



SPEECH BY CAROLLE BRABANT

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TELEFILM CANADA

FOR THE ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

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Canada

Thank you Véronick.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

It always gives me great pleasure to visit Halifax and the regions of the Atlantic Provinces. So I'm delighted to be here for our second annual public meeting.

Since last March, I have had the privilege of leading Telefilm Canada, an organization I'm very familiar with since I've worked there for more than 20 years.

Over the last few months, while we've been laying the groundwork for our new strategic plan, my new responsibilities have led me to work very closely with creators, producers, entrepreneurs—with people who are enthusiastic, determined, and responsible for the success and vitality of Canadian production.

In creating organizations such as the CBC, the NFB, Telefilm Canada and the Canada Media Fund, the Canadian government has banked on culture for a long time—for more than 75 years, in fact—and this has contributed to the growth of a truly national audiovisual industry.

An industry that is now renowned for its talented professionals, and for the economic, cultural and commercial impact generated by Canadian productions here at home and abroad.

These achievements would not have been possible without major support from provincial governments. Through organizations such as Film Nova Scotia, the Société de

séveloppement des entreprises culturelles du Québec, the Ontario Media Development Corporation and BC Film, they also help the industry grow.

We are here today to celebrate these successes and these partnerships.

Telefilm Canada was founded in 1967. Its mission, which is still relevant, is to contribute to the development and promotion of Canada's audiovisual industry. We are proud of this responsibility. Indeed, all Telefilm Canada employees are fans of Canadian audiovisual works, none more so than me.

In 2009, together with our partners, we helped finance almost 50 diversely original feature films.

And our efficient management of the Canada Media Fund programs helped bring to air such TV shows as *Flashpoint*, *Les Parent*, *Aveux* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.

Funding stories that reflect our reality and our diversity, offering Canadians stories that move us, that make us laugh, cry and think—well, that's an important role.

But times are changing...

Audiovisual content moved into the digital age years ago. Competition is global now, opportunities worth seizing are global now, and we have to adapt to this new reality. And not just adapt—we need to innovate.

Telefilm wants to be more than a financial lever. It wants to become a catalyst for success.

And today is a good day to celebrate success stories, since we're releasing our annual report for 2009-2010.

Last year, ten movies that were hits with Canadian audiences earned more than 24 million dollars at the box office, a 40% increase over 2008.

And there were films like Bernard Émond's *La Neuvaine*, which was named Best Quebec Film of the Decade by Quebec's film critics association.

Several others did very well with international audiences, films like *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, *Splice* and *Les Amours imaginaires*.

At Telefilm, everyone lent an enthusiastic hand to efficiently managing our programs. This substantially reduced our administrative costs and allowed us to invest an additional million and a half dollars in the creation of new projects.

In terms of international effort, we certified 55 new official coproductions, bringing a welcome injection of 248 million dollars of foreign investment into Canadian production.

However, measured on the basis of our existing criteria, these successes do not fully reflect the audiovisual industry's real impact.

Canadian cultural industries contribute 46 billion dollars to our gross domestic product—the GDP—and they provide more than 600,000 direct jobs. That’s as much as the agriculture, fishing and forestry industries combined. The audiovisual sector alone is worth five point two billion and helps create or maintain 52,000 direct jobs.

The Canadian industry aims for excellence. The entrepreneurs, creators and artisans that I have met are ambitious. They have confidence in themselves and in what they produce, and they want to conquer not just the country but the entire world.

We certainly intend to continue playing a major role in helping them achieve their goals. But to do so, we’ll have to work together to make our products known, to stimulate demand for Canadian audiovisual content.

The competition for consumer attention is fierce, and we haven’t always used the tools at our disposal in a winning way. Together, we will need to instil a culture of success from coast to coast.

Telefilm Canada has been funding Canadian productions for more than 40 years, working with many private and public partners who have the industry’s success at heart. But we want to do more. We want to promote the industry and make sure every Canadian understands the essential role it plays. That’s the job we intend to add to our responsibilities.

And it has already begun. Under the auspices of the Honourable James Moore and in partnership with the private industry and various organizations—producer and distributor associations, Astral, Corus, CBC, the National Arts Centre and others—we have screened outstanding movies for parliamentarians, who have enjoyed them enormously. With films

like *One Week*, *Passchendaele*, *Barney's Version*, *Incendies* and *De père en flic*, the quality of our production has been in the spotlight.

This evening, key players from the Atlantic region's cultural and financial communities will attend a special screening of *Afghan Luke*, by local filmmaker Mike Clattenburg.

The same way we do on Parliament Hill, in Ottawa, we have organized this screening with the cooperation of public and private partners from the Atlantic region. Partners willing to step in and help create a buzz around the film.

So, why not dream a little? Here's a challenge for the Atlantic region! This film is about to be released. How about if we work together to ensure that *Afghan Luke* is seen by at least 5% of the population in the Atlantic Provinces?

We're told that the past points the way to the future. Our past, and this last year, are proof of the creativity, ingenuity and will to succeed that distinguish the people and partners of the Canadian audiovisual industry.

We are going to need all that energy, and much more, in order to move ahead and take advantage of a digital environment that allows us to reach audiences anytime, anywhere and on any platform.

At Telefilm, we've set goals for ourselves—among other things, to improve our services, to be open to change, to become more flexible, and to demonstrate greater leadership.

The industry has asked us to simplify our decision-making process, to be more adaptable

and more open to new realities. How could we object?

In recent months, I have been pleased to see that our clients, while asking us to acknowledge the industry's maturity, are prepared to shoulder their responsibilities as good corporate citizens. They rightfully want us to recognize their successes, but in exchange they are willing to assume their failures—provided, of course, that the expectations and measures of success are appropriate.

Good years lie ahead for Canada's audiovisual industry. And interesting challenges, too, which the industry's talents and companies are clearly ready to meet.

Our new strategic plan, which will be released in early 2011, will aim to reflect the vitality, enthusiasm and innovative thinking that we see in our clients and partners. Together, we will accomplish great and good things.

On that note, I want to commend the fine work of the teams that have made it possible for us to talk with you today.

Lastly, I would like to remind you that Canada has several films aiming for an Oscar this year—in addition to *Incendies*, there's *Barney's Version*, *Cairo Time* and *Genius Within: The Inner Life of Glenn Gould*.

If you haven't seen them yet, I encourage you to do so and to talk them up on Twitter, Facebook or whatever you use.

And now, we will present a montage of Canadian features that are either currently in theatres or will be coming soon in 2011.

Enjoy these films!

Thank you.