

Panavision production centre gets funding

MONTREAL - Marcel Masse, the minister of Communications and Lise Bacon, Quebec minister of Cultural Affairs, have contributed \$3,148,000 to Panavision Canada Ltd., developer of the ExpoThéâtre/Studios Panavision project.

Both governments contribute equal sums under the Canada-Quebec Subsidiary Agreement on Cultural Infrastructures signed in March 1985.

The funding will be used to construct three large studios equipped with the latest technology for high-budget television and film projects by national and international producers.

Panavision was selected from four companies that responded to an invitation in May 1988 to submit a plan for a production centre.

B.C. taxes theatre film rentals

VANCOUVER - Beginning March 1, the British Columbia government began collecting a six per cent tax on all rentals of films that arrive from outside the province. Finance Minister Mel Couvalier said the decision to collect the new tax followed complaints from video rental stores which were already paying 6 per cent.

The following day, Famous Players increased ticket prices by 25 cents although the Motion Picture Theatre Association of B. C. was

considering challenging the tax in court. President George Mah says it may be possible to argue that theatres don't lease movies but pay for the right of performance.

Independent theatres are also concerned. Ray Mainland of The Ridge said prices were bound to go up since many smaller operations operate on less than a six per cent profit margin. Douglas Isman of Westcoast Theatre Service Limited warned that the tax could be critical in small towns where neighborhood houses are facing stiff competition from video stores.

(Exhibitors aren't the only ones impatient with the British Columbia government. The B. C. Motion Picture Association is asking for a new financial incentive program to counter initiatives in Ontario and Quebec.)

The BCMPA's newly elected president, Chris Bruyere, says the association is not "interested in getting into a competition with Ontario and Quebec, but the original decision by Quebec to add a provincial income tax write-off was not an option available to the other provinces, whose taxes are collected by Ottawa."

Bruyere says the B. C. film industry is young and "consequently we need a program with greater incentives to attract investment."

As of our deadline there had been no indication of what kind of action the Social Credit government might take in its upcoming budget.

Kodak gets what it gives

TORONTO - The old maxim that one good turn deserves another, applies to the presentation of the Air Canada Prize to Kodak Canada for its contribution to the Canadian film industry.

Having been honored by Air Canada at the 10th annual Genie Awards, the company known

for its development of the emulsion process, has announced that it will present an award to la Cinémathèque Québécoise (CQ) on its 25th anniversary.

Kodak will present the Prix Livernois (named after the photographer) to the CQ for its archival work. The presentation will take place April 17 at the CQ in Montreal.

Credo Group expands

WINNIPEG - The Credo Group, a Manitoba production company which has been serving the province for 15 years, is expanding its Winnipeg operation with a new subsidiary in Vancouver. President of the firm, Derek Mazur, announced that he and partners Joan Scott and Wayne Finucan have formed Credo Productions Limited.

Mazur intends to keep the Winnipeg office open, but admits that this recent move to Vancouver reflects the need for Manitoba producers to "enhance (their) profitability." The new division of Credo will continue to produce commercials, sponsored films and drama. Mazur agrees that this move will also enhance Credo's profile in Western Canada.

"Vancouver is much tighter and more competitive," said Mazur, "but there's a lot more work."

Producers too busy to organize

VANCOUVER - Plans to form a B. C. Producers Association are not progressing very quickly

partly because the producers are too busy. The idea was first announced at the B. C. Motion Picture Association AGM and, since then, there have been several exploratory meetings.

Producer Stephen Foster says his general concern is that "we don't have an organization in the West that speaks for producers. A lot of policy comes from agencies but there's no strong voice saying here's where we want to be three or five years from now."

He says some producers are not particularly interested in forming another association but do want to see a working group emerge from the exercise. Whatever form the new group takes, it will operate under the umbrella of the BCMPA.

Mickey Mouse meeting

VANCOUVER - Premier Bill Vander Zalm came back from a trip to Disneyland with a warning to B. C. filmmakers. After meeting with Marty Katz of the Disney studios, the premier said some local companies are getting too greedy. He said Katz thinks Vancouver is the best alternative to Hollywood but: "They are somewhat concerned because the advantage they used to have with a lower Canadian dollar is rapidly eroding. They're also concerned some of the people are becoming a little bit greedy. That could be a problem."

It was a Mickey Mouse meeting: the Vander Zalms were given stuffed Miceys and, in return, gave Mr. Katz a jade paperweight complete with a laser engraving of the famous mouse in a Mountie uniform.

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