

## Language parity legislated in QC

MONTREAL – Modifications to the Cinema Act in Quebec do not discriminate against English-speakers film-viewer, say Quebec government officials.

A recent declaration by Lise Bacon, Quebec's Cultural Affairs minister, saying that Article 83 in the Quebec Cinema Act is a "veritable sieve", coupled with subsequent modifications legislated on Dec. 17, have caused the distributors of English-language film to, once again, sit up and take notice of the province's Cinema Act (Bill 109).

Lise Bacon has modified Bill 109 (article 83). Now, in order to obtain a distribution visa from the Régie du cinéma, (Quebec's regulatory agency for film), all English-language films released in Quebec must be dubbed in French. Furthermore, the theatrical releases, in English and French, must occur on the same day with an equal number of copies available in both languages.

Bill 109 was first introduced by the Parti Québécois in 1983 and modified by the Liberal government in 1986 in an attempt to temper the influence of the U.S. major studios.

As it stood, prior to the recent modifications, Article 83 specified that subtitled or dubbed versions must be released 60 days after the release of the

English-language film.

This eight-week period, historically, has allowed distributors to decide whether to dub the film or withdraw it.

Because of an overall preference in the marketplace for dubbed versions rather than subtitled versions, modifications to Article 83 now require that distributors show dubbing contracts and agree to use an equal number of French-language venues.

Ann Label, assistant press secretary to Lise Bacon, told *Cinema Canada* that in the past distributors "respected the law without respecting the spirit of the law."

She explained that, too often, dubbed or subtitled versions were made but rarely exhibited after the 60 day (8 week) period. Thus, she says, the overriding intent of the modifications is to ensure that the French-language version gets to the screen sooner.

In 1986-1987, 43.7 per cent of all films shown in Quebec were French-language films.

In on-going talks with the minister of Cultural Affairs, distributors have argued against the prohibitive cost of dubbing a major commercial film (between \$40,000 to \$100,000) which might prove, upon release, to be an unpopular film.

They also argue that even a short delay for dubbing pur-

poses could mean that the English version will miss the National Release Date for major cities in Canada and the U.S.

Protectionist measures in France that prohibit Quebec-dubbed films in the domestic market also render dubbing cost ineffective, they say.

Label maintains, however, that the modifications to Bill 109 (article 83) which will be enforced by proclamation in the spring, will be flexible.

"In framing this law, we respect the marketplace and the choice of the people to see a film in French or English. We will also be able to make exceptions when needed," says Label.

The legislation of Bill 59 which contains the modifications to Bill 109 (article 83) forced the National Film Board (NFB) to withdraw from circulation in Quebec all English-language films having no French-dubbed version.

It has been estimated that dubbing at the NFB will cost close to \$1 million and take one year with the required approval of the Régie du cinéma.

NFB Film Commissioner François Macerola has gone on record saying that although he approves of the intent of Bill 109, he feels that the letter of the law has been too rigorously applied in the case of the NFB.

Macerola was not available for comment at press time.

## Cannell builds set for Hollywood North

VANCOUVER – After months of uncertainty, Cannell Productions has begun work on a \$20 million state-of-the-art film and tape production complex in North Vancouver, B.C. Demolition of existing buildings is now underway with construction scheduled to begin in May. Cannell plans to be operating out of the new North Shore Studios a year later.

The uncertainty involved negotiations with a number of West Coast labour unions including IATSE and the Teamsters. Cannell had put off committing to the new complex pending contract concessions from the unions. Although the talks are still not completed, real estate options on the so-called Park and Tilford property were about to expire. So, Cannell decided to proceed without a signed agreement. However Cannell Films of Canada vice-president and general manager Steve Sasson says the decision indicates "a degree of optimism" that the unions will agree to terms that will keep the new studios busy.

The 14.5 acre site will include seven sound stages (four at close to 15,000 square feet), a Production Support Building (complete with helicopter landing pad on the roof), a Ven-

dor building for companies supplying support services to the industry and even a gymnasium for employees.

Cannell says North Shore will be the biggest studio complex in Canada. It will also be the most flexible.

Anyone who has ever toured the old movie lots in Hollywood will experience a certain sense of *déjà vu* at North Shore. The entire complex is a movie set in progress. The exterior walls of nearly every building will be constructed as sets-in-the-rough. One wall will look like an all-American highway motel. Another, a row of urban brownstone houses. Yet a third will be a multi purpose classic facade that can dress up as a courthouse, city hall, library or high school. There'll even be a traditional movie theatre facade complete with marquee. These are all generic sets that can be easily adapted to specific needs by adding or subtracting "plugs".

Behind all of these facades are studio offices, workshops and storage areas.

North Shore Studios is the design of Dall-Lana/Griffins Architects of Vancouver. All of the engineering has been contracted to British Columbia firms.

## Dubbing war with France heats up

MONTREAL – Union des Artistes, the large French-language actors' union in Quebec, remains adamant that protectionist measures must be imposed against programs dubbed in France and exported to Quebec if the Quebec dubbing industry is to prosper.

"We have asked the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) that just as it imposes Canadian content on television it should impose quotas on the percentage of foreign programs that should be dubbed here," says a UDA spokesperson.

The Quebec dubbing industry has asked both the federal and Quebec governments to pursue a free-market arrangement with France in television and film dubbing, respectively.

According to the Association québécoise des industries techniques du cinéma et de la télévision, while France does close to \$200 million annually

in dubbing of foreign-language television and film, Quebec does \$3 million annually.

About 94 per cent of dubbed programming used in Quebec is American product dubbed in France.

This imbalance for the Quebec industry stems from a French government decree in 1961 which closed the domestic market to all films dubbed outside France. This has not changed in spite of repeated overtures to the French government by Lise Bacon, Quebec minister of Culture, the existence of bilateral trade agreements and a tripartite agreement signed in January 1987 between France, Canada and Quebec to find more equitable trade arrangements in film and television.

In early November, a strike was settled between public and private French broadcasters and the Syndicat française des acteurs (SFA) with assurances for the actors, who reap a

healthy percentage of dubbing fees, that protectionist measures are watertight.

A small concession was won for the Quebec industry in French television where a permissible 42 hours of foreign-dubbed programming has been increased to 140 hours in 1988, 112 hours in 1989 and 84 hours in 1990 when the tripartite agreement is reopened. French private broadcasters say this is the best they could do without prolonging the SFA strike.

This concession was delivered to the Quebec industry, recently, during a meeting in Paris between private broadcasters (France/Quebec), Telefilm Canada and the federal department of Communications.

It was also agreed, says Paul Racine, director-general of federal-provincial relations, department of Communications, that both markets would be

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## ACTRA settles half

TORONTO – The Writers Guild of the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) has agreed to a contract with independent producers but the Performers Guild continues to negotiate for a better deal.

The agreement, called the IPA for Independent Producers Agreement, will bind producers from the Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers, the Canadian Film and Television Association, Quebec's Association des producteurs de films et de vidéo du Québec, and the National Film Board of Canada.

Talks are "still in the preliminary stages," according to Doug Coupar, director of Communications and Research at ACTRA.

ACTRA Performers' Guild executive director Ray Stringer admitted to "making some

progress, but not a great deal at this point."

There are two rounds of negotiations set to take place in February. Although Stringer said he expects a "successful resolution by the end of February," he noted that negotiations could be drawn out because the IPA has no full-time negotiator. "We've only had four full days of actual face-to-face with the Independent Producers."

Stringer declined to give details of the issues under negotiation, saying only that "we're asking for more."

One of the sticking points appears to be the share of the new lucrative video cassette market which will go back to the performers. Sales of material after the initial broadcast or theatrical release often involve

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# TVO tries Monte Carlo L.A. company buys into Tegra

TORONTO - TVOntario, the provincial public educational channel, will travel to the Monte Carlo television market to show its wares.

This is the first trip to this market for TVO. Sales executives Antoinette MacDonald and Carmen Charette, along with marketing director Andrew Shapiro, will go armed with a variety of documentary and educational series, including two new episodes of its Vista series.

"We go to MIPCOM, but our indications are that a lot of interesting things happen at Monte Carlo," Shapiro said. "It's a first look at it."

Shapiro and company will be looking to sell Vista, as well as The Last Horizon, a five-part Australian nature series co-produced by TVO and NHK Japan. TVO holds the world rights to the series outside of Australia and Japan.

Passion for Food, a series of five light half-hour programs examining contemporary attitudes towards the prepara-

tion and consumption of food, will also be on the block. In the children's category, TVO will present Tales From The Blue Crystal, nine 15-minute stories using live action, animation and graphics.

Tales From the Blue Crystal and The Last Horizon will be available in French versions at Monte Carlo, as Les Contes du cristal bleu and Dernier recours.

TVO also begins airing its major new series, Origins: A History of Canada, this month. Origins is a 16-part series of 30-minute episodes that trace the history of Canada from the migration of Asians across the Bering Strait into North America 25,000 years ago, to the driving of the last spike. The TVO series is unique in its breadth, and in the attention it pays to Native involvement in the development of Canada.

Origins will run on Thursdays on TVO through to the beginning of May.

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complex and long-term international deals, and producers might be reluctant to include performers in profits that come years after an actor's performance.

But for Stringer, the bottom line is simple. "Where the producers make more money, we want to make more."

The writers ratified the same agreement that was rejected by the performers. But some terms of the writers' agreement are dependent on the performers. Both groups must have the same grievance and bonding procedures, for exam-

ple. Also both contracts must cover the same length of time. So if the Performers Guild comes up with a radically different agreement, the writers will have to go back to the bargaining table.

Coupar told Cinema Canada that the contract that the Performers Guild finally agrees upon will have "ramifications for the whole industry." The writers, he said, "are not as drastically affected by the agreement."

"Everything is up for discussion. It's not just money or just expenses, or just job security. It's all of that and more."

VANCOUVER - A group which includes Pacific Video, Inc. of Los Angeles has acquired control of Vancouver's Tegra Enterprises, a public company trading on the Vancouver Stock Exchange.

The company's enterprises include Tegra Industries, Alpha Cine Service (a full-service 35 and 16mm film laboratory, and recording transfer and mixing facility) and Post Haste Video (a broadcast videotape production and post-production centre).

Crawford Hawkins, Tegra's president and chief executive officer, is also part of the group which has purchased about 70 per cent of the shares in the company.

The 70 per cent was previously owned by a Canadian, Gunther Henning.

## U. of Victoria celebrates 25th

VANCOUVER - A six-evening festival of Canadian films made between 1930 and 1970 is one of the highlights of a multimedia celebration of the 25th anniversary of the University of Victoria. The umbrella title of the various events is "The Adaskin Years: A Celebration of Canada's Arts, 1930-1979." Murray and Frances James Adaskin are best known for their contributions to Canada's musical life but have also provided support to the visual arts and other aspects of the nation's cultural development.

The film festival, to be held on Tuesday nights beginning February 16, will present shorts, animation, documentaries and full-length features. The opening program focuses on Norman McLaren.

Other filmmakers represented include Claude Jutra (La Lutte, 1961), Derek May (Angel, 1966), Joyce Wieland (Rat Life and Diet in North America, 1968), Wolf Koenig and Colin Low (City of Gold, 1957), F.R. Crawley (The Loon's Necklace, 1948) and Donald Brittain and Don Owen (Ladies and Gentlemen... Mr. Leonard Cohen, 1965).

An exhibition of the Adaskin Collection of Canadian Art will include a half-hour video documentary about the couple. As well, the festival itself will be the subject of a 30-minute video.

Scholars of Canadian culture may also be interested in a two-day conference (March 25-26) on the society, culture and politics of the country between 1930-1970.

According to Hawkins, Tegra will continue to operate as usual. "It's still a Canadian company," Hawkins says. "No one from the investment group, except myself, will be involved in the management of the company, and membership on the board of directors is more than 50 per cent Canadian."

Hawkins says Tegra will benefit from Pacific Video's ag-

gressive business experience and expertise.

Among Tegra's present projects are laboratory processing for 21 Jump Street and MacGyver (for which they also do film-to-tape transfer). Last year they also did all posting for Sea Hunt and The Adventures of Beans Baxter.

Hawkins says he is also looking forward to working on the upcoming sequel to The Fly.



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