

Georges Dufaux's
**10 jours...
48 heures**

Georges Dufaux's recent documentary **10 jours...48 heures** depicts the oppressiveness of East Coast fishing in the '80s – an entire community dominated and controlled by a single company whose main goal is the commercial exploitation of Newfoundland's codfish. The film is a contemporary reworking of John Grierson's 1929 film **Drifters**, a romantic and poetic treatment of Britain's deep-sea fishing industry. While Grierson's film focuses mainly on the men who go out to sea, Dufaux's goes several steps further by avoiding the excessive romanticization of the role of the fisherman. Instead, he tries to show how large-scale fishing affects the entire community of Marystown, a small fishing village in southeastern Newfoundland where 80 to 90 per cent of its inhabitants are employed by one company, Fisheries Products International. In Marystown, the fishing industry permeates practically every aspect of people's lives. Dufaux illustrates this by taking his camera into places like the church, the radio station, and the classroom where references to fishing are invariably present.

The title of the film refers to the pattern of 10 days at sea, 48 hours leave for the fishermen on the trawler 'Zamberg', one of the largest of the FPI fleet and the mainstay of the processing plant at Marystown. Through interviews with two of the fishermen's wives we learn of the personal hardships a life of offshore fishing imposes on the lives of the fishermen and their families. Brief interviews with people involved in the administrative side of the industry and factory workers' comments add to the sense of how profoundly this single industry and company affects the people of Marystown.

The fishermen in Dufaux's film catch fish destined primarily for an American market. The fish, caught and semi-processed in Newfoundland, is sent to an FPI finishing plant in Massachusetts where it is transformed into a highly processed 60% fish product. FPI's goal, a company spokesperson tells us, is to create a product that tastes like fish, but better. In doing so, it hopes to capture the lucrative children's market and eventually create a demand for fish McNuggets. Ironically, an employee of Waldman's fish market in Montreal explains that the store imports most of their fish from the United States because Canadian fish can't compete either in terms of price or quality. This contrast points to one of the disturbing facts about East Coast fisheries: the people of Newfoundland can't sell their fish at home but must send it to a foreign country where it is subsequently turned into junk food. The reference at the beginning of the film to John Cabot's discovery of Newfoundland and the decision in 1497 to exploit its rich fishing grounds seems to suggest that very little has changed over the last 500 years, and Newfoundland's resources and people

continue to be exploited for the benefit of foreign powers.

Apart from the occasional interviews (conducted in English, but subtitled or dubbed into French) by Dufaux's assistant, Antonia McGrath, the film is mostly observational. Dufaux's camera surveys the various stages of production in the factory and on board the 'Zamberg', as well as the day-to-day interaction of some of the families. There is a noticeable absence of background music or narration – only the constant hum of the factory in operation, or the sound of the trawler as it breaks through the ice on its way to the fishing grounds. Dufaux avoids the typical lyrical presentation of small East Coast fishing villages – Marystown in winter is a far cry from the quaint, idyllic fishing villages we're used to seeing. The fluorescent lighting inside the factory and the harsh winter light enhances the cold detached feeling of this film.

Dufaux has been praised in the past for his "calm and discreet" style of filmmaking: In this film though, it decidedly works against him. Although the film occasionally is a moving portrayal of the young fisherman David and his family, it is mainly a detached overview of a large-scale fishing and processing industry in Newfoundland. The film often alludes to many of the ongoing economic and political problems that have plagued the Newfoundland fisheries for years. Dufaux doesn't, for instance, touch on the interaction between the company and workers even though the film begins with the workers returning to their jobs after a six-month strike. A radio program heard in the background mentions the pressing need for the modernization of many of Newfoundland's processing plants, and fishermen's chronic problems with the unemployment insurance system. However, these issues are never expanded upon and their relevance to the film in general remains at best tenuous.

Unfortunately, the overall strength of the film is lost in Dufaux's subtle and distanced treatment of the subject matter. This is further weakened by the unnecessary length of 85 minutes. In the end, the film fails to elicit a strong response from the viewer, and one is left feeling indifferent and apathetic to the issues raised by the film.

Mary Ledwell ●

10 JOURS ... 48 HEURES d. Georges Dufaux asst. d. Antonia McGrath sd. Jim Rillie asst. cam. Michelle Paulin ed. Georges Dufaux, Catherine Martin sd. ed. Les Halman asst. sd. ed. Antonia McGrath mix Hans Peter Strobl asst. sd. mix. Adrian Croll **French version** Claude Dionne voices Anne Caron, Mario Desmarais, Hubert Gagnon, Eric Gaudry, Jocelyne Goyette, Elizabeth Lesieur, Hubert Loiselle, Claude Préfontaine, Louise Rémy, Yvon Thiboutot, extracts from Menabem Golan's "Over the Brooklyn Bridge" used with the permission of Cannon films **Thanks to** The workers of the Catalina and Danvers factories and the crew of the Zandberg for their participation **admin.** Joanne Gallant **assoc. p.** Shelagh McKenzie **p.** Eric Michel c. 16mm **running time** 85 min 58 secs **1986 doc.** A National Film Board of Canada Production

**Capsule
reviews**

You would have to scratch to find some basis for comparison between **Prairie Women** and **The Road to Yorkton**. Both are short films that were presented at the Yorkton Film Festival this year, and both were produced by western Canadian filmmakers. That's about it.

THE ROAD TO YORKTON

The Road to Yorkton is a docu-parody, a lark that turned into a mocking look at a self-conscious business. Francis Damberger and Lars Lehman, partners in Young Alberta Filmmakers, took themselves and a short film to the Yorkton competition last winter. They also took a camera and a cameraman. They made **The Road to Yorkton** on the trip to Yorkton.

Damberger embellishes a version of himself: a back-country boy with big-city ambitions and one response to everything. On the lonely winter highway (going to the festival) he draws on a brew and quotes Steven Spielberg. "I know what he means." In a motel sauna (during the festival) he draws on a brew and listens to a European film editor describe bringing Bertolt Brecht to a film set: "I know just what you mean." In a motel-room bathroom (at the end of the festival) he throws up and listens to his producer quote George Lucas. "And I know just what he means."

This film is obviously an improvisation, technically competent as it is. But it bears a charm that comes from honesty. Damberger's fictional character, the conning "new mustang of western filmmaking" fits perfectly into a real background. Whether the dozen or so people

who made cameo appearances like it or not, there is only one way to distinguish truth from fiction in this film: the fiction is strange, the truth is very strange.

PRAIRIE WOMEN

Late in June, the downtown branch of the Edmonton Public Library hosted a screening of award-winners from this year's Yorkton Film Festival. The featured presentation was a half-hour documentary called **Prairie Women**, winner of the Golden Sheaf for best of the festival.

National Film Board of Canada documentaries are not generally considered box-office boffo – but **Prairie Women** surprised everyone. It packed audiences in the 200-seat theatre for two consecutive nights. The NFB scheduled extra screenings to accommodate the overflow.

Barbara Evans, a graduate of University of British Columbia and the National Film School in London, created a textbook example of what NFB documentaries do at their best: capture a piece of history that hadn't been contained. The topic of this film was the women's farm movement of the '20s and '30s. The heart of this film was the spirit of the women it documented.

The difficulties of farming forced prairie settlers to circumvent a lot of discriminatory traditions. As one woman pointed out, "It was very much a co-operative situation...a complete partnership. It brought people together. Until it got too difficult. Then it drove them apart."

It was those difficulties – incredible poverty and extreme isolation – that spurred farmers into forming the reform movements of the Great Depression. Their wives, who were worse off in some ways, joined forces in the Women's Grain Growers and United Farm Women's associations.

Women who might never have left their children and gardens and livestock felt compelled to campaign for educational, political, and legislative reform. Unassuming, but forceful "We farm women should know considerable about this patching business", they petitioned for health care, educational reform,



● A prairie woman, Nellie Peterson