

CBC staff attacks private sector producers

TORONTO - CBC producers have delivered a blistering attack on the private production sector in a draft brief to minister of Communications Marcel Masse. The unreleased document, a copy of which was obtained by Cinema Canada, notes that "the independents do not have the administrative, financial or production resources to meet a truly enormous demand for programming." "Nor, in spite of their constant self-proclamation about their efficiency and their economy, do they have unblemished records as businessmen," the Association of Television Producers and Directors' brief adds. It points particularly at the Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers and l'Association des producteurs de film du Québec whom it accuses of "bleating" for support. It speaks of "their hubris in proclaiming they are now ready to take over the production of all television entertainment programming in Canada."

The document points scathingly to the abysmal failure of the independents during the tax-shelter era. It says, "the ordinary viewer would be hard put to discover where the money generated for Canadian production on pay-TV has actually gone."

The paper calls on Masse to appoint an independent investigator "armed with the authority of an auditor-general to scrutinize the real costs of independent productions alongside those of in-house productions. We suggest that he start with a comparison of *Danger Bay*, the Paul Saltzman half-hour family drama co-produced with Disney and CBC, with the in-house production *Beachcombers*."

The brief also warned of the danger to CBC's management structure of putting all drama and variety into the independent sector. "That would mean that a different kind of management would emerge at the CBC. Today's operational CBC managers have emerged from

the real world of producing quality television. Under the system proposed by the independents management would come from law, accountancy and other entrepreneurial pursuits. The CBC would become what many myth-makers believe (wrongly) it is now - a bunch of faceless bureaucrats."

The brief recommends increased and guaranteed funding for the CBC; the addition of a second CBC channel; a review of licensing standards for private sector broadcasters; and a broad-based public discussion of broadcast policy.

Ray Hazzan, president of the Association of Television Producers and Directors, called an emergency meeting with leading producers to discuss Association policy and strategy "to see them through the next few months." Invited to the Feb. 23 meeting were Arnold Amber, David Cherniak, Ron Haggart, Peter Kelly, Jeanine Locke, Jim Murray, Mark Starowicz, and Robin Taylor.

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