

A different Canada revealed

By PATRICIA BEACH SMITH

Pierre Berton, a popular Canadian journalist, is probably correct in his theory that most Yankers think of Canada as a frozen wasteland to the north. It is generally accepted that this misconception was conveyed to us through the motion picture industry. It was the assumption which was the basis for Berton's latest book, "Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of Our National Image." In it, he explores the strange Hollywood created of Mounties and good dogs working in the whistling winds—and through the book he also attempts to depict that image with some newer imagery. If Berton's book doesn't work on the way Americans think, maybe the efforts of the National Film Board of Canada (NFBC) will.

Proving they are at least willing to try, 12 of the NFBC's films will be shown at Livonia, Canada, part of the 1976 International Detroit-Windsor Freedom Festival. The group of films will be shown at 2 and 8 p.m. Friday in Ford Auditorium. There will be no admission charge and tickets are not necessary.

At a recent preview eight of the 12 films

were shown. These proved the mettle of the NFBC and the filmmakers of our neighbor to the north.

The infectious laughter of a small boy is the sound track for "The Animal Movie," an animated short subject showing a small boy's adventures in meeting and being dragged around by or following many new animal friends.

The one-line brushstrokes used to illustrate for the animation gave the film a whimsical, Oriental quality. It was simple and to the point.

For science fiction fans, the NFBC has "What on Earth" to show it was produced by the "National Film Board of Man" and discusses rather peacefully assumes the American Dream. The Martians, returning from their first visit to Earth, have come back with a report.

It tells the viewers that Earthlings run on four wheels and lead a busy life. "Anything which stands in the way of their fast life is quickly dealt with," the narrator says as a bulldozer goes to work destroying a mountain and others move in

to build a bridge so that waking earthings may go on their way.

The film is fun and the monologue is clever social commentary.

The prize for the film with the most esoteric title goes to "A Piece of Cake." Gymnastics, the athlete's ballet, is the subject. Becoming a gymnast, the training involved and the culmination of that training—the meet—are areas of the sport covered in the film.

It begins with a training class in the simplest of gymnastic movements and progresses through to an elegantly filmed session in what looks like a ballet rehearsal hall, and on to an actual meet in 1973 in which Chinese and Canadian teams competed.

These seasons, interspersed with meet scenes, make the film highly informative and beautiful.

Another which fits that description is "Trout Stream." Its title tells all about its subject. It traces the life of the trout stream from the viewpoint of the trout—from conception through being caught by an angler.

Underwater and time photography during all four seasons takes this film out of the realm of the ordinary. None of the films to be shown are ordinary at all, however. Many of them combine the talents of Canadian citizens to achieve a weighty case against the Hollywood image of Canada.

One in particular which takes two of Canada's most talented artists is "Begone Dull Care." It is the collaboration of Oscar Peterson's and Norman McLaren's arts—the former, a jazz pianist, the latter a filmmaker. It is a marvelous fantasy of colors when the music suggests that and stark black and white when the musical mood is appropriate.

The techniques McLaren uses are remarkable and fascinating and apparently typical of what Canada has to offer. After viewing the films, one cannot help but be more aware that Canada is making a distinct contribution to the world of the cinema and hopefully the world at large as well.



The Animal Movie is one of 12 films to be shown.

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