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HISTORIC MEETING

UNANIMOUS VOTE

TO FORM ALL-CANADIAN GUILD

At the ungodly hour of eleven o'clock Sunday morning on the 25th of April, Salon A of Toronto's Westbury Hotel was jammed with 200 eager filmpeople ready to take on the status quo. It wasn't quite clear who actually organized the impromptu meeting — the important thing was the number and calibre of the people who showed their dissatisfaction with the way things are by attending.

Among the illustrious filmfolk were the best producers, directors, cameramen, soundmen, technicians, production managers, lab proprietors, and film union organizers working in the Toronto area. They all gathered to formulate a lot of flowing discontent into a coherent structure — a new guild perhaps, or — dare we even think it? — an all-Canadian craft union. The marquee in the hotel lobby read: Canadian Guild of Film Craftsmen.

Henry Comor of International Film Studios was the chairman for the occasion, though he made it very clear that he didn't actually organize the meeting, nor would he take part in calling for mass defections from existing unions or guilds. Joining him at the head table were John Board, John Eckert, Patrick Spence-Thomas, and Lou Graydon. All active and respected members of English-Canada's filmmaking community.

What was even more surprising was the presence of both Glenn Ferrier of IATSE local 644-C, and Bryon Lowe of NABET-AFC, Local 700, Freelance. Every other guild and association was present through equally powerful representatives, and of course the maverick, unaffiliated people also showed up in full force. Richard Leiterman, Don Shebib, Ken Post, and John Foster, spoke up alongside Norm Allin, CSC president, Sam Jephcott, Directors Guild secretary, and Bob Crone, who's associated with just about every organization.

We heard words of caution and subdued but angry speeches about how IA and NABET are screwing things up. ACTRA, and the other unions and guilds, were attacked as well. But many of the speakers urged us to think positively and try to help the existing situation by taking what we have and consolidating efforts.

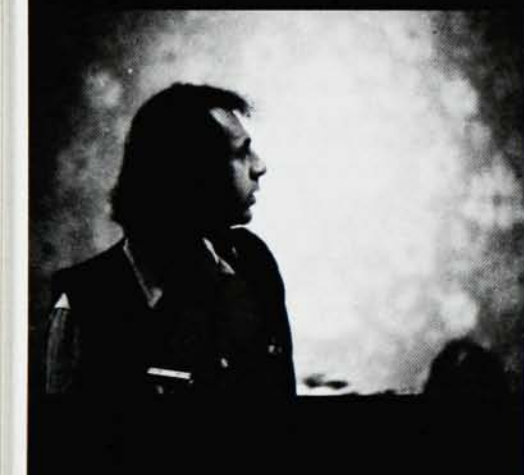
The consensus was that whatever's created should be Canadian controlled, and that the old order is not geared to present-day realities of making films, therefore a new organization is necessary.

The one concrete achievement of the meeting was the election of a ten member committee to examine the various sides of the question and report back to another open session in three week's time. The assembly nominated twenty-two people of its own ranks (only those physically present in the room were considered), then asked them to leave the hall while the voting took place.

Those nominated were Chalmers Adams (declined), John Board (Directors Guild), François Boivin (Ryerson student), Pat Crawley (freelance), Bob Crone (CSC, other guilds), Glenn Ferrier (IATSE 644-C), John Foster (CSC, IA 644-C), Stanley Fox (Society of Filmmakers), Lou Graydon (NABET), Tony Hall (freelance), Sam Jephcott (declined), David Lee (NABET), Richard Leiterman (freelance), Mike Lente (CSC, IA 644-C), Bryon Lowe (NABET), Evelyn McCartney (Directors Guild), Ken Post (CSC), James Rank (freelance), Allan Rogers (NABET), Don Shebib (freelance), Colin Smith (Directors Guild), and Patrick Spence-Thomas (NABET, SMPTE). Plus a representative of the Toronto Filmmakers Co-op, CUPE, and the CSC staff of technicians.

John Board, Glenn Ferrier, Lou Graydon, David Lee, Richard Leiterman, Bryon Lowe, Evelyn McCartney, Ken Post, Don Shebib, and Patrick Spence-Thomas were the ones finally chosen. They were instructed to meet on a weekly basis and report back at the next general session. They were also told to co-opt people from other groups as they see fit.

The Canadian Guild of Film Craftsmen, or whatever it may end up being called, is an idea whose time has come. Judging from the enthusiasm of the crowd at the Westbury and their willingness to provide constructive energy, major changes are in the offing for the filmmaking community. We should know more about their extent and impact in two month's time.





Film House

JOINS

ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX

Toronto's largest post-production centre, Film House Limited, is in the process of being sold to a Canadian based investment firm, Life Investors International Ltd., for the sum of two and a quarter million dollars. Film House President Bob Crone, who founded the firm at its Front Street location ten years ago, becomes a millionaire through the deal. He also stays on in his present position under contract at least for the next five years.

For Crone it's a 'dream realized' and he doesn't see the move as 'selling-out' at all. Two U.S. giants have been after his business, he revealed during an interview with this magazine, but he turned them down despite their larger offers. Were he to have accepted one of them, he would have lost his influence in the running of the company he started. Besides, he didn't want to see ownership of Film House leave Canada.

Not only won't this happen under the deal presently being finalized, but Crone expects to have bought — with the backing of his new co-owners — six other companies, some of them American, within the next year. This would be instrumental, he reasons, in helping to reverse the flow of money that at present goes one way only — south of the border.

In addition to taking over other groups, Film House itself is planning to expand. Crone is now deliberating whether to develop a new downtown location or to build on top of the existing building. Both possibilities would provide the vitally needed extra space. Film House provides complete technical services to the film industry — processing and printing of b&w and colour 16mm, 35mm films; sound recording, mixing, re-recording, dubbing; rental of professional production equipment, as well as of screening and editing space and facilities. Not to mention expert negative cutting and top notch, production trouble-shooting. Plus some extras — such as having your dailies flown to your location in Bob Crone's private Cessna.

The shareholders of Life Investors Limited, and those of International Bond and Equity Corporation have yet to ratify an amalgamation with Elkins Productions of Canada Ltd. But this, is a foregone conclusion of the share-

holders' meeting scheduled for the third week of April. Thus the creation of a \$6.5 million production complex is considered a certainty by all who have been involved in the negotiations. The three companies are Canadian, even though Broadway producer (*Oh Calcutta! The Rothschilds*) Hillard Elkins moved his production house here from New York just last year.

According to the man who will become chairman of the board of the new entertainment complex, the Film House deal will be completed right after the big shareholders' meeting. D. James McGorman told Cinema Canada: "Speaking conservatively, I would say it will be closed by the end of April." According to the deal, Bob Crone holds on to about 25 per cent of Film House, and will stay on in a steering position for a minimum of five years — and probably much longer. He certainly feels that he's gaining on the deal and not really relinquishing control over the future of the enterprise which he built, helped in no small measure by his spouse, Violet Crone.

Starting in the film business as a freelance news cameraman, Bob Crone developed a reputation as a prolific TV and news photographer. After he set up a sound mixing studio in the basement of their Rosedale home, his diligence and quality service attracted so many clients, that he had to rent a room in his present building, in order to deal with the volume of work. He named the business Film House at that time, in 1963, and in the past decade has engineered its growth into the second largest post-production business in Canada. From that one room he has expanded to four and a half floors in the same building, with 100 employees. In 1972, Film House did \$2.75 million worth of business.

Robert C. Crone, millionaire at 40, visited Cinema Canada's offices recently to explain the Life Investors International deal. He mentioned that several companies have been after Film House. "At the same time as these people had been negotiating with us, since last July, there have been other people talking to me. Two major American Companies were really anxious to buy."

"The difference is, that's what they