

Public libraries

17.5.3

Public libraries in Canada are organized under provincial legislation which specifies the method of establishment, the services to be provided and the means of support. Municipalities may organize and maintain public libraries or join together to form regional libraries according to provincial legislation. Provincial public library agencies advise local and regional libraries and distribute grants.

Table 17.8 gives summary statistics on 760 public libraries in 1977 and 916 in 1978, the increase in the latter year caused largely by a change in the reporting system for rural public libraries in Ontario. Book circulation was 116.2 million or 4.9 per capita in 1978. Operating payments of all public libraries amounted to \$199.3 million or \$6.81 per capita compared with \$5.80 in 1977. Full-time professional librarians numbered 1,694 in 1977 and 1,644 in 1978.

Canadian films

17.6

National Film Board

17.6.1

In the 40 years since it was founded to serve as "the eyes of Canada" the National Film Board (NFB) has produced over 3,000 films, capturing scenes of the Canadian nation, depicting events that shaped history and showing the diversity of Canadian concerns, interests and achievements.

An agency of the federal government, the NFB was established by an act of Parliament in 1939 and reconstituted by the National Film Act in 1950 to initiate and promote the production and distribution of films in the national interest. The board's films are produced in Canada's two official languages and often a large number of films are still in active demand after 10 to 20 years. The board's head office is in Ottawa, with operational headquarters in Montreal, but in recent years production resources have been increased in regional centres across Canada. Connecting links have been set up between the centres and such regional agencies as local media, cable television companies, educational establishments, local cultural and film circles and provincial governments. One of the main features of regional activity has been a substantial involvement of local production companies from the private film industry, providing access to creative and technical resources at the local level and in turn providing Canadian film-making talent access to the national agency.

In 1978-79 for the first time in history the worldwide cumulative audience for NFB productions exceeded the mark of one billion viewers. About 25% of this cumulative audience was Canadian. The remaining 75% was comprised of audiences in about 80 countries around the world.

NFB films are distributed in 16 mm or 35 mm. In addition, all films are being converted to video cassettes which accounted for 7% of 16 mm prints sold by the NFB in 1977-78, mostly in the education and industrial markets. In 1978-79 the sales of video cassettes increased 37%, mostly to educational institutions.

The board also produces and distributes other visual aids such as silent and sound filmstrips, slide sets, overhead projectuals, multi-media kits and photo stories. In Canada the board's productions are distributed through community outlets, schools and universities, television stations, theatres and commercial sales. A large part of the 16 mm community film audience is reached through film libraries, film councils and special interest groups. During 1978-79 community film distribution through NFB libraries in Canada rose to 503,805 bookings, compared with 491,787 in 1977-78.

NFB films are seen outside Canada on television, in theatres, in schools and in libraries, with distribution handled by the board's offices in New York, Chicago, London, Paris and Sydney. As well, community distribution abroad is effected by 100 film libraries operated jointly with the external affairs department. For greater international distribution, many NFB films are versioned in foreign languages. The board, in co-operation with the federal government tourism office, distributes films supporting the travel industry to audiences throughout the world.

Each year, NFB films are presented at many national and international film festivals. In 1978-79, although it felt the pinch of government austerity in reduced funds