

# FILM NEWS

## Major Developments

Famous Players is wasting no time in jumping into the quota system; they've placed Crawley's feature **The Man Who Skied Down Everest** (see review, p. 46) in a first run Toronto theatre. The engagement is billed 'For a Limited Time Only', which means it's a filler until the autumn biggie moves in.

In order to invest its \$1.2 million, Famous is changing its previous approach from scattered small investments to a few large ones. And to help them to do it they've got Paramount, a sister company in the Gulf and Western empire, as well as two or three other Hollywood studios offering advice as to suitability. They've got seven scripts on the Coast for appraisal. Odeon is also looking homeward and will rely on Rank Organisation advice in their quest for money-making properties. Odeon also says it will invest in only two or three features per year. All of which emphasises the fact that the chains are looking for commercially viable properties only, and in the British or Hollywood mould.

As an adjunct to feature financing, Mr. Faulkner, secretary of State, stopped off in London on September 12 and co-signed the British-Canada co-production agreement. Now each country's filmmakers will be able to take advantage of the other's special incentives for filmmaking. Conditions attached are not too stringent: the budget must be over \$350,000, technicians and profits must be spread around on both sides of the Atlantic. Already productions are planned

under the agreement (see Ontario Production section, p. 7).

Back home there is no official film policy but it appears that someone may formulate one soon. Pierre Juneau has been appointed Minister of Communications and should give a needed jolt to the federal cabinet. On Sept. 25 **Le Devoir** reported that Mr. André Gourd, past right-hand man in cinema matters to Quebec's Cultural Minister, would soon become Juneau's executive assistant. (see Quebec Political Echos, p. 8)

Meanwhile the effect of a cabinet shuffle on filming, whether Mr. Faulkner retains his portfolio or not, is unknown. What we do know is that Sydney Newman has received money, people — John Boundy, formerly of the NFB foreign distribution division, — and a task: advise on film. This might allow Newman's best ability, inspiration and enthusiasm, to be directed in an effective way.

Over at the Canada Council, much is in limbo. Geoffrey James is the new Visual Arts Officer, and Penni Jaques, film officer, has departed for B.C. Her replacement is Francoise Picard, formerly of the National Film Board in Toronto, who may have to cope with a re-allocation of funds where the ratio would be video 2/3 and film 1/3. And that's despite the fact that there is more activity in film. Perhaps the Council, long unable to define film's art and commerce components, has decided to leave it all up to the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

In Montreal, new Nation-

al Film Board head André Lamy has appointed his number two man, James B. de Domville. He's a producer who has been responsible for the drama division and one of the CBC-NFB theme evenings last year. Roman Kroiter will replace him in the drama division. One of de Domville's first priorities will be to supervise the NFB's decentralisation of English-language operations, starting with the Toronto-based Ontario division. Latter still needs an Executive Producer to run the show.

In Halifax, an interesting confrontation is taking place. The theatre chains and Hollywood distributors are accused of discrimination. Rocca Cinemas is suing Warner Brothers because Warners won't allow Rocca to show first-run product. If the outcome favours Rocca, booking patterns across the country may change radically, but most noticeably in the ten top-grossing cities, where the distributors deal with one or the other of the chains almost exclusively for first-run showings.

And finally to TV and broadcasting again. The CRTC has not announced a replacement for Juneau at press time, but presumably it will be Harry Boyle. And the CRTC has raised Canadian Content quotas for commercials on TV and radio to 80% by 1978. And the CBC is planning such massive coverage of the Olympics next year that most, if not all, of the Corporation's equipment and crews will be required in Montreal, which is unfortunate. I'm a firm advocate of exercise, but all that running, jumping and hopping around is ridiculous when everything else is standing still.

## Film people

Rodger J. Ross, engineer, lecturer and author has been given the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal Award by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers for 1975. The Award will be given at the Annual Awards Presentation of the Society at the Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles, September 29.

The Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal Award is presented to Rodger J. Ross, in recognition of his outstanding leadership in the promotion of advances engineering practices and techniques which resulted in significant improvements to the interface between motion picture film and television imaging systems.

A call from Actor Chris Wiggins pointed to inaccuracies in a previous column of mine. I spoke of the demise of two TV shows, **Police Surgeon** and **Swiss Family Robinson**, stating that both cancellations were due to an FCC ruling, that the programmes were American and that they had supplied sustenance and experience to Canadian personnel. Mr. Wiggins says that **Swiss Family** was not American and that it was cancelled because ABC came up with its own version of the show. Furthermore, he insists that **Swiss Family** had a top crew and cast. I agree. I stand corrected.

Screenings: **Why Rock the Boat?** opened for a brief run in Washington, and received warm reviews... **The Master Blasters**, originally seen on CBC's Gallery series last season, was shown on U.S. TV's **60 Minutes** recently, and was highly successful. Toronto filmmaker John Foster, who made the short, was

*Now that Cinema Canada is publishing monthly, the deadline comes quickly. We missed hearing from the West Coast and the Prairies, news from the Maritimes will be included in our November issue. We welcome any additional contributions to these pages.*

**Stephen Chesley**