

Private sector manifesto on resolving the CBC crisis

(The following is the text of the joint-manifesto presented by the private production sector at press conferences Jan. 15 in Toronto and Montreal.)

The central cultural organization in Canada is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It does not exist for itself but for all Canadians. The institution is in crisis and thus the crisis touches us all. We believe there is a way out.

We urge the Minister of Communications to recommend immediately that Parliament vote a special envelope of monies for CBC earmarked exclusively for independently-produced Canadian programming. This idea was first presented to the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission during the CBC licence renewal hearings in 1978. In the recent past, special funds have been voted for CBC for Olympic coverage,

for transmitters for the North, for the visit of the Pope, and for Gala concerts for the Premier of China and the President of the United States. We believe that the goals of Canadianization of the CBC and of increased privatization of production are events of comparable cultural importance.

We recommend that the level of funding of this special envelope be \$35 million in 1984 dollars, which will enable CBC to pay realistic licence fees to independent producers of drama, variety, children's and other programming, thus enabling CBC to take advantage of the monies potentially allocated to it by the Canadian Broadcast Program Development Fund.

The Fund, administered by Telefilm Canada, was created to give opportunity to a wider segment of the Canadian artistic community to communicate with all Canadians. It is an

instrument which leaves decisions of what is produced to the broadcaster, whether public or private, while encouraging independent producers to generate more Canadian content programs for Canadian audiences.

CBC played its part in this process during the first year of the Fund's operation, but now argues that it can play no longer. Thus, it is reversing its commitment to open up creative opportunities for independent producers to complement the production of programs made by its own producers. Also, it has postponed plans for the further Canadianization of CBC. This is a denial of two vitally important policies.

The real problem of Canadian television is the underfunding of the production of Canadian programs from whatever source. The solution we propose will enable CBC to pursue its professed goals and

will not undermine its integrity as the publisher of a truly Canadian television service. CBC will decide what is produced; but Canadian creative talent, both inside and outside CBC, will have the opportunity to entertain and inform the Canadian viewing public.

Signed by:

Ad Hoc Committee of Independent Canadian Filmmakers, Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association (AMPIA), Alliance of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA), Association of Canadian Film Craftspersons (ACFC), Association of Canadian Film & Television Producers (ACFTP), Association des producteurs de films du Québec (APFQ), Association qué-

bécquoise des distributeurs et exportateurs de films, de télévision et vidéo (ADFQ), Association québécoise des industries techniques du cinéma et de la télévision, British Columbia Film Industries Association (BCFIA), Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers (CAMPP), Canadian Association of Motion Picture and Electronic Recording Artists (CAMERA), Canadian Conference for the Arts (CCA), Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA), Canadian Independent Film Caucus, Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), Producers' Committee for Children's and Family Television, Syndicat des techniciennes et techniciens du cinéma du Québec (STCQ).

CFTA telex to Masse on CBC cuts

(The Canadian Film & Television Association/Association canadienne de cinéma-télévision sent the following telex Jan. 15 to Communications minister Marcel Masse, with copies to CBC president Pierre Juneau, CRTC chairman André Bureau, and Telefilm executive director André Lamy.)

The Canadian Film & Television Association/Association canadienne de cinéma-télévision wishes to recommend to the government of Canada a two-stage solution to the problem faced by Canada's independent production industry as a result of the manner in which the CBC is implementing its budget cuts.

Our association is a federally-chartered non-profit organization representing the interest of over 160 private Canadian companies engaged in independent film and TV production as well as the provision of services to the industry, including lab and video facilities, distribution, and legal and financial services.

Before outlining our two-stage proposal for the resolution of these difficulties we would like to place into context our view of the role of the Broadcast Fund.

The Broadcast Fund was created for the express purpose of stimulating independent production in undernourished types of programming for prime time among reluctant players - the private broadcasters. We believe that this has borne some fruit and is still a worthwhile goal. Programs licensed by independents to

CBC were permitted to access the fund, but to a limit of 50 percent of the total Broadcast Fund.

We believe that the dilemma faced by independent producers would in dealing with the CBC still exist in the absence of the Broadcast Fund, and therefore should be addressed separately from any implementation problems that Telefilm Canada may be having with the Fund.

Our proposal is as follows: Stage one is a special dispensation by the government that would allow CBC to keep pace with its commitments to Canadianize prime time and to make increasing use of independent producers to do so. We believe that the amount of money necessary to maintain levels of independent production for CBC/SRC in 1985 is \$35 million. This dispensation could take the form of temporary relief from the budget cuts by this amount, or a special appropriation by Parliament to permit the CBC to honour its commitments to private industry while undergoing the budget cuts. It is quite clear that implementing the cuts is creating the need for one-time settlements in areas such as laid-off personnel which supports the principle and the need for a one-time dispensation in this area.

Stage two is the longer term process that we believe is necessary to restore and enhance the symbiotic relationship between the CBC and private producers. We propose that the Act of Parliament that created the CBC be updated to

eliminate the fundamental contradictions that prevent CBC from fulfilling a cost effective and culturally rewarding potential. Whether one agrees or not with the recommendations of the Applebaum-Hébert committee, the diagnosis of the problem was clear - the CBC mandate has conflicting elements.

We believe that once these structural problems are resolved, existing levels of funding will flow in more productive ways. The outcome of such a process would be to re-orient the activities of the corporation more rigorously around the areas on which the public exercises its judgement - the programming that the CBC/SRC televises. We are confident that this type of review would reveal the merits and methods of accelerating the privatization of entertainment program production and raising the goal above 50 percent.

In our view, the budget cuts and their implementation, have focused attention on the fact that inefficiencies at the corporation originate in mutually exclusive obligations, and not necessarily in lavish spending practices.

We would appreciate an early opportunity to meet with you and representatives of the department of Communications to discuss this proposal and to discuss many other issues facing our industry in 1985.

Signed: **R. Stephen Ellis**, president, **Michael Macmillan**, vice-president, production, **Peter O'Brian**, president of CAMPP.

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