

# it's time to

## EDITORIAL

Ever since Gérard Pelletier's speech on July 4, 1972, the various Secretaries of State have reaffirmed their interest in a feature film industry and have promised to write a coherent film policy. Mr. John Roberts has told us we can expect this policy during the month of June.

Meanwhile, the federal agencies involved in filming (the Canadian Film Development Corp., the National Film Board, the Film Festivals Bureau) and those whose activities affect the industry (the CBC, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission and the Minister of Revenue) have all continued to make decisions, changing bit by bit the environment in which this industry has continued to grow. There has been no federal film policy to guide their decisions.

So there have been ups and downs. One of the more promising – and more troubling – periods is the one we're going through. While the 100 per cent capital cost allowance granted to investors in Canadian films has proved to everybody that there is indeed money available for production, the organization and execution of some of the recent features has given rise to doubt; is it wise to encourage feature production in the absence of a coherent government policy?

Why should the Secretary of State be interested in feature films anyway? The bulk of filming in Canada is done by those who film commercials, sponsored films, educational films and other documentaries. These companies are the permanent employers of staff, and train the people who may eventually work in features. The owners of these companies work full time at filming, and few of them are heavily involved in features.

One can only conclude that the Secretary of State is interested in features because the government realizes the tremendous cultural potential of a feature, well made and widely seen. Were the government interested primarily in the commercial aspects, it would have called on the Minister of Industry and Commerce to oversee the development of features in Canada.



*The Random House Dictionary* states that culture is "the sum total ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another." It is the knowledge and acceptance of who one is, where one lives and how. It is also built of respect.

Biologically, a culture is a specially prepared environment which encourages growth.

Artistically, culture is the pursuit of enlightenment and excellence. This involves critical evaluation of cultural activities and their impact upon a given people.

Translated to film, the requirements of culture do not set up the 'artistic-noncommercial film' and oppose it to an entertaining, money-making one. The opposition is spurious.

A culturally viable film is one in which the central idea corresponds to – i.e., is in harmony with – the way one lives. It should reflect

# take a stand

values which are particular to a place and be made by the creative people best suited to interpret these values. It does not preclude using ideas and talents which are not native to a particular culture, as long as the cultural integrity of the film is respected.

More often than not, the producer is called upon to insure that the requirements of "culture" are met. To make a Canadian film in which the government is a partner – either through direct investment or because of a tax advantage – a Canadian producer should be fully in control and answerable to the public for the quality of his film.

Never has there been so much confusion about why Canada is promoting the feature film industry or what goals are to be achieved.

Item: The promoters of the Anglo-Canadian co-production **Leopard in the Snow** took out a full-page ad in *Variety*, omitted the name of the Canadian producer, and added the words, "These credits are not deemed to be contractual."

Item: The Canadian producer of **The Great Day**, an Italo-Canadian co-production, had to cable to Italy to find out who was the cinematographer on the film, and this despite the fact that the film is finished and ready for screening at Cannes.

Item: While 16 Canadian features or co-productions have been made since Nov. 1, 1976, the local technicians are inactive, many producers can't raise money for their films, and the situation is deemed to be "unhealthy" by almost every Canadian producer with any kind of track record.

Item: The Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association has presented a brief stating, "The feature film industry is primarily a commercial enterprise geared to the 'leisure time' market. The other aspects include culture and education; however, it is our view that these are secondary to the main function..."

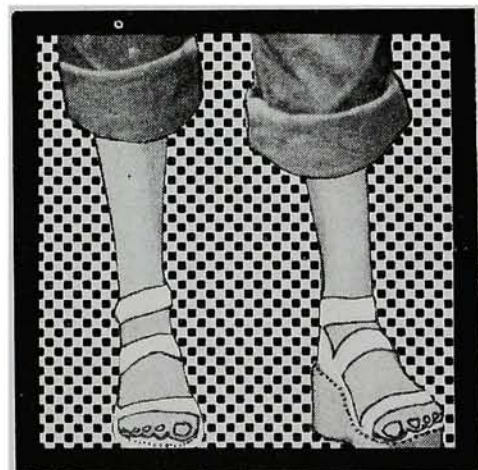
Item: For years, the Film Festivals Bureau has encouraged the distribution of Canadian film publications in their festival office at Cannes. This year, it has refused to allow this distribution. The reason given is that the film reviews included in these magazines (the 'cultural' aspect) are harmful to the government's promotional effort.

Item: The National Film Board of Canada is not harnessed to a commercial imperative. This year, its production includes three of the five Canadian films invited to the Cannes Fest, a sign that the pursuit of excellence and cultural integrity has its rewards internationally.

It is indeed time to take a stand. Will Canada encourage helter-skelter feature filmmaking, regardless of the cultural benefits of such activity? Or will we all have the courage to analyze the situation, set our priorities straight, and make decisions which will benefit the nation culturally?

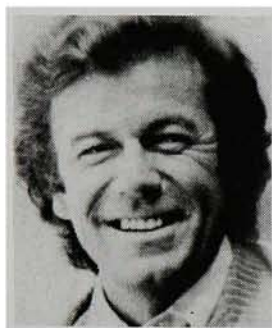
We do have a choice, if we care to exercise it.

**Connie and Jean-Pierre Tadros**



# FIGHTING FOR A CANADIAN FILM INDUSTRY THAT WORKS FOR US!

# CCFM



"If a carpenter raises his hammer, it is to drive a nail all the way in, not half way in; and we have every right to be the landlords, not the tenants of our own buildings. CCFM is trying to encourage these principles. They deserve our support."

**Gordon Pinsent**  
*Writer, Actor*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7 p.m.  
Tuesday, June 7, 1977

O.I.S.E. Auditorium,  
252 Bloor St. W.

Memberships available  
at the door **\$10.**

"I support and endorse the efforts of the CCFM. It is the one and only cohesive instrument working to maintain and further develop an industry for the benefit of all of us who work in film in Canada. The people who run the CCFM have got guts and commitment and the people who belong to it, which should be all of us in the industry, need the same guts and commitment."

**Al Waxman**  
*Actor, Producer, Director*



"In recognition and gratitude, we in Canada should support fully those individuals and organizations who continue the fight to establish a viable Canadian film industry."

**Christopher Chapman, csc, cfe (Hon)**  
*President, Directors' Guild of Canada*

"Looking at the dismal state of the feature film industry, we are fortunate that the government has not become the saviour of the commercial and documentary world. I look forward to the day when Canadians can work freely in their own country without the 'blessings' of the United States."

**Reginald H. Morris, csc**  
*Director of Photography*



## COUNCIL OF CANADIAN FILMMAKERS

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Directors' Guild of Canada — Canadian Film Editors Guild  
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