

New Brunswick entry

Miss Canada pageant strictly business-loser

By SOL CANDEL

"Miss Canada is very special. She speaks for the youth of our nation, and symbolizes their ambitions and ideals. She has the affection of the Canadian people who have created for her a world of loveliness, dignity, and opportunity." The producers of the Miss Canada Pageant, which is the registered property of Cleo Productions Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Baton Broadcasting Inc., expect us to believe this.

The goal of the Miss Canada Pageant, as the goal of any enterprise is to make money. Margie Vaiciulenas, Miss New Brunswick, agrees that the

pageant "is becoming more commercial every year. We all had to sign contracts which in effect made us the property of Cleo Productions during the 12 days of the contest."

For example, one of the sponsors of Cleo Productions is a meat-packing company. During the contest, Miss Canada and her entourage went around Toronto visiting retail food outlets. Miss Canada was not allowed to say anything. The Cleo Productions representative did all the talking.

Margie was one of the 28 contestants from across Canada who lined up in the hope of winning the first prize. She is a native of St. John, New

Brunswick, and is currently at the University of Toronto, working on her masters in music.

Her involvement with the pageant began when a fellow employee at a brewing firm in St. John suggested she enter the local contest. She won in St. John but did not place among the eight semi-finalists in the nationals, watched by an estimated 2 million viewers on the CTV network.

"All of our phone calls at the hotel were screened. If the caller didn't meet with their satisfaction then they took the call. The chaperones escorted, us everywhere, even down the hall.

"This contest may have started out as a beauty pageant, but the commercial aspect has been blown out of proportion. The show on Monday was strictly for the audience. Everything was geared to the Monday night telecast and not to the pageant as a whole," Miss New Brunswick said.

Prior to the telecast, the contestants were given advice by beauticians and designers. "They showed us cosmetics and then quoted the wholesale price on it. We had to buy our cosmetics," Margie said.

Miss Canada gives the sponsors of Cleo Productions a credible and powerful advertising medium. She is

not allowed to do any advertising without the permission of Cleo Productions. This makes her "the exclusive property of Cleo Productions."

There have to be some benefits for the contestants, though.

"It was one big experience made of small ones. I made 27 really great friends. The biggest experience for me was working with the CFTO crew. I now know what it's like to be part of a professional production number. Since I'm in the performing arts this show experience was good for me," Margie said.

There are a lot of prizes for the winner. Miss Canada gets a \$1,200 scholarship. Even the winners of the local contests get expensive prizes. Miss Calgary for example, got a car.

The girls were judged on their "beauty, talent, poise, personality and intellect.

"The intelligence testing was better than before. We were tested on the answers as well as the five questions we prepared. A lot if it depends on chance."

Because the pageant is a creation of the media, it is hard to find reasons for its existence. Margaret Vaiciulenas said, "I don't think there is a need for it, which is probably why I can't answer what Miss Canada is."

Austin Willis, moderator of CBC's This is the Law, and one of the judges, said that Miss Canada "is the nicest girl in Canada. She's an ambassador who shows the people of other countries what Canadians are like."

Margie disagreed. "I don't think she is the nicest girl in Canada because not everyone entered. Anyone with any intelligence would realize that not all Canadians are like Miss Canada. Everyone is an individual.

"I don't think it is entirely for the men. Just as many women are interested in it. They look at how the contestants dress, act, etc. Ten to 15-year-old girls were especially impressed. They asked for my autograph."

During the actual broadcast of the Pageant, a women's rights advocate nose from her seat and threw sand bags at Jim Perry, the master of ceremonies. She was hastily removed from the studio.

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Our contest cheap copy

By SHELLEY RABINOVITCH

The glitter and glamour of Hollywood has finally infected one of the last strongholds of Canadian life: the Miss Canada Pageant.

Hemming and hawing like exotic birds of paradise the contestants strut across the stage while an anemic-looking Jim Perry encourages them with cute little ditties and assinine questions that kept the ever-present T.V. audience entertained.

As I am not a women's libbist, it doesn't bother me in the least to see the beauties of Canada's provinces and territories on stage for everyone to admire. Nevertheless it piques me greatly to see CFTO turning a thing of beauty into a cheap carbon copy of the Miss America Pageant, replete with glittering paste-glass tiara and red roses (American Beauty?) to the winner.

The resemblance of Our pageant to Their pageant was unmistakable — Jim Perry even sang a "Here she comes/Miss America" tune for the winner. Surely that could have been done away with?

Canada should be able to come up with something unique that is not a leftover of the Hollywood haven of rhinestone glitter, greasepaint makeup, and saccharine sweetness to showcase her beauties. The Nov. 5 farce was evidence of the overall cowed attitude of the Canadian people when it comes producing something unique and original that the U.S.A. has not done beforehand.