

Bad taste mars first showing

By ESU MUNDI

The first production of the Halifax Film Society was marred by taste in the choice of films. The first few movies, sprightly and original, set the audience at their ease; then the unexpected showing of a French film about German concentration camps made them sick in their stomachs.

We are, of course, not questioning the desirability of presenting such documents to the public. We question only the propriety of interpolating such a film into a programme of otherwise light entertainment.

People who had spent the previous hour laughing were taken aback by the sight of naked, starved men and women; piles of bodies bulldozed into open graves; and heads carried by the armful to fuming crematoria. Atrocities without end, stark, macabre, horrifying.

And then the evening continued in the initial humorous vein. An animated cartoon; a photo-story of the Alpine stock car rally; a clever and original English trick film.

The evening concluded with a documentary study of the tawdry life of Canadian celebrity Paul Anka. The adolescent idolotry accorded this 45 RPM hero was the occasion of incredulous howls of merriment from the audience. But our Features Editor, Mr. Leslie Cohen, expressed his concern at this disturbing phenomenon of the American Way of Life.

The succeeding two films shown by the Film Society went some way towards making up for the initial blunder. "The Gates of Hell," a Japanese production, met with unqualified praise. And "The Great Adventurer," a Swedish nature film by the noted Arne Sucksdorf, impressed and delighted the audience.

The success of the latter film derived from its poetic appreciation of natural life. Far from idealizing the animal world in the fashion of Daddy Disney, Arne Sucksdorf captured the primaevae quality of animal existence in its very atavistic nuance.

The fox eats the chicken, the farmer shoots the fox, less agile beasts fall prey to the lynx, and old Emile the fisherman stalks his rival the otter. Nasty, brutal, and short, as Hobbes would have said.

But this harshest of epics was presented with a moving lyricism that somehow gave beauty to the crudeness and grandeur to the savagery.



Margaret Mercer and Eric Hyst, who recently appeared with the Ballets Canadiens at the Capitol Theatre in Halifax, perform the Pas de Deux from the Black Swan.

McGILL CONFERENCE STRESSES NEW EUROPE

By PETER HAYDEN

The recent McGill Conference on World Affairs laid special emphasis on the effects of the European Common Market. Addresses were delivered by eminent speakers and discussions were held between the assembled delegates on central problems brought out by the speakers. It is with these problems that I shall deal in this article (the essence of the speech by Prof. S.E. Harris of Harvard on the challenge of the Common Market is reproduced elsewhere in this supplement).

The consensus of the discussion group in which this writer participated was that the Common Market would be beneficial to the world as well as to Europe, that Britain's entry into the association should not be hindered by the objections of Commonwealth countries, and that Britain would gain from such affiliation. Delegates felt that there was little likelihood of a movement towards political unity, especially in view of the recent attitudes of France. The entry of Britain would, impede such a trend.

EFFECT ON

UNDERDEVELOPED NATIONS

Some delegates contended, however, that the industrial growth of the underdeveloped countries would be retarded by the tendency on the part of the Common Market to use them only as sources of raw materials. As a result, large areas might be laid open to Russian influence and infiltration. Such contentions, in the opinion of this writer, betray a mistrust of the Common Market that is, in light of concessions already made to the underdeveloped countries, largely unfounded. The success of the underdeveloped nations of Asia and Africa depends in the long run on the degree of unity they can achieve in their dealings with the Common Market members.

The Common Market, it was stressed, was not intended to be a completely independent economic unit and there would still be trade with the rest of the world. In fact, while imports from Common Market countries rose 37 per cent from 1958 to 1961, imports to the Common Market from non-Common Market countries rose 25 per cent in the same period. Canada's trade has at the same time shifted from Britain to the E.C.M.

One of the problems considered was the effect of the entry of numerous, presently unaffiliated, countries. As of now, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom have applied for full membership, while Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey are seeking associate status. A treaty arranging for the association of Greece has already been signed. Certainly, the difficulties that the Common Market is experiencing in regard to the co-ordination of social and economic policies will be increased by such extension of membership.

The policy of the Common Market in respect to neutrality will not ease the entry of nations like Sweden, Switzerland and Austria. But whereas Austria's neutrality is not of her own choosing, the neutrality of Switzerland has been dictated largely by conflict between the French and German elements in the country itself.

KENNEDY TRADE BILL

The Kennedy Trade Bill was considered by delegates to be a well-advised move on the part of the U.S. in meeting the challenge of the Common Market. Indeed, some delegates expressed their surprise that the traditionally protectionist American Congress had consented to the Bill,

notwithstanding concessions made to the glass, carpet textile and oil industries.

The bill allows the President of the U.S. to eliminate tariffs completely on categories of commodities in which the U.S. and Common Market control 80 per cent of the world trade. Although only one category fits this description at the moment, i.e. aircraft, if Britain enters the E.C.M. some 80 categories will be comprehended by the Bill's provisions. But there has as yet been no indication that the Common Market is willing to throw open its doors to American products in exchange for American tariff concessions.

New French-Canadian novel: stomach's eye view of girl

By PAUL McISAAC

Marie-Claire Blais

The Canadian novel has maintained a level of often stolid conventionalism in the face of a more progressive trend which has occupied writers of other nationalities. Whereas the writers of the United States and Great Britain have treated the dissatisfaction and rebellion of their post-war generations, and whereas those of France have become enamoured of chosisme, the Canadian author has been content to stick to the well-beaten path, offering little challenge or stimulation.

Marie-Claire Blais, in her novel *Mad Shadows*, has taken a step in a new direction. *Mad Shadows*, a novel probing the relationship of a girl to her mother and brother, purports to explore, in the fashion of Baudelaire, the most secret essence of existence. The girl, incredibly homely, despises her simple-minded brother because of his great physical beauty. The mother lavishes all her attention on the boy, giving little more than perfunctory attention to the girl. When the mother takes a lover - and weds him - the girl seduces a blind boy into marrying her, having convinced him that she is beautiful. By the book's end, the blind boy has regained his sight and fled the deception, the girl has scalded and disfigured her brother, the mother suffers a dis-

figuring cancer, and the family home is burnt to the ground by the boy.

Miss Blais builds up her story with a chaotic succession of bizarre events, and sick, sick psychology. The novel is quite effective, in the development of its strange tale, but it lacks power because of the narrow range of Miss Blais' imagination. The absolute inversion of theme shocks, touches, always holds the interest, but rather as one may be interested in the deliberate murder of a captured fly.

Perhaps when she has distilled her imaginative powers to a more acceptable essence, and learned to develop the glimmer of compassion evident in *Mad Shadows*, Miss Blais will produce a novel of more significance. It is the step which is important.

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What happens -

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terests of the Commonwealth can be adequately safeguarded, a closer association with the enlarged Community might result in considerable economic benefits for all. In the short term, however, Britain's entry into the Common Market will inevitably mean economic sacrifices all round. It has been estimated that Canada, for example, would lose exports sales to the value of \$200m a year.

Exactly what terms will constitute adequate safeguards for the vital trading interests of the Commonwealth no one has yet determined. Some dominions have even found it impossible to state which interests are truly vital, and which relatively trivial. But most of them have indicated that Britain's present concessions from the Community do not sufficiently protect their economic interests, and the degree to which they fall short has determined the vehemence with which they have individually opposed British entry into the Common Market. Indeed, the Commonwealth Prime Minister, invited to comment on the possible disadvan-

tages of Britain's entry, have naturally made the most of the opportunity, vigorously airing complaints and warnings. Almost without exception they strongly urged the British Government to sacrifice, if necessary, its own interests, in the name of the Commonwealth. This was a clever and powerful appeal: the concept of the Commonwealth still possess great emotional significance even if it cannot be precisely defined. And yet, at the same time the speeches of these imperial advocates were deliberately dictated by their own narrow national self-interest. Take Australia and New Zealand with living standards amongst the highest in the world. Passionately they plead that no restrictions be placed on their exports of temperate foodstuffs, and that they should be guaranteed the right to compete on equal terms with European farmers. Yet neither country will reduce its prices sufficiently to enable fellow Commonwealth countries, India and Pakistan, to import the food they so badly need. Why? Because this might mean a lower standard of living. Sir Alexander Bustamante spoke for many when he talked about "a surgeon's knife thrust into the body of the Commonwealth", but it was odd to hear such sentiments from a man whose party broke up the Carib-

bean Federation so that Jamaica need not share her wealth with her poorer neighbours. Equally typical was the attitude of Mr. Diefenbaker, who shook a most magisterial and disapproving head over the shortcomings of Brussels, and who was severely reprimanded by the British press for his pains. Yet even he can hardly imagine that the substitution of European tariffs for imperial preference would place Canada in real danger of becoming, as one commentator put it, 'a sort of Manchuria-with-hockey players!'

What Hope?

If maternal instincts and the fear of losing economic advantages determine the attitude of the various Commonwealth leaders to Britain's entry into the Common Market, what hope is there for the future of the Commonwealth? In the older white dominions the emotional basis of the Commonwealth tradition is still strong—sufficiently so for them to want to preserve an informal membership. But the newly independent members do not share this emotional attachment, except perhaps in the case of the West Indies. Whether such matters as defence, democratic ideal and parliamentary traditions are still common interests is much open to doubt. Ghana's comments about colonialism and imperialism, al-

beit more radical than most, are echoed by countries like Nigeria, India, Pakistan and Ceylon. Nor is a belief in the British form of democracy any longer a binding force of the Commonwealth. African states who have inherited the parliamentary machinery of Westminster, nearly all tend towards one-party political systems. If fundamental economic ties are broken, membership of the Commonwealth will then offer these newer nations little more than a vague, though genuine, spirit of fellowship, a common language, and a more influential international standing. At the same time, the Commonwealth has everything to lose if it ceases to represent amongst its ranks peoples of various races and traditions from many continents; a Commonwealth restricted to the white dominions will have no more importance in the world than an old soldiers' association.

Finally, there remains a substantial core of misgiving about the effect which closer political ties with Europe will have on the tenuous structure of the Commonwealth. So far the political implications of Britain's entry into the Common Market have been almost entirely submerged by the vigorous economic debate. The six existing members of the Community

have openly declared political union or federation to be their ultimate goal, but its exact form is a matter for speculation, and progress towards it will undoubtedly be very gradual and pragmatic. Time alone can provide the answer to this question. There can be no doubt, however, that the disappearance of already slender political cohesion would be far less fatal to the Commonwealth than the elimination of its fundamental basis of common economic self-interest. This is the major, immediate problem. By the way the negotiations are proceeding, it seems likely that the essential trading interests of the Afro-Asian nations will in general be adequately safeguarded; it is the old white dominions who will have to make the greatest economic sacrifices, at least in the short term. Will they, despite complaints, do this, in the belief that Britain's entry into the Common Market will in the long run strengthen the economic foundations of the Commonwealth as a whole? I think they will.

Certainly they themselves have offered no alternative solution within the existing imperial framework of preferential trading relations which would satisfactorily resolve Britain's current economic dilemma.