

ORGANIZATIONS

ACTRA

Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists

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ACTRA's recent refusal to issue work permits to Brian Bedford, Maggie Smith and Margaret Tyzak for a CBC-FM broadcast of Stratford's *Richard III* was another chapter in a continuing dispute. The corporation has intransigently insisted on its right to cast foreign performers as it sees fit. ACTRA claims its right to decide who its members will work with and wants an effective voice in decisions on the use of foreign talent.

Much of the media response to the *Richard III* decision was negative. The union was charged with "chauvinism" and with a desire to exclude foreign performers from Canada.

Such charges distort ACTRA's stand. The union has always favored unhindered movement by performing artists across national borders. But at present Canadians find it almost impossible to get work in radio, film or television in the United Kingdom or United States. The laws of those countries force alien performers to seek work permits which authorities issue only after consulting with the unions on the availability of local talent. It is only just that performers wishing to appear in Canada submit to the same sort of regulation here.

While the foreign talent question is a broad issue for the union, it expresses itself most sharply in relations with the CBC, since the CBC is not just another broadcasting entity, but a public system with a public mandate which involves the presentation of Canada to Canadians by Canadians.

ACTRA does not say that this mandate should stop Canadians from seeing international stars. Besides, the cable systems carry huge doses of American broadcasting and the Canadian networks, including CBC, carry many American and British programs. Some of the current British offerings on CBC radio include *Vivat Rex*, the *Goon Show*, and *My Word*. These involve the best of British performing talent in drama and light entertainment.

It is within this context that ACTRA demands that the CBC give Canadians priority in casting and employ foreign talent in Canadian productions only in exceptional cases. And the union wants a strong voice in the decision made in any case at issue.

The union's national executive is aware of opposition not only from the daily papers but from some union members. The executive is not averse to a continuing debate on policy, even though the members have already expressed themselves clearly — for example, in two votes rejecting a CBC agreement on this issue.

The executive believes that, whatever the differences on a particular action, its stand on the whole has been principled, correct, and in line with the expressed desires of the union's members.

Stan Linkovich

CFTA

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We're proud! The CFTA Film Awards for 1977 will be announced at an Awards luncheon at noon on Friday, October 28, 1977 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Toronto. In judging, there are seven categories of films and videotapes in the competition: public relations, sales promotion, travel and recreation, nature and wildlife, sports, educational and instructional, and TV information and public affairs. There will be a special award to the production judged best overall. In addition, there are six categories of craft awards: direction, cinematography, script, editing, sound and music score.

Harry J. Boyle, Chairman of the CRTC, will participate in the awards presentations and be guest speaker at the luncheon.

We're impatient! In spite of several contacts and meetings with Secretary of State John Roberts and a much more open dialogue with André Lamy of the NFB, we're still waiting for the long-promised policy statement from the government on its support for the film industry. What we have asked is that private sector producers have greater access to the sponsored film requirements of government which, up to now, have largely been supplied by the NFB, and second, that we take an active role in assisting the government to design a more efficient tendering system.

These are logical demands and we continue to press our case.

We're hopeful! We recently made a submission to the Ministry of Industry and Tourism of the Ontario Government making the case for larger annual budgets to support the private film industry. Among the recommendations:

(1) make available loan funds on a matching basis for investing in production of TV and educational films by distributors to assist distributors in promoting foreign sales of such films.

(2) make the film industry an eligible industry to receive financial assistance from the Ontario Development Corporation.

(3) make greater use of the film medium to achieve the program goals of government; specifically, for example, to use film and videotape more extensively in the province's export promotion program particularly for the products of smaller companies.

We expect to initiate similar approaches to other provincial governments over the next few months.

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