

### A Universal Language

I do not have to convince you of the high status held by the arts as privileged vehicles of the noblest aspirations of humanity. And among the arts, your choice encouraged the more traditional as well as the more recent media. Is there a language more universal than fine arts and a striking force more persuasive and reassuring than films and television? An unequalled instrument of diffusion, films very adequately convey the most varied messages; and I imagine that is also the case for the diffusion of artistic knowledge. May I offer a modest personal testimony? Thanks to the seventh art, I have had the pleasure - often through the remarkable productions of the National Film Board - of becoming acquainted with some fascinating and sometimes original aspects of painting, sculpture and architecture. I am thinking particularly of that stirring film on Ozias Leduc, the painter of Saint-Hilaire. It is not I, therefore, who would criticize the film as an information medium in the field of fine arts, even if I were to temper this opinion with a few considerations to which I shall return in the course of this talk.

I am now bringing to an end this egocentric digression, as I am well aware of the limited relevance here of my personal impressions as a film fan. They reflect at most the point of view of an amateur and derive no particular significance from the fact that they emanate from a Cabinet member. However, it will be of great interest to you, I am sure, to know the value attached by the Canadian Government to an event like this Seminar and Festival of Art Films. That comparisons could have been established by means of some 50 films from different countries, illustrating the art of the most varied periods, is a particularly impressive and rewarding achievement in the still relatively new field of films on art. You may rest assured that Canada is proud to welcome here a Pleiad of distinguished speakers and guests from all provinces of the country, as well as from abroad, who have been willing to share their extensive knowledge and experience of cinematography. On the occasion of this meeting, exchanges took place between some 30 countries, thanks to the eager participation of diplomatic missions. I should not be surprised if this Festival and Seminar of May 1963 were to constitute a landmark in the history of co-operation between fine arts and films.

### An Extension of the Museum

The mission which is yours is laden with consequences in the field of civilization. In his wonderful Dialogue with the visible, René Huyghe does not fear to state that "the visual, its prestige and vast powers must be put to work in order to preserve the inner balance of human life." This view agrees with the teachings of depth psychology and with the objectives of modern states, which aim at the material and moral welfare of their citizens and seek all ways to tighten the bonds of brotherhood between men. Knowledge of the arts throws indeed some very interesting light on the evolution of peoples and civilizations, and in this perspective I see art films as a marvellous extension of the museum and an instrument whose potential must be used to a maximum.