

Text of recent speech delivered by Guy L. Cote, president of the Association Professionnelle Des Cineastes, at the annual general meeting of the Canadian Society of Cinematographers.

# Selling Job Must Be Done On Feature Films Says Guy Cote

"The importance of the cinema is that it is the first world art. The power of the image triumphs over the barriers of language. And, in the service of the Russian Tolstoy, a Swedish actress, directed by an American, thrills all of Europe, India and Japan.

"But do not let this power of the image deceive you! It comes not from the fact that the cinema imitates reality, but rather that it is the most powerful interpreter of the unreal world, this strange world which often appears to resemble reality, but to which reality will never resemble.

"What the cinema reveals, each year more and more, is that men, in spite of all that separates them, in spite of their gravest conflicts, dream under the same skies the same fundamental dreams. And that sky is to be found in every film of talent, even in those where we never see it."

The above eloquent words were spoken at the Cannes Film Festival, five years ago by André Malraux, Minister in Charge of Cultural Affairs for the French Government. "But," says Malraux, "the cinema is also an industry."

My message tonight concerns chiefly the industry, and not very much of film art. I shall review a few recent developments in Canada which are of immediate significance to our film industry, paying particular attention to what has been going on in Montreal. Not all of you may know what has been happening there, and not all of you may be aware of certain ideas that have been evolving and taking root.

## FEATURE FILMS

My remarks will be limited to the feature film industry, or entertainment film, of 90 to 120 minutes in duration (sometimes more), for which people will pay money at the box-office to see performed. We all know that Canada is the home of the documentary short film and that our country has proved to the world that this kind of film has a distinguished role to play in education, in public information, in art. In Canada, the social justification of the documentary film is acknowledged by all. Since members of this society were present, eyes glued to the view-finder, at the birth of most of them, I shall not dwell any further on our achievements in this field.

The words feature film industry evoke the world of big finance, of huge investments. And, indeed, the film industry does manipulate staggering sums of money. Over three billion dollars are spent each year at the box-office of the 170,000 cinemas around the world. In the United States, the average cost of a feature film is two and a half million dollars. No one can predict whether a film will be a success or a box-office flop, for each film is, in

many ways, a prototype. It is a strange and fascinating industry and, like the world of espionage, it is full of international intrigue, high stakes and beautiful women.

In Canada, though, we have never had a feature film industry. What film industry we have known has mostly been the result of the unflagging zeal of others. The history of the Canadian feature film, as our national historian, Hye Bossin, has often told us, is one of many hopes and as many failures. (And I would like, on this occasion, to salute the unique contributions which Hye Bossin has made, and is still making, to the preservation of historical records about the cinema in Canada).

What attempts were made before the war to make Canadian feature films were dogged by incompetence, inexperience and plain bad luck. Our greatest achievement has been to provide Hollywood with some of its most famous film people: Mack Sen-

earnings, to obtain the co-operation of Hollywood producers. Henceforth, stipulated the agreement, Canada would become a more frequent location for big-picture exteriors, and Canada would be mentioned as often as possible in Hollywood scripts. "I've just come back from a hunting trip in North Ontario." "My brother's a dope addict in Vancouver."

How ill-conceived that policy seems now! It was sadly lacking in effectiveness, even as a gimmick to promote the tourist trade, for all that was shown of Canada was its scenery: never did we feel its human dimension. In fact, the Canadian Co-operation Project resulted not only in the free export of U.S. cash earnings, but also in the free export of our natural decor, in brute form, like so much iron ore. In retrospect, many people now feel that the Canadian Co-operation Project sold a potential Canadian post-war film industry down the river.

## ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONNELLE DES CINEASTES

Guy L. Cote, *President*  
Clement Perron, *Secretary*  
Marc Beaudet, *Treasurer*  
Jacques Godbout, *Vice-President*  
Louis Portugais, *Vice-President*  
Arthur Lamothe, *Director*  
Pierre Gauvreau, *Director*  
Glav Sperling, *Director*  
Marcel Dube, *Director*

nett, Mary Pickford, Louis B. Mayer, Jack Warner, Marie Dressler, Raymond Massey, Walter Huston, Norma Shearer, Beatrice Lillie, Edward Dmytryk and Walter Pidgeon, to name only a few.

## CANADIAN CO-OPERATION PROJECT

As the 20's turned into the 30's, and the 30's turned into the 40's, one may surmise that some people in this country must have wondered why Canada was not represented on the screens of the world. But official government thinking at the time certainly can't have been very profound. Indeed, it was not so long ago that a preposterous deal was concluded by Canada, in a misguided effort to put her image on the world's screens.

That deal was called the Canadian Co-operation Project, and it was dreamt up at a time when the export of cash earnings of American films in Canadian theatres was posing a currency problem. Under the terms of the agreement, the Motion Picture Association of America contracted, in return for the free export of U.S. film

## HOLLYWOOD IN MONTREAL

Things were not quite the same in French Canada. A long tradition of prejudices had instilled into the minds of many people the idea that films were somehow evil. "Christian parents!" went the title of one pre-war pamphlet, "save your children from the murderous cinema!!" In a post-war effort to clean up the screen by offering good wholesome locally-produced entertainment, financial support was found for setting up a proper film studio where the French-Canadian—at last—would re-create his own image for the screen. "Hollywood in Canada," the headlines stated. Indeed, two to three features were made, in French, each year, between 1947 and 1952. Conceived strictly for the local market, based on popular radio serials and horrific folklore, the films all made money, costing an average of \$100,000 (including graft). Seraphin, La Petite Aurore L'Enfant Martyre, and others, were shown in every town and village in Quebec, in parish halls and even in churches. None were ever exported, and when TV hit Montreal in the early 50's, audiences dwindled and "Hollywood in Canada" folded up. The market had been too small and the horizons of the businessmen too limited. The film technicians found jobs at the CBC, and so did the actors. And life went on.

## TORONTO FILE

Between 1954 and 1960, sporadic attempts were made here in Toronto to make feature films. You know the fate of most of them. Some were made for the U.S. market, and could just as easily have been shot there. Others were sold in England and never obtained a Canadian release.

(Continued on Page 12)

## Cote on the Film Industry

(Continued from Page 10)

Still others were given grand premières and were promptly buried. One film, I believe, didn't even get past the rough editing stage. Lack of money, lack of assured markets, lack of talent, lack of wisdom. Investors who lost money in some of these ventures have not yet forgotten how badly they were taken for a ride. But that is Toronto history, which you know better than I.

### FLURRY IN THE SIXTIES

Since 1960, however, some of the attention has once again shifted to Montreal. A student film, produced at the University of Montreal, shot on 16mm, in the style of the nouvelle vague, was blown-up to 35mm, put into the Orpheum Theatre, and ran four weeks to 30,000 paying customers. By itself, the experiment was not a major break-through, but it was symbolic: the film had been made by young people, not experienced professionals; it had been made in a new free style of film making, using inexpensive equipment and film stock.

It had been produced not in order to make money for investors, but out of a strong, inner compulsion to create a feature length motion picture. *Seul ou Avec D'Autres* in fact did cover its production costs. It was shown last year at Cannes, and some international critics praised it. *Seul ou Avec D'Autres*, a student film, marked the beginnings of the new era in the French-Canadian feature-length cinema.

### DETERMINED FILM MAKERS

One should never underestimate, when making cold, economic analyses of the film industry, the importance of the film-makers themselves. In recent years, making a feature film in Canada has almost been an economic impossibility. Yet, two film makers in Montreal — both trained at the National Film Board — each decided in 1962 to make an independent feature,

whether it made money or not. Claude Jutra, with earnings from his participation in a TV series about Canadian cinema, began shooting a personal film, on 16mm with friends, often on weekends. Half way through, he ran out of money, found a producer, Robert Hershorn, and finished a picture called *A Tout Prendre* (Take It All) which won the grand prize at last year's Festival of Canadian Films, in Montreal, as well as two international awards at Brussels.

And last night, it repeated the same success in Toronto by winning a Certificate of Merit as the best theatrical feature at the Canadian Film Awards. Pierre Patry, the other film maker, successfully promoted the idea of a film co-operative, in which all participants agreed to take shares in the profits, instead of a salary. Helped by producer Roger Blais, cameraman Jean Roy and by a team of young students, he directed a 35mm feature called *Trouble-Fete* (Trouble-Maker) which has just completed a six-week run in Montreal and drawn more than 70,000 paying customers. Both of these films, by ordinary standards, would never have seen the light of day had it not been for the dogged determination of the film makers themselves, who accepted considerable risks and personal sacrifices in order to complete their respective movies.

At the same time, people at the NFB were also completing their first feature films, one of which (*Drylanders*, directed by Don Haldane) has proved to be a great popular success in the Canadian West, and the other (*Pour la Suite du Monde*) is already a contemporary classic hailed by the international critics (but spurned by the public at the box-office). The production of these two films has marked a turning point in Film Board policy, and indeed in the history of Canadian cinema.

Lastly, in this rapid tour of recently completed films, one must include Budge Crawley's production of *Amenita Pertilensis*, directed by René Bonnière, which we hope will soon be seen on our screens. Produced without advance distribution guarantees, *Amenita Pertilensis* is also, in its way, a symbol of the risks which Canadian entrepreneurs must run in order to



Shooting a sequence for Crawley's "*Amenita Pertilensis*" is Frank Stokes, CSC, as he lines up a shot over a Montreal street. Directed by René Bonnière, the film will be released in the fall.

make films under present conditions. *Amenita* has cost a considerable sum of money, far more than what has been risked by all the independent Montreal film makers put together, and we are all looking forward to its favorable reception by the public.

### ASSOCIATION CINEASTES

I now turn to another aspect of Canada's feature film story, one in which my presentation must of necessity be somewhat more subjective. One evening in December, 1963, 40-odd French-speaking film makers gathered together to form a professional association called L'Association Professionnelle des Cineastes (APC). In itself, this new group was nothing startling, coming as it did after the formation of other professional groups, such as the Directors Guild of Canada, in Toronto and, of course, the Canadian Society of Cinematographers.

But there was a difference: the PAC grouped people who all lived in the same

(Continued on Page 17)

### FILM AWARD PHOTOS

Anyone interested in seeing the batch of still photographs shot by Paul Smith at the Canadian Film Awards dinner should contact him at 333 Bloor St. West, Toronto 5. Telephone 924-7516. They are excellent shots of the award winners and quite reasonable.

PAUL SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY 924-7516

## Shooting On The West Coast?

Everything In Lighting  
Equipment Available  
Sales or Rentals

- ★ High Output DC Mobile Generator
- ★ Camera Dollies and Dimmer Controls
- ★ M/R Arc Lights and Pedestals
- ★ ColorTran Lighting Equipment
- ★ Complete Lighting Facilities for Theatrical Productions

551 West 8th Ave.  
Vancouver 9, B.C.  
Phone 876-2931

Starlite

EQUIPMENT RENTALS

## Cote on the Film Industry

(Continued from Page 12)

city. This gave us, from the onset, a splendid opportunity for developing cohesion amongst our members, as well as establishing efficient day-to-day liaison with many of them. There was another difference too: the APC was born amidst a general ferment among film makers, to which our Latin temperament was quick to respond. Meetings were lively and noisy, and even the simple task of choosing our official name turned into a frenzied argument which lasted way past midnight.

The APC which now groups 104 film makers, in government and private industry alike, has very much the same aims as most professional associations: to defend, protect and advance the moral, social and economic welfare of its members. One circumstance, however, was to lead to an immediate orientation of our work: two members on our board of directors had the opportunity of studying for several months the structure of the film industry, in this country as well as abroad.

### PRESENT BRIEFS

What we discovered literally horrified us. The facts, accessible to all, may be old hat to some of you, perhaps. But these facts grieved and angered us, for we could not understand how any country aspiring to some form of cultural integrity, could tolerate some of the situations we came across. We resolved in January of this year to bring our case before the public in the form of Briefs to the Ottawa and Quebec Governments. These have now been translated, and English-language copies are available from our secretariat.

Basically, our findings were twofold.

- Canada is one of the few modern countries in the world in which no film legislation exists to promote and sustain a national feature film production industry.
- Film distribution and exploitation in Canada is basically controlled by foreign interests and constitutes a structure having all the characteristics of a monopoly, or combine.

Here are a few production facts which we put into our submissions to government:

### FOR SALE

**NEWMAN & SINCLAIR** latest model REFLEX CAMERA, 400' and 200' magazines, 32, 40, 50mm. COOKE series II lenses, electronic motor control, 12 volt nickle cadmium batt.

**NEWMAN & SINCLAIR**, spring driven REFLEX, five 200' magazines, three lenses, stop motion attachment.

**UNDERWATER HOUSING**, all metal Swiss made with BELL & HOWELL FILMO 70 DH, ANGENIEUX 10mm F.1.8, like new.

**FRED PORRETT**

106 Washington Place, New York 14

- In 1961, the following countries produced the following number of features:

Spain .....	89
Egypt .....	46
India .....	312
Japan .....	375
Denmark .....	16
(Denmark has a smaller population than Ontario)	
Canada .....	2

- Sweden annually distributes a million and a half dollars to a dozen features, in the form of direct aid; Mexico has a 50% screen quota for Mexican films; England and France subsidize their national films to the extent of 25% to 30% of their production costs; 16 weeks of Italian films must be shown, yearly, in each Italian cinema; Argentina lends up to 50% of the cost of each Argentine film; but in Canada, no government has ever lent money for the production of a feature film; no Aid Fund has ever subsidized private producers of feature films; no quotas have ever placed the Canadian film in a preferential position in Canadian theatres.

### CANADIAN GOVERNMENT APATHY

These facts, of course, have been known for many years. Gerald Pratley, the CBC critic, has repeated them with insistent regularity in many articles and radio broadcasts. The AMPPLC's brief to the Federal Government in 1959 has echoed the same statistics. But they are new to us, and we found them deplorable.

Then we looked at distribution and exhibition, and here are some of the facts we found:

- Film exhibition in this country is in the hands of two major theatre chains which, directly or through their associates, control almost every important first-run house in the country. With less than 20% of the total number of theatres, these chains make more than 50% of the box-office receipts. Financially, both chains are controlled by foreign interests.
- In Montreal, these chains, or their associates, obtain 78% of all box-office income; in Ottawa, 87%.
- In Montreal, a Famous Players or United Amusement theatre grosses on the average around \$230,000 a year; an independent theatre in Quebec doesn't gross much more than an average of \$30,000 a year.
- In 1962, the per capita expenditure in Canada for movies was about \$4,000. That same year, in the Province of Quebec (we haven't got the Canadian figure), the average per capita expenditure for Canadian movies was around 1/25th of one penny.

(CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE)



**\* AWARD WINNERS use ARRIS**



In this year's Canadian Film Awards, two members of the Canadian Society of Cinematographers won outstanding awards for camera work.

In color cinematography the honors went to STAN BREDE, CSC, for his work in "Brampton Builds A Car" (top picture) while JOHN SPOTTON, CSC, won his award in the black and white category for his shooting in "The Hutterites."

Both men used Arriflex cameras in their award-winning efforts.

Two more reasons why the ARRI is indispensable to cinematographers the world over.



**BRAUN ELECTRIC CANADA LTD.**  
35 Haas Road, Rexdale, Ont.  
Telephone CH. 1-4488