

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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In tribute to the National Film Board of Canada on its 21st anniversary, the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, will present a five-week retrospective of documentary films produced by the Board, 1939-1960. Between July 17 - August 20, programs, changing each Sunday for a week, will be shown daily at 3 and 5:30. The series will begin today (July 17) with V for Victory (1942), Churchill's Island (1941), The People Between (1947), The Settler (1953), and Universe (1960). Guy Glover, an Executive Producer for the Film Board, selected the retrospective.

As the official film-producing body of the government, The National Film Board of Canada has through its work penetrated more deeply into national life than has any other documentary film movement. The Board was established in 1939 by Act of Parliament "to initiate and promote the production and distribution of films in the national interest and in particular...to interpret Canada to Canadians and to other countries." According to Mr. Glover, "The support of the Government in maintaining a large group of creative artists in the material conditions of modern film-making is surely in itself noteworthy in the recent history of North-American - not to mention 'Western'-culture. No less noteworthy, perhaps, has been the devotion of the film-makers themselves to the idea and discipline of public service, in which the range and quality of cinematic achievements are often limited."

In selecting the Museum's series from the thousands of films in Canada's two official languages, Mr. Glover divided production history into five periods: The War Years (1939-45) - films retaining their original vitality despite minimum technical equipment during conditions of wartime scarcity and tension; Post-War Consolidation I (1946-49) - application of experience after the withdrawal of Grierson and the British contingent; Post-War Consolidation II (1950-53) - the testing of styles and genres other than documentary; The Television Era (1954-57) - the struggle to produce material in the volume required for programming; Recovery (1958-60) - the demands and influence of television ironically responsible for some of the Board's most interesting documentaries. The five periods will be illustrated during each program in the Museum series.

Richard Griffith, Curator of the Museum's Film Library, says of the National Film Board:

Most of the Canadian films concentrate on the job of building a democratic community, and of underlining the sense of community

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interest. Their common characteristic is a sober optimism. The old fleeing wisecrack 'much has been done - much remains to be done' could be applied to their outlook in perfect seriousness. And if that is not - still, in this hysterical period - the essential meaning in the documentary approach, then we have been astray these many years. These films mean to perform a service for their audiences and everything about them is functional. I cannot recall a single instance of technique being used, or misused, for its own sake or for the sake of momentary effect. The old heresies do not seem to take root in the soil of this vast, half-peopled country so industriously intent on providing an abundant life for its citizens. It is interesting to reflect that many of the National Film Board productions have been concerned with integrating the contemporary Eskimo with the Canadian economy, right in the midst of the frozen wastes in which Nanook lived and died. It is more than interesting, it is deeply satisfying, thus to watch them, through Grierson, invoke the great name and tradition of Flaherty. They are entirely worthy of both.

Schedule attached

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Complete program notes and further information available from Herbert Bronstein,  
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