

Famous' James Cameron, Odeon's Charles Mason, Famous' Maurice Phaneuf, and government's Gordon Noble. The latter group acts as an advisory committee.

Women and the NFB

When Mary Daemen, freelance artist and still photographer, applied to the National Film Board for a position as Assistant Cameraman, she filled in most of the spaces on the official application form. One question she didn't bother to answer was the usual, "Can you type?". After waiting a respectable amount of time with no response, she checked with the Personnel Department. They couldn't find her application at first, but it finally turned up — filed under "Typists"!

It was to discuss this sort of treatment that fifteen professional women from across Canada assembled with some Board officials in Montreal last fall. All of the women had years of experience as editors, camera and sound technicians. Production Unit D was responsible for getting us together and we were eager to dissect Film Board policy and aims.

Here's what we discovered: the Trudeau cabinet had issued a little-known but important document in December 1973 recommending that, "each department and agency in Federal Government be required to implement a special program for 1975 designed to promote equal opportunity for women, both within the departments' programs as they affect the public, and for the women employees of that department". But the NFB received no special monies for International Women's Year after all those heavy words. (That's this year, in case you've missed the radio ads). And the Board seems to be largely ignoring the friendly advice.

As yet, no definite projects are in the offing outside of Unit D. Unit D, formed last year, is in danger of evolving into a "dumping ground" for all film projects associated with women and for most women seeking work at the Board. The fact that noted filmmaker Kathleen Shannon is its executive producer may have something to do with this situation. After all, she's a woman. . . .

There was resounding agreement at that meeting that every NFB production unit and department has equal responsibility to train women, to profile Canadian women in films and to explore the female perspective by employing women filmmakers.

Bob Verrall, head of English Production, was present and expressed

concern that, "We can't just throw the doors open!". But he agreed it was reasonable to hope that the regional offices now being set up across Canada (Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Halifax) be particularly concerned with employing and/or training women; and that half of the new freelancers hired in the future be female — wherever possible.

It's this "wherever possible" that's the grabber every time. How many women are actually running around with camera, mike and megaphone out there in the wilderness? More than you think. Suzanne Roussos, Personnel Department; Claude Pelletier, Sound Department; Denis Gillson, Camera and Dorothy Courtois, Production Manager; were all made aware of the existence of a small but rapidly growing body of women already possessing sufficient expertise to qualify for NFB freelance work.

The Board has only one woman on the Programming Committee — representing half the population. This Programming Committee determines which film ideas get budgeted and which are shelved or just rejected outright. It was therefore concluded at the meeting that a fair balance between sexes should prevail as soon as possible on this vital committee.

The 1976 Olympics emerged in discussions as being an important testing ground for change at the Board. Half the freelance people hired could conceivably be female. There is still enough time to raise the technical levels of many women through training sessions. But even if this cannot be fully accomplished, fifty percent of the emphasis should be on *women athletes*. Women have contributed equally to this country and consequently to government institutions such as the Board — there is no justification for the films not reflecting this.

A beginning of sorts has been made — again under the auspices of Unit D. A whirlwind of workshops in December provided about twenty professional women from across Canada with advanced technical information. There were workshops on tricky lighting situations, equipment maintenance, cameras, film stocks, laboratories — all under the direction of Denis Gillson. This much has already been accomplished although Unit D was formed only halfway through the year and consequently had a minimal budget to work with.

It is hoped that other NFB Production Units and Departments will follow this example, and women will be equally represented within the next few years both in the camera pool and

the typing pool.

— Carol Betts

ALBERTA

Richard Leiterman at Banff

It was the *Man*, and he came down to give us the *Word*. But were we ready to receive *Him*?

So He sat there wearing media blue, staring at us staring back at Him, wondering where it all begins . . .

And we, the seventy-odd media flotsam and jetsam, all whirling around in our own movies, hoped that a message might come.

First, a few words about 'f' stops. Then a few more words. And a little bit more . . . so how's your movie now? A bit overexposed? . . . Just a bit.

All the news that fits . . . indeed the greatest news event to come along in life, and Leiterman started his career filming hard core human news, hand held and on the run, and became a master.

So how do you break into film? The same way you break into life.

So much for glory, how about the nitty gritty of money making movies?

. . . And the silver screen comes alive with Robert Stanfield, vintage 1968, give or take a hundred years, and a victim of Leiterman's humanized cinema. He tells it straight and in doing so cries out for some illusion to please hide this all too real person, he is too painful to watch. Leiterman is indeed a part of his work, job or no job. A rose is still a rose even though it has wilted.

And the little voice in the back asks what right does he have to editorialize with the selectivity of the camera? What right does he have to commit himself in front of so large an audience? Indeed, what right does any man have to use bluff, bullshit, common sense and compassion as his tools of trade, and witness the desolation of a married couple, faithfully rendered in lurid colour, so that we can see ourselves looking back?

Let us pause for a moment so that we do not forget who we are, and look at the new Arri BL with the four speed zoom, and matching Nagra IS-D for perfect home movies.