

# COUNCIL OF CANADIAN FILMMAKERS

The Council of Canadian Filmmakers will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, April 28th, 1974 at the New Yorker Cinema, 653 Yonge Street, Toronto, at 10:30 a.m.

## Canadian Film Symposium II

At a conference sponsored by the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg last month, 19 Canadian filmmakers and filmworkers – among them Denys Arcand, David Acomba, Tom Shandel, Colin Low, and CCFM members Peter Pearson, Don Shebib, Kirwan Cox, Ági Ibrányi-Kiss, Jack Gray, Sandra Gathercole – confronted representatives of the CFDC and the Secretary of State with a joint statement called the Winnipeg Manifesto. That Manifesto (published elsewhere in this issue) stated that:

- the primary purpose and responsibility of the Canadian film industry is to define the cultural reality of this country
- the present system of production/distribution/exhibition is American dominated and works against the Canadian filmmaker and the Canadian audience
- Government policies, charging the film industry with the dual responsibility to make culture and make money, have led to the present crisis in feature production
- Government attempts to avert the crisis have failed

The Manifesto concluded by calling on Government to take radical policy decisions to create a publicly funded production and distribution system as alternatives to the private sector, and to implement legislated quotas for Canadian films in theatres across the country.

These are fighting words to come as a consensus from Canada's major filmmakers. They reflect the escalating politicization of the film community – a politicization which has been compounded by the failure of communication on the part of the Secretary of State's Film Advisory Committee, and a politicization which found part of its expression in the formation of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers.

Winnipeg was both an endorsement and an extension of policies formulated by the CCFM this year. Michael Walsh,

reporting in the *Vancouver Province*, referred to the "CCFM's Winnipeg Manifesto". An error, but one which reflects the considerable input of CCFM people, philosophy and policy at the Winnipeg meeting. The Manifesto proposals for quotas and public distribution echo those of the CCFM policy paper on feature films (issue No. 12 of *Cinema Canada*). The proposal for a parallel public production capacity is a concept originally advanced within the Council, and restated at Winnipeg.

The general mood expressed by the cross section of the Canadian film industry at the conference also reflected and reinforced that of the CCFM. There was the same sense of survival crisis and the eerie feeling that no one was navigating the industry. There was too, a general impatience with the housekeeping excuses for Government inaction, and an insistence that we get down to the basics of where it is we're going with film in this country.

Winnipeg was a plateau, not a pinnacle, for the industry. Its significance lay in the fact that many of Canada's regionally scattered filmmakers met each other and recognized the common problems of American domination and Government ineffectiveness which are seducing them into a branch plant position. They also arrived at a precedent setting consensus that radical reorganization is necessary to the survival of the indigenous industry.

Perhaps the Canadian film industry caught up with itself and Government in Winnipeg last month. Or perhaps the Winnipeg Manifesto is destined to become yet another petition to Government seeking elbow room to make and show our own films. Only time will tell. But the voice from Winnipeg was larger and firmer than any yet addressed to Ottawa.

## Inter-Union Committee Report

Following the June 27 general meeting of the CCFM, the Inter-Union Committee comprised of Richard Leiterman, Don Shebib, Patrick Spence-Thomas, was joined by Pen Densham, Henri Fiks and Tony Hall as delegates of the general membership. Several meetings were held over the summer, and by fall the Committee presented the Executive of CCFM with a six part proposal for improving the union situation. Those proposals, and the response to them from IATSE, are reproduced below.

## Inter-Union Committee Proposals

1. That the existing union adopt an "Open Door" policy. That is to say, that any technician working in the field of filmmaking can make application which will be taken in all seriousness.
2. That this policy be openly publicized as such in the trade magazines, papers and journals.
3. That the Locals involved review their present categories and where necessary initiate new categories where applicable and demanded by the changes in filmmaking as we understand it today; i.e., documentaries vs. features.
4. That when new categories are established, applicants then submit resumes and then be required to undergo an impartial trade test and then be classed as to their abilities. That once tested and classified, the applicant then be presented to the respective Locals at their next meeting, and if accepted by the Membership, be placed on the roster as a qualified technician in his field.
6. That the members be afforded every opportunity to constantly upgrade themselves within the Union.

If such a policy existed it would consequently unite all the various factions and create a stronger union to better fulfill the growing demands of our commercial, documentary and feature filmmakers.

Inter-Union Committee  
Council of Canadian Filmmakers  
290 Jarvis Street  
Toronto, Ontario

Dear Sirs:

The Memberships of our respective Locals have been apprised of the CCFM Inter-Union Committee's proposals. The Members response was favourable, and they noted that the policy now pursued by the IA. closely parallels these submissions, with the exception of the reference to the creation of new categories.

As a Union we realize ways must be found to serve the men and women employed in this newly emerging facet of the Film Industry. It is with this awareness that the two Locals will invite depositions from groups, and individuals, explaining the intricacies pertaining to this segment of the Industry,

and their suggestions of how best the Union may perform its function to their benefit. A committee will be formed to peruse these proposals and to hold meetings to discuss the best means of implementing these suggestions.

The IA. intends to further make known its willingness to vigorously pursue any reasonable course in accommodating these new candidates, and by initiating such steps, it is hoped to enlarge the sphere of Trade Unionism, for the benefit of not only the supporting craftsmen and women engaged in the Industry, but also the Industry itself.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to convey our thanks to the Inter-Union Committee and the Executive of the CCFM for their efforts in making possible the level of our present understanding of this new and burgeoning facet of the Toronto Film Industry, and we look forward to a continuing rapport.

We remain

*Yours very truly,*  
*W.J. Wood, President,*  
*Local 873, IATSE*  
*Per G.A. Ferrier, Bus. Rep.*  
*Local 644C, IATSE*

## CRTC Hearings on the CBC

The Canadian Radio-Television Commission held a five-day hearing in Ottawa in February on the subject of the renewal of the various licenses under which the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation operates.

The Council of Canadian Filmmakers submitted a brief to the CRTC condemning the CBC English television network's lack of use of independent Canadian filmmakers, and requested that it be allowed to appear at the hearing.

Much to the amazement of the men who run both the CBC and the CRTC, over 300 briefs were presented regarding one aspect or another of Canada's public network. None argued that Canada did not need a public network. Most dealt with the English television system and most of those said it could be much better. Twenty-nine interventions were selected by the CRTC from the 304 filed for oral presentation at the hearing, including the CCFM.

The Council paid for the transportation of the members of its executive committee to Ottawa from a Canada Council grant. We gathered at the Talisman Motel in Room 274 overlooking the snowfilled Japanese garden. The Talisman manages to be a run-down luxury motel. Aside from the CRTC hearings, there were other groups such as the Rotarians meeting in its numerous halls. One of the women who works in the kitchen said she was told to be careful that week because a lot of VIP's

would be around. Every week must be VIP week at the Talisman.

The Commission was very patient with those giving oral presentations. CBC president Laurent Picard spoke for an entire morning, explaining with graphs how much everybody likes the CBC and how little money they have. This was followed by spirited questioning about such matters as American content in the prime time schedule.

As the week progressed, the CRTC began to schedule evening hearings to handle the rush, ignoring its printed agenda. This led to the CCFM being heard in an unannounced spot at the tail-end of Wednesday afternoon, an apparently disadvantageous position.

At the first table sat chairman Peter Pearson, Kirwan Cox, Bill Fruet, Richard Leiterman and Robin Spry. Behind them were Budge Crawley, Martin Defalco, Sandra Gathercole, Ági Ibrányi-Kiss, Ken Post, Peter Bryant from Vancouver, Marie Waisberg — executive secretary of the CCFM, and Jack Gray.



Mark Irwin

Peter Pearson made an opening statement that was a classic in grabby simplicity and mathematical inaccuracy. He told the CRTC that the CCFM had only one demand, "... that the CBC increase its programming of Canadian feature films by 1,000%". At this point there was a noticeable sigh from the Commission's table and Chairman Pierre Juneau leaned back in his seat as if involved with the crazies of this hearing. Pearson went on to say that this increase "... would raise the number of Canadian feature films broadcast by the CBC to 1% of the total." Another sigh from Juneau and arched eyebrows from the Commission's Vice-Chairman, Harry Boyle.

Pearson continued by pointing out that the CFDC has invested in 101 completed feature films over the last five years and only 2 of these have been screened by the English network. He said that CBLT in Toronto has broadcast nearly 2,500 features in the last five years and the CCFM would like to see at least forty Canadian feature films shown



The CCFM members presenting the brief to the CRTC

in the next five. Pearson finished with the understatement: "This is not an unreasonable demand."

Juneau seemed to be beside himself. He asked, "Why?". Crawley said it was a matter of salesmanship. Juneau then put forth *our* case — getting Canadian films onto the public network should not require superhuman efforts of salesmanship. Harry Boyle asked if it could be money, "Do Canadian filmmakers ask for too much?". Sandra Gathercole pointed out that CBC did not even bother to bid for *Slipstream* — so it couldn't simply be money. The Commission simply could not believe what it was hearing and asked again, "Why?". Kirwan Cox said we were dealing with two issues — participating in the financing of Canadian films by buying television rights like Global did with *Duddy Kravitz*, and buying the films after they are finished. The CBC has really done neither and the only reason must be that the executives like Thom Benson don't believe our films are any good or that they have a responsibility to show them to the Canadian people.

By this time, the members of the Commission were visibly angry and Juneau broke off the questions with the simple statement, "This is scandalous. I'm too depressed to hear any more." Whereupon everyone went to a late dinner.

Any analysis of the impact of the CCFM would have to be that it was one of the most effective representations at the Hearings. We had a simple problem that was able to use the CBC tactic of statistics against the Corporation. They couldn't argue around the fact that they weren't buying independent Canadian films no matter what the reason.

We will not know the result of these hearings until the CRTC grants the licence renewals to the CBC. The Commissioners cannot refuse these licences, but they can attach to the licences certain conditions, or they can issue a statement to accompany the licence renewals that outlines directions in which they feel the CBC should be moving. This will not happen until the end of March.