

Ostry attacks free enterprise's holy land

NEW YORK — Chief U.S. free trade negotiator Peter Murphy and his negotiating team members were described as "shrill and disingenuous" by TVOntario chairman/chief executive officer Bernard Ostry in a June 11 address to the annual meeting of the American Association of Museums.

Ostry, in recent months a very vocal proponent of the values of public broadcasting systems — as well as a former deputy minister of communications in Ottawa and of Ontario's Ministry of Citizenship and Culture — appealed to his audience in his speech on "Cultural Sovereignty and Free Trade Between Canada and the United States" to assist in fostering among Americans a greater understanding and tolerance for Canada's different cultural character and aspirations.

Ostry, wondering about recent U.S. actions that have precipitated a seeming trade war with Canada coincidental to free trade negotiations, asked why America did not "get its act together" before beginning talks "with a great neighbour and trading partner, a great friend and ally."

Referring to a lack of informed public opinion on the undefended Canada-U.S. border and its meaning, Ostry observed "There seems to be some notion on your side of the border that it is simply a line dividing your lawn from your backyard" and then told his listeners concepts like free trade were subject to national values and aspirations — which in America, "this holy land of free enterprise" supplants economics with concern for

national security and, in Canada, sees a priority placed on cultural sovereignty.

After echoing Ontario Premier David Peterson's view that cultural sovereignty in Canada could not be separated from political sovereignty, Ostry stressed "let us be sure that the matter under discussion is capable of being negotiated." He then pointed out Canadian legislation aimed at ensuring survival of Canadian voices in the media and publishing are not so much restrictions on the freedom of information so much as "an amplification of freedom."

After paying recognition to Canada-U.S. friendship and the two countries' almost similar view of the world, the TVO chief spoke of the need to understand the kinds of trouble similarities and differences between the two nations can pose.

"It is these resemblances, which we would probably like to think of as superficial, but are in fact profound; it is this family likeness that makes it so hard for Americans to take seriously any claim to be different. And we do make that claim. We not only claim to be different, we claim the right to be different, and the right to preserve that difference... And we claim to have these rights respected at the negotiating table," said Ostry.

Citing the vital regard those differences hold for Canadians and statistics showing the overwhelming degree of foreign penetration of Canada's publishing, film and video distribution, and sound recording markets that highlight the legitimacy of Canada's cultural

institutions, Ostry turned his oratorical aggressiveness on American agencies' near monopoly of Canada's market.

"These big bad wolves huff and puff and they want to blow our house in," said Ostry. "Scorched earth" is the warlike threat of the gulf and westerns (lower-cased in the text of his speech)...These multinationals already have their 70 and 80 and 90 per cent and unless they can get 100 per cent they cry Foul! Restrictive practice! Unfair! Nationalistic!"

Ostry, claiming the only corrective action to an American insensitivity based on "xenophobic blindness", was to make "ordinary decent Americans" realize Canada's right to conduct its own affairs as it sees fit — as Americans would insist in their case. In one of his many direct volleys to American opinion, he declared "If we choose to set up public bodies to stimulate film production, or programs to protect the old, the sick, and the deprived, that is our business."

With an eye apparently set on negotiating conditions insisted on by the U.S. Congress and various American lobbying groups, Ostry, with a whimsical touch, said Canadians weren't for their part asking America "to dismantle your defence programs or privatize the Marines."

Telling his audience that different interests and values and not hostility to the U.S. governed Canada's pre-occupations of its own, Ostry saved his speech's punch — and a high card for American consideration — for the end.

Not only is Canada about to

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Cité's contract due August 15

MONTREAL — *Cinema Canada* has learned that a federal-provincial government contract to build the \$20 million Cité du Cinéma film studio complex here will be awarded August 16.

Nicole Martin, assistant to the deputy minister in the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs, says that, according to a working schedule already in place within the ministry, a contract for Cité du Cinéma will be awarded August 16 following a call for public tenders in the private sector.

Officials of both the federal Department of Communications and the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs told *Cinema Canada* that open invitation to bid on the film-studio project will be extended to the private sector by the end of June pending Quebec treasury approval of the Canada-Quebec Subsidiary Agreement on Cultural Infrastructure.

According to this agreement, which allocates close to \$30 million for major renovations to the Montreal Musée des Beaux-Arts and approximately \$10 million towards the construction of Cité du Cinéma, it is the Quebec government which is responsible for implementing the jointly financed projects.

Several business interests within the private sector have already stated their intentions to build the Cité du Cinéma and are waiting for the invitation to tender proposals to a management committee set up under the terms of the agreement.

Most visible among these parties is Harold Greenberg, president of Astral Bellevue Pathé which is proposing a complex of office towers, studios, theatres and retail film equipment stores — reportedly to cost close to \$75 million. According to a report in a Toronto newspaper, the National Film Board has "linked up" with the Astral project for a Maison du Cinéma within the complex.

However, asked whether this federal agency is involved in Astral's private-sector bid for public funding, Stuart Cobbett, president of Astral Films Enterprises, told *Cinema Canada* there is no NFB involvement in the Astral proposal.

"You can't believe everything you read," said Cobbett, "the project is an Astral lead with a lot of private investors." Francis Fox, former Federal Communications minister and

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Exhibitors too close for comfort

TORONTO — It's close encounters of the "hardball" corporate kind between Cineplex Odeon Corporation and Famous Players Ltd. More specifically, the rival exhibitors have clashed head-to-head over the landmark Imperial 6 Theatre and in the process — temporarily at least — shut the downtown Toronto movie-going public out of the prime film venue.

The latest dispute between Cineplex and Famous became noticeable May 29, when security guards and chain-locked doors at the Imperial's Yonge and Victoria Street entrances signaled the theatre's closure to would-be patrons. Behind a stripped-down marquee announcing Sylvester Stallone's *Cobra* had been moved to Famous' Plaza and Sheraton Centre Cinemas, hand-scrawled apologies for the inconvenience, and legal notices addressed to Famous Players stated that an important portion of the Imperial now belonged to Cineplex Odeon.

The next morning, as a Supreme Locksmiths Ltd. van

pulled into the Yonge Street entrance (adorned with the slogans "For Supreme Emergency Service & Quality" and the request "Drive Carefully — We don't Have The Keys to Heaven!"), those notices advised Famous Players Ltd. of the expiry of its four-year lease dated May 25, 1982, that owner Edna Arleen Werden Rakas and current tenant Cineplex Odeon Corporation had taken possession of the premises, and that Famous would have 30 days to remove its records, inventory, and trade fixtures.

How did Famous come to lose a site it had held since the 1930s? The effect of Famous' failure to renew the lease, and Cineplex Odeon's acquisition of that lease from the owner effectively divided the Imperial. Famous was left with two theatres entirely on its property; the largest theatre (the 778-seat Theatre 2) fell onto the owner's property now leased by Cineplex; the remaining three theatres fell between both Famous' and Mrs.

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Quebec/Alberta coproductions on hold

MONTREAL — Last minute alterations by Revenue Quebec to an co-production agreement which will allow Alberta filmmakers to take advantage of the 150 per cent capital cost allowance in Quebec has delayed official signing of the agreement until later this summer.

Denise Robert, president and interim director-general of the Société du général du cinéma says she expects the agreement, co-sponsored by the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation, will be signed in August at the World Film Festival in Montreal.

Once in place, the SGCQ (Quebec)/AMPDC Co-Production Agreement will allow Quebec filmmakers working in Alberta to take advantage of AMPDC development loans while Alberta filmmakers can make use of Quebec's production equity funding and capital cost allowance.

The agreement will add credibility to Quebec-Alberta coproductions in seeking additional funding. It will also stand as an added incentive to use locations in both provinces.

Whether a co-production will qualify under the terms of the agreement will be determined by the current selection

process in each province and subsequent consultation between representatives of the SGCQ and the AMPDC.

"The projects will be negotiated on an individual one on one basis," says Robert.

In other business, Robert who became interim director after the unexpected departure of Nicole M. Boisvert from the Société général du cinéma, says a successor will be announced by the end of June. Robert is not in the running for the position because of the workload involved as both president and interim director-general.

Pay TV wants out of CRTC CanCon license commitment

OTTAWA – Canadian general-interest pay-TV licensees First Choice, Allacom and French-language Premier-Choix TVEC appeared at a hearing June 10 before the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommuni-

cations Commission to plead their case that Canadian content levels, set as a condition of their licenses at 50 per cent as of Jan. 1, 1986, should be reduced to 15 per cent.

The hearing, held June 10-12, is expected to result in a decision by the CRTC within "several weeks," according to Commission chairman André Bureau.

The issue of Canadian content reduction on pay-TV had

been put off earlier this year by the Commission, in expectation of the Caplan-Sauvageau Task Force Report on Broadcasting Policy. However, delays in completing the report caused the Commission, after consultation with Task Force chairmen Gerry Caplan and Florian Sauvageau to proceed with a hearing on the pay-TV licensee application.

Ironically, CRTC chairman Bureau, writing to Caplan early

this year, stated that holding the hearing now would facilitate the bi-annual tabulation of Canadian content reporting by the CRTC.

The hearings were preceded by one week by First Choice's million-dollar Foundation to Underwrite New Drama for Pay Television (FUND), announcement of seven projects worth \$52,000.

The CRTC decision, expected by the end of July, is

likely to be a short-term one as current general-interest pay-TV licenses expire in 1987.

Ostry's attack

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lie down in free trade talks with the U.S. but, vowed Ostry, "Above all, we are not going to let anyone knock our brains out. And maybe, after all, that is the best way to explain what we mean when we talk about our culture and national integrity." Should the U.S. negotiating team attempts to bully Ottawa, he added "Washington may well find that we Canadians are ready to give as good as we get."

American inability to strike a fair free-trade deal with Canada, he said, in an appeal to his audience's own self-interest, would indicate America "cannot deal fairly with anyone. The world will recognize that, in all that it implies."

Cité contract

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reported to be legal counsel for Astral in this project, was at press-time unavailable for comment.

Also in the running for the contract is the Lavalin Engineering firm of which current Communications Minister Marcel Masse was vice-president before returning to politics. Legal counsel for Lavalin is Clément Richard, the former Quebec Cultural Affairs Minister.

The Cité du Cinéma has been the subject of on-again off-again negotiations since June 1983 when a contract was awarded in summer '84 by the federal government – then represented by Francis Fox – to a private sector consortium. In the fall of '84 the Liberal government was defeated and the contract withdrawn. The Conservative Minister of Communications Marcel Masse and then-Quebec Cultural Affairs Minister Clément Richard announced the commissioning of a second implementation study (by consultants Secor Inc.) and hailed a new federal-provincial spirit of consultation and collaboration.

With the Secor study completed in April and the Canada-Quebec agreement signed, the physical and financial scope of the Cité du Cinéma project has been drastically reduced from the original federal government/private-sector split of \$22 million and \$14 million respectively, to the current \$20 million project in which, according to the Secor report, the governments, combined federal and provincial share will be a recommended \$7 million.



National
Film Board
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NEWS

WORKING GROUP TO STUDY NON-THEATRICAL FILM INDUSTRY

Communications Minister Marcel Masse has appointed Government Film Commissioner and NFB Chairman François N. Macerola and Winnipeg film producer Merit Jensen to co-chair a working group that will study the non-theatrical film industry. The six-member group will examine the major problems facing the industry, explore global market conditions for institutional, educational and industrial films and recommend to the Minister by August 31, measures designed to revitalize the non-theatrical film industry.

NFB SIGNS SHARED DISTRIBUTION / ACCOMODATION AGREEMENT WITH CITY OF RIMOUSKI

Rimouski has become the third Quebec city to enter into an agreement with the National Film Board which provides for shared facilities and increased public access to the NFB's film and video collection. The agreements are the first of several the NFB will sign with cultural institutions across the country over the next five years. The objective, outlined in the Operational Plan currently being implemented by the Board, is to reduce the NFB's administrative infrastructure, activate and develop a public video market in Canada, and multiply the number of access points for NFB productions. Sharing facilities with public cultural institutions has led to a substantial increase in rental of NFB videos. In Quebec City, the



Government Film Commissioner François N. Macerola and Winnipeg film producer Merit Jensen will co-chair the working group established by Communications Minister Marcel Masse to examine the non-theatrical film industry.

NFB office is now located in the city library, in Chicoutimi, in the community cultural center; and in Rimouski, in city hall.

NEW RE-RECORDING AND VIDEO-DISC EDITING FACILITIES

Theatre 3, the NFB's largest screening and re-recording theatre has been equipped with a NEVE re-recording console, a 36-channel board with six sub-groups, six main outputs and six-track monitoring facilities, as well as NECAM 96 and VCA subgroupings. A full Lucasfilm THX monitoring system, and a Magnatech high-speed projector have also been installed, allowing for screening of 16, 35 and 70 mm film with Dolby SVA optical or magnetic, four or six track sound.

Another new facility which will speed-up and facilitate editing is a computer-assisted film editing room which features an EditDroid console,

built around a Sun 120/2 computer and equipped with five video laser disc players and a U-matic videocassette recorder. Designed by NFB engineers and film editors, this facility, unique in Canada, also contains a video projector, which makes it possible to view edited material on a large screen.

FESTIVAL NEWS

Le Déclin de l'empire américain, Denys Arcand's feature film about the social mores of contemporary Quebec bourgeoisie, co-produced by the NFB and and Corporation M&M Ltée, won the International Critics' Prize (FIRPRESCI) during the Director's Fortnight held in conjunction with the Cannes Film Festival.

Final Offer: Bob White and the Canadian Auto Workers Fight for Independence tied for Grand Prize (with the French film *Music Hall*) and was also voted best political and social documentary at the 7th Annual Banff International Television Festival.

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