

I came back to beautiful Fredericton. Since I finished my degree in the States I was now making more money, and was ready to spend it on films.

I made more shorts. Better ones. But still could not afford a silent camera to do true sync. Finally, in August 74, I received a \$4,700 grant from the Canada Council, to make a 20 minute short called **What Comes First**. Things are now looking up. We are more than half way through making it at the time of writing. I am using my own Nagra SN and Eclair ACL.

It's sort of a fun struggle. People ask me after a show: "Wow, you didn't make this film." "O no, it came with the projector," I reply. "Are you fixing it?" "Yep". "Listen Art, I have this TV at home..."

Who says you can make money in filmmaking.

I believe in my ability to make a good short. I think

a short should be entertaining to a wide audience, and not just to a group of filmmakers who *understand*. Nevertheless a filmmaker should not be a slave of the viewers and make films to suit audiences or jump in the latest trend that happens to be going around. If a filmmaker can not present his subject or a story in an interesting way, he should quit. And for me what is interesting is that which is new. And "the new" is what is perhaps the hardest thing to create, a true measure of my kind of an artist.

Here in New Brunswick making a film can be like establishing a bordello; first no one really believes such things can exist here, secondly, seems no one wants to take part in it because it's immoral, and thirdly, it can never be as good as the ones that exist in Toronto anyway. □

## Mr. Faulkner's Trojan Horse

by Stephen Chesley

On Tuesday, August 5th, The Honourable Hugh Faulkner, Secretary of State of this fair dominion, rode up to the assembled multitudes of the Canadian Film Industry on a perfect white steed – or he claimed that it was. In a long-overdue but magnanimous gesture, he offered it to the skeptical throng, announcing his intentions, in both English and French, to help them create a new world with the help of this magical horse. They reluctantly agreed and received it gracefully, mainly because it was all they would get, and they knew it. No little time later, they discovered that the Honourable had misled them again, or in his simplicity just made another error, and their industry floundered and was absorbed into an imitative, branch plant, just like the rest of Canadian industry. The Honourable didn't know or possibly didn't care that such a result had occurred, for he had, by this time, been accorded a higher honour, that of Royal Senator. The rest of the Governing Body did not notice, because they concerned themselves with far weightier conundrums than Culture, such as preventing eggs from turning into chickens or replacing lush fields with concrete runways. The Canadian Film Industry did not care, for they had long ago fled to foreign climes, where their ability had been received with open arms and where they achieved Fame and Fortune... back home.

By the time you read this, about two months will have passed since Mr. Faulkner's statement. The press has reacted, the industry has reacted, and even the theatre chains have reacted. Mr. Faulkner has been out of town. I don't mean to imply that he has run away, but he hasn't offered to explain his actions in public either. One must, therefore, assess his proposals on the basis of his past actions and by examining closely what, in fact, his statement says.

Basically, there are three areas in Mr. Faulkner's proposals. First, he says that the theatre chains have "agreed" (Why must they "agree"? They can also be

coerced by long-lasting legislation.) to provide four weeks per year per theatre – not per screen, thereby reducing the effect already – for Canadian features. That's only three months after Mr. Faulkner told the Commons Broadcasting Committee that his previous quota had not worked, and directly after he was advised by his top policy advisor that voluntary quotas don't work. He says he will monitor the new agreement, after admitting that the old one was not, and could not be, monitored properly.

Both chains have stated that they would play only commercially successful movies, and that unsuccessful ones would be pulled, thus almost confirming the danger of re-runs. Neither would they pull a winner to play a Canadian film; that's fine, but they could run a trailer for a Canadian film along with a huge success like **Jaws**.

Of course a voluntary quota suits the chains and Mr. Faulkner very well. It's much easier to let a voluntary agreement die than to repeal legislation. One cannot blame the chains; they achieved what they wanted. And to restrict the quota to a year allows ease in monitoring and great opportunity for quota evaluation; only one or two English-language features will be released this year.

Mr. Faulkner has reinforced a failed system.

The second aspect is the investment by the chains. The addition of Odeon is welcome: too long has Famous been flying solo. But \$1.7 million is only less than one per cent of the total box office gross, and less than five per cent of the dollars that leave Canada for foreign pockets. And putting the bite, even if one tooth is used, on the exhibitors, avoids completely the place where the real money falls: ten foreign distributors earn some forty per cent of total box office revenue.

Avoiding a levy, Mr. Faulkner's "agreement" also impedes the development of an industry, because instead of placing funds in producers' pockets directly, the income from a film can virtually disappear in distribution expenses, ad costs, house nuts, print costs, etc.

But it is when we enter into the definition of "Canadian" in the 100% deduction outline, that incredulity renders one, not speechless, but howling.

It is reported that one of the reasons the policy

## OPINIONS

statement has been held up for some time is that a translation was difficult to arrive at. Nonsense; there must be a French phrase for "Branch Plant".

The criteria at first glance seem to be reasonable, until you realise that a film can be made, and qualify, without a Canadian writer or director. Which leads one to wonder how a "Canadian" identity can be conveyed when the two most important creative elements can be Congolese. It's not enough to have Gordon Lightfoot sing in the background. And any foreign company can simply hire a Canadian producer and send up their own man to be watchdog.

More important, however, is the copyright provision. There is no mention of Canadian control in the company that owns the copyright. And Warners, Paramount, Odeon, Columbia, etc. are all Canadian companies; they're incorporated here. And they're all foreign-controlled. And they all qualify for the full deduction.

Paranoia? I don't think so. Not when Canadians invest eagerly in foreign films and claim the deduction. Not when Americans have already insured and

maintained at every opportunity - control over the industry, albeit with Canadian co-operation. Overall, film is not the hottest topic around government bloody mary's; oil is slightly more important when the matter of foreign investment comes up, and that's where the film problem really lies.

A crucial period has arrived. After proving that Canada has the talent, the expertise, the ideas, even the investors, as well as potential box office strength, the film industry must continue to operate without help in organising these components properly. Film is one of the few cultural industries that is capable of self-support, that is, without government handouts. And yet it must struggle on alone, again.

Mr. Faulkner repeated previous errors, neglected to learn from history, defied not only his own policy advisor, the industry, and the facts, but also his own words, and rejected expressed public support for proper plans, as well as CFDC and CRTC precedents.

It's no wonder you have to look a gift horse very carefully in the mouth. □

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