

## Credit where credit's due

All our computers and furniture are on their way to B.C. (as we will be in a few days), I am handwriting this note.

Re "Sandor and Gough Go West" (*Cinema Canada* #153): As much as I'd like to take the credit, I did not write *Charlie Grant's War*, as your article stated. It was written by Anna Sandor and produced by me. As for the projects "underway in Toronto", even with the lure of the beautiful mountains of the West, that would be a bit irresponsible. Both *Two men and Momma's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird* are quite complete and ready for airing later this year. As with *Charlie Grant*, they were written by Ms. Sandor and produced by me.  
Bill Gough

## 'Clarifying' the state's role

In the preamble to Connie Tadros' article on film distribution in Canada (*Cinema Canada* #152), I have a little trouble digesting the statement, "In Canada, the government has always been involved in the film industry, just as it is involved in almost every other sector of business and industry." I feel this statement needs some fine-tuning.

I have no argument that our government was actively involved in supporting film production, and keenly aware of the power of the medium to communicate. But this involvement was almost totally in the non-commercial film sector. This distinction is important. It helps to explain, crudely, the tradition and celebrity of the National Film Board in contrast to the struggles and obstacles that continue to beset Canadian feature film. Indeed, it could be argued that the current debate at the centre of the distribution issue is a testament to the unresolved ideological conflicts of earlier years.

The Canadian Cooperative Project of 1948 is a good example of the peculiar way that the government involved itself in the feature film sector. The scheme was concocted by Hollywood to short-circuit some real momentum that had built to repatriate the Canadian domestic film market mostly in response to a balance of payments problem that included approximately \$12 million annually in box office receipts flowing south. By the project, Hollywood promised to do more Canadian location shoots and to what amounted to the insertion of silly, obscure and awkward references to Canada (from birds to trading posts) into Hollywood scripts. The logic was that these references would attract tourists to Canada.

I would like to conclude my views on the subject with a quote from film historian Peter Morris' 1978 book *Embattled Shadows*: "There is something in the Canadian experience with government film production that reflects a more general Canadian attitude towards state-owned enterprises. In this century at least, there is apparent a continuing concern in Canada that the forces of the free marketplace must be tempered in the public interest through government involvement. ... Examples are numerous, running from provincially owned telephone and power corporations to such operations as CNR and the CBC. ..."

"Given this approach and, in particular, the operation of the publicly owned film units by several governments in Canada, it is curious that those same governments almost completely ignored the commercial film industry."  
Michael Ferras

## Holier than thou?

The following letter, a copy of which was sent to Cinema Canada, was addressed to the directors of the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival.

I am utterly appalled by the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival's attitude towards filmmaking as displayed by this year's judges' decision to eliminate six categories from the awards presentation without pre-warning the participants. By excluding nearly half the categories, the judges seem to be saying that only they know what is good cinema, and Canada really doesn't have it. Their standards are rather questionable. I suggest that the Yorkton Festival be renamed "The Holier Than Thou Festival."

The Yorkton program specifically indicates, and I quote: "Golden Sheaf Awards will be presented to winners in each of the following categories:

Animation, Documentary over 30 minutes, Documentary under 30 minutes, Drama over 30 minutes, Drama under 30 minutes, Experimental, Fine Arts, Health/Medicine, Instructional/Educational, Music Video, Nature/Environment, Production for Children, Promotional, Public Affairs, Sport/Recreation.

Nowhere does the program say that some categories may be excluded upon the judges' decision. This is blatantly false advertising, and I insist that my entry fee of \$50.00 be returned immediately because I entered The Yorkton Festival under pretenses the festival dishonestly promoted, and I do not support their judges' arbitrary decision to eliminate categories.

As well, under the present conditions I will certainly refrain from ever entering this festival again.

I would also like to know why rumors are circulating that Debbie Cartmer was chosen to

receive the Kathleen Shannon Documentary Award and two hours before the presentations Kathleen Shannon vetoed the jury's decision and the prize was awarded to Gil Cardinal's *Foster Child* distributed by the NFB, although the regulations state this award will be presented to an independently-made documentary production.

In addition, I understand that independent filmmaker Ron Hallis was specifically invited to the Yorkton festival and was told by executive director Ian Reid that the pre-selection committee "loved" his film and the festival staff would be "honored" to have him present at the festival. Usually when someone receives such an invitation that person assumes he will receive an award for his film. Your procedures are unscrupulous and deceptive. He spent \$700 to attend the festival only to hear that the category he had entered, "Best Documentary Under 30 Minutes," was being eliminated.

I am shocked by the manipulations of this year's Yorkton Film Festival. The festival has now shown itself to be a farce. This festival is a disgrace to filmmaking in Canada. Someone should sue for malpractice because the festival has mistakenly cut off many Canadian filmmakers' healthy arms and legs.  
Lois Siegel

## Hope or hype?

The following letter was addressed to Mr. Allan Stein, President, Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association and was copied to Cinema Canada.

Dear Mr. Stein,  
"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."

Your above statement published in *Cinema Canada* (#153) prompted me to write this letter to you. I must ask you again how seriously should I take this statement? Honestly, as the president of AMPDC, are you really going to formulate and recommend to AMPDC and the government any such policies which will help fresh film and television graduates to stay in the province and develop their talent?

Or is your statement more media hype?  
Mr. Lorne MacPherson's (President of AMPDC) letter to Mr. Ted Bellman, published in the May issue of *Cinema Canada* (#152) and your above statement have encouraged some recent film major graduates from Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Calgary, to believe that finally (maybe) we are going to have a real film and television industry in the province.

I too am hoping that in the future, the motion picture industry in Alberta will be clique-free. Maybe fresh graduates won't have to wait five years to get funding from AMPDC to develop new and indigenous projects in their own home province. Maybe the unions will issue permits to young graduates so they can develop further from within the industry after leaving school, instead of driving cabs or labouring in the construction industry while the taxpayers' money goes into some foreign production. Maybe, for a change, I might be proven wrong about bureaucrats and political leaders.

Only time will show us who actually are the ones who practice what they preach. In the meantime it's a long wait for a new writer, producer and director who have to become accustomed to being unconnected and unpatronized. Jeff Hirschfield, Mike Rohl and I can surely confirm that.

Jay Bajaj



Canadian Broadcasting Corporation  
Société Radio-Canada

CBC Television is looking for a highly experienced developer of stories, scripts and series concepts to work from Vancouver in finding and shepherding dramatic material onto the English Network.

The successful candidate will report to the Western Development Head of Drama, and will be involved with projects throughout the four Western Provinces, working with CBC drama development heads, in everything from movies for television to series to half-hour anthology. The focus of the job is the writer, and a background in script writing and editing is essential. Production experience in film and television is highly desirable.

Critical script analysis, the training of script editors, and the finding of the creative partners in project development are all part of the job. The job will extend into program production when necessary to complete the development.

This is a contract position and salary is negotiable. This competition closes July 20, 1988.

CBC Vancouver Box 4600 Vancouver, B.C. V6B 4A2