



Welcoming remarks

delivered by

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(Check against delivery)

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BONJOUR À TOUS,

WELCOME TO THE 2006 DOCUMENTARY POLICY SUMMIT.

TELEFILM CANADA IS HONOURED TO PARTNER WITH THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD AND THE CANADIAN TELEVISION FUND ON THIS EVENT, NOW IN ITS THIRD YEAR, TO DISCUSS PROGRAMS AND POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION.

AS EVERYONE HERE KNOWS, THERE HAS BEEN ENORMOUS CHANGE IN THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY OVER THE PAST NUMBER OF YEARS, AS EVIDENCED BY THE INCREASING COMMERCIAL SUCCESS OF THE FEATURE-LENGTH DOCUMENTARY.

THIS RE-EMERGENCE OF THE POWER AND POPULARITY OF DOCUMENTARY FEATURES CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO ANY NUMBER OF FACTORS – FROM AN INCREASING CURIOSITY FOR INFORMATION – INFORMATION AS THE NEW ENTERTAINMENT – TO REALITY TV AS THE NEW DRAMA.

AND THERE ARE THE DRAMATIC, THREATENING POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES THAT ARE REACHING A CRISIS POINT FOR A NEW GENERATION – GLOBAL WARMING, THE ENVIRONMENT, TO NAME BUT A FEW...

DOCUMENTARIES SUCH AS *THE CORPORATION*, *SHAKE HANDS WITH THE DEVIL* AND *LES VOLEURS D'ENFANCE* ARE BETTER ABLE TO BRING THESE ISSUES INTO SERIOUS AND CREDIBLE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DEBATE BETTER THAN ANY DRAMATIC FICTION.

QUITE SIMPLY PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW MORE... THEY WANT TO LEARN MORE OF THE SEEMINGLY INVISIBLE FORCES OF CHANGE THAT ARE DRAMATICALLY IMPACTING THEIR LIVES EACH DAY AT A PACE THAT IS OVERWHELMING... *UNLESS YOU'RE A TEENAGER... OR YOUNGER.*

WHAT OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS SINCE WE LAST MET AT THE LAST DOCUMENTARY POLICY SUMMIT... WHAT PROGRESS? WHAT ACTIONS?

FRANKLY, IN MY HUMBLE OPINION QUITE A BIT HAS HAPPENED *AND* NOT ENOUGH HAS HAPPENED.

ON THE PLUS SIDE, TELEFILM CANADA, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CBC, ANNOUNCED IN JUNE OF LAST YEAR, AT BANFF, THE CREATION OF A THEATRICAL DOCUMENTARY PILOT PROJECT WITH A TOTAL INITIAL INVESTMENT OF \$2 MILLION.

AND LATER ON WE WERE PLEASED TO HAVE THE ROGERS GROUP OF FUNDS COME ABOARD.

IN THE SAME WEEK AT BANFF, THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DOCUMENTARY CHANNEL, ANNOUNCED THEIR NEW PROGRAM IN SUPPORT OF DOCUMENTARIES.

TWO SIGNIFICANT INTERJECTIONS OF NEW DOLLARS AND PARTNERSHIPS IN SUPPORT OF THE CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY COMMUNITY... IN THE SAME WEEK... THAT'S ACTION.

IN FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR WE ANNOUNCED OUR FIRST ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PILOT PROJECT INVESTMENT – STUART SAMUELS' 27.

ON THE FRENCH SIDE, WE HAVE FUNDED TWO PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT AND THREE IN PRODUCTION. TWO OTHER PROJECTS HAVE RECEIVED POSTPRODUCTION AND COMPLETION FUNDING, INCLUDING THE “SHOCKUMENTARY” ON ABUSED CHILDREN *LES VOLEURS D’ENFANCE (THIEVES OF INNOCENCE)*, AN OUTSTANDING FILM THAT’S BEEN A HUGE HIT IN QUEBEC THEATRES.

AND, EARLIER THIS YEAR THE PRODUCERS OF THE VERY SUCCESSFUL DOCUMENTARY *THE CORPORATION* RECEIVED THEIR OWN PERFORMANCE ENVELOPE FROM TELEFILM AS A RESULT OF ITS BOX OFFICE SUCCESS IN CANADA. THAT’S SIGNIFICANT ACTION.

HOWEVER, THE FUNDING FOR THE PILOT PROJECT WAS FOR ONE YEAR... AND WILL HAVE BEEN FULLY COMMITTED AROUND THE END OF THIS MONTH WITH THE FINAL PROJECT SELECTION.

SO POSITIVE CHANGE HAS TAKEN PLACE – A LOT HAS HAPPENED – BUT NOT AS MUCH AS WE ALL MAY HAVE WANTED.

IDEALLY NEW MONEY WOULD HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FROM THE GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL 2006-2007 FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LONG-FORM THEATRICAL DOCUMENTARY FUND.

BUT A SURPRISE EVENT CALLED – A NATIONAL ELECTION – INTERVENED TO ALTER THAT OPPORTUNITY.

UNLESS THERE IS A BIG SURPRISE IN THE BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT SOMETIME THIS WEEK I DON'T FORESEE ANY NEW DOLLARS FOR THIS FISCAL.

SO WE HAVE A NEW GOVERNMENT, NEW DECISION-MAKERS, A NEW MINISTER.

AND IT'S ENCOURAGING TO REMIND OURSELVES THAT THE HONOURABLE BEV ODA APPEARED AT THE DOC SUMMIT LAST YEAR PRIOR TO BEING MINISTER... SO SHE HAS BOTH AN INTEREST AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHALLENGES FACING OUR INDUSTRY.

THIS YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE INDUSTRY AND TELEFILM, IS UNDERTAKING A POLICY AND PROGRAM REVIEW OF THE CANADA FEATURE FILM FUND. SO AN OPPORTUNITY WILL EXIST TO EFFECT CHANGE OVER THE COMING MONTHS.

OUR MESSAGE WILL BE SIMPLE: GIVEN THE CONTINUING CREATIVE AND MARKETING POWER OF FEATURE DOCUMENTARIES WE MUST INCREASE, ON AN ONGOING BASIS, OUR FINANCIAL AND MARKETING SUPPORT – IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTORS.

THANK YOU.