

Additional funds to strengthen TVO role

TORONTO — Ontario premier David Peterson has promised TVOntario an extra \$10 million for programming as part of a campaign promise to spend \$300 million a year more on elementary education.

Peterson told Liberals during an August 6 campaign speech in Ottawa that his government, if re-elected Sept. 10, would spend the money.

Responding to the announcement, TVO chairman Bernard Ostry said "This unexpected but welcome addition to our base funding is another indication of the confidence in and regard for TVO held by the premier and his colleagues.

"It's as important as much for the money as it is for the recognition of the role of the institution," Ostry explained about the announcement. He said details of how Peterson's \$10 million pledge for education programming is to be used had not

been revealed.

"We have to sit down with the ministry of education and sort out what we think we should be doing with that money in relation to school broadcasts," Ostry told *Cinema Canada*. He said the additional \$10 million would encourage TVO's producers and educational colleagues across the province.

The \$10 million campaign pledge comes after TVO announced its estimated overall budget for next year has been reduced to \$52.7 million (excluding money from membership drives, market sales and underwriting) down by \$7.2 million. Although operating grants from the province went up four per cent in 1987-88, an overall decrease occurred largely because of a reduction in one-time government spending for specific projects. Depending on several factors,

Ostry said TVO's total budget for the year will be between \$60 to \$70 million.

In other news, Ostry told delegates to the 56th annual Couchiching Conference near Orillia that Canada must co-operate with other countries to further develop its cultural sovereignty.

Growing acrimony around the world between governments and industries that deal with the U.S. in film, television and telecommunications is a concern, Ostry told those attending the annual think tank.

Canada should take the lead in developing a general agreement on information and entertainment trade (GAIET) with Western Europe and the Third World, he urged. Ostry said cultural industries require teamwork to flourish. He said the Americans have contributed greatly to prosperity and peace in the world and added that

Canada's fortunes have been strongly tied to those of the U.S.

But Ostry told the conference, which was called to debate the future of the American empire, that Canada must continue with measures to prevent the complete takeover of its cultural industries.

"No one, Canadians included, wants to build walls. None of us wants to wage cultural wars. But Canada, like the United States and our friends and allies, is committed to the development of cultural sovereignty," Ostry said.

Ostry said in the written text of his speech that U.S. cultural influence in Canada is more pervasive than in other countries "because we are already in some sense American. The U.S. does not need to teach us its values: There is always a Canadian ready to do it for them."

Canadian agencies such as The Canada Council, Telefilm Canada, the CBC, TVOntario and many others have given Canadian culture room to develop, he said. But American multinationals, which already have captured a large part of Canadian markets, complain about restrictive practices unless they can gain 100 per cent.

Ostry cited American film industry lobbyist Jack Valenti's strident opposition to the proposed Canadian film distribution licensing system as an example. "Canadian cultural sovereignty cannot exist in these conditions," Ostry said.

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The first series was budgeted at \$8 million.

At press time, Michel Dalarie, advertising director at Ultramar, told *Cinema Canada* that a budget for media promotion had not been determined. **Ultraquiz Lance et Compte**, the weekly game show, programmed to bridge the off-air time between series, has been discontinued.

The second series is budgeted at close to \$11.6 million. Participation includes a \$4.6 million public offering and an aggregate total of close to \$4 million in financial participation from Telefilm Canada (\$3 million), O'Keefe Brewing Company Ltd. (\$500,000) and Ultramar Canada Ltd. (\$500,000).

The co-producers of the series, TF1 and SFP of France, will invest \$2.7 million. Radio-Canada and CBC will pay \$1.6 and \$1.9 for five and four year Canadian television rights, respectively.

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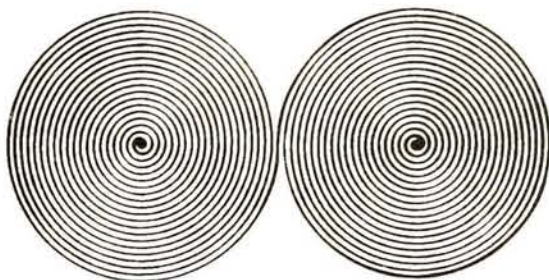
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