

SHOOT ALBERTA

by Stacey Bertles

It would be an understatement to say that Alberta filmmakers are disappointed with the Calgary Olympic Committee. COC sent out questionnaires to local producers on February 4th. Those who wanted to compete for rights to produce the official documentary were asked to present sources of funding, world-wide distribution networks, lists of crew members, and their 'philosophy' - before February 27th. Jerry Joynt, vice-president of communications, said he felt three weeks was "adequate time for professionals to answer the questionnaire."

Local producers disagree. Allan Stein, president of the Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association (AMPIA), said "it's clear that this process has been evolved by people who know nothing about the business." Very few producers would be able to find funding and make distribution deals that quickly.

Even if they could, Stein said, the committee's expectations are unreasonable. They are planning to sell production rights for the film, just as television rights were sold. "In all the hundreds of film proposals I've seen, I've never seen that before. Usually people pay me to make films."

The profit margin just isn't there. "If you sold to every network in the world at top documentary prices you couldn't expect more than \$250,000," said Stein. Production costs for the Olympic film have been estimated at \$1 to \$3 million.

Stein thinks it is unlikely that a corporate sponsor would offset costs. "It's my intuition that corporate sponsors have been bled dry by the Olympics."

Joynt pointed out that the Los Angeles summer Olympic film sold world-distribution rights. The committee feels obligated to license producers of the 1988 film with a fee. "We would be short changing the athletes of Canada if we did not pursue this avenue (of funding)."

In response to claims that the COC ignored AMPIA's attempts to develop some policy with the COC, Joynt said he was waiting to see how many producers filled in the questionnaire. "Obviously, if we

don't get any submissions, we're wrong."

In the meantime, AMPIA is gearing up for its 13th annual awards night on March 21. A panel comprised of federal and provincial government representatives, Winnipeg producer Derek Mazur, and director Sandy Wilson will be viewing the entries during the second week in March.

Anne Wheeler, who has already scooped up 8 Genie nominations for **Loyalties**, might be well-advised to take her wheelbarrow to the AMPIA ceremony. It will be televised live on CBC.

Local performer Tim Feehan will be back from his Japanese tour in time to appear at the AMPIA awards. The singer/songwriter is establishing strong connections with the film industry. His contributions include a single and rock video based on the U.S.-produced feature **The Wright**. He's been talking to Calgary's Dave Winning about composing the soundtrack for his next feature, **Flash Frame** (see below).

Both of the big winners at last year's AMPIA awards are gearing up for new projects. Wheeler's putting the final touches to the adaptation of **Cowboys Don't Cry** for Atlantis. She plans to start shooting it in May or June. She'll be off to India to scout locations for **Bye Bye Blues**.

Dave Winning spent January in Calgary, shooting additional scenes for last year's festival winner **Storm**. He's added another 20 minutes to the original 81-minute running time. The final version should hopefully be deposited on Cannon Group Inc.'s doorstep the first week in March. Winning sold world rights for **Storm** to Cannon, and Canadian rights to Thomas Howe.

Both those companies are potential backers for Winning's next project, **Flash Frame**. He's hoping to start production on the action/suspense film sometime in June.

HBW/Toth will be shooting another 26 half-hour episodes of **Connecting**, a series for teenagers. Production on **Tel**, a seven-part dramatic series, has been postponed until 1988. Helene White and Gary Toth have one British partner, Diverse Productions, but are hot in pursuit of another. Meanwhile, Denise Coffey (former associate director of the Shaw Festival) is working on the scripts about British immigrants adapting to Western Canadian culture.

Any local producers who plan to start shooting this summer might want to book crews early. David Crowe of Calgary's economic development office echoes some of the optimistic predictions for summer production. There is talk of five or six pictures coming to Edmonton and Calgary. Crowe said there has never been more interest from foreign producers.

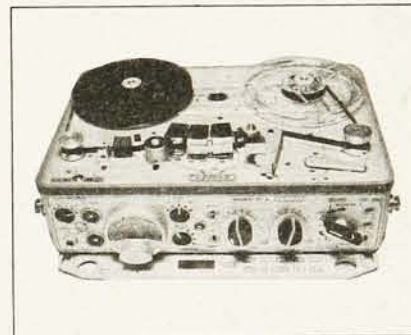
"This is the best year I've seen it since I've been here." At the very least, he believes "everyone will be working."

Edmonton's CITV plays host to some 55 privately-owned television stations. The Canadian Programming and Promotion **CanPro** festival will be held

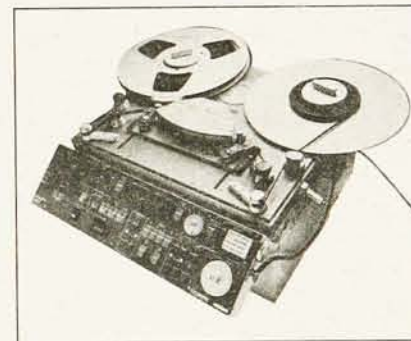
April 4th to 7th at West Edmonton Mall's Fantasyland Hotel. Scheduled activities include seminars on music, program production and management skills. The festival will culminate with an awards ceremony hosted by CRTC chairman André Bureau.

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MONTREAL - François Bilodeau has been awarded the critic's prize at Les Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois, Feb. 10 to 15, for a review of **Le Déclin de l'empire Américain** in *Liberté* magazine.