



Managing Success Managing Growth

**Speech by Wayne Clarkson
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**Association des producteurs
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(Check against delivery)

Thank you for that warm welcome, Jacquelin.

As I looked over the APFTQ's themes for this convention – global trends in television, exports, documentaries, features – I said to myself, “This is like a Telefilm meeting.”

There are other things on my mind as well – governance of the Canadian Television Fund, renewal of the Canada Feature Film Fund.

From this, I draw two conclusions:

- We – you and I – the Quebec industry and Telefilm – have a lot to do, and
- In Quebec, the real questions are: How to manage success? and How to manage growth?

We at Telefilm want to help you go even farther. We want to have a solid action plan for French-language production.

I'm facing a major challenge today – giving this speech in French. The good news is that my remarks will be brief.

My relationship with French – the French language, French grammar – got off to a bad start.

In my last year of high school in Toronto, I was taking French. And on the final exam, I scored 49%. (I think my teacher was from France and didn't like my – Quebec – accent).

So, during the summer I attended immersion camp. And two months later, my grade was... 32%!

Today I have French teachers in Montréal and in Toronto. They're of Vietnamese, Spanish and – yes – even of French-from-France origin. – Welcome to Canada!

I have been the executive director of Telefilm since January 17th. Three active, stimulating and exhausting months – three terrific months.

I found an apartment in Old Montréal – and for my wife and me, it has been a homecoming, because she is a Montrealer and we were married here in 1968.

My time is split among the head office in Montréal, the Toronto office and, increasingly, Ottawa.

I have visited a dozen cities in seven provinces and spent close to thirty nights in hotels.

Here in Quebec, I have met many of you at Travelling Laurentides, the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois, the Gilles Carle tribute, and the Géméaux and Jutra awards.

Ah, yes – the Jutra Awards – Patrick Huard – Where's Patrick Huard? I'd like to meet him.

I know he's a comedian, and that he's in a film where he plays the Good Cop – I hope.

Comedian, actor, show host... Patrick, how about director of a Montréal film festival – in September or October? – No, I take that back – film director, OK, but film festival director, no way!

In late March, I addressed the Canadian Club of Toronto.

I stated that when it comes to Canada's cultural industries, especially film and television, government intervention is good.

No, government intervention is not good... it's absolutely essential.

It's the difference between being Canadian and simply not being American.

For well over 75 years, ever since the CBC was founded in 1929, Canada's governments have been intervening to support and strengthen Canadian culture.

Why?

Because we're a very small population in a very large space. So creating the myths that shape and distinguish us from the world's other tribes, and communicating the stories that define our identity isn't an easy task.

If the CBC, Canada Council, NFB, CRTC, Telefilm – and the Quebec government, with SODEC – hadn't put their shoulders to the wheel to encourage this never-ending creative process, where would we be today?

As the great writer Northrop Frye put it, "Identity is local and regional – rooted in the imagination and in works of culture."

Frye's roots were in Quebec. He was born in Sherbrooke in 1912.

Canadian intellectuals have often asked, "What is our history, where are our heroes?"

Quebec film and television have provided – and continue to provide – answers, and that in large part explains your success.

The notion of identity is evolving. By 2012, it is said, more than 50% of Canadians will be visible minorities. These people will have to be able to express themselves and recognize themselves on screen. There will have to be room for their stories.

For me, working in the cultural field is a privilege. And questions of identity are critical.

Television

Since January, television has been my priority. The governance of the Canadian Television Fund must be resolved.

The Minister asked me to take the lead in this matter, and I have put forward inclusive models that allow for both public and private expertise.

The Department will be consulting the industry on the choice of a model shortly, and I hope we'll have a consensus within a few weeks.

My preference is for a public/private partnership model. With one board of directors – the CTF – and a single administrator – Telefilm.

This model takes into account Canada's geography and our clients' needs in the regions and on the international scene.

It recognizes that broadcaster envelopes are paying off.

And, what's more, it represents savings of three to five million dollars.

I am convinced that Telefilm, a national institution with nearly forty years of cultural know-how, with headquarters in Montréal, three other Canadian offices and an office in Paris, would be a first-rate administrator of funding for television.

Telefilm offers other advantages. More than 300 companies now use our *eTelefilm* portal to work online with us. And this service will be extended to screenwriters and directors eligible for our programs.

Furthermore, as an administrator, Telefilm gets results. The public monies that we manage support your ideas and help bring them to the screen.

Feature Films

Let's talk about feature films now.

A little over a month ago, I explained to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage the direct connection between increased funding – through the Canada Feature Film Fund – and the fact that we are just a few films away from reaching the 5% domestic box-office goal.

Canadian cinema has made enormous strides in the past five years. And it's increasingly clear to me that we mustn't be satisfied with the 5% goal.

Let's be ambitious! Why not aim for twice that much, 10%? You'll tell me there are financial constraints, and it's true.

But other national cinemas have managed to capture local audience share: Germany with 24%, Sweden with 22% and the UK with 18%.

And Quebec films already hold more than 21% of our Francophone market! Why should we stop when we're doing so well?

I have read your brief to the Standing Committee – a solid brief that deals with cultural and financial, Canadian and international issues.

I was very pleased to see your high marks for the Fund. You recognize that it has encouraged diversity among creators, genres and budgets, and that it has served to reach the public.

You want to see the Fund renewed with multiyear resources, with its one-third/two-thirds linguistic breakdown, and with its two components – selective and performance-based – auteur films and popular/commercial films.

We agree: more funding is needed, particularly here in Quebec.

Suppose the government gives the Fund more money next year. That would be great.

But what if there isn't more money? What do we do then?

We have to join forces – the industry, Telefilm, SODEC and others – to find ways to increase revenues and promote success.

For a month now I have been telling people in English Canada that the provinces and the municipalities need to expand their commitment. My message is very simple: you can increase tax credits for foreign productions all you want, but nothing will be as culturally and financially profitable as investment in creation.

Here are some of the concrete measures that will be part of Telefilm's action plan for French operations:

On the international scene

- Telefilm is organizing several immersion sessions this year, made-to-measure sessions that will produce fast, concrete results. The first one in French will deal with animation and will be held in Paris.
- Telefilm and SODEC will work together more closely at certain international events, and I am very happy about that. This will begin with the Cannes Festival, and we will jointly organize an immersion session on French-language features in Paris.
- Telefilm wants to boost international sales. With you, we are going to explore ways to do that – through pilot promotion initiatives or other means.

And now, two concrete actions that should help you increase your revenues:

- Telefilm has just confirmed its support for Daniel Langlois's Digimart project, a new international market concept for digital film technologies. The event will take place next fall, concurrent with the Montréal International Film Festival.
- To bolster the circulation of Quebec films in French throughout Canada, there will be an annual tour in the other provinces. This French-language distribution project is generating a lot of enthusiasm.
- Let's not forget that the English version of *Les Invasions barbares* (*The Barbarian Invasions*) earned \$1 million at the domestic box office and that *La Grande Séduction* (*Seducing Dr. Lewis*) took in \$800,000 with English subtitles.

Telefilm has other irons in the fire, but there are two topical points I want to mention.

- *Feature-length documentaries.* Telefilm is working with partners starting this year to create a pilot program for feature documentaries. The first application deadline should be in the fall, and details will be announced at the Banff Television Festival.
- *The Feature Film Advisory Group.* The Group has fulfilled its mandate vis-à-vis the Department and Telefilm. Now we need to review its composition and procedures with an eye to simplicity and effective representation of your professions.

Since January, I've learned that the Executive Director of Telefilm spends a lot of time on the ice! The job requires quick-footed skating in a fast-growth industry among equally strong interest groups, each of them fighting for *the* good cause and trying to score goals.

Scoring goals is fine, but in the long term it takes a team spirit to win. That's where Telefilm comes in, standing back from the fray while being attentive and fair.

One day in English Canada I'll open the paper and read, "Canadian production industry *unites* to succeed!"

One day in Quebec I'll open the paper and read, "Production industry *unites* to manage growth."

Let's encourage and celebrate success.

There are three Canadian films in competition at the Cannes Festival this year. That's great! There was international triumph for *Les Invasions barbares* (*The Barbarian Invasions*) and *La Grande Séduction* (*Seducing Dr. Lewis*) last year, and now David Cronenberg, Atom Egoyan and Stuart Samuels are stepping up.

And other success stories will follow.

The collective choices we make must facilitate the expression and dissemination of culture.

In closing, let me tell you how pleased I am to see *Le Survenant* being warmly received.

Érik Canuel, the young director, has said that reading Madame Guèvremont's novel as a teenager made a lasting impression. I envy him.

Maybe if I had read *Le Survenant* in high school I would have had less trouble with French!

Merci. Thank you.