

Distribution legislation watered down

TORONTO – While Canada's big players welcomed the money that new federal legislation will pump into distribution and production, reaction from the smaller distributors was more reserved.

Communications Minister Flora MacDonald chose the 40th anniversary celebration of the Canadian Film and Television Association, a group composed mostly of producers, to announce a watered-down version of the long-awaited bill. The legislation that was originally proposed in February 1987 would have insisted that Canadian companies distribute independently-produced international films in Canada, rather than having those rights fall to the American distributor that bought the rights for the United States, including Canada as part of the domestic market.

But the bill MacDonald announced in May only gives Canadian distributors the right to bid against the larger American companies, and provides them with \$17 million each year for the next five years, administered by Telefilm Canada, to make those bids competitive.

Though the announcement was cheered in the festive atmosphere of the CFTA anniversary, distributors are now wondering how the bill will work in practice. Criteria for accessing the new money have yet to be announced.

"We want it to be as simple as possible," says Daniel Weinzweig of Norstar Releasing. "We want to ensure that Telefilm itself, internally, is sensitive to the needs of the distribution community, which previously it had not been. We want the funds to be administered as democratically as possible between the companies – this isn't a fund for Cineplex Odeon or Norstar. It's not money to be just thrown around and then disappear."

Despite uncertainty about how the bill will work in the complex distribution world, Weinzweig is generally optimistic.

"It's certainly not what we'd hoped for, but this particular piece of legislation may be more realistically drafted. . . It establishes the fundamental principle of the separation of territory, and the identification of Canada as a separate and distinct territory for the purchase of (distribution) rights. We've never had that so we don't really know if it'll work until it's in practice.

"My personal feeling is that the short-term effects in terms of the acquisition of new pictures will be minimal. But the long-term impact will be significant. People around the world will get used to the idea that Canada is a separate market, that Canadian distributors are

well-armed and well-financed and have the ability to distribute these important pictures."

Creative Exposure's Ron McLuskey isn't willing to say whether small distributors will gain by the bill.

"In theory, probably yes. In practice, it's hard to say until we get a clearer picture of what it means, both financially and logistically.

"It made the larger companies bigger and stronger and able to compete for more high-profile films, we could possibly then get access to some films they may not have time for."

"In terms of generating production, it'll probably be okay," says Isme Bennie, president of Paragon International, largely a sales agent for television programming. "In terms of assistance to distributors to acquire rights, I'm still iffy on that. I'm not sure I want to see it happen.

"Even with that fund available to Canadian distributors to acquire rights for Canada, can they compete? It sounds fine in theory; let's see if it can happen."

In addition to the \$85 million aimed at helping distributors, MacDonald also announced \$60 million to be spent on production and \$15 million on subtitling and dubbing films over the next five years, both funds to be administered by Telefilm. Also, the National Film Board will be allocated an additional \$25 million to co-produce feature films with independent producers. And Supply and Services Canada, through its Film and Video branch, will be given \$10 million, also over five years, to go into non-theatrical film production. Finally, a new Film Products Importation Office will be set up at a cost of \$5 million over five years to "administer the proposed legislation regulating the importation of film products into Canada." In all, the programs will cost \$200 million.

Asked whether this legislation will be passed before the next election, MacDonald replied "You bet it will! It's a priority."

Reaction to policy lukewarm in Quebec

MONTREAL – Quebec distributors are taking a wait-and-see approach to the Canadian Film Distribution Policy, announced May 5 by Communications minister Flora MacDonald.

The proposed legislation has been given a lukewarm reception by Quebec-based distributors, according to André Link, president of the Association Québécoise des distributeurs et exportateurs de films et de vidéo (AQDEFV).

"The overall reaction is rather positive on the

whole but we are waiting to read the fine print in the legislation," says Link. "It is a first step in the right direction."

Link welcomes the formation of the Film Products Importation Office by Communications Canada to govern the importation of proprietary and non-proprietary film products. "If this system is applied according to the spirit of the law then we are in effect clearly defining Canada as a separate territory."

Time will tell, says Link, whether the system is circumvented or not.

Marie-José Raymond, president of Rose Films and an executive member of the Association des producteurs de films et de vidéo du Québec (APFVQ), says the distribution policy is a toothless version of the original policy introduced in February 1986.

According to the 1986 policy, Canadian distributors were automatically given domestic rights to properties not owned by the major studios. This, says Raymond who co-authored a federal government task force report on the Canadian film industry, would have undermined section 2005 of the free trade agreement. "It has been obvious for a long time that the federal government would not do anything that would bring retaliation," says Raymond.

Under the proposed system of proprietary and non-proprietary films, it is business as usual for the U.S. major studios and their proprietary film product (see story). Where non-proprietary product is concerned, legislation will require that the importer demonstrate that the rights for Canada were acquired under a separate agreement for a separate fee; and without considerations for any other market.

Raymond commends the policy for at least acknowledging a separate Canadian market in which a Canadian contract is required and in which Canadian distributors will bid on non-proprietary films with the support of a new five year \$85 million Film Distribution Fund. However, she adds: "I don't believe the fund is strong (competitive) enough and one has to ask, do we want taxpayers' money to purchase foreign films?"

Another \$115 million, to be administered by Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board and the Film and Video Program of Supply and Services Canada, will be set aside for culturally significant films, regional films, non-theatrical films and French-language productions. Raymond says she is perplexed as to why this money is being parceled out when Telefilm Canada has been established as a central funding agency.

"I am hoping that it is not opening the door to patronage which is the sort of problem we've had in the past with this government," says Raymond.

Production down as writers strike

VANCOUVER – The Writers' Guild strike in the United States is already affecting fall season programming for Cannell Productions, according to Lisa Lewinson, Cannell's vice-president of publicity.

The production company, which shoots such programs as the series *21 Jump Street* in Vancouver, would normally be well into pre-production at this time of year.

Instead, they are laying people off and hoping for progress soon in the almost three-month-long dispute some producers estimate has cost the industry more than \$15 million.

"All we can do is wait," said Lewinson. "It will probably take at least six weeks to gear up for production from the day the strike ends. So, at this point, it looks like it will probably affect the next season."

She said all productions for this season had already completed normal scheduling before the strike.

Cannell does not yet have a contingency plan should the dispute continue into the summer.

Lewinson added that they would not likely use Canadian or other writers since studio head Stephen Cannell is himself a member of the guild.

MacGyver, another American series produced in Vancouver, has also not yet been affected.

Producers there are waiting to hear whether they will be picked up next season by ABC and can't say until then what consequences the strike will have for them.

Quebec funding grossly inadequate

Lobby exerts pressure

MONTREAL – Télécopro Inc., an association of several Quebec-based television production companies, has thrown its considerable weight behind what is becoming an industry-wide demand for increased television production funding from the Quebec government.

A letter has been sent to Premier Robert Bourassa and key ministers stating an urgent need for the establishment of a \$6 million television fund.

This fund, they say, would help to assure a higher rate of employment and preserve the reputation of the Quebec production industry in French-language world markets.

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The Télécopro Inc. letter echoes the concerns of Rock Demers and several industry representatives who called a press conference in April to show their disapproval of a five per cent increase in provincial government budget allocations for cultural industries.

Representatives at the press conference said the \$11 million for film and television was not enough to counter the rising cost of production and compensate for a sharp reduction in the provincial and federal government tax shelters. (Since this press conference, Quebec has again increased its tax shelter for film and video.)

Télécopro Inc. is comprised of Rose Films Inc., S. D. A. Ltée., Téléscène Inc., Verseau Inc. and Via le Monde Inc.

Tax shelter increased

MONTREAL - The tax shelter increase in Quebec's provincial budget, tabled May 12, will do in a pinch, says Aimée Danis, president of Les Productions du Verseau Inc.

Danis, one of the organizers of Télécopro Inc., says an increase in the tax shelter allowance for Quebec-made film and television is, nevertheless, a sorry substitute for a television fund.

However, she says it will help the industry and hopefully bring investors on side.

In an attempt to encourage investments in Quebec's film and television industry, the government has raised the deduction on investments in the Quebec Stock Savings Plan to 166.6 per cent from 133.3 per cent.

"The federal Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) combined with this could make it livable for us," says Danis.

Quebec Finance minister Gérard D. Lévesque reduced the QSSP in December 1986 from 150 per cent to 100 per cent. An increase to 133.3 per cent was announced in the wake of a federal government White Paper, June 18, 1987, which proposed to reduce the federal CCA to 30 per cent, where it sits today.

Due to its limited market size, the Quebec-based film and television industry is far more dependent on private investment than the larger English-language market.

Independent Pictures in limbo

TORONTO - On March 31, producer Peter O'Brian shut down preproduction on *Hollywood North* and laid off staff. Thinking back on "the horror" of dealing with Telefilm Canada since last fall, he contemplated the damages: the derailment of what had been one of the more promising production companies by its principal financial partner, the federal funding agency.

O'Brian's company, Independent Pictures, is probably the most high-profile company to be seriously harmed by the financial and administrative disarray at TFC, but is certainly not the only one. The immediate victim is its feature, *Hollywood North*, which had the enthusiastic backing of the Ontario Film Development Corp. and which had been approved by TFC's Operations branch last July. O'Brian is now working to secure the survival of his company, hoping that it will not also become a victim of TFC's inertia.

Over the last three years, O'Brian had TFC's encouragement to "go for it"; former executive director Peter Pearson had been supportive of the idea that Independent should aim to produce two or three features a year - original, Canadian material. With a track record which included *The Grey Fox*, *My American Cousin*, *John and the Missus* and *One Magic Christmas*, the encouragement seemed warranted. Having received development money from TFC, O'Brian had understood that the agency "would be there in strength when it came time to sit down at the table and finance these things."

As *Hollywood North* moved from creative approval in Operations to Business Affairs, TFC made its October 1987 announcement of financial over-commitment and O'Brian and his project began a six-month stint in limbo.

"Senior management couldn't discuss the rules," he told *Cinema Canada*. Having begun to negotiate with Neil Court and then with Linda Beath, O'Brian wound up with Judy Watt: three officers in six months, all handicapped by the administrative confusion surrounding Pearson's withdrawal from the agency.

"No one was in charge," O'Brian explained. Despite denials from the former chairman of the Board of interference in the daily functioning of the agency, O'Brian understands that Jean Sirois was an important factor in the slowing down of the administrative process. "The head of Business Affairs for English Canada couldn't make a decision without calling the part-time, political appointee, chairman of the Board. It was ludicrous. This was last November, before Michèle Fortin was in."

Meanwhile, O'Brian refinanced the project twice, trying to maintain the momentum necessary to its production. But with TFC "sinking into a torpor," the situation became untenable and O'Brian finally had to cancel the production in March.

At Business Affairs, O'Brian recognizes certain problems with the production and admits that not everyone was crazy about the script. But approval had been given in Operations, and the details should have been worked out. As it was, the staffers on hand in March were very legalistic, O'Brian reports, and decisions just weren't forthcoming. While TFC was "technically blameless," according to O'Brian, the agency bears a moral responsibility.

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"Nobody wanted that picture not to go forward. Everybody knew what was at stake in terms of Independent Pictures being able to make other films." As it was, O'Brian spent one year not producing, and now wonders, if companies like his are allowed to languish, "Where are the films to come from?"

O'Brian subscribes to the idea that different kinds of producers and productions are necessary on the Canadian scene, and admits that he is interested in the "cinema," and not in an industrial model where quantity, by some mysterious alchemy, converts itself into quality. He does not believe, however, that variety need result in murky policy.

"Is it necessarily true that an industry comprising all kinds of different points of view should pay the price for those different points of view by having an unfocused Telefilm Canada? An unfocused film policy? I don't think so," he concludes.

Perhaps the adventure of Independent Pictures will serve as an object lesson for the industry. Meanwhile, *Hollywood North*, a film about a tax-shelter production which never gets made, has been cancelled. In its wake, O'Brian finds a mountain of problems to resolve if he is to maintain his independent stance.

B.C. Film to buy common shares

VANCOUVER - British Columbia's lottery-funded film agency is going to invest some of its winnings. B. C. Film has decided to set aside \$400,000, repeated from investments made during the first seven months of the agency's life, for the purchase of common shares in B. C. -controlled film and production companies.

Chairman and CEO Wayne Sterloff announced the new program on May 5 along with notice of intention to study an umbrella marketing program for the Western provinces.

In an interview with *Cinema Canada* he explained that the \$400,000 is in addition to the \$3.5 million the agency receives from provincial lottery funds. It is the return on project-by-project investments and payments from low-interest loans.

"We found there was a fundamental problem in B. C.," says Sterloff, "The undercapitalization of development companies. They were approaching networks with development packages that weren't strong enough, that weren't attractive enough for the networks to commit to major funding in B. C. You capitalize the development companies on a project-by-project basis."

The example of Ontario and Quebec would indicate that the companies able to tap into Telefilm funds and support corporate overheads

are those which develop six projects per year.

"Year after year after year, a very evident imbalance began to exist. We realized we're never going to catch up in the area of indigenous B. C. filmmaking," Sterloff said.

"So the board of directors really felt that we needed a fast-track method of taking our strongest companies - that is to say those that are a team of very strong professionals who have a portfolio of product in development - and purchase shares in that company itself. That should allow the management team to approach the networks with the highest quality portfolio possible."

Under the terms of the new program B. C. Film will not buy more than 25 per cent of the common shares available. Sterloff also says there will be an emphasis on leverage funds from the private sector.

"Of course we're looking at having half of the writers resident in B. C., as B. C. residents controlling the company. In terms of how we're going to make a decision, there isn't a list of criteria, there won't be a guideline. We're prepared to begin reviewing the prospectuses that will be sent to us. We're looking at the top end of the market, thorough business plans. As much confidence has to be built in us as any other private sector investor in making that kind of a risk."

On the surface this seems to run counter to the general get-the-government-out-of-investment philosophy of the current British Columbia administration. Sterloff says not.

"Essentially what we're doing in this program is taking new money and recycling it into the industry. I think also the idea of this agency handing over more responsibility to the private sector, entrusting our funds to the decision-makers of the private sector is in line with that overall corporate policy as well.

"If we begin to see those professionals joining together, forming partnerships, forming new development companies with broader management teams, that is going to instill in us the confidence (necessary)."

He says he'll also be looking for companies with a wide range of projects in the works, features, low-budget films, TV series and so on. Once some of these films get made, they'll also be eligible for improved marketing. Sterloff says B. C. Film is working on co-ordinating the film agencies of Alberta and Manitoba under a group marketing umbrella.

"The idea basically is to dramatically increase the sales force of B. C. so that we can attend festivals like MIP-TV. We're just looking for a direct way to get B. C. product into the world market. Umbrellas may be an avenue."

Sterloff also reports that there are 29 projects in different stages of development at his agency. He's expecting a boom year of indigenous filmmaking in B. C. with as many as four features likely to begin shooting in the next few months.

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Tenders called for production centre

MONTREAL – Proposals for a Film Production Centre in Montreal for the production of feature films and high-budget television series are being sought by the governments of Canada and Quebec.

Under the Canada-Quebec Subsidiary Agreement on Cultural Facilities, the private sector has been invited to submit proposals by June 30. The proposals will be evaluated on the basis of their ability to meet the needs of the Canadian and Quebec film industries and to attract foreign productions.

This project is one of several projects promised under the (Quebec/Canada) agreement which was ratified in 1985 the invitation for proposals has been circulated widely throughout the private sector.

A federal government spokesman told *Cinema Canada* that it is not a resurfacing of the Cité du

Cinéma project which had been the subject of much speculation over the past several years.

Gilles Lalonde, director of federal-provincial relations, communications Canada, says the project is on a much smaller scale than the Cité du Cinéma.

"We are talking about one maybe two major sound stages," says Lalonde, "at any rate we are talking about production facilities only."

Lalonde says the recently announced film distribution policy and a promise of a \$200 million infusion in the industry has created a renewed interest in the building of a production centre in Montreal.

"Montreal is already heavy with video production facilities but there is room for more film production facilities," says Lalonde.

"There has been declared interest in this project in the past. We will have to wait and see what happens."

The proposal invitation stipulates that the project must be at least 80 per cent Canadian owned.

The management committee of the agreement, co-chaired by Ken Hepburn, senior assistant deputy minister of Communications Canada

and André Juneau, assistant deputy minister for the Cultural Milieu of the Quebec department of Cultural Affairs, will make its recommendations to the responsible ministers in July.

Vancouver fest tightens belt

VANCOUVER – The Vancouver International Film Festival will go ahead in late September but at two-thirds of the originally planned size. Interim director Alan Franey, who was appointed after Hannah Fisher resigned following the Festival's annual general meeting, says the last month has been a time of "finding our feet".

Leonard Schein's "Vancouver Community Slate" won approval when the AGM voted for the board of directors on April 20; since then, Fisher has left along with business manager Sheila Beveridge and two other staffers. Franey says the priority is to hire a director of communications and a special events co-ordinator. A small clerical staff will be looking after business management.

"We've got to tighten our belt," Franey told *Cinema Canada*. "We've pared the festival down to about 100 films from the projected 150. The dates won't change and we'll allow two screenings per film. The word we've been hearing from audiences is that to market a festival that has too much for people to get a handle on is counter-productive. Especially these days when Cineplex and Northstar are spreading out into the area of specialized films, art films."

He says the VIFF will continue with Fisher's plan to focus on the Pacific Rim countries.

"Hannah had a great many things up in the air and her personal talents will be greatly missed. I don't think anyone can pretend to come in and capitalize on what she had done. We'll try and get our priorities straight and carry on with those things that are most important for the long-term of the festival."

Franey says he feels somewhat caught in the middle of the philosophic disagreements that saw Schein take over the Board and Fisher leave. "I've worked with Hannah for the past year-and-a-half and I'm very much sympathetic with both what she was trying to do and with the aims of the festival before Hannah arrived. I think that, unfortunately, because of the high emotions of the thing, there was no reconciliation possible. I don't think Leonard's mandate was to take the festival back to what it was... I don't think anyone knew the emotions would start a domino effect.

"I agree 100 per cent that there has been damage conferred because of seemingly petty issues. The Board I know... there was much alarm about this kind of jumping the ship. I

think that the common good and the responsibility to the long-term goals of the festival was lost in the emotions of the moment," he continued.

"If we get over this year as gracefully as we hope to... I think that the picture will be clearer. This has been an unfortunate glitch but I think everybody wants the same thing: a quality film festival which will have meaning for Vancouver audiences and for the international film industry as a whole."

Famous launches construction drive

TORONTO – Calling it "the largest single construction commitment in the history of film in this city," Famous Players chairman Walter Senior has announced eight new theatre complexes to be developed in the Toronto area over the next three years, including a downtown location that reclaims the name Imperial Six.

The old Imperial Six was lost when rival exhibitor Cineplex Odeon bought first half, then all, of the building in which it was housed, renaming it the Pantages.

The new Imperial will be built underneath the historic Ryrie building at Yonge and Shuter streets. Construction on the six-theatre, 2300-seat complex is set to begin next spring, and will take one year to complete.

The Ryrie is located in the heart of the city's "theatre block," an area designated by the city to be developed as an entertainment district. The block includes Massey Hall, the soon-to-be-reopened Elgin-Wintergarden theatre, and the old Imperial Six, now being redeveloped into Cineplex's live theatre venue, the Pantages.

Famous Players' Uptown theatre is also slated for redevelopment following completion of the new Imperial Six. Both plans are seen as an effort to reestablish the downtown presence of Famous Players, which has been outmaneuvered twice by Cineplex recently. In August 1987, Cineplex bought the University theatre on high-priced Bloor Street, which had been closed by Famous, and announced plans to turn it into a theatre, hotel and shopping complex that would serve as the home of Toronto's Festival of Festivals. Then, this spring, after a bitter legal struggle, Cineplex finally gained control of the Imperial Six complex, also located on prime downtown land.

Allan Gregg, chairman of the Festival of Festivals, was on hand at the Famous Players announcement to show his neutrality in choosing theatre space. "Our demand for cinemas is so great that no one cinema complex will ever be able to accommodate it all," he said.

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IMAGES 88

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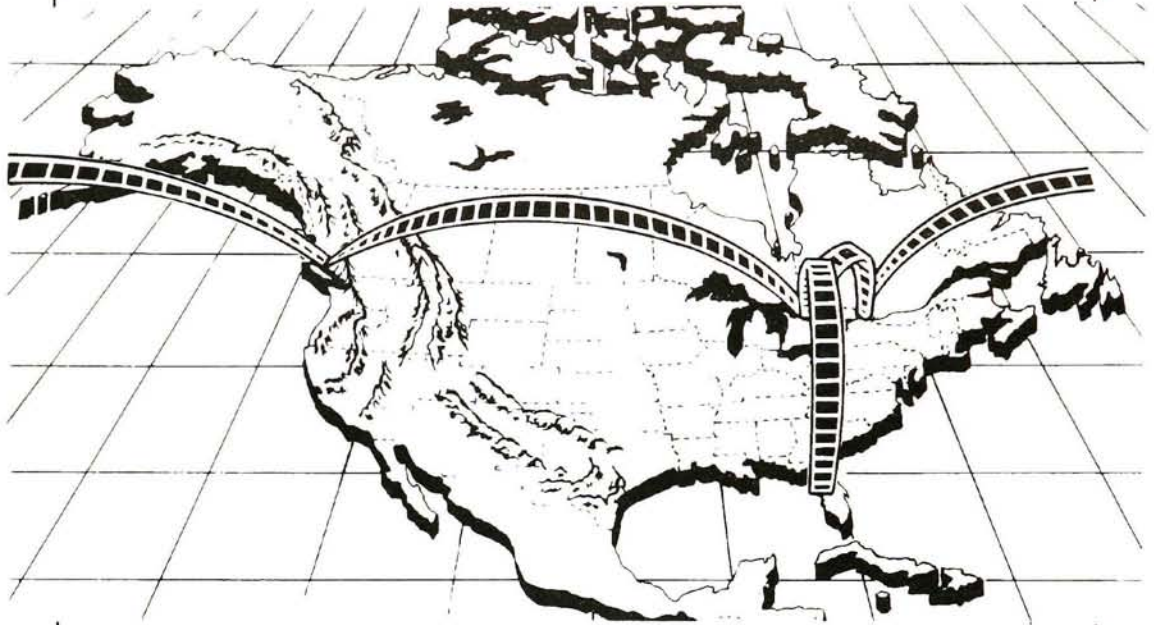
Senior assured the audience that the Famous Players' association with the festival "will continue in these new theatres."

"The festival needs the cooperation of both circuits."

Senior also denied that the announcements were a new salvo in a long territorial battle between the two exhibitors. "We don't expand reactively," he said. "We expand because we think there's a need."

In addition to the Imperial Six and Uptown projects, Famous Players will also build a new complex at Yonge and St. Clair in midtown Toronto, and five more in surrounding areas, including: a six-screen complex in Scarborough scheduled to open in December; the Gateway cinemas, a six-screen complex in Bramalea, located west of Toronto; the Glen Abbey, a six-screen theatre in Oakville.

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Drabinsky defends expansion to shareholders

TORONTO - At an annual meeting marked more by orchestrated responses than outright conflict, Cineplex Odeon chairman Garth Drabinsky defended his expansionist policies to an audience of nervous shareholders.

Despite stock prices that reached a 52-week low the day before the shareholders meeting, Drabinsky presented an aggressively upbeat profile of his corporation, outlining its dominance of "the important markets" in film exhibition, and its diversification into other areas. Cineplex's goal, he said, is to create "a well-balanced and highly profitable leisure and entertainment operation by the end of the decade."

There were 747 shareholders, holding over 39 million shares, represented at the meeting in person and by proxy. Although some of the questions challenged Drabinsky's version of the company's performance, the actual business of the meeting was handled without opposition. Directors were nominated and voted onto the Cineplex board with orchestrated precision. At one point Drabinsky said, "We should have the scrutineer's report (on a vote) in about 30 seconds." Exactly 25 seconds later, it arrived.

Drabinsky took the crowd through the company's recent performance, characterizing 1987 as a "year of consolidation" after the rapid expansion of 1986. Still, Cineplex plans to open

"100 screens in the U.K. by the end of 1990," and Drabinsky hinted at moving into the Japanese market as well. He tried to downplay any risk in the corporation's activities, and insisted that Cineplex will not move into film production.

"I wish to state categorically that we are not in the business of producing motion pictures," he said. Cineplex will, however, provide distribution guarantees, which a producer can then use to obtain more money from other sources.

One shareholder pressed Drabinsky

repeatedly on the corporation's performance, citing the cost of lavish new theatres, and stock prices that have continued to slide since the October 1987 market crash. Before the crash, stocks reached a high of \$26, and are now trading in the \$10 range.

"If shareholders decide to sell, nobody can stop them," Drabinsky responded. "I know where we're going. Our directors know where we're going. We have tremendous confidence."

Drabinsky's aggressive defence of Cineplex policy is matched by similarly aggressive accounting practices. Cineplex reported

revenues of \$520,153,000 (U.S.) for 1987 and net income of \$34,558,000 (U.S.), but the corporation includes real estate revenue in its yearly profit rather than counting it as extraordinary gains, boosting the on-paper profit beyond what a more conservative accounting would show.

For the most part, though, investors left the meeting impressed with Drabinsky's confident plans for further development. On leaving, each shareholder was presented with a ceramic miniature of a Cineplex popcorn bag, with the words "Made in USA" stamped on the bottom.



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MONTREAL - Distributors of English-language films in Quebec are expected to act in good faith and comply with the spirit of the current cinema law while the implementation of the controversial Bill 59, Article 83, revising the Quebec Cinema Act, is put on hold until October.

Originally expected by mid-summer, the amended version of Article 83 would have limited to a single copy the number of prints to an English-language film that can be exhibited in Quebec unless French-language versions are exhibited simultaneously.

Bill 59 was passed in Quebec's National Assembly early in December, thereby updating what was known as the Quebec Cinema Act: Bill 109.

However, ongoing talks between Cultural Affairs minister Lise Bacon and representatives of the film industry in Quebec have delayed the amendment of a key clause - Article 83 which stipulates the one-copy rule.

Luc Bertrand, assistant to Bacon, told *Cinema Canada* that whether the law is enforced in October or whether a code of ethics is implemented in its place as suggested by industry representatives, will be determined by "how the industry behaves during the next five months."

"We cannot say what the measure will be," says Bertrand who discredits any suggestion that this five-month hiatus is the result of pressures brought to bear by the U.S. major studios.

"Certainly not," says Bertrand. "Everyone we have talked to has said that they agree to the main objective to bring more French more rapidly to the screen."

Bacon has warned the industry that the amended Article 83 remains on the books and can be enforced earlier than October if the distributors don't comply with the intent and spirit of the law and make available sooner an increased number of films that French-speaking Quebec citizens can see in their own language.

Indeed, prior to Bill 59, Article 83, distributors were showing several English-language prints without any intention of showing a French-language version at the end of a prescribed 60-day period, despite the availability of the dubbed or subtitled version. There was no limit in the number of English-language prints in circulation.

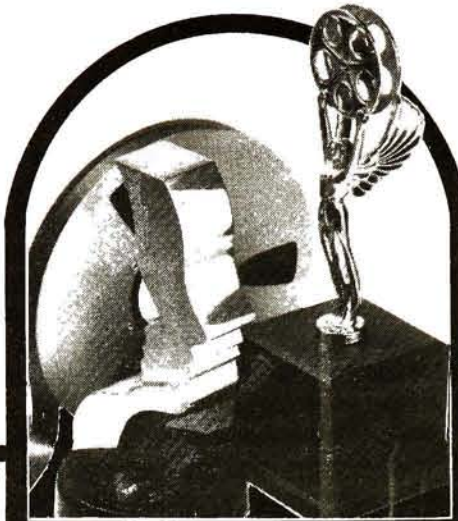
Although there has been widespread approval of the amended Article 83, several sectors of the industry have suggested further revisions while those who oppose the Bill are adamantly opposed.

Harold Greenberg, chairman of Astral Bellevue Pathé Inc. which handles film

distribution for 20th Century Fox in Canada through Cineplex Odeon, has gone on record as saying that Article 83 will result in "less films, not more films" for the French-speaking public. Greenberg was unavailable for comment at press time.

The greatest concern among the dissenting voices on record including Cinémas Famous Players and the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association is that the major distributors are not going to delay the release of films in New York, Los Angeles or the rest of Canada to await dubbing in Quebec.

Carole Boudreault, executive in charge of



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operations at Cinémas Famous Players, told *Cinema Canada* recently that the theatre circuit is willing to comply with the spirit and intent of the law but that in the final analysis what goes on the screen is left up to the distributors. "If they bring us the French-language version, it goes on the screen," says Boudreault.

The CMPDA, representing the U.S. major studios in Canada has added to the controversy by stating that only 50 per cent of all major titles released in any given year are judged to be sufficiently viable for distribution in the French-language markets of the world.

The Association of Cinema Owners in

Quebec, with over 200 screens across the province, represents a moderate voice in the controversy recommending that Article 83 be "more flexible" by allowing a limit of five to six English-language films for exhibition prior to the release of dubbed versions where a dubbing commitment has been given by the distributor. Where a film does not prove to popular, three undubbed prints should be permissible for 30 days.

Throughout the controversy, the Quebec government has emphasised the importance of a public hearing before Bill 59, Article 83 is enforced.

Bill 11 broadens AMPDC mandate

A long time ago the Alberta government chose to emphasize the economic aspects of the province's film and video industry, rather than the cultural ones. "Our department gets more involved in the filmmaking that's designed to be marketed," says Larry Shaben, the minister of Economic Development and Trade.

The Alberta government was a pioneer, setting up the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation (AMPDC) in 1981 to strengthen the indigenous industry. "AMPDC set an example for subsequent boards across the country," brags the minister. And now the government is taking a further step. It is amending its Motion Picture Development Act to greatly improve the financial picture for Alberta's business-minded film and video industry.

The industry has taken the government's cues. "Our industry is organized on the private enterprise model," says Allan Stein, the president of Alberta's Motion Picture Industries Association. "We try to justify ourselves as businesses. But we're also on a cultural mission. We talk apologetically about the fact that we're a cultural industry. We don't have to be apologetic - we simply produce culture."

But 'culture' is a bad word in Alberta. Even though the arts contribute significantly to the provincial economy, they are all but ignored. Pam Barrett, the house leader for Alberta's official opposition, claims the government cut up to 73 per cent off the culture budget last year. The government also renamed the department from Alberta Culture to Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, de-emphasising the arts.

Barrett not only moans the fact that the Getty government is so tight-fisted with money; she is also concerned with political favoritism. "We're leaving it very much up to the government to determine who gets the money, and how much. If we had an independent film and video foundation with elected board members we wouldn't have a problem."

Still, she could be making things worse, since AMPDC probably has fewer ties with the government than Alberta's various arts funding foundations. The foundations now provide most of the funding to the arts in Alberta, but are government controlled and funded. Barrett admits: "Compared to what's been going on, with the political direction that the foundations are told to follow, AMPDC is now an illuminating leader in the field."

Meanwhile, the government has introduced bill 11, the Motion Picture Development Amendment Act, which is expected to receive royal assent this month. The bill will broaden AMPDC's mandate to provide minority equity in Alberta film productions, expands its capital from \$3 to \$10 million, and extends the term of the bill indefinitely (the Corporation was initially only an eight-year experiment).

The AMPDC is extremely pleased because "it radically increases the amount of funding producers can leverage from other sources," says Gary Toth, director of project administration. "Alberta will see a dramatic increase in production as a result."

Bill 11 in effect turns AMPDC into a 'real' business, and there's a gleam in Shaben's eye when he says: "AMPDC can now build the size of their capital if they're wise in their investment." And if they do poorly? "That's a risk that any venture capitalist group takes," says Toth. "It's an extremely high-risk business, but we're here to develop the industry. There are going to be losses but there are also going to be gains."

The industry will have a say in how the money is invested. To assure a degree of control over the corporation, says Shaben, AMPDC "established an advisory committee from whom they seek advice." This board consists of people from the industry, and always includes the president of the Motion Picture Industries Association, in this case, Stein.

Stein is happy with the bill. "We have wholly endorsed the concept of AMPDC as an equity participant." But he adds that more government development is needed, not from Economic Development, but from Culture and Multiculturalism.

"AMPDC is clearly not a cultural agency. It is an economic agency. We've always thought that a Film and Video foundation would be an appropriate parallel to the Performing and Literary Arts foundations, since AMPDC addresses only part of our needs."

"We need a foundation, or some other support mechanism, because if we continue as we are now, it (the industry) is going to be a closed clique. We need to bring up new people, support them between the time a kid graduates and the point where the AMPDC becomes useful to him. We need to provide a base."

The province hasn't shown too much interest in culture over the past few years, and it's doubtful they'll change their business-oriented approach. Still, Stein is hopeful the government will invest in culture too.

"The private sector model doesn't fully address the needs of our industry. We hope that all these government support systems are just training wheels. But Canada has a very small population base, and Alberta's is even smaller. The government must be prepared to have some of the industry supported from the tax base."

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Four fests announce plans

MONTREAL - Four important film festivals in Quebec have recently announced opening dates.

May 27-June 3, the 4th Montreal International Festival of Films and Videos by Women is running. This festival presents 150 titles from 20 countries. Among 15 films in competition for the Alcan Prize are *Chronique d'un temps flou* by Sylvie Groulx, *The Romance of Book and Sword* (Hong Kong) by Ann Hui and *Dziwoczenia Z Nowolipiek* (Poland) (Part 1: The Girls of Nowolipiek/ Part 2: The Apple Tree of Paradise).

A prize is offered this year in the short film section which opens with a homage to filmmaker Anne-Marie Miéville by showing three of her films.

Also in this section are *Ou serez-vous le 31 Decembre 1999*, an experimental work by Quebec filmmaker Marie Décary and Brenda Longfellow's *Our Marilyn* which recently won the Grand Prize at the Oberhausen Festival in West Germany.

The Panorama section features, among other films, *Terra Para Rose* (Land for Rose) by Brazil's Tete Moraes and *An Autumn's Tale* (Hong Kong) by Mabel Cheung.

The 12th International Montreal World Film Festival will be held Aug. 24-Sept. 4, followed by the fourth annual Festival du Cinéma International de Ste-Thérèse, to be held September 21-26. Entry deadline for the Ste-Thérèse festival is June 12.

The 17th Montreal Festival of New Cinema and Video will take place Oct. 20-30, at four different venues in the downtown area. Registration deadline for films and videos is August 15.

World Film Fest

Czechoslovakian filmmaker Very Chytilova's *The Jester and the Queen* will have its world premiere at the 12th Montreal World Film Festival.

China will once again have a strong cinematic presence, as will Japan, Hungary and Argentina. Heading the Chinese section in the Official Competition is *One and Eight* by Zhang Junzhao. *The Report on Pollution at Women's Kingdom* and *The Red Sorghum* by Zhang Yimou will be shown in the Hors Concours section as well as Chen Kaige's *The King of the Children*. China's *The Last Frenzy* will be shown in the Cinema of Today and Tomorrow section.

The cinema of Japan will be represented in the Official Competition by *Bu Su*, a film by Jun Ichikawa. The Hors Concours will feature *The Kimura Family* by Yojiro Takita and *Tonko* by Junya Sato. *Remembrance* by Takehiro Nakajima and *Tomorrow* by Kazou Kuroki will be shown in the Cinema of Today and Tomorrow.

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Hungary will be represented by Zsolt Kezdi-Kovacs's *Cry and Cry Again* in the official Competition. Bela Tarr's *Damnation* will be presented in the festival section for television films.

Latin American entries to date include *Open from Six to Midnight* by Victor Dinenzon in the Official Competition and Miguel Pereira's *La Duda Interna* in the Latin American Cinema Section.

Other program announcements are expected throughout the summer.

Two from Quebec bow at Cannes fest

MONTREAL - *Les Portes tournantes* (The Revolving Doors), directed by Francis Mankiewicz was selected for the Cannes International Film Festival, May 11-23 this year, with *La Ligne de chaleur* (The Heat Line) by Hubert-Yves Rose.

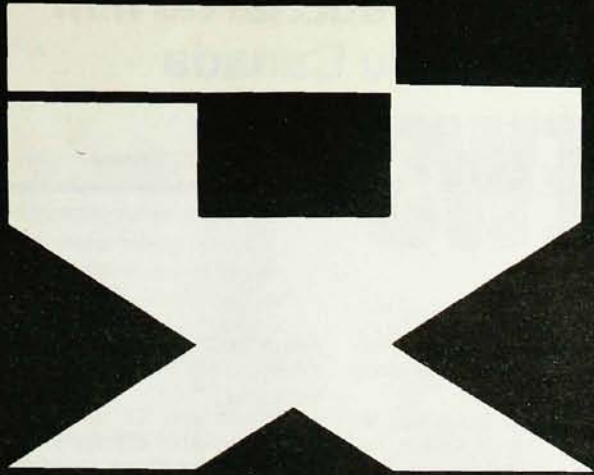
While this first feature by Rose was selected for the Director's Fortnight Review Section, *Les Portes tournantes* was entered in the Certain Regard Showcase Section.

HBO gets a plus

MONTREAL - Film and video distributor Cinema Plus will represent HBO Video in English Canada.

With offices in Montreal and Toronto, Cinema Plus also carries HBO Video's French-language product.

This recent expansion of the video distribution division has resulted in the appointment of André Paquette as vice-president video in the Montreal head office. Steve Dorman has been appointed general manager of the English video distribution.



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Lighthouse Productions has finished shooting its first feature, *The Traveller*, and is well into editing.

The film tells the story of a white man, Robert, who has grown up in a West Coast native community, married a native woman and has studied and taught anthropology at a university producers say is "remarkably similar to UBC." Robert has split with his wife and gone to Toronto to work in a museum. The film begins when he returns to B. C. to find some artifacts for the museum and deals with the pull he feels from each of the two cultures.

All shooting was done in Vancouver and the lower mainland area, includes a number of native locations and native roles. The native community here has praised the production as portraying it in a realistic and contemporary manner, and the Lighthouse film crew is the first in years to be allowed to shoot in the university's Museum of Anthropology, according to production spokesperson Ted Pallas.

The Traveller is aiming to premiere at this year's Festival of Festivals and will likely be handled by André Bennett at Cinephile (... *Mermaids Singing*). The script was co-written by Jean Pierre Lefebvre and Bruno Pacheco, with Pacheco also directing; Raymond Massey was producer.

And, speaking of travelling, the British Columbia Motion Picture Association is now set up in their new offices (half a block closer to the coast, on Hastings). They now have a great deal more elbow room with five rooms instead of their previous one. The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television rents an office from the BCMPA.

The space is certainly not going to waste. Natalie McCowen, the association co-ordinator, is busy working on the resource library's data base. This new service makes taking out a corporate membership quite a bargain now that they've reduced the rate to \$300 from \$1,000. And, if you have a \$50 individual card already, you can end up paying a mere \$250. Offer expires at the end of this month.

Bob Dubberly, executive director, adds that the BCMPA will begin holding annual film awards in 1989 for craft and excellence by B. C. filmmakers.

• Praxis just wrapped-up its spring workshop for writers, with five script participants. Four of the screenplays were from Vancouver (which was a surprise to Praxis, since the scripts are read without names or addresses, says Patricia Gruben, co-director) and one was from a Winnipeg writer who now lives in New York.

"I am very impressed with the quality of the scripts we receive," says Gruben, "especially given these are not commissioned but come from writers who feel so strongly about them they are willing to write on spec." She added that producers are beginning to call Praxis in search of good scripts.

The spring session brought in writers: Kit Carson, Sharon Riis, Linda Feferman and Phil Savath. For the first portion of the workshop, participants work with the writers and each script is read twice by a repertory company. Then the visiting directors come in, and the scripts are gone over once more. This session, directors included Robert M. Young (*Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*), Randa Haines (*Children of a Lesser God*), Jill Godmillow (*Waiting for the Moon*), Stuart Margolin (*Glitterdome*), and David Burton Morris (*Patti Rocks*).

The fall session will feature the regular nine-week program in which people work with a story editor at their own pace, and will add a new, one-week intensive workshop. Deadline for fall seminars is July 15.

Elsewhere in this issue you'll see a review of Hy Perspectives Media docu-drama *Close to Home* to be broadcast nationally on CBC-TV on June 18. The Vancouver company has picked up a second broadcast agreement from Mother Corp; *Walking in Pain* is an hour-long documentary about native drug and alcohol abuse counsellor Marge Mackie-Orr. CBC-British Columbia will broadcast the program this month or July.

• Vancouver Province film writer Michael Walsh used his calculator while writing about the sudden change of direction at the International Film Festival. Concerned about the level of public subsidy the Festival received last year, he figured out that revenues from memberships (\$10,684) and ticket sales (\$204,822) worked out to \$4.14 per ticket. Government grants totalled \$494,855 or \$9.52 per ticket. Walsh goes on to ask:

"One argument advanced in favour of film festivals is that they offer us films we otherwise wouldn't see. Who's kidding whom?"

"In the first 17 weeks of 1988, 85 feature films opened here... we don't miss much. Certainly not enough to warrant sticking the taxpayers with the bill for an annual film festival."

Be that as it may, the Vancouver Festival is inviting submissions for this year's event (September 30-October 15). Joanna Yamaguchi is looking for features, shorts, fiction and documentaries. Send videos to her at #303-788 Beatty Street, Vancouver, V6B 2M1.

Some notes from CBC-Vancouver:

The venerable *Beachcombers* will undergo a few technical changes in the new season. It will continue to be shot on film but will be transferred to tape for editing at Gastown Productions.

For the last three years Helen Slinger has been at the helm of the local supper-hour newscast *NewsCentre*. She's moving from fact to fiction as an executive producer of TV-Drama on the West Coast.

Fair representation next content challenge

Disabled new target

MONTREAL - The importance of enfranchisement of interest groups such as the disabled - that is, providing access to the broadcast media, portrayal, employment in the media - will soon surpass the issue of Canadian content in the Canadian television broadcast industry, says Bill Roberts, senior vice-president, television, of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB).

Roberts, who recently presented a CAB brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Disabled Persons, says a revised broadcast policy (expected this summer from the federal government) will close the 20-year-old debate on Canadian content and open a new avenue of discussion: interest group enfranchisement.

"For the last 20 years we have been preoccupied with Canadian content and how to handle it. Now we are fine-tuning it with specialty channels, questions of basic or non-basic tiers, capital costs. There are no foreseeable big leaps. So the real discussion in broadcast policy will be technology and enfranchisement," Roberts told *Cinema Canada*.

At this point in time, Roberts says, it is obvious that the Standing Committee on the Status of Disabled Persons, which concluded its hearings May 3, is considering the best interests of the disabled. A report of the committee's findings is expected in late June.

CAB was among several media (film and television-related) organizations to appear before the committee. Among these organizations were the National Film Board of Canada, the CBC and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

François Macerola, NFB Film Commissioner, told the committee that the NFB will aid the hearing-impaired with closed-captioned versioning of all NFB videos released for distribution in 1981-1989. This accounts for close to 200 titles.

Pierre Juneau, president of CBC, outlined policy for hiring disabled persons to positions in front of and behind the cameras. He explained that the CBC has an Employment Equity Co-ordinator to oversee the implementation of the Employment Equity Act which is concerned with women, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and the disabled.

Juneau reminded the committee that disabled persons have acted in episodes of *Street Legal*, *Lance et Compte* and *Des dames de coeur*. "There was a time when such things would not have



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NEWS

FILM PROJECT ANNOUNCED FOR SASKATCHEWAN

The province of Saskatchewan and the National Film Board have announced plans for a three-year production training and film development project. The plan calls for a total commitment of \$600,000 from each of the two parties.

The NFB will be working directly with several independent Saskatchewan-based co-producers, screenwriters, directors, performers, musicians and production crews to create seven half-hour dramas. Saskwest Television Incc., (STV-Regina, Saskatoon), a member of the CanWest Broadcasting Group, has secured the Canadian broadcast rights to the first drama produced under this project.

Substantial training opportunities in all skill areas will be a priority. The proposed three-year project is designed to help stimulate increased independent film industry activity throughout the province.

NFB VIDEO DISPENSER PREMIERES

Markham, Ontario is the first site for a new experiment by the NFB. The Film Board has installed its first videocassette distributing machine in the Thornhill Community Centre in Markham. The Vi-

deomatic Teller will provide access to 196 NFB productions at a rental rate of \$2 each.

The Videomatic Teller was developed by the Technical Research and Development Division of the NFB in co-operation with Tercet Enterprises, Inc. of Markham and Continental Research of Toronto.

The video dispenser features state-of-the-art robotics and a unique "marquee" display system which allows all 196 cassette jackets to be viewed by the client (28 at a time). The Videomatic Teller is the only such machine currently being manufactured in Canada.

Aside from the normal processes of dispensing the cassette, the bilingual Teller invites users to recommend other NFB titles for the collection and provides updated reports on the most requested titles. As well, an LED (Light Emitting Diode) system allows the display of upcoming NFB events and new titles.

NFB ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF FRANCOPHONE FILM CONTEST

The winners have been announced in the National Film Board's Francophone First Feature Film Contest. The contest, which was announced by the NFB's French Program Branch in March, 1987

was organized in association with the Board's 50th Anniversary celebrations (1989).

In September '87, six projects were selected by a first jury awarding each finalist with a prize of \$109,000 and assistance in finalizing their scripts within six months.

The jury's first choice was **Sous les draps, les étoiles** by Jean-Pierre Gariépy. The second script chosen was Richard Roy's **La couleur du désir**. Gariépy's production will be shot during the NFB's fiscal year 1988-89 and Roy's 1989-90.

Among the other finalists, the jury also praised the quality of **Bonne fête, Jacques** co-scripted by Robert Cornélius and André Blanchard.

COMPETING IN BANFF

Four NFB films have been selected for competition at this year's Banff Television Festival to be held June 5-11 in Banff, Alberta. They are: Paul Cowan's **Under the Influence** one in the four-part series on highway safety entitled **At the Wheel**; **Foster Child** directed by Gil Cardinal; **IKWE**, directed and produced by Norma Bailey, which is one of the four films in the highly acclaimed series **Daughters of the Country** and **Sucre Noir** directed by Michel Régnier.

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been thought possible, either on television or in real life. But as I said, society is changing. We now recognize disabled people as individuals with talents they are eager to use and abilities we can all benefit from," said Juneau.

The CBC runs a weekly average of 12 to 15 hours of closed-captioned entertainment and news programming. Trails for "real time" captioning on live sports events are scheduled and the coverage of the Seoul Olympics "will have at least some captioning," he said. The proposed second English-language news and information channel includes plans for captioning or signing similar to the signing used

in French and English on the national satellite channel for the daily *Question Period* from the House of Commons.

For his part, Roberts stated the CAB position that 15 per cent of the Canadian population or four million disabled persons is "an audience to whom our attention should be turned." CAB publications have promoted closed-captioning among CAB members whom, he says, already exceed the CBC by 25 per cent in approximate hours per year of new captioned programs not including captioned repeat episodes or captioned U.S. shows.

Public service announcements, often run at no

charge, are another way that many of the CAB members support the disabled.

The Global Television Network in Toronto (a CAB member) has been involved in annual muscular dystrophy campaigns and has shown over 125 news stories related to the disabled over the past two years.

Télévision Quatre Saisons in Montreal captions its *Le Grand Journal* and co-produces, with CFCF-TV, a marathon for the disabled.

Roberts commended Télé-Métropole and Radio-Québec for their support of the disabled.

Continued next page

YOU CAN LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT, IF YOU'RE SHOOTING IN TORONTO

Continued from previous page

In its presentation to the committee, CAB recommended that a new voluntary industry standard be created to raise the issues of disabled person portrayals and employment. This standard, says CAB, should be based on the recommendations of a United Nations Seminar of June 1982 entitled Improving Communications about People with Disabilities.

CAB is a nonprofit association representing 86 per cent of Canada's private television licensees.

CAB calls for multicultural emphasis

TORONTO - Canadian television must reflect the country's changing social make-up, says a new report issued by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters.

CAB senior vice president Bill Roberts introduced the 30-page "Broadcaster's Guide to Canada's Cultural Mosaic" at the Forum on Multiculturalism in Broadcasting held here in May. The report comes in the wake of calls by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission for broadcasters to increase multicultural programming. Since 1985, stations seeking license renewals must show how their programs will reflect the interests of the communities they serve.

Citing statistics showing over nine million "ethnocultural" Canadians (those with origins other than British, French or Native Canadian), the report uses both economic and social factors to push for closer links between broadcasters and immigrant communities.

"Research indicates these new Canadians are young, well-educated and highly motivated to succeed; in short, the demographics sought after by advertisers who are targeting upscale consumers," the report says.

"The broadcaster who has attracted ethnic minority audiences with attractive programming and who has become identified with these groups by means of local ethnic community involvement and participation, will be in a strong position to access some of the millions of advertising and promotional dollars which are being moved into multicultural marketing."

The report calls for increased access to broadcasting for ethnocultural groups, both through employment and programming, by:

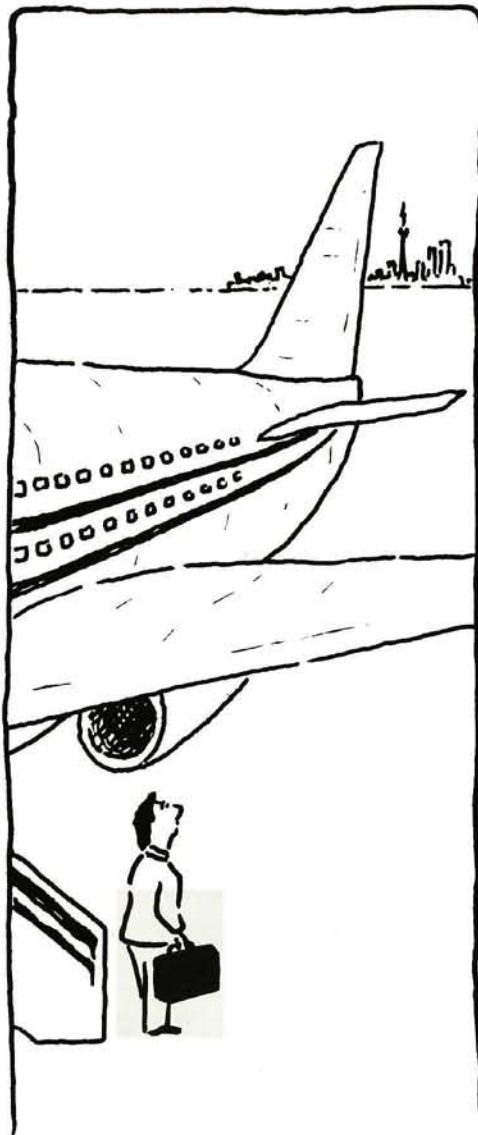
- "implementing employment equity programs to redress the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the broadcasting industry;

- "providing for the dissemination of creative works by ethnic minority persons;

- "providing for greater opportunity for access for ethnic minorities to the broadcasting system as program and service providers."

The report also outlines the categories set up by the CRTC to describe ethnocultural programming, based on language and cultural content. Broadcasters are eligible for Canadian content reductions for this sort of programming.

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Joint-ventured features in QC formula

MONTREAL - The second series of five feature films in a 10-feature package for Radio-Québec has received \$525,000 from the Société générale des industries culturelles Québec (SOGIC), the Quebec film funding agency.

This film package of 10 movies-of-the-week is

being produced by four independent Quebec-based companies, known as Les Producteurs TV-Films Associés, in cooperation with the National Film Board.

Eight of the films are being coproduced with the NFB, each member company of Les Producteurs TV-Films Associés being responsible for two. The remaining two films will be completely financed and produced by the Board.

The second series of five films includes *Bye Bye Love* directed by Claude Fournier for Productions du Verseau. *Le Chemin de Damas* directed by George Mihalka for Cinéma Plus Productions.

Gauguin directed by Jean-Claude Labrecque for Les Films Vision 4. *Julie* directed by Yves Dion for the NFB. *Richard Coeur de nylon* directed by Michel Poulette for Les Productions Vidéofilms.

Budgeted at \$846,000, each of the feature films is being shot in Montreal on an 18-day schedule. Production began in November 1987. The first five films are already in post-production. The first series is expected to be ready for broadcast by September while the second series will be in post-production by January.

Radio-Québec has invested \$105,000 in each film. Other participants include the SOGIQ and Telefilm Canada.

Famous and Cinexus make production deal

TORONTO - Veteran producers Stephen Roth and Frank Jacobs have entered into an agreement with Famous Players to produce Canadian feature films. Their company, Cinexus Capital, and Famous Players will enter into joint ownership of Cinexus/Famous Players Film Inc., with Roth serving as president of the new company.

Roth recently left Alliance Entertainment, which is engaged in production deals with Famous Players' rival, Cineplex Odeon.

No dollar figures for the deal have been announced, but the aim will be to produce "quality commercial projects," according to a statement.

Producer and consultant David Perlmutter, also involved with Cinexus Capital, has been excluded from all official mention of the deal. Famous Players and Perlmutter were involved in a legal wrangle several years ago when Famous was unable to collect a \$761,000 judgment awarded to them for Perlmutter's failure to repay a loan.

The deal marks a return to film production for the exhibitor Famous Players, which made a short foray into the field in 1981. With the production experience of Roth and Jacobs, Famous hopes to be more successful this time.

"It will give us the opportunity to foster quality projects and should serve as a source of Canadian films for Famous Players," said chairman Walter Senior.

Cinexus/Famous Players says projects are already in development, including adaptations of Joseph Svorecky's *Dvorak in Love*, Sylvia Fraser's *My Father's House* and Russell McRae's *Going to the Dogs*. The company plans to develop projects in both English and French Canada. Production of the first film is set to start this fall.

Safe sex brings Cinepix gold

MONTREAL - Cinepix Inc. of Montreal has won the gold medal for Best Documentary Video Over 21 Minutes at the 10th Houston Film and Video Festival.

Making It... Safe is a one-hour video about the question of safe sex hosted by Dr. Marian Dunn, director of the Centre for Human Sexuality at the State University of New York Health Science Centre, Department of Psychiatry.

Written and directed by Michael Paseornek and produced by John Dunning and André Link, *Making It... Safe* was also honoured at Chicago's U.S. Film and Video Festival where it

was awarded a certificate for Creative Excellence.

Canadian Chinese fest in Montreal

MONTREAL - Over 40 films from Canada, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the U.S. is being shown at The Festival of Contemporary Canadian Chinese Cinema, June 4 to June 11, in Montreal.

Among the films shown are *Yellow Earth*

(China) by Chien Kaige, *Old Well* (China) by Wu Tianming, *Just Like Weather* (Hong Kong) by Allen Fong, *Homecoming* (Hong Kong) by Yim Ho.

Two films look at the life and career of Dr. Norman Bethune and a third documentary, entitled *The Cultural Revolution*, outlines the history of China through archival photos and paintings.

Chinese-Canadian films are presented by Keith Lock from Toronto who has directed *Everything Again Alive*, *The Highway* and *Chinatown*.

The festival is organized by InterCineArt with

the participation of the Cinémathèque Québécoise, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, the National Film Board, the Chinese Neighbourhood Society, and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China.

New Star hits home

MONTREAL - *Hitting Home*, produced by Telescene Productions, directed by Robin Spry, starring Kerrie Keane, Daniel Pilon, Saul Rubinek, Alan Thicke and Collen Dewhurst, has been sold to the Los Angeles-based distributor New Star Entertainment.

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Tuning in mother nature

Driving in from the airport the other day I noticed one of those *bona fide* Maritime signs of spring – the porcupines were out at dusk, grazing on the roadside right-of-ways. After months of chewing on bark, they're more than ready for some tender green shoots. May not seem like much but we Maritimers are tuned-in to what Mother Nature has to say. Although the CBC has a large regional production studio in Halifax, their profile on the local film/video scene tends to be a low one. They are active in a gamut of news and public affairs programs but, with the exception of the two *CODCO* series produced over the last two years (in conjunction with Salter Street Films), there is little indigenous variety programming on this front.

I was therefore pleased to see that CBC was sponsoring a couple of screenings in May hosted by documentary filmmaker Harry Rasky. Rasky, the winner of two Emmys and an Oscar nominee, was in town to promote *Rasky's Gallery: Poets, Painters, Singers and Saints*, a 12-part documentary series which run this summer on CBC television. The series includes looks at George Bernard Shaw, Tennessee Williams, Marc Chagall, Arthur Miller, Leonard Cohen, Raymond Massey, Henry Moore, Yousuf Karsh as well as documentaries called, *Next Year in Jerusalem*, *The Peking Mystery Man*, *Stratosphere* and *To Mend the World*.

Rasky himself was here to screen two of the films from the series, including *Tennessee Williams South*, his favourite of this group which he has produced for the CBC, as well as to meet with local documentary film producers and film enthusiasts to discuss issues of documentary film production.

CBC's Judy Campbell told me that Rasky enjoyed himself and that he hopes to return here again. The King's College School of Journalism has invited him for a series of screenings and panel discussions dealing with the documentary process slated for the fall. The plan is to have Rasky as well as filmmaker Donald Brittain and journalist Anne Medina. Now *that* may make for an interesting series of discussions!

I talked with intrepid, itinerant director/cinematographer Les Kriszan, back from yet another trip to his native Hungary where he spent time last year on a Canada Council stipend observing Istvan Szabo shooting his recent feature starring Klaus Maria Brandaur. He had a chance to see some of the first rough-cut of the film at Mafilm Studios in Budapest, which he said looked very good. It's still 5 1/2 hours long, however, so a considerable degree of cutting still remains. On the home front, he's been quite busy on a number of commercial shoots which he is doing for ex-NFBer Barry Cowing who has started his own production company under the logo of Citadel Communications.

Sharon Smith, one of the stalwarts of NIFCO, the Newfoundland Independent Film Co-op, is a writer/director/producer on her own. The distance between Halifax and St. John's notwithstanding, I normally encounter her buoyant presence frequently at some gathering or other. Thus when I hadn't seen hide-nor-hair of her for some I grew curious and gave her a call. Turns out that she and partner Jeannie Staple have had their collective noses to the grindstone since last fall (except for a brief sojourn-to-the-sun in Florida from which Sharon had just returned) researching and writing a six-part (1/2 hour) television series which they hope to produce in 1989.

There are six dramas, collectively referred to as the *Small Treasures* series, somewhat in the style of Smith's previous film, *Season on the Water*. They examine children in six different communities of Newfoundland and Labrador and the cultural communities which they come from (French, Irish, Micmac, Inuit). They are all written from the children's perspective and Smith and Staple both spent time in the six communities where the stories are based, talking with children, working with them in schools and analyzing the results of questionnaires. Sharon told me that the scripts simply tell the children's own stories and the way in which they see their own lives in the communities in which they live.

The production of the series is proceeding via the Telefilm-CBC broadcaster letter route and, thus far, is going according to plans. Both Smith and Staple will be going to the Banff TV Festival this year and hope to make a number of useful contacts there.

The Atlantic Film and Video Producers' Conference for this year is well along and is scheduled for the middle of this month at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown as usual. I'll bring you more details of this as they reach me.

The *Film Nova Scotia Production Guide* is out and what a fine guide it is (a gold star to editor Andrea Shaw!). It has a very complete listing of all things pertaining to production in the province and is a *must* for anyone from outside the province (or from within, for that matter) to have when planning a shoot. Copies are available from Film Nova Scotia, P. O. Box 2287, Station M, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 3C8.

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House makes Telefilm his new home

TORONTO - Bill House leaves the Ontario Film Development Corporation this month to take up a position at its federal counterpart, Telefilm Canada.

House has been appointed Telefilm's Director of Operations for Ontario, and head of its Toronto office. He had served as the OFDC's Executive Co-ordinator of Production and Development since its inception in 1986.

House will be responsible for allocating Telefilm money in Ontario, especially the funds available for television programming.

Before his move into the public sector, House worked as an independent producer, responsible for the Bijoux award-winning documentary *The Little Paper That Grew*, as well as the CBC satire *The*



Canadian Conspiracy, which won a Gemini award and was nominated for an International Emmy in 1986.

Bovey top spot at Telefilm Canada

MONTREAL - The federal appointment of Edmund Bovey as chairman of Telefilm Canada is one of several recent appointments at the federal film and television funding agency.

Past-chairman of a federal task force on funding in the arts (1986), Bovey has extensive executive experience in the arts as past-president

and trustee of the Art Gallery of Ontario and its foundation, vice-president and board member of the Roy Thomson Hall, vice-chairman of the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and past-chairman of the Council for Business and Arts in Canada.

The Calgary-born businessman is a director and member of the executive committee of Norcen Energy Resources Ltd. from which he retired as chairman in 1981. He holds several business directorships



and is vice-president of the board of governors at the University of Guelph.

Bovey replaces Jean Sirois whose term as chairman expired on April 13. He will serve a five-year term.

Skene goes west

VANCOUVER - Wayne Skene, regional head of CBC radio and television operations in Alberta for the past year and a half, has taken over as director of television for the B.C. region.

Skene replaces Ron Devion who has gone to Toronto as director of co-funding for the network.

"Ron did a marvelous job through a difficult time," Skene says. "He brought the station through Pearl Harbor in respect to dealing with budget cuts."

Skene also says Devion had established good connections for the station within the community and with local independent producers, and that he plans to reemphasize these ties.

Skene, who also has a



background as a print journalist, says he intends to develop the news and current affairs aspect of the station (which currently takes a second place to BCTV news). "When I was in Calgary, we took the station from number three to number one in its market; the problems here are similar," he says.

Besides his certainty CBC in Vancouver can be more than just competitive in news broadcast, he also feels the station will play a significant role in CBC's proposed all-Canadian schedule (to begin in 1991). "If conditions are in place, Vancouver could conceivably become the main TV-drama centre in the country," he claims.

Another change at CBC-Vancouver comes with the announcement that Phil Keatley has been made head of drama development for the Western region (B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba).

Robert Roy a regal choice for Academy in Quebec

MONTREAL - Robert Roy, a 30-year veteran of Radio-Canada, has been appointed director of the Quebec wing of the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television.

When asked what ambitions he has for the academy, Roy told *Cinema Canada*: "I want to see that the tradition of excellence in Quebec television and film is carried on. Recognition of what the

craftspeople do by their own peers is also very important which is why I want to increase the membership."

Roy, who will replace Marc Boudreau effective August 1, will leave his post at Radio-Canada as the director of French television programming. He is a member of several organizations promoting film and television in Quebec as well as the administrative council of the Banff Television Festival Foundation.



The appointment was announced May 17 by Donald Pilon, president of the executive committee in Quebec.

"I hope that in a year's time it can be said that I met the challenge," says Roy.

Boudreau heads Famous in Quebec

MONTREAL - Carole Boudreau is now in charge of operations in the Montreal office of Cinémas Famous Players following the departure of Roland Smith, May 6.

"We've got a good team and the future looks bright," says Boudreau.

The former director of distribution with René Malo joined Famous Players with Smith in March 1987. At that time, Smith promised to reorganize the Famous Players organization in Quebec and bring more French-language films to Quebec screens.

Boudreau is confident she can continue where her former boss left off with a summer



line-up of 30 French-language titles recently acquired from Maurice Attias' Provimfilms Inc. and a promise from Tri-Star of a day and date release of a French-language *Rambo III*.

The appointment was made recently at a Montreal press conference by Walter Senior, president of Famous Players Canada.

With 59 screens in Quebec, Famous Players is in head-to-head competition with Cineplex-Odeon (80 screens). Expansion in the Montreal area includes plans for a six-screen complex in the new Eaton Centre by 1990, a redeveloped Parisien Theatre with the possibility of nine screens and a new complex in Laval.

Smith, who will be retained by Cinémas Famous Players as a consultant, was in Cannes at press time.

Sandor and Gough go west

TORONTO - Screenwriters Anna Sandor and Bill Gough are leaving Toronto for Vancouver this month, where they expect a refreshing change in both climate and opportunities.

"Our main reasons for



relocating," Sandor says, "are to shake up our lives and careers in a healthy way; so that Bill can teach film writing at the University of British Columbia; and to gain proximity to Los Angeles, where we have a pilot movie for a possible comedy-adventure series in the works at CBS."

Sandor and Gough have worked together on *The Marriage Bed*, winner of a 1987 Gemini Award, and have also collaborated on scripts for *Seeing Things* and *For the Record*. Gough was writer and producer of the CBC's ACTRA award-winning *Charlie Grant's War*, and producer of *The Suicide Murders*.



The partners will leave several projects underway in Toronto, including *Two Men*, directed by Gordon Piment and starring John Vernon, Jan Rubes and Lila Kedrova; and *Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird*, directed by Sandy Wilson (*My American Cousin*) and starring Linda Griffith and Geoff Bowes. Both projects are being made for the CBC.

Sandor is also one of three co-writers of an upcoming feature, *Martha, Ruth and Edie*, and is currently adapting Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel* for the screen. Among other things, Gough is working with Gilles Perrault on a mini-series called *Dieppe*.

"We may be physically gone from Toronto, but we'll certainly be well represented for the next year or so by our various projects," Sandor jokes.

"In Vancouver, everything will be new for us and that safety net will be gone. That kind of challenge is really important for an artist."

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Bookshelf

GEORGE L. GEORGE

The use of computers for animation graphics has brought a new visual dynamism to television commercials and shows, and enriched spectacularly the panoply of film special effects. The full scope of this development is explored by Cynthia Goodman in *Digital Visions*, an inspiring book whose lucid text and superb illustrations define the achievements of this creative process and its potential. (Abrams, NYC, \$29.95/19.95).

A thoroughgoing survey of television production techniques, *Today's Video* by Peter Utz itemizes and describes the specifics of the equipment required and its uses for the successful taping of shows and programs. The technical and creative aspects of production are covered in an explicit and well illustrated text that addresses itself mainly to the kind of video predominant today – the small studio with relatively inexpensive equipment and limited production crew. (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NY, \$49.95).

In a tightly reasoned rebuttal to Marshall McLuhan, Brian Winston contends, in *Misunderstanding Media*, that new technologies – telephones, television, computers and satellites – fall prey to what he calls “the law of suppression of radical potential,” and, far from converting a divided world into a “global village,” they become the victims of entrenched interests. Winston argues cogently that the information revolution is an illusion based on a misunderstanding of electronic media, their development, diffusion and present form. (Harvard U. Press, Cambridge, MA, \$22.50).

Soviet filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky, who died last year in Paris, wrote *Sculpting in Time*, an artistic testament that sums up his concepts of cinema's aesthetics and social roles. Combining autobiography and creative inspiration, Tarkovsky traces the inner stimuli of such films as the long-suppressed *Andrei Rublev* and his 1986 Swedish production, *The Sacrifice*, whose visionary Bergman-like mood defines human relationships in a higher form of spiritual life. (Knopf, NYC, \$22.95).

In *Five American Cinematographers*, Scott Eyman explores the part that highly respected cameramen played in the progress of film art and technology. His probing interviews with Karl Struss, Joseph Ruttenberg, James Wong Howe, Linwood Dunn and William H. Clothier record well-informed opinions on the development of camera techniques and production methods, and provide personal recollections of the personalities and work habits of such directors as Charlie Chaplin, George Cukor, John Ford, William Wellman, Sam Peckinpah and Orson Welles. (Scarecrow, Metuchen, NJ, \$25).

Articles published in *The International Photographer* between 1929 and 1937 are assembled by Anna Kate Sterling in *Cinematographers on the Art and Craft of Cinematography*. Written by such eminent ASC members as Hal Mohr, Ray Rennahan, Karl Struss and Tony Gaudio, they deal with technical and esthetic problems, document the filming of *Intolerance*, *Hell's Angels* and *Trader Horn*, the advent of wide screen and sound, and early Technicolor lighting equipment. (Scarecrow, Metuchen, NJ, \$17.50).

Insightful memos made for his personal use by French director Robert Bresson appear in *Notes on the Cinematographer*. They reveal an artist's search for the nature and values of “cinematography,” the creative *auteur's* craft, as distinct from the director's affinity to theatrical staging concepts. (Quartet/Merrimack, Topsfield, MA, \$7.95).

Union front hot as NABET opens

VANCOUVER – The National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, NABET, has opened a film and video production local in Vancouver. Local 800, which has 270 carded members, is headed up by business agent David R. Kelly, a former IATSE cameraman/director of photography.

While NABET 800 has existed since 1971, Kelly says the decision to open an office came after inquiries from producers in the United States and Eastern Canada.

“We're a viable alternative to IATSE,” he told *Cinema Canada*. “NABET has a feature and video basic agreement which isn't carved in stone. We will tailor our agreements, crew-wise and whatever, to the producer's requirements. The ACFC is a mixed local, they cover camera but to

my knowledge at the moment they don't have any directors of photography on their books.”

“George Chapman (IATSE's business agent) is in a strange position at the moment. I know for a fact that George, through the B. C. Film Commission and through his position representing IA members, has had more inquiries regarding shooting than he's been prepared to crew or suggest other unions crew. The IA isn't the only game in town. I believe the reason production is kept at a certain level and goes to IA is because of union constitution and by-laws where a local has seniority. You have, say, eight senior members across the board,” he said.

“What George is saying... he can only guarantee eight qualified IA crews. At the same time there is a huge number of NABET crews which are available. It's rather strange to me because I know that this local can put five crews out.”

Continued p. 50

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On (Experimental) Film

BARBARA STERNBERG

Congratulations to Brenda Longfellow whose film *Our Marilyn* (col. snd. 16mm 24 min.) shared top prize at this year's prestigious Oberhausen Short Film Festival. She shares the International Jury Award with a Soviet film. *Our Marilyn* was pre-selected for submission to the festival by the Goethe Institut's Doina Popescu and once there was selected for competition, as was Gary Popovich's film *Immoral Memories*. Brenda was at the festival, (although she had left before the awards were announced!) and noted that this year a large section of the programme was from Eastern European countries; that films tended to have a strong political slant, reflecting, perhaps, the involvement in the festival of the trade unions.

Our Marilyn refers to Canadian Marilyn Bell and the film contrasts her public persona with that of the American Marilyn - Monroe. The viewer is presented with stock newsreel footage of both Marylins while a voice-over personalizes the place these two imagings had/have in a growing girl's experience/memory.

Brenda explained that she had started out interested in the way women's bodies have been mythologized and the national differences in this mythmaking between Canada and the U.S. At first, Brenda had approached the swim from an ironic perspective on the typical nationalistic hurra-for-us treatment of the press. But as she researched the topic, she turned towards wanting to recreate the swim. The extant media footage and newspaper photos reflect the way the swim was represented in history: they document only the beginning and the end of the swim (CBC didn't cover it at all until well towards the end) - Brenda concentrates on the middle. By optically printing certain phrases of the existing footage, repeating it, slowing it down, Brenda creates a sense of the swim - hours upon hours, the endurance, the hallucinatory states, the breathing, the water, water, breath... In this long middle section of the film Brenda feels she went beyond the theoretical premise of the film. Which is as well, she realized, as our bodies are beyond theory and mythology; in their movement, power, struggle there is resistance to the containment of mythologizing.

● Philip Hoffman was invited for the second year in a row to the Salso (Italy) Film and Television Festival, this year to screen his new film *Passing Through/Torn Formations*. Phil reports that although this is not a huge festival - one can actually see all the films screened - and although the competition is only amongst feature films, they always programme some experimental work. This year there was a Godard retrospective and, in past years they've invited Syberberg amongst others. The largest audience turnout is for the mainstream feature films, yet, Philip feels, a lot is gained from the networking that takes place. Phil is planning to put together a package of Canadian films to be screened, hopefully on film, during next year's festival.

● Hey! I think we have a 'school' in film happening right here - the "escarpment group" as they're being called - Rick Hancox, Richard Kerr, and now Philip Hoffman, all teachers at Oakville's Sheridan College, have created a recognizable style of experimental filmmaking. Mike Hoolboom, experimental film officer at Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre, instituted a prize to be awarded from the Centre for the best Sheridan student experimental film. Mike and I juried this first year. Best experimental film was awarded to Hugh Bissett's film *Mantra*, an ambitious 15-minute film, complex, sensitive, well-structured and orchestrated - and showing definite signs of the Hancox/Kerr sharp blue, blue skies, the gently panning camera caressing landscape, the Kerr/Hoffman on-the-road-autobiographical motif, and the Hoffmanesque introspective voice-over! Overall the quality of all the films, technically and thematically, was exceptional - such that we added four smaller prizes awarded to Tim Rivers, Lisa Miles, Stephen Butson and Shelley Morrow. It was obvious that there was something at stake in the films' making - something personal - that took these films beyond student assignments. We can take heart in the future of experimental filmmaking. We can take art into the future by experimental filmmaking.

● An update on the state of experimental film (and film in general) at the major public galleries: Meetings of the film committee at the Art Gallery of Ontario continue with the result, thus far, of the creation of a Film Department headed and staffed by Cathy Jonasson and Norma Elms. Policy and funding for this department are still in the talking stage.

The National Gallery of Canada opened its new building with a gala event which includes screenings of recently acquired videotapes - five regional programmes (39 videos) which are screened daily in the gallery through the end of June. Films, on the other hand, rented for one screening each, will be shown Sunday and Monday evenings in a programme of new works by independent Canadian filmmakers, *Emerging Images*. And this after filmmakers such as Michael Snow, David Rimmer, Joyce Wieland, Blaine Allen, Lorne Marin, Peter Dudar, Peter Lipskis, Mike Hoolboom, Chris Gallagher, Annette Mangaard, Gary Popovich, Steve Sanguadolce, myself and groups such as the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers, Atlantic Filmmakers Coop, and the Film and Video Alliance all wrote letters protesting the inexplicable exclusion of film acquisitions from the mandate of the film and video officer. What now?!

● Who said that summer is down time for experimental screens? May/June/July/August sees the light flickering at the National Gallery (see above), at Pitt International Gallery in Vancouver, in Toronto with the *Northern Visions Festival* and at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The *Summer Screen* series at Pitt International, Sunday evenings, June through August, is being organized, gratis, by Peter Lipskis and he hopes that the gate will cover the rentals/artist fees. The programme will include films by Larry Kardish, James Benning, Carl Brown, Betty Ferguson and Ed Emshwiller.