1 million.

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Convergence confab a "critical success" for film/video makers

MONTREAL - With over 1000 registered participants (87% from Quebec, 12% from the rest of Canada, and 1% from the U.S.), Convergence, the five-day forum on the new film/video technology held Nov. 27-Dec. 2, was, according to its organizing committee president Larry Lynn "a first, not just in Canada, not just in North America - but a first of its kind."

"It's only a slight exaggeration to say it succeeded beyond our wildest dreams," commented co-director Barbara Samuels. "We'd prepared ourselves to take a bath. We'd been told we were the last people who could organize such an international conference and what happened was that we had some pretty heavyweight people come in from Los Angeles and London and who discovered Montreal. Canadians have never been terribly given over to international conferences and the international community was happily surprised by the level of discussion and interest. For that alone, it was worth it."

The \$600,000-budgetted forum, which Lynn agrees was "a critical success," admitting, however, to "a small (as yet untabulated) deficit: the box-office just about made it, but not quite", was addressed to professionals in film and video and offered 22 workshops/panels (at between \$35-\$85 per session depending on date of registration) examining aspects of the film/video convergence from production techniques in electronic cinematography to interactive video.

Paralleling the workshops was a wide selection of current work in video, thematically organized by programmer Ewa Zebrowski not only to reflect the conference panels,

but as well to illustrate uses of video made by such filmmakers as Wim Wenders (*Room 666*), Jean-Luc Godard (Scenario du film *Passion*) and Michelangelo Antonioni (*Il Mistero d'Oberwald*).

An exhibits room at the Sheraton Centre, where most of Convergence was held - screenings were at the National Film Board's Guy Favreau Complex theatre - featured state-of-the-art technology like the much-discussed Sony High-Definition Television System (HDVS) with its 1125 scanning lines, the Synclavier 32-track digital recording system, as well as displays of Lucasfilm's Editdroid electronic editing system, the Sky-cam suspended movable camera, and other electronic marvels. Conspicuous by their absence, however, were manufacturers from the film side of the image-production industry.

Of the 87 invited panellists, five cancelled, while four came from as far away as Japan and Australia. By national origin, panellists were predominantly American (38, mainly from Los Angeles and New York), with 31 Canadians, four Europeans and one Nicaraguan.

The intensive electronic cinematography course, given by Harry Mathias, asc, lasted three days, while the remaining panels were held in three-hour sessions, except for the final global overview which consisted of an all-day session in two three-hour chunks. Other panel topics focussed on computer editing, a primer in electronic imaging, production design in the light of video aesthetics, music videos, new horizons in sound reproduction and post-production, the video avant-garde, computer animation, electronic field produc-

tion, cost effectiveness in video/film production, studio lighting in video production, the video and film documentary, advertising and the new technology, distribution and exhibition in the new age, and interactive video. Many of the panels are available on videocassettes through the NFB.

If overall, Convergence often seemed like a hard-sell attempt by the video industry to seduce filmmakers into converting to tape - indeed, as one participant put it, "This isn't so much a convergence as it is a submergence" - reaction to the conference was extremely varied.

"I thought it was absolutely fantastic," commented Glen Ferrier of Toronto IATSE Local 667. "There was interest right across the board. There should be more conferences like this one, across the country, not just confined to Quebec."

For CBC-TV drama producer Mark Blandford (*Duplessis, Balconville, Empire Inc.*), "As a first taste, I think it was useful. Basically the whole thing appeared geared to people with little knowledge of video, and a lot of my Film Board friends with no knowledge of video said they found it useful."

Though trained as a filmmaker, Blandford doesn't "share the industry bias against video." His own television work, he says, has been "pretty much 50-50 film and tape; I really have no preference," adding that he was "really fascinated by the High Definition TV, because what it means is that we are not very far from shooting in video that won't be any different from film."

Primarily, for Blandford, the value of Convergence "was that it brought a lot of people from

different aspects of the industry together. Usually conferences like these are very narrow: either all techies, or film people or videotape editors. So the organizers should be congratulated in bringing people from all areas of the industry together."

National Film Board filmmaker Mort Ransen found Convergence "a little disappointing. It was mainly an establishment affair, and the average age was too high. At \$350 for the conference, kids couldn't get in, and this was a crippling omission. If Convergence was organized to bring people in film and the established television industry together with what is new in technology, it's the kids who are the most playful with this stuff and they weren't there. So there was nothing threatening to our complacency."

For Ransen, "a lot of filmmakers came in order to be disappointed, so that afterwards they could go back to working in the same old way, without having to nervously look over their shoulders."

"Convergence looked at video as a cheaper way to make films, but there isn't really that much difference. And that's very relieving if you want to dismiss it."

Still, Ransen felt "the conference was useful, though my expectations weren't realized. But it's the sort of thing that should happen again. The more action there is going on, the better."

For experimental filmmaker Richard Hancox, who teaches media arts at Sheridan College in Toronto, Convergence simply glossed over the fact that film and video "are really two different, very different art forms.

I feel that for the organizers new technology is simply videotape - that's the new film. They tried to organize the panels as though they were selling a product. To me the truth still emerged: they are ignoring the new film technology.

"There are so many new things happening in film: Fuji for instance has just announced an ASA 800 professional production film-stock that'll be absolutely revolutionary.

"The difference is that the new technology in film is more software and less hardware. You can use the new film technologies in the old hardware, but if your only definition of new stops with hardware, that just doesn't count. After all, even tape itself is now 30 years old."

Mentioning some "really new technology in film," such as the Swedish developed EFC (electronic film conforming) system that allows electronic editing on film, or Kodak's data code film that makes film frame-addressable by computer, Hancox felt that "what our film industry needs is not videotape, but conferences on scriptwriting, on distribution and exhibition. What it needs is money and ideas, not just tape technology."

"So I would have liked to see some of these issues dealt with; instead what we got was just a lot of hype."

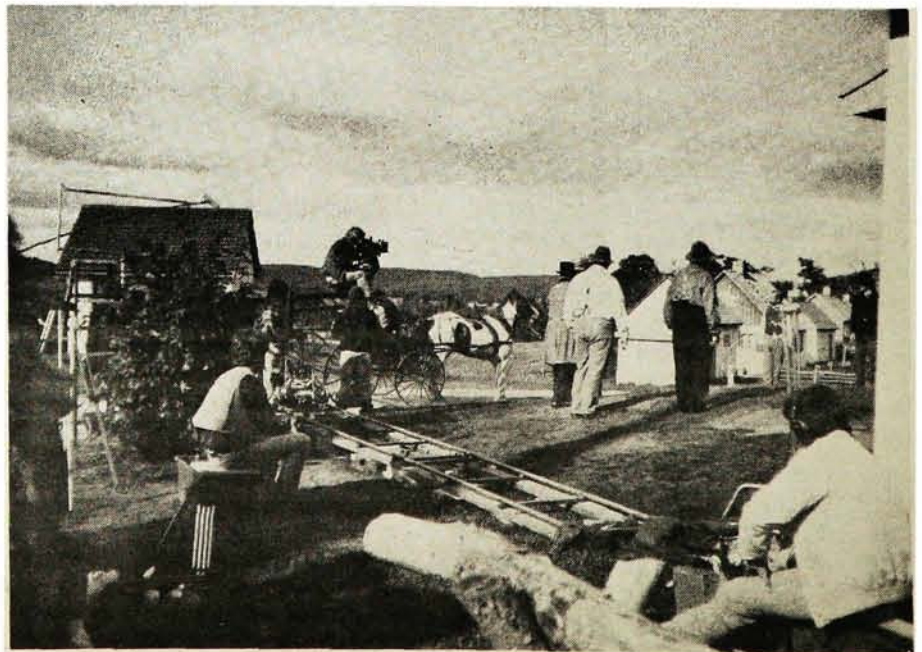
For filmmaker Jacques Bensimon who heads international distribution at the National Film Board, Convergence "was a spectacular display of marvellous toys utterly removed from our own reality, whether you're talking public-sector or private-sector. I feel something

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Convergence

like the African must have felt on meeting the white man for the first time with all his trinkets and baubles.

"And yet Convergence did touch upon something fundamental: that as a filmmaker, when I look at a television set, I'm aware that there's something happening there that's completely beyond me. I feel that in my own craft I'm still back in the age of the foot-powered sewing machine.

"Yet what I see on television is a very specific usage of information, either by the state or by large corporations. The question then becomes: can this medium discover a cinematographic vocation for itself? And that's where we as filmmakers come into it, if at all.

"In Canada, where we still talk about developing a film industry, we've become like dinosaurs, totally surpassed by the information media. There is no convergence happening: at best we're taking cinematographic products and redistributing them through broadcasting.

"The virtue of a conference like Convergence is to have addressed some of these issues, which are tremendously complex, whose tools have marvelous potential, but are still very far removed from both our means and our needs."

For Convergence co-director Larry Lynn, "I think the idea of a conference such as this should continue. Perhaps within one to two years, we could probably put together a continuation here in Montreal."

For now, "we have to sit down and figure out what happened. We have to analyze this thing and see where one should go next.

"I think the general idea was

a success. We succeeded in bringing people together to discuss the new technology and its impact on the industry. By bringing these ideas in from around the world, hopefully people walked out with a new perspective on their own work. That at least was our original intention."

Convergence was funded through grants from the federal department of Communications, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, the Société générale du cinéma, Montreal's CIDEM Tourisme, the federal department of Regional Economic Expansion, and Tourisme Québec.

For additional aspects of Convergence, see this issue pp. 7-13.

MONTREAL - Runaway kids' hit *La Guerre des tuques* will open in English as *The Dog Who Stopped The War* in Toronto and Vancouver on Jan. 25.

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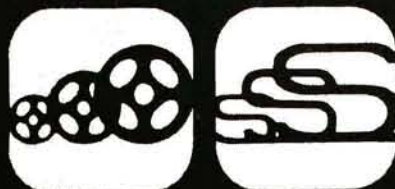
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LEGAL EYE

by Michael Bergman

The past meets the future

The three e's are in jeopardy! The law cannot come to grips with the new technological means of exploitation and exhibition and protect the exclusivity of the audio-visual media generally known as TV and motion pictures.

Whether it be satellite dishes, video cassettes, floppy discs, bytes, beams or particles, the new technology has in large measure shifted the control of the audio-visual medium to the consumer. With the right equipment, today's consumer can tap into most distribution networks and appropriate and duplicate the images for himself. Gone is the old simplicity where the distributor determined the consumer's access by the limited number of television channels within the reach of the television set and by the fleeting image on the

picture tube or the movie screen to be viewed at determined times.

This shift in mastery is thwarting proprietary and regulatory protection. It raises important legal policy approaches which will seriously affect the financial utility of new technology for those producing films and TV programming. To what extent should the viewer in the privacy of his home, using his VCR, tape any material he likes without anyone's permission, to view when he likes? Why shouldn't he be able to watch the result of any flow of electronic particles reaching his dish without restriction?

Current legislation on copyright, that branch of the law which protects ownership of film and television shows, comes to us directly from the 19th century. The media or the

presentation of ideas which it tries to protect are either written or static; the novel, the written play, the sheet of music, the painted or sculpted image. Although long recognized as being outdated, no major revision has really been attempted.

The advent of motion pictures and television in their traditional and conventional format provoked some minor amendment and judicial interpretation to bring them within the statute scope. Nevertheless, Parliament has hesitated to proceed further. This hesitation, while no doubt representing the public's "anxiety" over a seemingly obscure and boring issue, is really a result of increasing modern flexibility of use of the media of conveyance of copyrightable material. Furthermore, the constant creation of new technology requires continual legislative updating to bring new inventions within statutory control. Computer software is nowhere mentioned in the current Copyright Act. Theft of computer programs by tapping into memory banks is a phenomenon difficult to de-

tect, the prosecution of which is only beginning with uncertain outcome.

Yet there is an urgency for legislative reform. The protection of the proprietary interest of those creating film and TV programs is not only the recognition of private ownership, it is the assurance of continued output. Protection of proprietary interests makes for comfort in exploring the possible uses of new media and new technologies. The producer, safe in the assurance that his investment is protected, should be impelled to search for new ways to make technology more financially rewarding and obtain the maximum exploitative use of his product.

The law is thus to some extent holding back the boundless possibilities of technological advance in this area. This can be evidenced in many ways. Today's producer is still making programs for first use by conventional modes, the theatre and television whether "free" or "pay." Video cassettes, although a very important market, are not yet the first means of exploitation. This has much to do not only with marketing and media management but with pirating, unauthorized use and difficulties of legal control.

Of particular difficulty is the internationalization of media

use by satellite transmission. The reception of satellite transmission by dishes effectively defies international frontiers. The recipients in some countries can effectively pick off foreign transmission on foreign-owned satellites. Much as the several international treaties on copyright legislation extend national copyright protection to foreign jurisdictions, it seems that further treaties will be necessary to extend copyright protection to satellite transmission and other forms of effectively special atmospheric transmissions.

Satellite transmissions and dishes in particular pose the greatest difficulty for legal regulation and regulatory bodies. Effectively the notion of direct reception of atmospheric transmissions by the viewer amounts to a deregulation of television. It thwarts the policy aims of regulatory agencies like the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to direct the extent of Canadian cultural content, and concentration of television facilities in a given locale.

Solving the problem of regulating the new technology is a difficult task. Of course there is a need to develop technological security devices which prevent unauthorized tapping into satellites' systems.

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Much greater difficulty presents itself in the more philosophic concepts of media use and information access. Is there and should there be a way to licence direct viewer reception of international signals? This is, to some extent, already the case in free TV where the viewer may watch anything his rabbit ears may pick up. The problem now concerns the breadth and depth of what the viewer may see.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty, though, is the orientation of current Canadian regulatory systems. Free television systems have for a long time remained inert since it was at an

early stage regulated so that its fundamental transmission systems affect only the viewers of essentially defined geographic areas. The encroachment on this limited viewing range has until recently been primarily eroded by the use of cable. The regulation of new modes of transmission have been primarily defined by wire. Witness the Canadian pay-TV system – really a glorified cable TV network – as the logical extension of the development of the cable concept: the development of an antique technology. In Canada we have developed an elaborate and extensive cable network which will no

doubt last for quite some time, and entrenched interests, costs and the difficulties of reorienting existing systems and applying new technologies will assure this. Yet there is no doubt that an immediate inquiry is necessary to determine and guide the use of new technology in the film and television medium.

This is both a legislative and administrative problem. It is legislative in the sense that the law must provide for opportunities to explore and discover the application of new technology to the television medium and its distribution system. The need for amend-

ments to the Criminal Code and other legislation to prevent piracy both of video cassettes and other transmissions is of immediate necessity. The kinds of transmissions the consumer using new technology may draw directly into his home must be determined. To what extent do problems of obscenity concern the viewer in his private confines? All these are matters currently being approached with much hesitancy and uncertainty.

We should be apprehensive about future regulatory intervention into new technology. The experience of pay-TV is illustrative. This system as

originally sanctioned was poorly conceived and awarded without much foresight as to its possible uses, development and viability. While this is not purely the fault of the CRTc (the licensees themselves were poorly organized and by and large had no business or market strategy), it bodes for concern for the future development of a kind of unified information system where the computer is at the same time a memory bank, television set, satellite receiver, home shopping-centre and whatever else.

It is imperative that the film and television community act to advocate and lobby for changes in the law to anticipate and protect the application of new technology to systems of exhibition, exploitation and protect of exclusivity of product. For Canada, legal enactments take on a new importance in this area. Technological advancement is one of the key means for the Canadian film and television community to get a step ahead of work and, in particular, American competitors. Rapid technological advance has surgically removed much of the influence of the accumulated might of our American counterpart. Today, if only the muted might of our American counterparts. Today, if only the Canadian film and television community would innovatively harness its application, excellence, enterprise and energy can become the code words for the future of technologically advanced Canadian entertainment systems.



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UNESCO to sponsor World Fest category

MONTREAL – Sponsored by UNESCO, a seventh category featuring the film work of young directors under the age of 30 has been added to the six existing categories of the Montreal World Film Festival.

Making the announcement Nov. 15, WFF director Serge Losique said: "The World Film Festival is proud that an important international organization such as UNESCO will sponsor the new category and thus support the advancement of new talent."

All films selected in the new Young Filmmakers section must be in 16mm or 35mm, must have been produced in the 12 months prior to Aug. 22, 1985, cannot have been released theatrically nor have participated in any other Canadian film festival, must be in its original version and subtitled in French or English.

The new category will debut during the International Year of Youth for the ninth edition of the WFF to be held in Montreal from Aug. 22-Sept. 2.

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Toronto registers busiest year

TORONTO - Cheaper costs and welcoming government organizations have attracted a record number of foreign, mainly American, producers to Toronto. Naish McHugh, film liaison officer for the city of Toronto, reported that Toronto has seen its most hectic film year since 1979. By the end of November 35 features and made-for-TV films had been shot in the city (last year it was 21). Leaving behind some 60% of a total budget of \$87 million, it is easy to see why city officials work hard to accommodate the movie industry. "Movies are very attractive," says McHugh, "because they are labour intensive, lucrative and non-polluting." With a multiplier effect estimated at anywhere between 1.5 and 3, the city benefits far more than indicated by budget figures.

While McHugh's office provides a "nitty-gritty" service - "we're a one-stop shopping centre for permits and approvals," says McHugh - the provincial Film/Video office undertakes a broader marketing effort to bring foreign producers to the province. Sandra Johnson works with colleagues Gail Thomson and Lynn Marsh in what she calls

"one of the most competitive markets in the world." She notes that many American states have set up film offices to grab a piece of the very lucrative movie action. In Ontario (including Toronto) producers spent \$66.65 million, in 1984 70% of that from foreign productions. Operating on an annual budget of \$300,000 excluding salaries the Film/Video office has developed a broad-ranged marketing strategy which includes print, video and personal marketing trips to New York, London and Los Angeles. In addition the province acts as an umbrella organization for the industry at the London Market and MIP. The Film/Video office is investigating adding a third trade show to its list. At home the office will provide a location scout and act as intermediary between producers government officials, unions and guilds, and other industry groups.

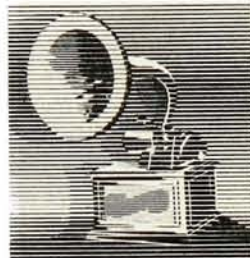
Both the city and provincial offices were established in their present form as a result of the tax-shelter production boom. With the rapid proliferation of on-location shoots, the industry approached city council to facilitate approvals from a great many different

departments. Under McHugh's direction a whole raft of by-laws were amended and a central permitting process instituted. That was in 1979. Today the Film Liaison Office generates over 1000 permits a year and co-ordinates police, traffic and public work re-

quests. For *The Park Is Mine* the city office helped transform High Park into New York's Central Park. Wellington Street became downtown New York for *Beer*. The result, says McHugh, is "a lot of repeat business from U.S. producers who are delighted with what

they find here."

Recently, the Ontario office has begun to expand its role. It is now bringing together producers in hopes of sparking co-production deals. "Our philosophy is to act as a catalyst," says Johnson. "We try to arrange a climate amenable to deals."



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Film Alliance gathers to plot strategy

REGINA – The fourth Annual General Meeting of the Independent Film Alliance du cinéma indépendant (IFACi) was held here from Nov. 5 to 8. Over fifty delegates from member-groups across the country attended the AGM, organized by IFACi co-ordinator Jean-Pierre Laurendeau in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Film Pool. (IFACi membership is open to any non-profit group in Canada that has a mandate to produce, distribute, or exhibit independent films and videos.)

The agenda of the meeting was divided into two public days of panels and presentations, followed by two days of "in house" business. The first session was a panel on the role of the independent producer. Guests were Bill MacGillivray (Halifax), Sandy Wilson (Vancouver), Don Haig (Toronto) and Mary Armstrong (Montreal). The panel agreed that the key to producing an independent feature is persistence coupled with an utmost belief in the project – "because they will test you every inch along the way and you've got to stand your ground." The main problems stem from battles over creative control versus large budgets. In order to obtain financing, many filmmakers are forced to increase the budgets on their films. They then have to fight to retain creative control over a project which is suddenly considered too large for them. Both the panelists and the delegates stated the need for a Telefilm program specifically geared to helping experienced short-film producers make their first low-budget feature.

The next days' session included a panel on government funding for independent film and video. Speakers were Françoise Picard (Canada Council), Robin Jackson (department of communication), Ken Rosenberg (Telefilm Canada), Rudy Carter (CBC), Jan D'Arcy (National Film Board), and Yok Leng Chang (Multiculturalism). This session took place two days before the federal budget announced cutbacks to almost every

agency represented at the panel. Although Robin Jackson confirmed that the National Film and Video Policy would be implemented by the Conservative government, the spirit of uncertainty created by the impending budget cuts left most panelists with little to say. Nonetheless, it was clear that funding for independent productions of any size is going to get harder and harder to come by. Rudy Carter from the CBC came under attack from delegates for the near-cancellation of *Canadian Reflections*, and for its poor time-slot and meagre budget. Carter defended the programming on *Canadian Reflections*, stating that the premise of the series is to make sure the CBC has enough stand-by material on-hand to use when the network runs into technical difficulties. It was obvious that the definition of independence put forward by the IFACi delegates – complete creative and editorial control by the film or videomaker – differed sharply from Carter's. When delegates asked for a prime-time slot that would allow independent work produced in the regions a national audience, Carter reminded them "it has to start with what we want to put on the air – it is time to marry the notion of independence with what we want."

Another session investigated the organizing of an exhibition network to assist independents in touring cross-country with their short films. The AGM was also addressed by Bess Gillings from the Canadian Conference of the Arts, and by Laura Sky from Media People for Social Responsibility.

In the housekeeping section of the meeting, delegates voted to adopt a category of associate membership that will be open to individuals and associations that support the objectives of IFACi. A number of resolutions empowering the co-ordinator to look for money for research into distribution, the home video market, and computer networking, were passed. A board of directors was elected, with Barrie Pollock from the

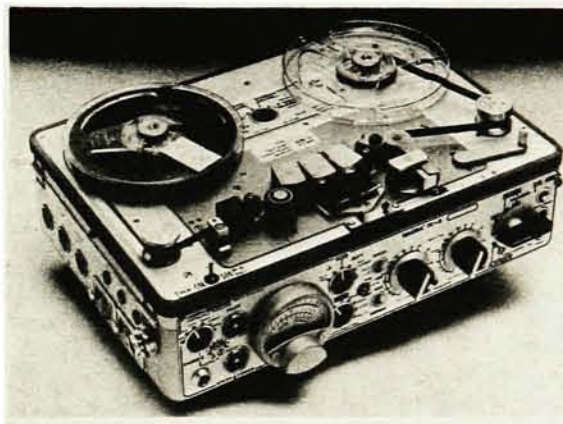
Saskatchewan Film Pool chosen as president. Other members elected include Nicole Hubert (Groupe d'Intervention de Video, Montreal), Susan Renouf (Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre, Toronto), Eric Emery (New Brunswick Filmmakers' Co-operative, Fredericton), Paul Pope (Newfoundland Inde-

pendent Filmmakers' Co-operative), Carmen Katz (Winnipeg Film Group), Debbie McGee (Cineworks Independent Filmmakers' Society, Vancouver) and Gillean Chase (Women in Focus, Vancouver).

The IFACi meetings were held in conjunction with the first annual National Co-op Film and Video Festival. Productions from each member-group were presented every evening, providing both

delegates and the Regina public with an opportunity to see independent work from across the country. Organizers hope that this successful combination of meetings, screenings and socializing will repeat itself next spring, when IFACi's Fifth Annual General Meeting and the Second National Film and Video Festival takes place in St. John's, Newfoundland.

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Ottawa ready for promotion

OTTAWA/HULL - With some \$8 million per annum in regional audio-visual production, and about \$1 million annually in outside production, Ottawa/Hull producers and production companies in film and television have been increasingly feeling the need for a film liaison officer.

What has so far complicated establishment of a regional film promotion office is the number of overlapping government jurisdictions in the area: 12 municipalities, including two medium-sized cities, two provincial governments, the federal government and the National Capital Commission.

However, as of Feb. 1, the region should at last have its own full-time film and television production liaison office, the result of a seed grant from the City of Ottawa and the time and efforts of the one-year-old Ottawa Hull Film and Television Association.

"It's really the City of Ottawa that's responsible for the initiative," OHFTA president Bill Stevens told Cinema Canada, explaining that following a three-day salute to the regional film and television industry last spring, sufficient support was generated as of Sept. 1 to create a regional film liaison office on an interim basis.

Interim liaison officer Pierre-Paul Lafrenière has been involved with the Ottawa/Hull entertainment scene since 1969. In between location scouting and arranging clearances for shoots such as the Radio-Québec dramatic production *Les Outardes*, Toronto production house SC Communications' educational documentary *Career Planning: Dare To Dream*, as well as exploring location possibilities for two TV mini-series (one American, one Canadian) and a Montreal-produced feature film for this spring, Lafrenière has been close to the on-going negotiations between the cities of Ottawa, Hull, and the Ontario, Québec and federal governments that should shortly lead to the 60-40% public-private-funded establishment of a permanent film liaison office, to be formally announced Feb. 1.

With \$35,000 to be raised from private companies and \$40,000 from the government bodies, the \$75,000 budgeted position (for an office and one director) would serve as an information clearing house on available regional production services as well as being involved in promoting the region to outside producers.

Says Lafrenière, who so far has been working from his home: "Having a permanent office for starters will make such a difference."

There are, Lafrenière explained, at present 3500 people

in the local audio-visual industry grouped in an estimated 40-50 production companies - "a considerable pool of human resources." However, exact information on the region's overall resources has yet to be gathered, and Lafrenière mentioned that one of the priorities for the new year was getting a three-month market analysis underway.

"We have to establish our credibility with the outside industry," Lafrenière said. "There are so many things we don't have, such as a soundstage, or a lab for 35mm, but what we do have are the natural locations

offered by the Gatineau, Rideau and Ottawa rivers.

"We know perfectly well that we can't rival Montreal or Vancouver as production centres, but we have to progress and develop as well as we can. And the future growth of local production will depend on the kind of extensive promotion we can offer."

With the major part of local production in sponsored film for the federal government, an established reputation in documentary, and a growing international reputation in animation, the Ottawa-Hull production industry is gearing up to expand further.

"There's so much that needs to be done," Lafrenière says.

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US features create BC boom year Academy gears for Genie Awards

VANCOUVER - With some \$60 million in total feature film budgets plus another \$40 million spent in production services and salaries, the British Columbia film industry is basking in what many industry observers feel has been its best year ever.

In perspective, however, B.C.'s \$100 million in manna from Hollywood is less the result of a miracle than it is a combination of strategy and hard work. Such, at least, is the perspective offered by Dianne Neufeld, director of the B.C. ministry of Tourism Film Promotion Office.

"Everybody's yelling about the best year ever," Neufeld told Cinema Canada, "but we're still within the top-end of our yearly average, usually between \$30-\$50 million (in total budgets)."

For Neufeld the production upsurge, mainly accounted for by 15 major U.S. shoots, was the result of hard lobbying after what she terms "a lousy" year in 1983 in a climate of severe

economic restraint. "This economy has been working under restraint, so our strategy was to pick a market we have access to and go for it. I really PR'ed Los Angeles. We had a number of return engagements from producers who'd come here before and were pleased with what they found.

"Interestingly, a lot of them, when they were interviewed here, said it wasn't (the 30% exchange rate on) the dollar that mattered most in their decision to shoot in B.C., but the quality of the crews and the kind of cooperation they got."

Unlike Toronto, for instance, which has a producer base large enough "to make development deals," Neufeld notes that "we've got no producer base like that here, so we go for what we can offer: the location picture with all the L.A. production advantages."

"Probably the reason why we got so much attention this year was there were as many as five shoots happening simultaneously, and that really

strained our resources. The last time there was anything like it was in 1980 when there were three shoots going on at once."

With the 15 U.S. shoots taking the lion's share of local film activity - Neufeld's Film Promotion Office does not keep track of television production - the Canadian production share of the \$100 million was, Neufeld says, in the vicinity of 5-10% with such low-budget features as *Walls, Regeneration, My American Cousin*, and "the *Danger Bay* series for Disney channel."

However, at a time when film production in Canada usually grinds to a halt - "Back east the weather is a real disadvantage at this time of year" - Neufeld notes that "there are two or three location scouts here now, and December is usually a very quiet month."

"If we can get started early enough, we could be looking at another good year. At any rate, it looks good from here."

TORONTO - The Academy of Canadian Cinema announced the complete list of feature, theatrical documentary and theatrical short films entered in competition for the 1985 Genie Awards. The 6th annual awards presentation will be telecast live on the CBC Television network from the Metro Toronto Convention Centre theatre on Thursday, March 21, 1985.

In total, 22 feature films, 7 theatrical documentaries and 16 theatrical shorts have been entered. All entered films will be screened in January for assessment by Academy members in Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver. Nominations for all award categories will be announced on February 14, 1985.

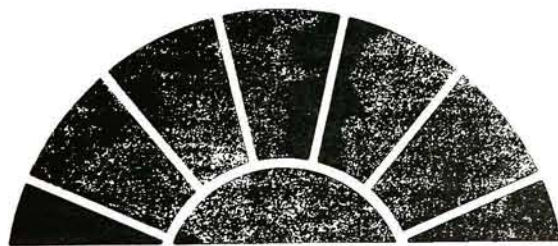
The feature films entered are: *Les années de rêves, The Bay Boy, Bedroom Eyes, Le*

crime d'Ovide Plouffe, Draw, Falcon's Gold, La femme de l'hôtel, La guerre des tuques, Hey Babe!, Isaac Littlefeathers, Le Jour "S...", The Killer Instinct, Mario, My Kind of Town, Next of Kin, Reno and the Doc, Sonatine, The Surrogate, That's My Baby, Thrillkill, Unfinished Business and Walls.

The theatrical documentaries are: *And When They Shall Ask; Au rythme de mon coeur, Le dernier glacier, Hookers... on Davie, Pas fou comme on le pense, Raoul Wallenberg; Buried Alive, Rencontre avec une femme remarquable: Laure Gaudreault.*

The theatrical shorts are: *Amuse-gueule; The Awful Fate of Melpomenus Jones, Charade, Cher monsieur l'aviateur, The Heroes of Winter, I Am A Hotel, I Think of You Often, and John Kim Bell.*

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Rouyn rolls out welcome mat

ROUYN-NORANDA - "Wow! These people sure know how to put on a show!" This was the unanimous comment of everyone attending the 3^e Festival du cinéma international en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, held here from Nov. 1-7, 1984.

Indeed, Jacques Matte, head of the organizing committee, and the people around him do know how to create an event in their community. Not so long ago, Rouyn-Noranda had six theaters; all but one closed for a reason or another. This explains why some of the inhabitants take a week off work during the festival so that they can see as many films as possible. In seven days, more than 4500 people filled the Théâtre du Cuivre to screen the 50 short- and feature-length films presented for the occasion. Surely, some attracted more spectators than others; *La Guerre des tuques*, for example, was so popular that it had to be shown a second time (the film won the only prize given throughout this festival, the Grand Prix du Public).

The opening night was quite a treat. First, we witnessed a multi-media event: Pierre Hébert, the animator working at the National Film Board, presented *Chants et danses du monde inanimé - le Métro* to

which he and two musicians, Robert Lepage and René Lusier, improvised a score which was recorded live. Hébert intends to repeat this experiment a few more times, then will choose among the different recordings for a final music-track to be printed on the film. Another NFB production had its world premiere, *Le Dernier glacier*, directed by Jacques Leduc and Roger Frappier. This film is a mixture of documentary and fiction, and the two directors have managed to fuse the two without them clashing as is usually the case. Filled with emotion and sensitivity, it tells the story of the closing of north shore mining town Schefferville, and describes how this event leads to the break-up of a family. Following the screening, Michel Rivard, who plays in the film and wrote "Schefferville," the closing song, appeared live on stage to sing it once again to everyone's delight.

The organizing committee must be congratulated for the fact that, contrary to many festivals, short- and medium-length films are given as much consideration and importance as features. Their directors, producers or scriptwriters had been invited and were introduced to the public before the

screening and were given a warm welcome. Among these were Robert Awad's *Amuse-gueule*, Michel Poulette's *Cher Monsieur l'aviateur*, Roger Cantin and Danyele Patenaude's *L'Objet*.

Although there were a good number of foreign films such as *Le Futur est femme* (Marco Ferreri), *Jon* (Jaakko Pyhälä), *Le Pays où rêvent les fourmis vertes* (Werner Herzog), they

were outnumbered by Québécois productions such as *Les Années de rêve*, *Jacques et Novembre* and *Mario*, to name but a few. If every film festival in Canada could proportionally show as many "local" productions as this festival did, the Canadian public would get a better knowledge of what is done in this country and, maybe, our industry would feel better for it.

There is one last reason for going to this festival and it might be the most important one: the warmth and the friendliness of the organizers, each and everyone of them. Their welcome surpasses the many pompous and stiff openings and closings of other festivals both in this country and abroad. Bravo et merci, les amis!

Martin Delisle ●

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NFB applies for pay kids' network

MONTREAL - In response to the Canadian Radio-television and Tele-communications Commission's (CRTC) call last July, the National Film Board and one other organization have field applications for a children's and youth television specialty service.

The NFB application, deposited with the CRTC Nov. 30 following the Commission's extension of its original September deadline, was made on behalf of a non-profit foundation to be established among private-sector interests, citizens groups and government organizations. The application proposes two youth specialty channels, Young Canada Television and Télé-jeunesse Canada, with a minimum 70% Canadian content programming of 108 hours per week, available by satellite to all basic cable subscribers.

The application proposes to

raise a start-up endowment fund of \$40 million from contributions from private corporations and federal and provincial governments. Families would be asked to buy \$10 shares in the network as an investment in alternative children's programming.

Operating revenues, according to the application, would come from a \$.50 increase in monthly fees to Canada's 5.2 million cable subscribers that would raise over \$31 million per year.

The other application was for a French-language service.

The CRTC has scheduled a hearing for early 1985 on the proposed applications.

Quebec Super8 fest

MONTREAL - The closing date for entries in the Sixth Quebec International Festival of Super 8 Films is Jan. 9, 1985, reports fest director Michel Payette.

To be held this year in Montreal from Feb. 19-24, the festival attracts young filmmakers

from some 20 countries. All entries must have been shot in Super 8, although they can be entered in 16mm or other formats.

For this year's festival, organizers have prepared seminars on Super 8 distribution, and transfer of Super 8 to alternative formats.

The festival is organized by l'Association pour le jeune cinéma québécois, at 1415 Jarry east in Montreal, (514) 374-4700, ext. 403.

New Brunswick attracts first feature

FREDERICTON - As part of a bid to attract more film and television production to the province, the government of New Brunswick has invested \$47,000 in the recently wrapped period shoot *Samuel Lount*.

According to Edward Leger of the N.B. department of Historical and Cultural Resources, this is the first such investment in a feature film.

Samuel Lount, produced by Moonshine Productions of Vancouver, is a \$1.6 million historical drama about the life and death of Canadian hero Samuel Lount. R.H. Thomson plays the lead, while Laurence Keane directs for producer Elvira Lount. Film was shot at King's Landing, N.B., (that province's equivalent to Upper Canada Village) with financial participation from Telefilm Canada and the CBC.

The provincial government is also preparing a brochure for film and television producers on the advantages of shooting in New Brunswick.

Sunrise wins Chris

TORONTO - Sunrise Films announced that their television film, *When We First Met*, has been nominated for an ACE (Award for Cable Excel-

lence) in the Children's Programming category. Paul Saltzman produced and directed the one-hour drama for HBO. In November *When We First Met* won the Chris statuette at the Columbus Film Festival for excellence in educational programming. *When We First Met* marked Saltzman's directorial debut in drama.

Pay subscribers up

TORONTO - As of November 30 First Choice has grown to 300,000 subscriber households, the pay-TV company announced. Fred Klinkhammer, First Choice president, attributed the successful growth to packaging, good programming and the support of the cable companies. He added that First Choice hopes to hit break-even point of 350,000 before the summer.

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Telefilm annual report available

TORONTO - In the five months ending November 30, Telefilm has committed \$25,559,926 to 59 projects with budgets totalling \$76,474,901. Twenty of the projects are ventures with CBC - two for the French network, eighteen for the English. In the previous twelve months CBC had committed to 33 French projects and 24 English.

CBC matches a significant portion of the Broadcast Fund. In the first year of the Fund the CBC matched over 70% of the Fund's disbursements. No one at Telefilm seems able to respond to what happens to the Fund given the current

freeze of independent production at CBC.

Telefilm has also just released its first annual report, nine months after year-end on March 31, 1984. Claude Daigneault, director of communications at Telefilm, explained that a late release was not unusual. "It was sent to the minister who tabled it on June 30th. It took the minister two months to inform us by letter that it had been tabled." Telefilm needed official confirmation before the report could be released. Company annual reports are normally issued within three months of the year-end.

Ratings rise for Danger Bay series

TORONTO - Ratings for Paul Saltzman's *Danger Bay* have shown steady increases since it began telecasting on CBC in mid-October. In the first six weeks the audience grew from 841,000 to 1,290,000 with audience appreciation showing a matching climb from 57% to 70%. Disney, which partly financed the series, is still pre-testing the program and plans to telecast in the New Year, says Saltzman.

Working with Disney and CBC was a completely civilized process, says Saltzman. "There were never any serious disagreements." Nada Har-

court, in charge of independent production at CBC, agrees. "There was no difference between us. Arguments occurred when we discussed handling action-adventure aspects." The sense of Canadian place did not prove to be a major issue. "Occasionally, there were some pleas from Disney to make it nameless," said Harcourt. "But we stuck to our guns."

Despite a growing audience, the future of *Danger Bay* remains in doubt. Disney will make a decision on renewing its contract within two to three weeks.

Primedia films Queen's mount

TORONTO - Primedia Television announced a joint venture with Judith Crawley to produce a two-hour television movie about a Canadian horse, *Burmese*, the ceremonial mount of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. W.O. Mitchell will be scripting and Eric Till will direct.

The project is supported by Telefilm and the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation. CTV has acquired the Canadian Television rights. The BBC will be telecasting it in the U.K.

The story of *Burmese* was researched by William Kelly, former deputy commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. *Burmese* was born in Fort Walsh, Sask., and rose to become the lead horse in the RCMP Musical Ride. She was presented to the Queen in 1967.

Principal photography will commence late winter and be completed by fall, 1985.

Distribution mandate renovated

MONTREAL - The area of distribution and the implication of Telefilm Canada is one which the minister of Communications Marcel Masse is ready to re-evaluate, says Telefilm head André Lamy.

At a meeting with the Quebec film industry last month, Lamy disapproved of the distribution measures as written in the film Policy, and said that he had shared his reservations with the minister. Following the meeting, he shared his opinions with Cinema Canada.

"First, I think that it is unfortunate that Telefilm is limited in its aid to theatrical distribution of films. This is old-fashioned, and I would like to see Telefilm authorized to participate in the promotion of a film in every market - whether it be television, videocassette, theatrical or whatever.

"Second, I think it should be clearly stated that Telefilm will

only deal with those companies which are Canadian-owned and operated." Although the Telefilm mandate now allows it to come to the aid of Canadian films which may be distributed by a foreign-controlled distributor, Lamy would like to promote Canadian companies by limiting Telefilm aid to those companies.

Asked about the relaxation of FIRA, its conversion to Investment Canada, and the influx of foreign companies - Orion and Lorimar, to mention two - Lamy didn't foresee any difficulty in the relations between these companies and Telefilm. "I think it would be very proper, and very politic for those foreign companies to keep their distance from the Fund, and not to request any sort of participation from us." He was clearly not welcoming by his tone of voice.

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CRTC ready for new French net bid

OTTAWA - The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has called for license applications for a new French-language television service for Montreal and Quebec City.

In a public notice Nov. 15 in response to the application filed by Quebec communications group Cogeco, the Commission invites other parties wishing to operate the new French-language broadcasting undertaking to apply by Jan. 31.

Stressing the importance linguistic, cultural and financial of the long-term feasibility of such an undertaking, the Commission asked for copies of all the empirical evidence relevant to the applications.

The notice listed 10 criteria that it requested applications to address. These included how the new service would help achieve the objectives of the Broadcasting Act; the program format in relation to existing services; the anticipated audience reach of the

new service; the contribution of independent program production companies in Canada and particularly in Quebec; the availability of creative talent, particularly script and concept development; shared investment in program buying with Canadian or foreign broadcasters; a market analysis and potential advertising revenues; a marketing plan; a clear demonstration of financial viability and availability of supplementary financing; and lastly, a clear demonstration of the financial viability of the principals involved.

Interfaith hearing at CRTC postponed

OTTAWA - At the request of applicant Canadian Interfaith Network (CIN), the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission has postponed the Hull hearing originally scheduled for Nov. 26 on the interfaith network's application to carry on a religious programming service via satellite.

In a letter Nov. 16 to the

CRTC, CIN's board of directors requested the Commission adjourn or defer its application "until such time as the network is in a position to proceed with a viable financial campaign."

The CRTC on Oct. 5 had requested additional detail as to the network's financial feasibility, but a study on behalf of the network, commissioned in terms of a \$40 million campaign goal, had recommended further efforts to obtain participation in the network from the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish community. Both major religious groupings have been reluctant to participate in the application.

Without such participation, the study recommended pursuing alternative proposals based on more modest revenues.

In granting the adjournment, the CRTC requested a progress report in six-months time "which should include a firm timetable as to when CIN will be ready to proceed with a financial viable proposal."

The Commission then proceeded Nov. 27 with the public hearing on distant Canadian signals.

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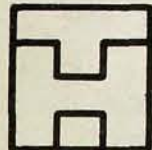
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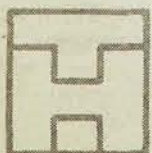
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Joshua budget goes out of control

TORONTO - CBC and Telefilm pulled out of a deal to increase their investment in RSL's *Joshua: Then and Now* to balance budget overruns of \$1.4 million. Douglas Leiterman, executive director of Motion Picture Guarantors, completion guarantors for the film, said in an interview that "Andre Lamy and Denis Harvey pledged to put up extra investment to the amount of \$450,000 and they did not come through. They wanted a better recouplement position." Stephen Roth, RSL chairman, confirmed that discussions had fallen through over the recouplement issue.

The overruns were a result of loss of control, stated Leiterman. "The producers were unable to control the project. A lot of information was not available to us. Cost reports showed unanticipated and significant increases." As examples he cited an art department 100% over budget; the construction department was 1000% over. Leiterman said that RSL "had promised to bring in extra investment." By the time the CBC-Telefilm deal fell through "it was too late for us to take action to restrict shooting." Leiterman said that "the producers and beneficiaries asked us to take over."

Roth denied that there was any loss of control. "The averages," he claimed, "are small as a percentage (10-12%) of the total budget."

The overrun has meant a hefty loss for Motion Picture Guarantors which has responded with cost-cutting measures such as withdrawing from advertising commitments. Leiterman was at pains to emphasize that while "there's no question *Joshua* is the worst case I've ever seen, the nature of our business is to take losses." He said that the loss will not have a substantial impact on the company which is reinsured with Lloyds of London.

Motion Picture Guarantors is a fully Canadian-owned company. It is the largest such company in Canada and the third largest in the world and operates in 10 countries. Last year it guaranteed \$150 million worth of pictures.

Atlantis ready to film sci-fi adventures

TORONTO - Atlantis Films began production at the end of November on the first of three half-hour dramas based on stories by popular science fiction writer Ray Bradbury. Co-produced with Wilcox Productions, the dramas will screen on Global and HBO.

The three dramas are *The Crowd*, *Marionettes Inc.* and *The Playground*.

SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecek

Birds of Prey, the low-budget film noir produced by Peter Haynes and Jorge Montesi, started shooting Nov. 11 in Edmonton. The totally non-union shoot, budgeted at \$400,000, has a cast of 40, plus a flock of extras, reports Haynes. Jorge Montesi directs, as well as playing one of the leads, and acting as editor. DOP is Gary Armstrong, with Céline Daignault as production coordinator. Haynes, describing the film as "very stylized", says it is targeted for the film market at Cannes.

Isaac Littlefeathers (now returned to that title after a brief fling as *Drastic Measures*) will premiere Dec. 6 in Edmonton...

Calgary writer Don Truckey's *Tools of the Devil*, a drama about journalism for the *For the Record* series, finished shooting in Toronto in September for producer Maryke McEwan. Truckey, incidentally, is a star reporter at The Calgary Herald... Anne Wheeler directed a half-hour drama based on a Margaret Lawrence story in Edmonton in November for Atlantis Films... On Jan. 13, ACCESS moves to satellite... In November, director Don Owen (*Nobody Waved Goodbye* and *Unfinished Business*) was guest of honor at a reception to celebrate the touring "Canada's Ten Best" Film Festival at the Plaza Theatre in Calgary.

Alberta faces in the crowd at the CFTA Awards in Toronto in November included Bill Marsden of the Film Industry Development Office; Lorne

MacPherson of the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation; Ron Brown of ACCESS; Wendy Wacko (*Challenge: The Canadian Rockies*) and others of us who landed at

the Four Seasons for the occasion... Dave Crowe of the Calgary film office has returned from a scouting expedition to Los Angeles... and *Snowballs* is still snowed in 'til January.

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Playing with Time speaks directly to kids in 20 episodes

TORONTO - Linda Schuyler turned down a Disney co-production deal on *Kids of DeGrassi Street* because it would have meant watering down her scripts. Schuyler explained in an interview that *Playing With Time*, which she founded with partner Kit Hood in 1976, doesn't work in the normal industry way. "We're a grass roots company. We have to be true to DeGrassi Street and a tiny bit of a kid's world." The paradox is that by focussing on a "tiny piece of Toronto we created a program with universal appeal." The shows have been selling all over the world with a particularly strong response from Britain.

Playing With Time began by making documentary films, often in the field of education. But Schuyler, a former school teacher, and Hood wanted to speak directly to kids and turned to a dramatic series. For Schuyler it was important to represent inner-city, working-class kids, the kind of kids she had taught and was familiar with. "So much TV takes place in renovated town houses - nothing of kids with holes in shoes and dirty socks."

To speak to kids meant getting the story right. "We didn't want to condescend to kids. We didn't want it to be too slick or too glib. The humour had to come out of the character." Hours and hours were spent hammering out scripts to achieve that quality. For the same reason Schuyler and Hood eschewed using agency actors. "The kids we were seeing from the agencies were not the kind of kids I taught. There was a slickness and quality to them which we were not looking for. In the end the majority of kids came from the area around the office, in the east end of Toronto."

Finding a niche for *Kids* was not easy. "We were constantly competing against mediocrity," said Schuyler. A pilot episode, *Ida Makes a Movie*, was pre-sold to CBC for "a pittance" After *Ida* "all these distributors came with guarantees." Over the next two years five more *Kids* were produced, all independently financed.

Such is *Playing With Time's* reputation that their most recent offering memorandum, released October 1, was sold out in two weeks. Schuyler explained that investors don't make a killing. They receive their tax deduction. At a minimum *Playing With Time* will pay off promissory notes over the four-year life of the note. In effect, investors, cash advance is only 20% of their actual investment.

Kids has a strong non-theatrical market in school boards and libraries. With six new

episodes airing on CBC in the new year, *Kids* is up to 20 episodes. Schuyler doubts that the market can bear many more. "Each show is issue oriented (telling the truth,

cheating, etc.) and we've covered many of the issues." So where does *Playing With Time* go?

"The financing in place will let us continue until August. This gives us time to develop," said Schuyler. In the works in DeGrassi Junior High with a lot of interest from CBC, Global and PBS. But typically Schuyler is cautious about outside invol-

vement. "We could have a deal if we were prepared to give up our creative freedom. We want to come up with a working relationship which will allow us to keep our grass-roots connection."

Spectrafilm gets new Godard film

TORONTO - Spectrafilm announced that it has acquired *Detective*, the new Jean-Luc Godard film which has recently completed principal photography in Paris. It is tentatively scheduled for North American release in late 1985.

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