

Canada on the Film Screens of the World

ABOUT 25 years have passed since a start was made on the projection abroad of the Canadian image by the use of documentary films. Today, the number of viewers of Canadian films in North and South America, in Europe, in Africa and in Asia, is enormous and growing steadily. The task of presenting Canada to the world in film and photograph belongs to the National Film Board, whose gigantic and flexible distribution network permits a citizen of Johannesburg, an engineer in New Delhi, an American tourist, a French schoolmaster or a Chilean industrial worker to become familiar with the magnificent Canadian landscapes, to follow the development of this vigorous young northern country and to obtain a surer grasp of the role of Canada, a democratic industrial giant of the twentieth century, in the world.

As in Canada itself, NFB films are shown abroad in theatres and on television. They are made available to the foreign public by Canadian diplomatic missions and film libraries. The same films are shown at home and abroad. All Canadian diplomatic and trade missions have film libraries. Such collections consist of anywhere from 50 to 1,000 prints, which are lent directly to institutions and individuals. In the endeavour to reach a wider audience, the Film Board also enters into agreements and make exchanges with government film agencies of other countries, with foreign departments of education and with certain of the agencies of the United Nations. Its films are integrated into commercial TV or theatrical circuits abroad through the larger distribution agencies.

In addition to sending its films to all countries where English and French are spoken or understood, the Board provides dubbed versions in more than 30 modern languages.

Influence of NFB Films

The NFB films shown abroad have a considerable effect in encouraging people to come to Canada as tourists or on business or even to settle. Information films familiarize innumerable viewers with the geography, natural resources, industry, trade, scientific achievement and cultural life of Canada. Instructional films and travelogues illustrate the beauty and variety of the Canadian landscape and the size and vitality of Canadian cities. Some years ago the noted animationist Norman McLaren created a cartoon film entitled "New York Lightboard", which ran in Times Square, New York, for three months on a luminous screen composed of thousands of light-bulbs. Undoubtedly, this spectacularly successful film, which depicted, in a highly stylized manner, some of Canada's chief attractions, gave many of the millions who saw it the idea of visiting Stratford or fishing in Canada's fine trout streams and well-stocked lakes.

Documentary films can help make less frustrating the period of adjustment to