

\$250,000 going to individuals and \$100,000 to organisations. Bill Boyle spoke next, and explained that the focus this past year had been on developing programs to make the Co-op a group activity centre rather than a service. Workshops had been started and the results were disappointing statistically, although participants felt they were definitely useful. The job placement service was going well, and he wanted to further the National Film School idea. The members voted down this last goal. Working groups to program various aspects of the Co-op were organised, with areas outlined including script library, darkroom, public relations, rushes, workshops and administering the production fund grant of \$3000 recently received from the Arts Council.

And now to the legislators; The CCFM sent a special Christmas card to all Ontario MPPs. On the outside was written, "All we want for Christmas is" and on the inside was added "a film quota and levy", along with wishes for a merry Christmas.

CFTA

Another couple of meetings were held in early winter, and this time it was the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA). First with Hugh Faulkner and Aides, where the CFTA requested open tenders on government jobs, the transformation of the CFDC into a bank-type operation, and an extension of the tax write-off provisions to shorts and TV films. Faulkner said there is no unanimous voice in the industry. The CFTA also met newly-installed CBC president A.W. Johnson in December. The CFTA proposal for a special fund for developing co-productions will be studied, and the meeting was summed up as

"all in all a good start toward re-establishing relations with the current top echelon of the CBC."

Miscellaneous

You may have heard rumours circulating, and, not being one to fan the flames, I hereby divulge a rumour as fact, and a rumour as pretty certainly fact. First, the fact. Quinn Labs has been rumoured to be in financial trouble. Well, although Mirrophonic Labs isn't doing spectacularly, Quinn is perfectly solvent. It was

the company, a holding conglomerate, that owned all of Quinn's shares that was in trouble, so much trouble that its assets, i.e., Quinn, were put up for tender. Holding Company, called Vencap, went bye bye, and Quinn's shares, as Findlay yelled in a Globe and Mail Business Section ad, were acquired in total by a multinational company. Quinn is now among the hundred subsidiaries of Tozer, Kemsley and Millbourn (Canada) Ltd.

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THE PRAIRIES

AMPIA vs. ACCESS

During the past year forces have been gathering under the banners AMPIA (Alberta Motion Pictures Industry Association) and ACCESS (Alberta Education and Communications Corp). Confrontation and conflict there has been; total war seems imminent. The issues of the day are moral and prudential matters, guided in the latter case by equal weightings of enlightened and unenlightened self-interest and in the former case by piously invoked principles of altruism. Of course, the AMPIA front is less unified than the ACCESS front, some of its members forming a shadowy underground dedicated to the sinister and myopic practices of self-destruction.

The central contention of AMPIA is that ACCESS, a crown corporation founded on October 17th, 1973 and funded by the government is buying men and materials so that it can compete with the private sector. The evidence for this intention to compete, as we shall see,

is the present existence of competition. What better evidence could there be? What is wrong with this—howls of "government intervention", sighs of "private enterprise" notwithstanding — is that it is an unnecessary and silly waste of public money, another example of the profligacy of bureaucracy.

Unfortunately the replies to this contention made by Mr. Larry Shorter, President of ACCESS, do not even have the merit of being straightforwardly false: they are, alas, a mélange of the muddled, the misleading, the misinformed, the evasive, and the false. Let us start with the most reasonable denial by ACCESS to the charge of trespass. When confronted by AMPIA about its acquisition of flatbed editing equipment early in the year, Mr. Shorter claimed that this was necessary because the private sector was already flooded with work. In the light of the fact ACCESS has also added a new film crew to its personnel and engaged in

the production of various films, this argument ought to be extended to cover all the capabilities of the private sector.

The justification for the burgeoning equipment and manpower, then, is this: the private sector is unable to supply the necessary facilities to ACCESS because it is already working at full capacity; and so ACCESS has to expand its 'in-house' production capabilities. This might be a good argument if its premises were true, but that is not the case. It is simply false that all, or indeed most, of the private production companies in Alberta are carrying a full work load.

Consequently the increase in equipment and personnel, the production of training films for Grant McEwan Community College and Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, the production of the series, "Man and His Environment", all of this represents work and equipment that could have been provided by the private sector. Hence the claim that ACCESS is in competition with the private sector and in the business of squandering public funds.

And this is no small time operation: we are not dealing with a two-man set up working out of a disused garage. ACCESS employs about 200 people — a healthy number this, after only two years of operation — and has an estimated annual budget in excess of six million dollars. It is impossible at the moment to get an exact breakdown of the financial and interior structure of the ACCESS war machine, but here is an educated guess. Suppose that in the year 1975-1976 ACCESS spent \$1,000,000 on the radio station CKUA that it runs. (This estimate is very high, but it takes into account some recent capital expenditure.) Now we know that ACCESS purchases about \$2,000,000

of equipment, services and personnel a year from the private sector, so that leaves about \$3,000,000 unaccounted for. This means that *at least* as much production work is done in-house as is contracted out and it almost certainly means that much more is done. For the figure of \$2,000,000 includes film stock and processing, graphics and all television program acquisitions and co-productions. If ACCESS is engaged in as much production as the figure of \$3,000,000 suggests then it is clearly duplicating work that the private sector could handle; if it is not engaged in this much production, then what, one may well ask, is it doing with three million dollars of public money?

The argument for the expansion of ACCESS based on the claim that the private sector is unable to handle any more work, although unsound, at least has the merit of clarity. Still, this clarity is somewhat obscured by other pronouncements that have emanated from ACCESS. The obscurity is caused by the implications of these remarks, which tend to undermine the rationale for the argument: the claim that the private sector is flooded with work. In particular, it has been claimed that ACCESS in-house production costs are cheaper than those of the private sector. This, of course, is not true, the figures upon which it is based not taking into account indirect costs of men and materials. In addition, it has been claimed that ACCESS is equipping itself to handle a "minimum consistent volume". Whatever minimum consistent volume may be, it clearly is volume in excess of mere rush material. I do not think that one could fault ACCESS for wishing to provide against the eventuality that the private sector was unable to supply an

equipped crew at immediate notice on all occasions; but the extent of its equipping far exceeds any such reasonable requirements. One can only conclude that its intention is to produce material that the private sector could produce and that it believes this to be a legitimate function regardless of the capabilities of the private sector. Again, it is illegitimate because it is wasteful.

There are other problems that the private sector has had, and is continuing to have, with ACCESS. These problems revolve around the issues of rights and royalties. Suffice it to say that ACCESS seems to think that it should have complete distribution rights in Canada for all of its material, including material co-produced with companies in the private sector. On top of this it seems to think that the demand for royalties by the private companies that produced some of ACCESS' very low budget productions amounts to a demand by the private producer that ACCESS subsidize the private sector. In reality, all it amounts to is a demand for a reasonable return on one's invested capital.

So much, then, for the causes for the recent skirmishes between our two hosts. What strategy has AMPIA evolved to deal with this threat to membership? After the ineffectiveness of the various meetings and bits of correspondence that AMPIA has had with ACCESS president, AMPIA's executive decided to approach the Ministers of Education and Advanced Education, Messrs. Koziak and Hohol respectively. Needless to say, the Ministers were very attentive, they appeared thoughtful and disturbed by what AMPIA had to say, but in the end they have done nothing. In the legislature, under the questioning of Mr. Clark, the Social Credit leader, Mr. Hohol

attempted to evade the pertinent issues by claiming impotence in the face of ACCESS wheelings and dealings; and, recently, on being questioned by AMPIA president, William Marsden, Mr. Hohol prevaricated and played for time. The government, it seems, is unable to face its responsibility for the ill-begotten issue of its philandering with the public purse.

There is a moral in all this, one that independent producers throughout the country not yet plagued by the self-propagating mammoths conceived by the bureaucratic mind, ought to heed. ACCESS was created to satisfy a distinct need, the need for organised, controlled educational material. But the act which generated it allowed it immediately to become an instance of Parkinson's Law. At the present time, the Government of British Columbia proposes to set up an ACCESS-like authority for the coordination of educational material throughout the Province. Their statement of intent restricts their proposed authority in exactly the way AMPIA wishes ACCESS restricted. They say, "We are not devoting public funds to the establishment of an expensive network of television broadcast facilities, as has been done in other provinces. We are not establishing an 'in house' production facility with expensive studios and fancy equipment, as others have chosen to do; and we are not establishing a rigid and bureaucratic corporation for a project which could be handled more efficiently using existing mechanisms." So their intention is merely to coordinate the facilities available to them in the private sector. Nevertheless we all know what happens to good intentions.

Peter Haynes

Manitoba

Now that the posties are back at work, we in the West can once again send out glorious rumours about just how fat we are. There's a lot of news to catch up on. First, the Yorkton Film Festival. Apart from the screenings and awards, this year's festival also sponsored a day-long panel on the current state of the Canadian Film Industry. The panel was set up of some brass (CFDC, CBC, CTV, NFB, etc) and a few independent filmmakers. However, the discussion was really more of an open forum featuring a lot of concerned film people. The subject matter was somewhat frustrating because it lacked focus and featured many of the woes which have been rehashed ad infinitum. But a few important points were raised. To begin with the current state of non-production in Saskatchewan, especially for the novice filmmaker. Allan King was asked how a filmmaker could establish himself in Saskatchewan. He really couldn't provide a solution beyond the usual checking out of resources and needs. For the young filmmaker both experience and opportunities seem virtually unobtainable in Saskatchewan. This coupled with tremendous governmental indifference paints the gloomiest picture to date for local filmmakers.

Talk, however, also centred on more optimistic topics. A feeling existed that there is a real sense of a regional identity in the Prairies. Many film people suddenly found themselves face to face with one another after years of familiarity through rumour and scattered films alone. Suspicion and antagonism melted into co-operation as talk concentrated on common needs, experiences and ambitions. Closer contact is now planned between the Manitoba-Alberta-Saskatchewan people to