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With productions such as *The Bell Ringers*, *Blizzard Island*, *CODCO*, *George's Island*, *Justice Denied*, *Lighthouse Island*, *The Midday Sun*, *There's Nothing To Do Here* and *Vacant Lot* all in production last fall, there was more activity here than most producers or craftspeople might have imagined in their wildest dreams. Almost every film-person of any ilk found a niche in one or several of the productions. While grateful for the work after a long dry summer, the flurry of activity also brought to the surface a host of questions which have been lurking in the back of many filmmakers' minds.

"When I signed on for this job did it include working 16-hour days? How come the guy next to me on the set, who's doing the same job that I am, is getting paid twice as much? If that dolly drops on my leg, who's going to pay the rent while I sit home recuperating? How am I going to survive with no productions in sight during the cold winter months?"

These issues came to the fore in an open meeting called by the Atlantic Independent Film and Video Association (AIFVA) in which a broad cross-section of producers and craftspeople sat down in the same room to try and hammer out the parameters for working relationships in the film industry of this region. Chaired by producer and AIFVA activist Terry Fulmer, the meeting got off to a brisk start and it was evident that there was real concern on the part of the craftspeople with respect to issues such as pay scales, working hours, working conditions, safety, accident compensation and the overall climate of producer/employee relations. It was clear from remarks all round that base lines on these issues needed to be formulated.

AIFVA has, for a variety of reasons, come to be perceived by craftspeople here as a "producers" association although activist producers such as Bill MacGillivray, Lawrence Carota, Bill Skerrett and Duncan Moss were quick to point out that its mandate and structure is to represent all the parties in the independent film and video sector. As such AIFVA presented its case for being the forum for the articulation and resolution of these issues urging craftspeople to join and help develop industry standards, although the ability of the association to 'police' any such regulations was acknowledged to be... well, minimal.

Bill MacGillivray argued that as a pioneer industry we had the ability to shape and control the climate and relations here in ways which are appropriate to this region and not import external styles and standards. Lawrence Carota emphasized the commonality of purpose by pointing out that producers and craftspeople were from one and the same pool of talent. Luciano Lisi emphasized that he was here as a producer for the duration and keeping good relations with the technical community was in his long-term interest. "I'd be happy if all of you drove Porsches," said Lisi, a statement which was immediately construed by some as an actual offer...

Between the lines there was clearly an anxiety on the part local of producers to avoid the polarization which characterizes relations between producers and craft unions in many jurisdictions. Many emphasized their common position in trying to develop a fledgling industry which would provide a livelihood for all parties concerned. The past position of ACTRA, with its lack of accommodation for regional conditions and realities, was a paradigm for such a breakdown of communications. Local producers often found that they simply could not afford to hire ACTRA talent, people who thus found themselves excluded from many interesting projects which they in principle supported. An ACTRA spokesman at the meeting emphasized his union's changed stance and its interest in working with AIFVA or other parties to develop a policy designed to benefit the entire regional industry.

Nevertheless a certain skepticism remained with some craftspeople uncertain of whether their interests could be well represented in a joint organization. Chuck Lapp, speaking for an informal coalition of craftspeople who had met prior to the meeting, said that their consensus had been that a separate organization should be formed to determine their needs and demands. This organization could then negotiate with producers either within AIFVA or separately. Although there seems to be a clear preference, at least at this point, not to go the route of affiliation with the currently existing craft unions, there is certainly an awareness of this option. Lapp mentioned that local producers were already bringing in union crew members from other regions with whom local craftspeople had to coexist on shoots. Others expressed concern that in bringing up contentious issues, they might find themselves labelled as "troublemakers" and cut out of work.

This suggestion brought a wave of response from AIFVA producers who would like to see AIFVA as the industry voice in the region with respect to lobbying the CBC, NFB, Communications Canada, Telefilm and the provincial governments - a sphere where the organization has been very active in the past. Bill MacGillivray felt that it would be a major step backwards to divide and that the perception of producers and craftspeople as representing two opposed parties was an outdated one. Fulmer chorused that it was difficult enough making the production community's viewpoint felt in government circles and that two would weaken rather than strengthen the impact.