

editorial:

Photo: Don Owen



The most exciting development in the recent history of our film community, is the formation of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers. Only as a unified force can we expect to surmount the major obstacles on our way to increased production and the establishment of a firm, feature-making alliance. Be they our lawmakers, foreign-controlled unions, or the lack of investment capital, the CCFM is working on the problems, and has already proposed some immediate solutions.

We endorse the Council's quick-remedy proposal submitted to the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee, which calls for an emergency fund for the production of ten major Canadian features later this year. We find it odd that Ottawa hasn't yet responded to this worthwhile plan, and urge the government to stop procrastinating.

That Advisory Committee seems to be coming out in favor of a voluntary quota system on the exhibition end. Famous Players and Odeon, the foreign-controlled corporations in charge of our major theatre-chains, have alternately endorsed, then denied acceptance of this plan. Negotiations are still going on.

We think it foolish to expect an effective self-policing policy. We've had a "voluntary quota" for the past few decades, and it just doesn't work. Legislation is necessary, and our lawmakers should not shirk their responsibilities. In Ontario, the Bassett report's recommendations are a good, short-term solution. Queen's Park is in the process of actively evaluating this report. We'd like to see less verbiage and more action.

Runaway production used to be an exclusive Hollywood problem. They have succeeded in keeping their major features at home, whereas Canada is now seeing many of its films shot abroad. The lack of a clearly defined tax leverage is causing our producers to seek investment advantages elsewhere, notably under Britain's Eady plan. Ottawa should learn from Eady, and help keep Canadian motion picture production here, where it belongs.

Drawing of Don Owen by Michael Clancy

cinema canada

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