



F.I.A.F. Congress, Moscow, June 1964

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

Canadian Film Archives

a division of the Canadian Film Institute

General Introduction

Following the deliberations of the Canadian Film Institute's Board of Directors, and as a direct result of our subsequent participation in the Belgrade Congress, the Board of Directors and the Canadian Archives Committee agreed that the time was appropriate for the establishment of the Canadian Film Archives as a division of the Canadian Film Institute. A motion to that purpose was passed unanimously at the 28th Annual General Meeting of the Institute last December. By this action, the centre of responsibility for the Canadian film archives programme moved from the ad hoc Archives Committee to the new Film Archives division. A copy of the resolution is attached to this report.

An independent, non-profit organization, the Institute has as its purpose, stated in the charter granted by the Secretary of State for Canada in August 1935, "to encourage and promote the study, appreciation and use of motion and sound pictures and television as educational and cultural factors in the Dominion of Canada and elsewhere." The Honorary President of the Institute is Canada's Governor General, His Excellency General The Right Honourable Georges P. Vanier. President Jean Clavel will represent the Canadian Film Institute at the 20th F.I.A.F. Congress.

The Archives Committee had previously felt that a Canadian film archives should be the responsibility of the federal government. But a number of factors, not the least of which was the experiences gained at the Belgrade Congress, suggested the value of immediate private action: the present surge in film appreciation through the film society movement; the focussing of public attention on the Canadian motion picture business through the recent celebration of the 60th anniversary of film exhibition in Canada; and especially the renewed interest of various organizations and the general public in the preservation of Canadian history and culture as recorded on film and by television. The growing awareness of both Canadian history and our contemporary culture has been heightened by preparations

for the centennial celebrations of Canadian Confederation. As a centre for archives work, the Institute seemed to offer the advantage of having, as a result of its functions in the fields of film, education and culture, an overall view of the activities of all Canadian organizations with similar or complementary aims.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A) Collection and Preservation of Films and Documents

A number of films were acquired by the Archives during the past year, including LA PASSION DE JEANNE D'ARC, three silent shorts (both items from other archives), a five reel 28mm film on Ireland (and a 28mm projector), and several early Canadian films, one (c.1922) from a small private collection, another (c.1925) from Trinity College, Toronto. One hundred and fifty National Film Board films withdrawn from circulation were retained at the Institute for study purposes; and the first amateur feature made in Canada (1929), with a tape describing its production, was bequeathed to the Archives. A complete list of present Archives holdings (280 films) and a list of films in the permanent circulating archives library (55 films) is attached to the original of this report. These are in addition to the 7,000 films in general distribution through the National Film Library at the Institute.

A modest programme of transferring nitrate film to acetate continues; that only \$1500 was available this past year for this important work is an indication of the financial problems the Archives faces at present.

Volunteer help in the identification and cataloguing of Archives holdings was supplemented by the assistance of the Institute's staff, and a complete inventory of films was made; cataloguing is in progress. In addition to cataloguing Archives material, the staff of the Institute's Library and Information Service continue their normal cataloguing activities: this past year over 500 stills were added to the collection; information files, by title, were increased to over 26,000; and the biographical reference material and classified files of related subject matter continue to grow. Related to this work is that planned by the National Library of Canada in publishing regularly a comprehensive catalogue of current Canadian film production.

The resources of the Library and Information Service are organized on the basis of an expansion of the British Film Institute's U.D.C. system; a booklet detailing this system is attached to the original of this report, and copies are available on request. An important addition for the Archives was a set of tapes on the early history of production and film use in Canada by a pioneer of the film society movement who was also connected with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation until his recent death. Other valuable tapes acquired include film scores and interviews with directors, which have been circulated on request.

In addition, a circulating library of books was established as a memorial to Dorothy Burritt, the most important contributor to the film appreciation movement in Canada during the past three decades.

B) Diffusion of Film Culture

Film appreciation continues to be carried out by the 84 film societies and study groups affiliated with the Institute through the Canadian Federation of Film Societies. This year saw the commencement of Archives screenings in Ottawa with the series "Shakespeare on Film" which elicited an exciting public response and resulted in invitations for a repetition of the series in Montreal and Toronto. Student performances were included, and an index, designed for its long-term value in many centres in the study of film, was prepared. Of course this is only a beginning, and we are confident of expansion in this field.

Another division of the Institute, in co-operation with an Ontario university, sponsored a week-long seminar on film last summer; among the well-known guests at this conference was James Card, who spoke about and presented films of the French cinema.

An exhibition of 120 posters, assembled initially by the Montreal International Film Festival, successfully completed a tour of fourteen Canadian cities begun in the 1962-63 season with a display at the National Gallery in Ottawa; posters for a second exhibition will be arranged by the Archives in collaboration with the National Gallery of Canada during the next three months.

The Archives is collecting material for the publication of a history of the film in Canada. An indication of the interest in researching aspects of the history of film is the fact that two other books will be published with the assistance of the National Film Board of Canada: one on the history of the National Film Board written by a west coast author, and one on the history of the film industry--production and exhibition--in Canada, written by the dean of the Canadian film archives movement, Hye Bossin, editor of the Canadian Film Weekly. The Archives also plans to publish a directory of Canadian film-makers, and indexes for film series to be presented in the '64-'65 season.

C) Relations with the Industry

Three production associations--the Association of Motion Picture Producers and Laboratories of Canada, the Canadian Society of Cinematographers, and the Directors Guild of Canada--have contributed substantially to the immense success of the Canadian Film Awards, now in its 17th year. Canadian Film Awards, which is administered by the Canadian Film Institute, is the national competition for recognizing the best Canadian production; the pattern of collaboration among the professional

associations and the Canadian Film Awards provides a practical precedent for similar collaboration in the development of the Archives.

In passing it might be said that while 30 to 40 Canadian feature films have been made over the years, and the production of short films is so well established that more films are produced than books published, the past year has been a milestone in that the production of six features holds promise for the growth of a feature film industry which may be assisted by the federal government.

Associated with the Archives programme in an advisory capacity are individuals in private film production, with the National Film Board, with the private and public national television networks, in the exhibition industry, and at the Federal Public Archives

The National Film Board continues to make their storage facilities available; and we are privileged to have access to their technical resources for the transfer of archive film from nitrate to acetate stock. Following protracted discussions the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has agreed to make films available for study purposes through the Institute, and to help defray the cost of such distribution. Films produced by and for C.B.C. television are among the most important in Canada. Both organizations continue maintaining archives for their own material.

F.I.A.F. AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In the course of a visit to Australia and New Zealand, I had invaluable discussions with archive authorities, film makers, festival organizers and those active in film appreciation and education; the result of this visit has been a continuing exchange of information, and accessibility to early Canadian material previously unknown. I also attended the Vancouver International Film Festival in November as one of the three judges.

Three archivists visited the Institute this past year: Jacques Ledoux, David Francis, and Henri Langlois. This kind of individual contact following immediately on the Belgrade Congress was immensely helpful, particularly in this year of change and progress.

Arising from discussions last year in Belgrade with the Jugoslovenska Kinoteka regarding the possible exchange of Norman McLaren films, and because of our intention to use the Members Film Service this coming season, negotiations have been initiated with the National Film Board to have a programme of new 35mm prints of McLaren films deposited in the pool. We are also planning to offer a number of Canadian films to F.I.A.F. members on an exchange basis.

Participation in the Belgrade Congress stimulated and guided many aspects of our programme this year. We are anticipating further fruitful developments through our participation in this Congress.

Roy Little
Director

For the information of F.I.A.F. members only.