

CHARLES MANDEL



EDMONTON - The announcement of one new program, as well as a change to the existing equity fund program, by the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation (AMPDC), is certain to make Alberta filmmakers smile.

AMPDC's brand new marketing assistance program, which will help filmmakers defray the cost of print advertising, is designed to draw public attention to Alberta film productions. The program provides expenses to the tune of either \$500,000 per film, or 25 per cent of the combined costs and marketing of the film. Among the eligible expenses are:

- The creation of prints of the film, as well as trailers and internegatives.
- The design of posters, flyers, one sheets, press kits, and magazine and newspaper advertisements.
- The production of sales demo-tapes.
- The creation of merchandising material.
- The placement of ads in newspapers, magazines, trade publications, television and radio, with the stipulations that the ad content be specific to the film and sales-oriented.
- Travel costs for principal creative personnel on the film for promotional purposes.
- Freelance publicists.

Furthermore, the program will give assistance to provincial films marketed in a foreign country by a foreign distributor as long as the filmmaker owns the distribution rights.

It is AMPDC's belief that this program will help increase the audience for Alberta-produced films and thus increase the distribution revenues from all sources, helping maximize the dollar return to investors and film producers.

The change to AMPDC's equity fund financing takes the form of an incentive for new producers. Investment by the film corporation will be limited to first-time producers who are doing theatrical release dramas of 75 minutes and longer, and those undertaking the production of television broadcasts of one hour or more. AMPDC will provide up to 25 per cent of the funding, to a maximum of \$75,000 per project. The financing will be a one-time investment to the producer. The change to the program has been endorsed by Telefilm Canada and ACTRA, and Superchannel and ACCESS Television have pledged their support.

IT'S NOT OVER UNTIL IT'S OVER:

Asked to say: "Say it's not true," Lorne MacPherson, AMPDC's president, said: "It's not true." Which is to say, MacPherson has no intention of leaving his position with the film development agency. This item comes about because the *Edmonton Journal's* culture columnist, Allan Kellogg, has hinted in print - not once, but twice - that MacPherson was thinking of quitting his post. Said MacPherson: "(I'm leaving) only if Kellogg has a better position in mind for me."

LIGHTNING ON THE LAKE:

Thunder on the Tundra is the title of the new music video for Edmonton-area pop group Wilfred N. and the Crown Men. FAVA Co-op member Dave Cunningham produced and directed, with help from associate producers Clint Barradell and Rick Gustavsen. Studio Post handled the post-production and some 25 FAVA members were involved in the creation of the video, which is set to premiere at Edmonton's Media Club early this month. Zonik Records will handle distribution.

WHERE'S HINTON?:

The Hinton Independent Film and Video Festival is scheduled to take place August 31 to September 1 at the town of Hinton, located approximately halfway between Edmonton and Jasper, Alberta. The festival will focus on alternative, indigenous work by Alberta film and video-makers. A highlight of the festival will be the curated retrospective of co-op media arts organizations in Alberta, including FAVA, EMMedia, and the Quickdraw Animation Society. As well, there will be a number of seminars with such topics as Alternative Artists and Access to the Airwaves; Post-Modernism In Alberta Film and Video; and the Role of Media In Film and Video Criticism.

Colin Low
sees future for
the NFB and the
documentary

MONTREAL - Colin Low, a filmmaker whose name is often uttered in the same breath as the words National Film Board of Canada, says the National Film Board is here to stay.

Low and filmmakers Pierre Perrault and Kathleen Shannon are the ambassadors of the "Salute to the Documentary", an international symposium and screening of 200 documentary films, June 16 to 25, in Montreal.

The event, hosted by the NFB as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations of the NFB, was structured around 10 days of screening which took place in a number of downtown cinemas and the NFB and six days of workshops, symposia, debates.

Low, who joined the NFB in 1945, has produced and directed many high-profile films for the NFB including *Circle of the Sun*, *Standing Alone*, *Universe*, *Labyrinthe*, *Transitions* (the first Imax 3-D movie), his earlier films *City of Gold*, *Corral* and an NFB project called *Challenge for Change*.

He says much of the discussion inside and outside of the symposia centered on television and why the documentary form and the nature of television don't fit together easily.

"We heard all the usual complaints about format and ratings and the pressure of entertainment," says Low, who adds that most filmmakers agreed on the need to "affirm the value of the documentary."

"As far as I'm concerned, the documentary is a medium of reflection. It is a chance to reflect on the exploration you do with a camera. It isn't this instantaneous thing where the surface is ripped off a subject and dropped in small pieces on the audience. It requires an intellectual penetration of a whole event or subject. As such it fits uneasily in television."

Texture - much of the information carried by 35 mm. film - is lost on television, says Low. Time constraints are also a problem for the documentary on television.

"You can't structure a documentary like a drama without deforming the reality of the documentary. It has its own pace."

During the last five years, Low has worked extensively with Imax film technology. He says there is a chance that the documentary will find a home with another leading-edge technology called HDTV.

"I'm interested in what film is and what it is not. With 3-D, for instance, there is an incredible expansion of not just the space but the textural resolution of the image."

Imax has the equivalent of 4,000 lines of

resolution. Television has 500 lines. High Definition Television is the equivalent 1,000 lines. 3-D is the equivalent of 15,000 lines.

Low says the NFB continues to provide a place for filmmakers to make "valuable and influential films."

"The film board is more important than it ever has been. People come here and do important work even though they are sacrificing monetary rewards because they want to make good films. They stay here because of that."

"Even now, good work comes out of here because like-minded groups of people work together. This is why the motion picture business grew up so splendidly in the U.S. because in the 1930s and '40s there were places with some degree of permanence where people could practice their craft until they got extremely good."

Younger filmmakers should be given a chance to spend at least five years at the NFB, says Low.

"It sickens me that some of the younger filmmakers here are the people I helped to bring in 20 years ago."

All problems at the NFB considered and contrary to opinion voiced elsewhere in this magazine, Low says the NFB is here to stay.

"I'm not pessimistic about the future of the NFB because I was raised in the 1930s. I've seen this place on the edge of being destroyed several times. I say that the moment this place is destroyed, it is going to have to be reinvented or you can write off the country."

3D Television:
glimpse of the future

MONTREAL - Persons interested in 3D technology from 30 countries gathered at the International Conference on Three-Dimensional Media Technology, May 30 to June 1, at the Grand Hotel in Montreal.

The first conference of this kind was held in Montreal in 1977 but this conference represented the first time anywhere that experts gathered to discuss general applications of 3D technology other than film and holography in isolation.

Attendance was close to 300 persons per day. Main attractions included sessions on film production, holography, 3D television systems and future perspectives.

The conference was divided into six thematic sessions expanding on the future of 3D film, holography and sound.

Other attractions included the latest advances in 3D film from Walt Disney Studios and NASA's environment-creation 3D technology with the use of special helmets and gloves to introduce astronauts to outer-space environments without leaving Earth. The conference was presented in association with Concordia University.