

Trade News

CBC and CUPE reach tentative agreement

TORONTO - Negotiators for the CBC and 2,600 striking workers reached a tentative settlement April 5 that is expected to bring an end to the three week-old labour dispute. If the agreement is ratified, the announcers, production staff, clerical workers, makeup artists and other members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees will be back on the job by April 10th.

No precise details are available yet, but sources close to the negotiations say that the CBC didn't give in to the union's demands for greater job security and jurisdiction over coproductions with independent producers. The stalled negotiations picked up after a meeting between union officials and CBC president Pierre Juneau. The CBC is reported to be happy with the terms of the settlement.

CUPE, the largest of the CBC's unions, voted to walk out on negotiations with the corporation 12 days before a March 29 strike deadline. Some programs were cancelled completely, drama productions were halted and management personal substituted for news announcers on radio and television. The strike did not affect Radio-Canada operations in Quebec and Moncton.

Both sides agreed at the time that the main issues at stake this time were job security and jurisdiction. Ken Hopper, chief negotiator for the union, told *Cinema Canada* that, "about 50 per cent of our bargaining unit has no job security and no way of getting job security under the existing collective agreement."

An official CBC press release claimed that, "if CUPE jurisdiction were imposed on all co-productions, the CBC would be unable to attract co-producers and their money." CBC spokesperson Tom Curzon said that, "its been on the record for a long time that the CBC's goal is to move towards 50 per cent production with independent producers, either co-productions or straight independents. If we concede to the union on this point we would start to lose co-productions, and we just can't afford to do that." The CBC also claims that for an employer employing 500 employees or more, the CBC is the only broadcaster that offers any job security at all.

In some parts of the country, including St. John's, Windsor, Ottawa and Vancouver, technicians and journalists refused to cross picket lines and programming during the first few days of the strike was chaotic. The *Genies* went ahead, but the show was stripped down to the bare essentials and picketed by CUPE and sympathetic filmmakers. The CBC went to the Canadian Labour Relations Board to prevent other unions from joining the strikers.

The CBC is offering a 34 month contract with present job security in place and no movement in the area of jurisdiction. "It is the same offer," said Curzon, "that other unions have accepted, such as NABET (who recently settled with the CBC after the federal government appointed a Commissioner to resolve the dispute). They have to recognize the kind of budgetary crisis the CBC is in."

Production came to a halt on *Kids In the Hall*, *Mosquito Lake*, *Codco*, *Crazy People*, and *Love and Hate*, the Colin Thatcher story being shot in Saskatchewan. This could mean a delay in the implementation of the CBC's fall schedule.

CRARR takes action on *Disparaître*

MONTREAL - The Centre for Research Action on Race Relations (CRARR) continues to push for a redressing of multicultural issues in Quebec after the airing of the controversial *Disparaître* by Société Radio-Canada on Feb. 12.

CRARR called a press conference in Montreal on March 1st after an initial outburst of criticism in the English-language press that this two-hour documentary was unbalanced and intentionally propagandistic.

Produced by Raymond Gauthier, directed by Jean-François Mercier and narrated by former PQ Minister Lise Payette, *Disparaître* conjectures that without strict language and immigration policies Quebec will lose the French-language by the turn of the century.

The program is produced by the National Film Board in association with Société Radio-Canada and it is to both these public institutions that CRARR has directed its criticism.

In a press release issued at the March 1st conferences, CRARR lists its objections:

"... CRARR believes that it is totally unacceptable that these institutions, both financed by taxpayers money, should use their resources to convey highly questionable opinions on important national issues such as the declining birth rate and immigration.

- CRARR is particularly disturbed that no place was given to viewpoints differing from those expressed in the program and that certain means were implicitly used to undermine and cast aside such differing viewpoints.

CRARR does not question the right of the filmmakers or the agencies to freely express themselves on any subject matter. However, it does object to reinforcement techniques used in order to present, under the guise of consensus, unbalanced and unobjective views on such important and emotionally-charged issues as falling birth rate and immigration..."

Subsequently, CRARR has asked the NFB to devote an equivalent amount of production funding or resources to a program that would show positive aspects of immigration and multiculturalism in Quebec.

CRARR has also asked Communication Minister Marcel Masse to remind both institutions of "their legal and social responsibilities and to make certain that the boards of both institutions reflect the cultural and racial diversity of Canada.

"*Disparaître* should not be the last word on these issues," says Richard Daignault, member of the CRARR board.

"Those who do not share the views expressed should be able to share their views as well," he says.

Daignault says the program reflects inappropriate hiring practices at the CBC and NFB, where ethnic minorities are concerned, and that the employment equity act should be rigorously applied.

"We want these matters to be discussed at the legislative level," says Fo Niemi, executive director of CRARR, "but we have to wait for the House to resume."

Neither does Niemi expect that the NFB will respond until a full-time film commissioner is hired.

Bethune to open 1989 Montreal World Film Festival

MONTREAL - *Bethune: The Making of a Hero*, the long-awaited movie about Canadian surgeon Dr. Norman Bethune, will have its gala world premiere August 24, opening at the 1989 Montreal World Film Festival. Co-producer Nicolas Clermont of Filmline told *Cinema Canada* that, "it is very important for us that this film be first presented in Canada because the roots of this film are so deeply in this country."

It had been previously been announced that the film would be ready for Cannes this year, but Clermont now says the final print will not be ready until mid-July. "What I would very much like to happen," said Clermont, "is for this film to be in both festivals, Montreal and Toronto. It is as important for us to be in Toronto as Montreal."

At times, it looked as if the movie would never be completed. Production was halted for almost a year as Clermont and his producing partner, Pieter Kroonenburg, scrambled to maintain control of the picture and find additional financing. The four-month 1987 shoot in China proved more arduous and costly than planned

and there were public disagreements between screenwriter Ted Allan and star Donald Sutherland.

Clermont is understandably anxious to see the final film on the screen. "I hope and believe it will surprise many people. There have been so many negative things said about it that, at times, people have lost the scope of the film itself."

Bethune is the first ever Canadian-Chinese-French co-production. Filmline is producing with the China Film Coproduction Corporation, Telefilm Canada, the August First Film Studios of Beijing and Eiffel Productions of Paris, France.

Masse to move ahead with film importation bill

OTTAWA - Marcel Masse, the recently reappointed Minister of Communications, will be "moving forward" with the Film Importation Bill, according to John Watt, film policy officer with the Department of Communications. The bill, which did not pass first reading in the House of Commons prior to last year's election, will be reintroduced when Parliament is recalled this month. Watt would not confirm if it will be reintroduced in its present form or will be modified by the new minister.

The federal film legislation which died on the order paper would have required that Canadian rights to independent films (films that are not wholly owned or financed by the American majors) be acquired separately from American rights. Currently, the American majors buy blanket North American rights to the films they distribute, making it near impossible for Canadian distributors to compete for those films.

The Department of Communications is presently studying the proposed mega-merge between U.S. media giants Time Inc. and Warner Communications Inc. to see what it might mean for their respective Canadian operations. Warner Brothers Canada and Warner Home Video Canada Ltd. employs about 35 people and are headquartered in Toronto. The Department is also studying an earlier takeover of Orion Pictures Distribution (Canada) Inc. by MetroMedia Co. of New Jersey, which has acquired 70 per cent control of Orion's U.S. operations.

"Investment Canada will be looking at it (the Time-Warner merger)," said Watt. "They will be reviewed under the existing policy which has been in place since last May." He said that the policy states that no new distribution business will be allowed to be established in Canada, except where the company will be only distributing their own product.

BANFF, JUNE 4-10: THE INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION REVOLUTION

In 1989, Banff — Canada's International Television Festival — celebrates its tenth anniversary. A time to look back? No, a time to look forward, to the 90's and beyond. In our anniversary year, we're planning our most ambitious festival ever: a week-long, in-depth look at what can only be called the television revolution.

THE TELEVISION REVOLUTION

The week begins with the CBC Keynote Address, presented this year by **Andrew Neil**, Executive Chairman of Rupert Murdoch's controversial new British satellite service, Sky Television, and Editor of *The Sunday Times* of London.

That launches fifty hours of seminars and workshops about our industry and where it's going. "The Television Revolution: More Choices, Fewer Voices?" — "Television and the Democratic Process: An Electoral Revolution" — "The Sponsorship Revolution: Who Pays? Who Controls? Who Cares?" — "The Banff International Market Simulation" (a perennial favorite, revolutionary in concept!) — "The Distribution Revolution," a presentation by **Norman Horowitz**, President and CEO, MGM/UA Telecommunications Inc., and members of his specialist sales force — and a wind-up session titled "Visions of the Future," looking at where the television revolution is going in America, the likely impact of the 1992 integrated European market on the television industry, and the impact that television will have on cinema in the next decade.

All that, and much more, including afternoon workshops for producers, writers and directors, specialized workshops (the digital, computer, and education TV revolutions) and a showcase of emerging talent.

BLUE-RIBBON PANELS

As always, our panels will feature some of the best and the brightest in the industry. People like **Patrick Chalmers**, BBC Scotland; **Jean Chalopin**, C & D, France; **Francesco de Crescenzo**, RAI, Italy; **Jacques Der-court**, Telecip, France; **Patrick Dromgoole**, HTV, U.K.; **Valerie Hardy**, Network TEN, Australia; **Gerry Hogan**, Turner International, U.S.; **Fernando Labrada**, Cannon Group, Spain; **Michael MacMillan**, Atlantis Films, Canada; **Reiner Moritz**, RM Arts, Federal Republic of Germany; **Richard Price**, RPTA/Primetime, U.K.; **Claude Torracinta**, TSR, Switzerland; and **Michael von Wolkenstein**, SATEL, Austria, to name just a few.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

Each year at Banff, we honor a network, production unit, or production company with our Outstanding Achievement Award. (Past winners include Granada Television of England; WDR, Cologne; MTM Enterprises, U.S.; and NHK, Japan.) This year the award goes to Brazil's Globo TV Network, whose President and owner, **Dr. Roberto Marinho**, will be in Banff to accept the honor. On Tribute Night we celebrate Globo TV's unprecedented domestic and international successes.

WE MEAN BUSINESS

As a registered Banff delegate, you'll enjoy a full, relaxing week of easy access to other professionals in our industry — opportunities to make friends, renew contacts, and do business. (Banff has been called *the co-production marketplace*.)

You'll get to all the seminars and workshops you care to attend, and enjoy free access to our "on demand" screening rooms and hundreds of hours of superb international television.

Continental breakfasts every morning, and social events every evening — an Opening Night salute to La Communauté des télévisions francophones; a CBC reception honoring our keynote speaker; the phenomenally popular Western Canadian barbecue; a reception in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Film Board of Canada; our Awards Night gala and Tenth Anniversary birthday party.

Join the revolution. Come to Banff in '89.

BANFF TELEVISION FESTIVAL



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Cineplex sells Florida complex

TORONTO—Cineplex Odeon Corp. has sold its 50 per cent interest in Universal Studios Florida, a large movie theme park, to a U.S. subsidiary of Rank Organization PLC of Britain for about \$150 million (U.S.). Cineplex chairman Garth Drabinsky said the sale to Rank was part of an earlier deal when Cineplex sold its interest in

Toronto's Film House to the British company. The proceeds from the sale of the theme park will be used to pay down Cineplex's long-term debt, which stands at \$663.8 million according to the year-end financial report released by the company at the same time.

1988 financial results show a profit for the Toronto-based company of \$40.4 million, up from \$34.6 million a year ago. Revenue climbed to \$695.8 million from \$520.2 million a year earlier. Cineplex's stock jumped slightly on the Toronto Stock Exchange with the release of these figures, but settled back down again. Industry

analysts suggest that Drabinsky was forced to sell Cineplex's interest in the theme park to reduce its overall bank debt. They point to the timing of the sale, linked as it was to the announcement of the year-end figures.

"This is a wonderful deal for us," Drabinsky was quoted as saying. "We have no risk, substantial profit, the ability to pay down our bank debt again and to improve our debt equity ratio one more time." Cineplex will realize a profit of \$58 million on its investment of \$92 million in less than two years and will make a further profit from the theme park, which is

Rogers completes sale of U.S. systems

TORONTO—Rogers Communications Inc. (RCI) of Toronto has announced that it has completed the sale of its U.S. cable television interests to a subsidiary of Houston Industries of Houston, Texas. The sale, which was announced last year, took months to complete as each of the five cable television systems had to receive the necessary local transfer approvals.

At a press conference held in Toronto at the end of March, Ted Rogers, president and controlling shareholder of RCI, said the money (\$1.17 billion net) will be used to wipe out the cable company's sizeable long-term bank debt. But he has also arranged a \$1 billion line of credit with Canadian banks to finance ambitious expansion plans.

"We are going to improve service in all aspects of our operations," Rogers said. "It's great news that a Canadian company is taking \$1 billion from the U.S. and investing it in Canadian business for Canadians." He intends to spend \$600 million on Canatel in the next two-and-a-half years to expand the operation from coast to coast. He will spend \$525 million on RCI to install fibre optic cables, improve customer service, increase channel selection, and prepare for the coming of high-definition TV. Fibre optic cables will ensure that Rogers will be able to provide 150 channels by the turn of the century. Currently RCI serves approximately 25 per cent of the Canadian cable market.

Rogers' bid to purchase the Teletatino specialty television service and cut its Spanish programming came under strong criticism from Hispanic groups in Montreal. They told the CRTC that Rogers' plan will drastically reduce the amount of programming available to them. Rogers told the licencing body in Toronto that the Spanish-speaking community in Canada is too small and not economically well-established enough to support the specialty service.

scheduled to open in 1990, if attendance exceeds certain minimum limits.

Cineplex has also announced a new deal with American Express that will see the charge card accepted at all Cineplex-Odeon theatres from May 1. Drabinsky noted that an evening out at the cinema is no longer a small-ticket item, particularly as moviegoers often attend in groups of four or more with consequent costs running upwards of \$25. As part of the deal, Cineplex will be screening American Express commercials in their theatres prior to the main feature.