

Unions multiply as Vancouver ACFC opens

VANCOUVER - The Association of Canadian Film Craftspeople (ACFC) is moving West. The Toronto-based union opened offices in Vancouver on April 11 with about 80 members signed up (as of presstime). That number equals ACFC membership in Winnipeg but is far short of the 500 Toronto technicians, gaffers, designers, cameramen and other behind-the-camera crew.

Organizer Kevin Brown says the need for a new, Canadian union local arose after an ever increasing number of industry workers grew frustrated with IATSE Local #891. He says the feeling was that IATSE members "don't like making movies, they like making money" and are overly protective of their positions. He cites his own attempts to get an IATSE card as a set dresser.

"All I ever wanted was a chance and they wouldn't give me one."

He says that, although IATSE has about 300 members in B. C. (and has recently carded another 200), there is an ongoing problem of under-representation. He tells stories of newcomers with extensive and impressive out-of-province credits being denied entry to IATSE. The ACFC, he says, will take on anyone with a track record and will also help people with related experience break into the industry.

George Chapman, business agent for IATSE Local #891, says the formation of an ACFC local in Vancouver is "a sign of the times."

"We have doubled in size over the last two years," Chapman says, "by June 1 we will have over 500 members and will probably pick up another 150 in the following nine months. Everything (in B. C.) has been operating at an accelerated rate.

"We're already looking at a shrinking pie; network license fees are going down and the Canadian dollar is going up which is affecting major pictures. For every percentage point (the dollar rises) American producers lose \$75,000 in savings. Everyone knows it's precarious right now."

He's worried that the ACFC membership might find themselves with no work if the bubble bursts.

Brown says ACFC does not want a war with IATSE. "In fact, our rates will probably be about 50 cents an hour higher. We want to demonstrate that we're the A-team, the best option. Where we'll offer savings to producers is in having no minimum crewing requirements and no seniority which always results in a discontinuity of effort."

Chapman responds, "If our systems don't

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work, local members have the ability to change the rules. We don't have minimum crewing. In fact, I have a picture now which is organized to the point of having a crew the size of a movie-of-the-week."

ACFC's head office is providing financial backing to establish the new local and has assured Brown that "they have longstanding relationships with producers who are interested in working in B. C." He reports a positive reaction from two unidentified Canadian producers with projects in the wings, New World Pictures and Cannell, the TV production company that accounts for a large portion of

West Coast work.

Chapman allows that "in general, competition is healthy" but adds, "It's unfortunate that this should occur almost after the fact. If we had had more alternatives available last year and the year before we may have been able to serve the pictures that left the province. Our competition is not in Canada, it's Florida, Texas, Louisiana, those places."

Vancouver Island should also benefit from an ACFC local, according to Brown (who was involved in the establishment of the Victoria Film Commission). He says the fact that Victoria is not within IATSE's 25-mile studio zone has

made it difficult to sell producers on shooting there, despite its compact size and varied locations. Inevitably some crew members must travel from the Lower Mainland; he says IATSE's per diem rates and regulations make such shoots too expensive. Brown says ACFC "won't need expensive hotels. We'll look for minimal rates for Vancouver members who travel to fill out a crew."

ACFC is well aware of the need to support indigenous B. C. filmmaking; Brown indicates

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the union will be "extremely flexible" when negotiating with home-grown productions.

"We are a Canadian union and are interested in seeing that something is left behind (if the American producers leave)."

If innovation provides an edge, then the ACFC has one idea which should be attractive to anyone working on a set, or at least anyone with a child. The membership is considering operating an all-industry daycare centre on its shoots with the service open to one and all - even IATSE members.

At the same time, the National Association of Broadcast Employees (NABET) is also organizing in B. C. About 125 people attended a meeting in April to "organize non-affiliated people in all film and video crafts." Toronto Local 700 agent Linda Gardon told *The Vancouver Sun*, "We're looking for people in the film documentary and commercials field. We're also interested in the feature film and TV-series area but that may take a little more time."

ACFC Vancouver can be contacted at Suite C-302, The Marine Building, 355 Burrard Street, Vancouver, V6C 2G8. The phone number is (604) 683-2232.

The percentage is the point in negotiations

MONTREAL - Quebec producers are dissatisfied and wish to renegotiate a clause in the collective agreement of the Syndicat des techniciennes et des techniciens du cinéma du Québec (STCQ) that limits to 15 per cent the number of non-union members who can work on a production.

However, the 700-member technicians union says it will not renegotiate the clause next fall. "No," says STCQ board member Pierre Blondin. "We do make exceptions to the rule and that should be good enough for them. When they exceed the 15 per cent it is usually because they want to pay less."

This volatile issue is a continuous source of tension between producers and the union. Rock Demers, president of the Association des producteurs de film et de vidéo du Québec (APFVQ) and one of the signators of the collective agreement, says the problem of how to mount a production without exceeding the 15 per cent limit or quota of non-members becomes much more acute during the summer months when the STCQ members are busily employed on various productions.

"Each time we can respect the quota we do. But there are certain occasions where it is

FILM / VIDEO CANADIANA

Film/Video Canadiana 1985-1986, the newest edition of Canada's national filmography is now available.

Film/Video Canadiana 1985-1986 is a detailed guide to more than 2,500 French and English films and videos produced in 1985 and 1986. It also includes a directory of over 3,500 Canadian producers and distributors.

The publication is the result of a cooperative project undertaken by the National Archives of Canada (Moving Image and Sound Archives Division), the National Library of Canada, the Cinéma-thèque québécoise and the NFB. The aim of this partnership is to promote the distribution of Canadian films and videos both at home and abroad and to create a permanent record of Canadian filmmaking.

Film/Video Canadiana 1985-1986 may be ordered through the Customer Services Division of the National Film Board (price: \$35.00 in Canada; \$40.00 U.S. and elsewhere).

For further information, contact Jane Devine at (514) 283-9247.

NEW FOR THE CLASSROOM

Three new packages for the classroom have just been released

by the NFB. **Images of a Peaceful Planet**, a cassette with seven top NFB titles including the Oscar-winning **If You Love This Planet and Neighbours**, is directed at peace study groups and the classroom. This powerful cassette was first introduced at the Peace Institute held as a part of the Quebec Teachers' Convention in Montreal last November and will be featured at a Peace Day for Toronto educators this May and at the International Institute for Peace Education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton in July. **Film for a Peaceful Planet**, a resource guide which accompanies the video, is available free of charge.

Focus on Canada, a specialized resource handbook for secondary level Social Studies teachers, is also available. This book, which provides film-use suggestions for 300 NFB films, was researched and prepared by a group of eight teachers from across Canada.

Images and Meaning, a compilation cassette and accompanying film study notes featuring nine NFB titles, is designed to spark discussion and learning in media literacy and communications arts courses.

Information on all items is available by writing to: Education Marketing, D-5, National Film Board of Canada, P.O. Box

6100, Station A, Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3H5.

NFB AT MIP-TV

The National Film Board will again participate at MIP-TV, the world's largest TV sales marketplace. The Board will be offering TV buyers over 150 films, most produced within the last two years. Last year, a large percentage of the NFB's international sales revenues were directly related to its MIP presence. Among this year's potentially big sellers are: **To a Safer Place**, the story of an incest survivor; **Shoot and Cry**, an exploration of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; **Sonia**, a drama about a victim of Alzheimer's disease and **Give Me Your Answer True**, a biography of Canadian actor Donald Sutherland.

ALSO ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Italy has replaced France as the NFB's top European client and is now second only to the United States. A major sale to Greek television, involving films on women's studies, is a break - through in this Eastern market. A sale to Korean broadcasting which, among other titles, includes the highly acclaimed series **Daughters of the Country**, is the biggest NFB sale ever to that country.

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impossible to respect it despite our good intentions," says Demers.

Marie José Raymond, co-producer of *Mills of Power*, is currently in arbitration with the STCQ over union grievances that include a breach of the 15 per cent quota. Raymond shares Demers' concern that there are not enough STCQ members to hire at peak production times. This problem, she says, is compounded by the fact that the union is slow to enroll new members.

"It is unrealistic," says Raymond. "There is a limited number of people in the union. When we have a glut of U.S. films or many films shooting in Quebec at the same time, we simply

don't have the option of taking STCQ members."

Both producers say that the most competent technicians are not always union members and that the producers should have the choice, especially during peak times, to hire on the basis of competence and compatibility with the rest of the crew.

Explains Demers, "Sometimes you have people available who are not considered very good technicians, so what do you do? This is a delicate question. Sometimes the technician may be very good but for some reason the crew does not want to work with him. If we had more

people to choose from we would be able to put together a whole crew that would work together, but some of them and some of us are very difficult people."

Blondin doesn't buy either argument about numbers of available crew or competence. "Our collective agreement is clear," he says. They can hire outside of the union if they can demonstrate that STCQ members are not available. There is also a procedure for dismissing a member for incompetence."

Bill Wiggins, associate producer with Claude

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