



Cover of the National Film Society catalogue of Canadian Films, 1941.

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**PATTERNS OF CULTURAL AUTHORITY:
THE NATIONAL FILM SOCIETY OF CANADA AND THE
INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FILM EDUCATION, 1938-1941**

Résumé: Le passage au domaine public de certaines activités dites privées est à l'origine des concepts qui dominent le discours actuel sur le cinéma canadien. Un cas probant est celui des rapports entre le «National Film Society of Canada», agence privée et bénévole et l'Office national du film, institution publique et subventionnée par le gouvernement. Ces rapports ont démontré la nature fragmentaire et incomplète du pouvoir hégémonique. Le NFS a grandement contribué à rendre le cinéma canadien accessible au public et dans les écoles, coordonnant souvent la distribution de films pour l'ONF. Le NFS fut aussi assisté dans ses tâches par le «Canadian Film Committee», un organisme peu connu et éphémère. Le CFC et le NFS ont aidé à introduire l'idée de l'éducation dans le discours sur le cinéma national, ce qui a mis l'emphase sur les questions de citoyenneté au détriment d'autres thèmes reliés à la culture cinématographique nationale.

A prominent educational activist, board member of the National Film Society and founding president of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, E.A. (Ned) Corbett wrote in his memoirs of the "hotel interpretation of Canadian Enterprise."¹ The phrase referred to the frequent hotel meetings of cultural authorities from the 1920s through the 1940s, necessitated by the absence of other formal facilities for them to use. Corbett's "hotel interpretation" also reminds us of the emphasis budding nationalist organizations placed on travel, frequently touring local operations as a way to survey progress. Such travel additionally provided a sense of national connection by linking activities in distant locations. Further, this view to Canadian cultural enterprise accents the familiarity and intimacy that existed between key individuals. Though there were recurrent debates and dissent, conditions constructed a largely homogeneous class-determined membership in the emerging cultural networks of the period,

often with the same individuals appearing on the boards of several agencies at once.

Only recently has the full influence of the voluntary societies of that period come to be taken into account in Canadian cultural history. The place these associations have in the complex pre-history to the watershed Royal Commission on Arts, Letters, and Sciences, struck in 1949, tenders special insight into the making of a "commonsense" about nationhood, citizenship and cultural life, one that formed the basis of future government action (and inaction). Such a movement from the activities of concerned citizens to the purview of the "ethical state" is a crucial instance in which a set of discourses becomes hegemonic. It is a development in which an authorized language forms a compact, ultimately legitimizing certain patterns of leadership in the cultural arena. The most resonant cases are those in which the discourses contribute to the establishment of institutional bodies, because it is at that moment that a regime of social power is under construction, conferring legitimacy and longevity to particular ideas and agendas.

With a similar theoretical perspective, Martin Allor and Michelle Gagnon offer a genealogy of the production of "cultural citizenship" in Québec. They argue that "the Quiet Revolution has been nothing less than the production of the 'Cultural' field itself as both the central legitimating agency of government and as an emergent regime of social power."² Through an analysis of what Michel Foucault referred to as "governmentality," Allor and Gagnon point to the way in which a project of cultural development, bridging the state and civil society, formed an apparatus of governance. Rejecting a general theory of the state, they show the indeterminacy of policy and practice, which nonetheless shapes core relations of institutional power.

Michael Dorland's comprehensive study of feature film policy similarly proposes, "In a sense, discourses about Canadian cinema have historically been inscribed within the problematic of governmentality."³ Taking as fundamental the provisional and contentious nature of the boundary between the state and civil society, the research of Allor, Gagnon and Dorland alerts us to the importance of struggles in and around the institutionalization of discourses about culture for hegemonic formations. In effect, through policy and practice, as formed in an emergent epistemological framework and embodied in organizational units, structures of social power are arranged and applied.

Thinking about Canadian film, the specificities of a nationalist project can be discerned in the organizations that acted upon particular discourses

of the cultural dimensions of "nation." How did a special agreement about "film culture" come to be articulated as part of "national culture"? I suggest that this can be addressed only through the practices and policies of cultural agencies that, through clear assessments of priority and due to pragmatic choices, produced a "commonsense" about film in Canada. While the scope is less sweeping than Dorland, Allor and Gagnon's, such was the case of the relationship between the voluntary National Film Society of Canada (NFS) and the state-funded National Film Board of Canada (NFB), which I began to detail in an earlier work, and will continue here.⁴

The Film Society merits close scrutiny for its successful work in putting film on the agenda as a national concern. Founded in 1935, its role as a promoter of film and film appreciation, and the two key reports it produced, were elements essential to the serious consideration of film in Canadian life.⁵ Histories of the NFB's early years make frequent mention of the forceful and lasting influence of the first film commissioner, John Grierson. Few, however, have explored the NFB's relationship with already existing film organizations.⁶ Peter Morris has introduced many questions about the Grierson legacy. He writes, for instance, "Grierson's policies effectively steered the Canadian government away from any interventionist role in stimulating or regulating the film industry."⁷ While this iconoclastic revision has been welcomed, to my mind it is essential to understand that Grierson's ideas about citizenship, mass democracy and film coincided with the reigning commonsense of an elite of cultural authorities, something Morris has drawn our attention to in his discussion of Grierson's relation to the writings of Walter Lippman.⁸

Grierson might be best seen as an articulator of a looming hegemonic view of film. He helped to draw the boundaries around appropriate film activities in service of the nation, giving voice to a class- and taste-specific formation. As Andrew Rodger observes, "When in Canada, Grierson reinforced another ally for change": the National Film Society.⁹ Here was a voluntary association that remained without state support and without a clear mandate in its relationship to the new arm's-length, government-funded film agency it helped to form, and yet acted, in the end, as a de facto mediator of policy and publicity between the NFB and other publics.

In what follows, I propose that this case demonstrates an association fraught with contradiction in terms of the coordination of a national agenda, which was always its key objective. The relationship between the Film Society and the early NFB reveals the complexities of a moment of hegemonic settlement, a moment that is truly incomplete and fragmentary.

Still, the NFS served a critical structuring function as a "private" society coordinating access to schools and public life, often on behalf of the NFB, and often furthering its ideas through the circulation of essays advocating the importance of film in modern education, of which Richard S. Lambert's 1940 pamphlet *Films in School* is a prime example to be discussed below.

According to E.A. Corbett, John Grierson had proposed a national film committee early in the summer of 1938.¹⁰ This suggestion arose from a general impression of Grierson's that the NFS was not as effective as it might be, especially in the promotion of educational film. Whereas film societies had been clearing houses for information on film and for the distribution of non-theatrical productions, Grierson encouraged national initiatives in the distribution and production of educational film. Such a claim was contentious, and Film Society members felt this was an unfair assessment. If we take as representative the film presentations organized by the Montréal branch in early 1936, the focus was upon a budding international art cinema, with some documentary film. February screenings included *Symphony in Sight* (Germany, 1934, Oscar Fischinger), *The Bedbug* (USSR, 1933, Alexander Ptushko), and *Sous les toits de Paris* (France, 1930, René Clair),¹¹ and March included *Mechanics of the Brain* (USSR, 1925, V. I. Pudovkin,) and *The End of St. Petersburg* (USSR, 1927, V.I. Pudovkin).¹² And, that same year, educational film in the service of training for citizenship is a stated priority, as evidenced in Donald Buchanan's report, *Educational and Cultural Films in Canada*.

Nonetheless, it seemed the new national film committee was to be a sharper instrument for policy, especially for educational uses, acting at a distance from the ordinary activities of film programming and promotion, and that consequently it might be in a better position to influence government. This film committee would offer a broader view of the significance of film in national life, and operate to impress this view upon influential people. A meeting on this issue took place in September at the Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, with delegates' expenses covered by the Imperial Relations Trust. In attendance were twelve individuals prominent in Canadian educational and cultural societies.¹³ In addition to Grierson's recommendation, a new report co-authored by Donald Buchanan and D.S. McMullan on educational use of film, the first NFS project funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, received special attention.¹⁴ According to Corbett, the Winnipeg meeting concluded with two resolutions:

Resolved that there be constituted here and now a Canadian Film Committee, representative of institutions and organizations interested in the production and use of films for educational and cultural purposes, to advise with respect to the expenditures of such grants as may be received for these purposes from the Imperial Relations Trust or other sources.

Resolved that the Canadian Film Committee forward a request to the Imperial Relations Trust that a grant of six thousand dollars (\$6000) a year for each of five years be made for the following purposes: (a) the distribution of documentary films; (b) the distribution of British and Empire films; and (c) the encouragement of the production in Canada of documentary films. This grant may be used in conjunction with grants that may be received by the National Film Society of Canada from the Rockefeller Foundation and elsewhere. It is respectfully suggested that this grant, at the discretion of the Imperial Relations Trust, may be made either to the Canadian Association for Adult Education or the National Film Society of Canada, to be administered pursuant to the direction of the Canadian Film Committee.¹⁵

These resolutions capture a growing interest not only in the production of film, but documentary film in particular, as well as British and Empire works. They also reveal a mindfulness of granting agencies, placing the Canadian Film Committee (CFC) ambiguously between the Canadian Association for Adult Education and the NFS in order to qualify for funds from the Imperial Relations Trust and the Rockefeller Foundation at the same time. In general, the actions taken to found the Committee reflected the influence Grierson was already exerting, having completed his survey and analysis of Canadian film activity in June 1938. This influence is amply evident in the attention paid to the Imperial Relations Trust, whose film committee, established in March 1938, consisted of three central figures in the British documentary and non-theatrical film movement: distributor Oliver Bell, Empire Marketing Board chief Stephen Tallents, and John Grierson.¹⁶

The coordination of efforts between Grierson, the Film Society and other interested parties, was evidently important to the Rockefeller Foundation, which would be a major source of NFS operating funds for the next six years. Two months after the Fort Garry Hotel meeting, John

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Announcing

the foundation of

**A NATIONAL FILM
LIBRARY**

of Classroom, Educational
and Documentary Films

and an

**ADVISORY SERVICE
BUREAU**

on all matters pertaining to
the motion picture

NFS publicity for the National Film Library, 1939.

Marshall, Associate Director of the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, met with Film Society board member H.O. McCurry, Assistant Director of the National Gallery of Canada, during coinciding visits to London, England. In subsequent correspondence, McCurry acknowledged the Film Society's implementation of Grierson's recommen-

dations for Canadian development. He maintained that the Buchanan-McMullan report integrated suggestions from Grierson, including a request to the Rockefeller Foundation for funding. In blatant disparagement of the new CFC, McCurry expressed suspicion about "the utility of large and 'representative' committees which can never meet because of the time, distance and expense factors in Canada. They tend to become mere screens for one man shows."¹⁷ Marshall understood McCurry as suggesting that the Committee would be "no more than a front for Corbett's activities," who was "more of a politician than educator."¹⁸ McCurry continued to challenge the claim that had been made at the Winnipeg conference that the Film Society "is a 'flop' and is a body concerned solely or primarily with theatrical films."¹⁹ Further, he commented, "I like Grierson immensely but I feel that he has been doing some special pleading and does not see the Canadian situation too clearly."²⁰ He then went so far as to suggest that "someone in Canada is trying to throw the switch on the National Film Society, for reasons that are not wholly in the public interest."²¹

On Marshall's part, his designs for the NFS fit neatly with the Committee's focus on educational film; it would be useful "1) in continuing to supply films illustrating the development of motion picture art to its member societies, and 2) in organizing the supply of films to Canadian schools and colleges."²² Marshall noted at the time, "The results of Grierson's visit have evidently been somewhat disturbing to the Society's officers."²³ Here, it is Marshall's interpretation that Grierson called for the formation of the Committee due to a lack of confidence in the Film Society. During the course of his tour, Grierson gave the impression that it would be unlikely that the Film Society could expect Rockefeller support without forming a coordinating committee of some sort. Indeed, Grierson had earlier informed Marshall of the "relatively little" accomplished by the NFS.²⁴ Yet, to reassure McCurry, Marshall maintained that no prevailing negative view of the Film Society existed at the Rockefeller Foundation.²⁵ More than this, Grierson saw two NFS leaders, Corbett and Sidney Smith, as the most likely candidates to establish a film promotion and production unit that would "take on a properly educational and sociological slant."²⁶

Subsequent to the Winnipeg meeting, plans for the CFC continued to develop. The NFS Directors meeting on December 17, 1938, approved a formalized relation between the Film Society and the Committee. The latter was understood to have "broader objectives," and to represent "all organizations and interests in Canada having to do with the production and

distribution of cultural and educational films"—but, significantly, not those having to do with international feature films.²⁷ It would "serve as a necessary liaison agent between the Dominion government, documentary film production units, national educational bodies and the National Film Society of Canada."²⁸ For his part, Grierson saw the Committee as the policy-making organ of the NFS.²⁹ The CFC would be funded by governments, foundations, trusts and individuals, unlike the Film Society which did not expect to receive anything from government. In actuality, the Committee used NFS facilities and was mandated to "include a substantial number of directors of the National Film Society of Canada."³⁰

Supposedly, the advantage to the Film Society of this arrangement was that it was now freed up to promote educational film on a national scale, presumably with "the proper slant."³¹ NFS Vice-President, Charles G. Cowan, stated cryptically that the Committee was Grierson's idea "for certain specific purposes which he had in mind."³² The Film Society's attention to educational and classroom films was already evident. Nonetheless, Grierson's criticism was a spark to the Society's operations, encouraging the executive to elucidate its educational objectives. In her valuable documentation of the Film Society, Yvette Hackett concludes that the CFC's primary function was "to present a public front wholly interested in the educational aspects of film, unlike the NFS which continued to support the film society movement."³³

Grierson's designs, according to Hackett, were to have the Committee and the Film Society act, in effect, as "the public relations arm of his proposed National Film Board of Canada."³⁴ Additionally, it is worth highlighting the introduction of an interest in film production on the part of the Committee, which had not been an emphasis of the NFS. One may speculate that an independent public relations arm of a federally funded film unit was an attempt to establish that unit's legitimacy. Unlike the Government Motion Picture Bureau, the NFB would not be a vehicle of government policy objectives, ideally speaking. More importantly, perhaps, it could not appear as such. But by expanding their mandate to encompass production, the Film Society and the CFC seem to have wanted to capture ground they may have felt was slipping away. It is also worth remembering that when Grierson made his recommendations for the NFB in 1938, he presumably had no idea he would return a year hence as its first commissioner. Even when the National Film Act passed in May 1939, Grierson was still thinking about travelling through New York, Ottawa and Vancouver on the way to Australia and New Zealand.³⁵

Rockefeller Fund sources credit Grierson with the formation of the CFC, and describe it as "a national body formed to act as a liaison agent between the government, organizations interested in educational and documentary films, national education institutions, and the National Film Society of Canada."³⁶ Though a private organization, the Committee had ambitions for engaging in quasi-public activities. Donald Buchanan did not accept a nomination to the Committee executive because his position at the CBC might be in conflict of interest with CFC decisions. As he explained, the Committee's "promotion of wider public support for the film activities of the Dominion government and of documentary production by industrial concerns...must naturally infringe slightly on public policy."³⁷ Buchanan's candid remark intimates that a realignment between government powers and a voluntary association of concerned citizens was in process. The innovation of the Committee, which even generously viewed, reproduced much of the operations of the Film Society executive, was its role as a mediator between the state and civil society in the formation of film policy and initiatives.

The Committee met in Toronto, January 10, 1939, with Charles Cowan as acting chair. The other members present were Terry MacDermot, McCurry, Buchanan, Corbett, and the sole woman on the executive, W.L. Grant, the Principal of Montréal's Royal Victoria College. They approved nominations for regional representation to the Committee, selected Donald G. Fraser as secretary for a six-month term, and instructed him "to travel widely during that period, direct a campaign to raise money for film projects sponsored by the committee, and prepare a research report on possibilities of documentary and educational film production."³⁸ Fraser had a background in documentary production in Britain, had worked with filmmakers Evelyn Spice and Lawrence W. Cherry, and would become a cinematographer at the NFB by the end of 1939. The funds for the secretary's salary and expenses came from a £1,750 grant from the Imperial Relations Trust.³⁹

Meanwhile, at the Rockefeller Foundation John Marshall remained unclear about the direction of the Film Society. He felt the Buchanan-McMullan Report's recommendations were somewhat imprecise and offered him little in the way of practical details about how the work of the Society was to be done.⁴⁰ This issue was of prime importance given that a Film Society request for operating funds from the Foundation was being considered. McCurry provided a detailed list of proposed operations including a tour by the Film Society secretary to promote educational film

use and film production projects, to encourage cooperation with international educational film agencies, and to clarify customs regulations between Canada and the US, which regularly caused problems in the exchange of films between the two countries.⁴¹

By February, CFC membership was at thirty-seven. Its first accomplishments were the creation of a library of free films, with a special film depot in Québec to accommodate its two school systems, and the acquisition of educational and documentary films with broad appeal. Fraser reported that the previous month had been one of clarifying responsibilities with the executive and, interestingly, with John Grierson. In the interest of avoiding "specialized" films, given their limited funds, Fraser, Grierson, and Naomi Slater, the assistant secretary, compiled a list of films to be acquired and promoted, representing largely "Britain's best."⁴² Grierson promised to help secure these films through his contacts in London. Fraser had a tour of Western Canada planned, including stops at Port Arthur, Winnipeg, Brandon, Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, and Victoria, with a later trip to Québec and the Maritime Provinces. The purpose of this travel was

to discuss with as many as possible the use of films in Canada, their problems, how the CFC can best help them, and how they can best co-operate with the Committee; to create a general public interest in films; to have the tour as widely covered in the press as possible, and to encourage individual efforts in writing and speaking; to give where possible talks and film demonstrations; to seek possible solutions for certain problems which tend to hinder the distribution of films; to discuss with distributors and libraries terms and the possibility of placing films with them; to discuss with the various members of the Canadian Film Committee how they can best do their part; to discuss with the Film Societies their problems, attempt to widen their activities, and to see how general interest and participation can be stimulated; to discuss with Provincial and local Education Boards their plans, and how the Canadian Film Committee can co-operate; to discuss with provincial Governments the possibility of simplifying censorship regulations; to seek new sources of revenue.⁴³

Fraser's western tour resulted in a preliminary film catalogue itemizing twenty-one films.⁴⁴

As the Rockefeller Foundation considered the Film Society grant

request, Marshall relied on his network of contacts for advice. Grierson met with Marshall in New York to brief him on the Canadian situation on several occasions.⁴⁵ At one, Donald Slesinger of the American Film Centre joined them in a discussion about international film and "how work being done results in progress toward a better life."⁴⁶ As part of his own extensive survey of Canadian activity, Marshall made a trip to Ottawa in April, where he met with CFC and NFS executives, Slesinger, and Stuart Legg, a British colleague of Grierson. He returned to New York with a favourable impression of the Film Society. He thought their prospects of receiving a Rockefeller grant were strong. Cowan had said that the Committee and the Film Society worked so closely together that it did not matter which received the funds. Marshall, however, could offer grants to incorporated agencies only, which made the Film Society the eligible organization.⁴⁷

Due to the increased profile of its educational activities, the Film Society had its share of ideological detractors. J.S. Atkinson, Director of the Canadian Bureau for the Advancement of Music ("an association of those interested in developing interest in music for its educational and stimulating value in life"), criticized the NFS for being less successful as a clearing house for information on film and more accomplished as a "social group whose objects appear to be more the showing of films that were not ordinarily available through regular channels."⁴⁸ He commented specifically on a Film Society programme of German and Russian films which "gave the impression to a large number of people that they [i.e., NFS members] were inclined toward Communism."⁴⁹

This view did not dissuade the Rockefeller Foundation from taking action. It approved the NFS grant-in-aid in May (incidentally coinciding with the passing of the National Film Act calling for the establishment of a Canadian film board) for \$19,380 (US), or a sum not to exceed \$19,000 (CDN), over a two-year period starting September 1, 1939. Following the recommendations of the Buchanan-McMullan report, the grant was intended to help the Film Society extend its promotion of the educational use of films. This was to be accomplished through closer links to US organizations, including the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Association of School Film Libraries, and the Motion Picture Project of the American Council on Education. The MoMA Film Library had been established with the assistance of a Rockefeller Fund Humanities Division grant in 1935.⁵⁰ The latter two had received Rockefeller Foundation grants through the General Education Board. From 1934 to 1940, the American Council on Education received \$178,500 (US) for

comprehensive work "1) describing the functions of and needs for motion pictures in general education; and 2) facilitating the reorganization of general education through the use of motion picture and allied visual aids."⁵¹ One of the Council's accomplishments was the creation of the Association of School Film Libraries in 1938 "to serve as a clearing house for information on available films of educational value and to act for the educational users in securing such films from producers," to which the General Education Board contributed \$21,575 (US) in 1939.⁵² The Association of School Film Libraries's initial plans included encouraging close relations with film activities internationally, with Canada specifically mentioned.⁵³ Not surprisingly, the Foundation grant-in-aid to the Film Society directed it to "represent Canada when films produced in Canada are wanted by American agencies."⁵⁴

Details for the Film Society's first year with the grant show funds budgeted for two trips across Canada and two to New York and Washington, the publication of material evaluating the uses of particular films, and the purchase of three films from ERPI, a New York-based educational film production unit (*Guidance in Public Schools*, *Choosing your Vocation*, *Teaching with Sound Films*), three US Government films (*Three Counties Against Syphilis*, *Stop Silicosis*, and *What's in a Dress*, about labour conditions), and twelve "March of Time" films, including *Conquering Cancer* (1937), *Crime School* (1936), *New Teaching Methods in US and Canada* (1938), and *Munitions* (1935).⁵⁵ As this account of activity shows, the emphasis upon instructional films for use in a variety of educational contexts, from adult education programmes to classrooms, is now unambiguous.

The Rockefeller grant to the National Film Society offered significant evidence of the Foundation's interest in the role of mass communication in democratic life, especially the possible uses of new technology for the purposes of educational and international exchange.⁵⁶ However, this support for the NFS at this time was unusual. For, as the grant decision records,

The present recommendation is the first in the field of motion pictures for aid to an agency outside the United States. In Europe most countries already have strong national agencies to represent them in making motion pictures more effective means of international communication, but among the American countries there are few national agencies strong enough to assume this responsibility. The present recommendation aims to strengthen the service of an organization in Canada whose work there qualifies to represent Canada internationally.⁵⁷

Support for film had been part of the Foundation's work through the General Education Board, and would continue to be part of Marshall's programmes in mass communications in the Humanities Division, as a 1935 proposal for new programmes in the division indicates. "How," the proposal asks, "can the public, young and old, be helped to an understanding that enables it to distinguish good from bad in the films they see? and How can informed public opinion be brought into constructive relations with the industry?"⁵⁸ Responses to these general problematics included educational initiatives designed to realize "democratic social ideals."⁵⁹

Marshall stressed to the NFS that the Rockefeller grant was not to be used for Fraser's salary as CFC secretary, nor to duplicate expenses covered by the Imperial Relations Trust. Further, as the Imperial Relations Trust grant focussed on the promotion and purchase of Empire films, Foundation funds were to support the purchase of non-Empire works. Marshall specifically advised that this meant films from US agencies, including the American Film Centre and the Film Library of MoMA.⁶⁰ Grierson later reminded the Film Society of this funding division, recommending that the Imperial Relations Trust money could be used to purchase films about the Empire from non-Empire sources, and that the fund need not be used immediately.⁶¹

In June, Fraser reported the findings of his tours, showing that in general, educational film activity was far more advanced in the West than in the East. Surprisingly, the minutes of that Committee executive meeting record no discussion of the recent Rockefeller grant and passage of the National Film Act.⁶² July's meeting included discussion of co-operation with the Association of School Film Libraries, the production of the film catalogue, and the ongoing evaluation committee, which oversaw the selection of appropriate films for the NFS/CFC's holdings and circuits. A film in process at the Department of Labour, on the training of youth, was the sort of film that appealed to the Committee and Film Society, and they made a specific request to the Minister for prints.⁶³ Other films reflecting a favourable NFS evaluation included the Government Motion Picture Bureau's *The Royal Visit* (1939, Frank Badgley), and three (unspecified) films produced by Arthur Elton and procured by Grierson.⁶⁴

A search took place for a new organizing secretary who would serve both the Committee and the Film Society. The two individuals interviewed were Hazen Sise of Montréal and Oscar C. Wilson of Vancouver. The committee offered the position to the latter, whose impressive work at the extremely active and successful Vancouver branch made him the

obvious choice to replace Fraser.⁶⁵ In announcing this hiring to Marshall, McCurry commented, "We found in the end that Mr. Fraser, while a useful young man in many ways, was inadequate in some directions. He felt this himself and asked to be allowed to retire."⁶⁶ With Wilson's appointment for an initial two-year term, there was no longer any pretense to distinctions between the Committee and the Film Society. Fraser's six month contract ended, and so did the Imperial Relations Trust's responsibility for the CFC secretary salary. Marshall's warning about not duplicating expenses was neatly sidestepped before the September 1 initiation date for the Rockefeller grant. In effect the CFC secretary position no longer existed in its own right, though the Committee continued to operate as a distinct organizational unit.

The NFS/CFC sent a delegation to meet with W.D. Euler, Minister of Trade and Commerce, and other (unspecified) Cabinet Ministers in July to discuss the formation of the NFB. In addition to promoting the development of film education in Canada, the delegation wanted to know what representation the NFS/CFC would have at the NFB. The Ministers in turn requested nominations for non-governmental members that might make up the Film Board.⁶⁷ According to Hackett, three NFB members were from the NFS.⁶⁸ The first Film Board included five government and civil service representatives: Euler, as chair, T.A. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources, V.I. Smart, Deputy Minister of Transport, J. Parmelee, Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, and R. S. Hamer, for the Department of Agriculture. The representatives from the public were Edmond Turcotte, editor of *Le Canada*, W.C. Murray and Charles G. Cowan.⁶⁹ While others may have been members of the NFS, the most significant appointments were the last two. Both Murray and Cowan were not only prominent in the Film Society but were executive officers of the Committee, the former being its chair. This is a striking moment of alignment between a fledgling state-funded institution and a voluntary society acting as a vehicle for public interests. Two key figures in a nationalist voluntary organization become founding members of a formal public institution. And, importantly, they continued to act in that capacity by serving in both the NFS/CFC and the NFB.

Throughout 1939, NFS executives showed concern about the lack of public awareness of the Film Society. They suggested on several occasions that the organizing secretary needed to make personal contact with reporters and to place stories in newspapers about their work "spreading the gospel of the educational and documentary film."⁷⁰ With regard to

their relationship to the new NFB, the members agreed that no decision on this matter could be made until the appointment of a film commissioner, but that generally the Film Society would probably help with the distribution of government films and offer feedback about the needs of audiences and educators. When nominations for the position of commissioner began, the influence of the NFS members on the Film Board was evident. The first choice was Canadian Association for Adult Education president and NFS board member Ned Corbett. His refusal led the Film Board to appoint Grierson on October 19, 1939.

Earlier, in August, the Film Society announced the formation of a National Film Library, and described it as a source for classroom, educational and documentary films as well as "an advisory service bureau on all matters pertaining to the motion picture."⁷¹ It offered this service to schools, community groups and other cultural organizations. Five regional libraries were to hold films at the Vancouver School Board, the University of Alberta, the University of Manitoba, the Government Motion Picture Bureau, and the Department of Education in Halifax, but by autumn, only Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Toronto had depots.⁷² Acting as the Canadian representative of both the British Film Institute and the Association of School Film Libraries, the Film Society was now well established as the shunting point between Canadian educational programmes and educational film work in the UK and the US. The Association of School Film Libraries approved affiliation with the National Film Society in October 1939, believing that the "immediate effect will be an increase in perhaps 15 to 20 active Canadian members [film libraries] and 50 catalogue and News Letter subscribers."⁷³ With Wilson as Film Society executive secretary and with the NFB's establishment, there was what Marshall called a "war boom in documentary film production in Canada."⁷⁴ The growing links with US activities at this time included Wilson's presence at the Association of School Film Libraries' conference on film distribution in New York in October 1939.⁷⁵ At virtually the same time, John Grierson appeared as a featured speaker at the Association of Documentary Film Producers' Documentary Film Festival which was taking place at the New York World's Fair.⁷⁶ A week later, he became Canada's first film commissioner.

Wilson concentrated on the development of film depots, the establishment of evaluation and re-editing committees, publicity and publications, and the production of industry-funded films.⁷⁷ During his tour of the Maritime Provinces, Wilson took the opportunity to promote the

Government Motion Picture Bureau's *Heritage* (1939, J. Booth Scott).⁷⁸ He was also able to secure Shell Oil sponsorship of film programmes, in return for showing a ten-minute promotional film during NFS screenings. He looked forward to productions by Shell, Canadian Industries Ltd. and Associated Screen News as additions to the NFS's film library.⁷⁹ After its first year of operations, the CFC executive reaffirmed its relation to the NFS and its mandate. The purchase of British and Canadian films was its central budget category, with \$3,502 (CDN) of the Imperial Relations Trust set aside for this purpose.⁸⁰ Yet, with the Film Society taking on full responsibility for educational and classroom film, the rationale for a separate Canadian Film Committee began to fade, and in the summer of 1940 the CFC unceremoniously withered away.

Meanwhile, Grierson's impact through the NFB had been felt immediately. Wilson commented that "he has done more in three months than anyone else would have accomplished in a year."⁸¹ When Grierson first addressed the Film Society and the Committee as Film Commissioner, he described the NFB as the originator of policy and action "in all productions relating to the national picture, whether they be those of Provincial Governments, or of the big industries."⁸² Grierson thought that the Film Society would provide promotion of NFB activities and films, as well as inform the Film Board of demand.⁸³ Against Grierson's initial wishes, a significant amount of energy went into the establishment of evaluation committees across the country.⁸⁴ Through its newsletter of January 1940, the NFS proudly introduced the NFB, Grierson, and Grierson's concept of the documentary film to its members. The discussion of the documentary consisted largely of a reprinted article by Grierson, and its inclusion suggests that Grierson's definition of non-fiction film was relatively novel to Canadian film enthusiasts.⁸⁵ In reference to Canadian documentaries, the newsletter noted three "accomplishments": *Heritage*, *The Case of Charlie Gordon* (1939, Stuart Legg) and *Behind the Headlines* (1936, Leon Shelly), produced for the *Vancouver Daily Province*.

Due to the war in Europe, Wilson's plans to survey film activity in Britain and France were put on hold.⁸⁶ Instead, he visited US facilities, including the American Council on Education, the Human Relations Film Project, the Film Library at MoMA, the American Film Center and the Association of School Film Libraries.⁸⁷ At the same time, the Film Society saw its membership drop substantially.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, its activities continued on a number of fronts. It actively publicized the Government Motion Picture Bureau's *When Spring is in the*

Air (1936) and *The Case of Charlie Gordon*, though *Heritage* was a clear favourite. In the Winter of 1940, 231 screenings of *Heritage* across Canada had an audience of 60,254.⁸⁹ Its publications included 5,000 copies of the Film Society prospectus, 300 copies of the newsletter, and 2,500 copies of a transcribed radio talk by Grierson, "Films and the War." In addition, there was a pamphlet on the classroom use of film and a special issue of the adult education periodical *Food for Thought* on non-theatrical film in Canada, proposed by its editor and Film Society member, Richard S. Lambert.⁹⁰ Its film evaluation committees were in operation in Halifax, Québec, Toronto, Ottawa, Regina and Vancouver. It had made available a total of 128 films through local depots of the National Film Library at the Vancouver School Board, the University of Alberta, the University of Saskatchewan, the Department of Education in Winnipeg, the Workers' Educational Association in Toronto, and the Departments of Education in Fredericton and Halifax. Local branches of the Society estimated their total audience at 177,497 people. Films came into their holdings from the British and Irish Travel Association, the South African Accredited Representative, the Australian Trade Commissioner, General Motors Products, Shell Oil, Bell Telephone, International Film Centre, John Grierson, Arthur Elton, and the *Vancouver Daily Province*⁹¹

Seeking industry support was a priority, and there were some minor successes. Wilson announced that "after a long campaign, Shell Oil have given me authority to at least explore the possibility of making some films on Canadian history."⁹² Shell also paid for the printing of 40,000 copies of a Film Society pamphlet, *Films in School*, by Lambert.⁹³ Distributed by the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations as well as the Film Society, the pamphlet argued for the importance of film as a modernizing instrument in the classroom.⁹⁴ It emphasized education through film, instead of film education, which was, in fact, a concise articulation of the Film Society's position on the educational use of films.

Lambert writes of "a world which is changing faster than past generations have ever known it to change." Consequently, he argues, "We need to use in education methods which will equip the young mind to be responsive, adaptable, imaginative and realistic." While he criticizes the schoolroom that cuts itself off from that changing world and encourages "escape," he praises attempts to modernize the classroom experience, where "some of the stuffy air of nineteenth century pedagogy has been let out," and proposes that film has the special advantage of "bringing 'actual-ity' into the classroom" in order to "teach citizenship." In addition to the

arming of students for democratic life, film is praised as "a direct instrument of teaching a particular subject." Here, Lambert refers to the NFS's own Film Library Catalogue as a teacher's guide to "the lesson film." He recognizes that a stumbling block to using film in the classroom is that it "had first to live down the prejudice against its association with entertainment." Lambert also points out that since documentary films are not easily accessible to the public through commercial channels, their circulation is largely the result of the work of film societies, "industrial firms," and schools.

Apparently concerned that his readers might not understand what sort of films he is referring to, Lambert writes that film "began to be used to describe and record the living world around us in all its forms. This type of film was given an odd label—'documentary'—because it was the counterpart on celluloid of the document, or record of a transaction." He describes as exemplary the three films sponsored by Shell Oil, *Oil from the Earth* (UK, 1938, J.A. D'Arcy Cartwright), *Protection of Fruit* (UK), and *Transfer of Power: The History of the Toothed Wheel* (UK, 1939, Geoffrey Bell). The British films *Children at School* (1937, Basil Wright), *Drifters* (1929, John Grierson), and *Night Mail* (1936, Harry Watt and Basil Wright) also receive special mention, as does *The Plow that Broke the Plains* (USA, 1936, Pare Lorentz). He refers to only one Canadian film, *Heritage*, which he calls an "outstanding example" of a government publicity film. Thus, through his evaluation of quality documentaries, Lambert argues that the use of international film in educational contexts is well suited to the building of the modern citizen.

Concerns over the influence and pervasiveness of US film are absent from NFS rhetoric at this time. Instead, the very notion of educational documentary film was imbued with an internationalist point of view. Accordingly, by 1941 Wilson moved to secure easier access to US film. He felt that "people here are having their attention so exclusively centered on Britain and the war effort that they are beginning to overlook American ideas and things. They want reminding."⁹⁵ He opined that the Film Society "should initiate an intensive film campaign to tell Canadians about the United States."⁹⁶ Through Marshall, Wilson met with officials at the US State Department and returned to Canada with several films in "the diplomatic pouch," thus avoiding Canadian customs, red tape and potential tariffs.⁹⁷

The wartime drop in membership put the Film Society in a crisis situation. The NFS recorded increases in attendance, and films from the

national film library reportedly were seen by just under 178,000 people in 1939, and 400,000 the following year.⁹⁸ But the eleven branches and 4500 members of a few years earlier had shrunk to only three branches and 900 members by 1941.⁹⁹ The growing attention to US film may have been a tactic to assure continued support for the Film Society as the Rockefeller Foundation's initial two-year grant drew to a close. At the same time, lobbying efforts began to facilitate customs exemptions for US educational films. Wilson received a number of American titles from Charles Thompson of the Bureau for Cultural Relations at the State Department: *Homs of Today*, *Hawaii*, *Miracles of Modernization*, *The River* (1937, Pare Lorentz), *Fight for Life* (1940, Pare Lorentz), *Power and the Land* (1940, Joris Ivens), and *Men and Ships* (1941).¹⁰⁰ In his next request for Rockefeller support, Wilson wrote, "The most important work we can do at present is to organize a national distribution of films which will keep Canadians informed about the American people."¹⁰¹

In his position as film commissioner, Grierson wrote to Marshall in support of the NFS's request for renewed funding. He described the Film Society as unique and complementary to the NFB. He especially highlighted its function "as the initiating force in interesting educational and cultural groups in the life of other countries and developing a special system of contacts with educational and cultural groups outside Canada."¹⁰² The State Department's Charles Thompson also wrote a letter in support of the NFS application.¹⁰³

John Marshall's argument for continued assistance emphasized the NFS's important move from a "national organization of local societies made up of members who were interested principally in seeing films of supposedly limited appeal which were not ordinarily shown in the theatres" to "the supply of films to the schools, colleges, and universities and to adult education groups."¹⁰⁴ More specifically, the Film Society's efforts to distribute US documentary and educational films from the American Film Center, the Film Library at MoMA, the Motion Picture Project of the American Council on Education, and the State Department, ensured a positive impression upon the Rockefeller Foundation, which approved a grant-in-aid of up to \$12,600 (CND) and \$5000 (US) for September 1, 1941, to August 31, 1943.¹⁰⁵

Despite the expressed interest in the circulation of "quality" international documentaries, the NFS continued to promote the budding Canadian efforts in film production. A formative contribution was a survey of Canadian documentary films undertaken by its evaluation committee.

Intended as a handbook to help people, especially teachers, in the selection and use of film, *Canadian Films Reviewed, 1939-1941* includes descriptions and discussions of sixty-one films produced between those dates. The films were gathered and evaluated by J.R. Pollock of Vancouver and E.F. Holliday of Regina, both NFS directors of visual education in their respective cities. Their work was then edited and reviewed by Buchanan and Lambert. The information provided for each film includes running time, producer, distributor, and a synopsis. In addition, the handbook offers an appraisal of each film's technical achievements and "suitability" for particular audiences and for the teaching of certain subjects.¹⁰⁶ The majority were films produced and/or distributed by the NFB and Associated Screen News.

From 1938-1941, the Film Society objective of national "coordination" in film activity expanded to include its relationship with the new NFB. Equally evident is a struggle for institutional identity. The efforts of those years represent an attempt to define the relationship between voluntary film societies, the national public film unit and international initiatives. For instance, in Marshall's assessment of the NFS, he praised "[n]egotiations with Mr. Grierson [that] led to its being designated as the agency to take responsibility of the non-theatrical showing of film board films in the province of Ontario."¹⁰⁷ The cross-promotion of films, film activities and ideas about film provide ample evidence of an expanding consensus about national film culture as an educational film culture. This must not be confused with any "actual" national spirit. The NFS and NFB originated from and helped secure a *discourse* of national interest. Further, it would be mistaken to see only the influence of outside sources. For the Film Society, the mixed interest in both international art cinema and educational film was evident before 1939. But there was a process of reinforcement, one suggesting that the increasing agreement about national film culture and education existed not only between public and private units in Canada, but with an alliance of British and US agencies and authorities as well.

One might ask if the Canadian Film Committee was necessary at all. O.C. Wilson, in an oral history of the period, suggests that it was Grierson's organization, and in this respect, might be viewed as the first wave of his initiatives.¹⁰⁸ But there were several individuals at work here. Grierson's effective articulation of agendas for film in national life needs to be seen alongside those same efforts by Donald Buchanan, Charles Cowan, R.S. Lambert and others. The Committee's function as a mediator between government and the voluntary NFS, its enlistment of the Film

Society as an agent of the NFB in the promotion of instructional films, its casual but substantial efforts at creating access to Canadian schools and other non-theatrical screening situations, and the participation of two of its executive officers on the Film Board are among its achievements.

The NFS and the CFC helped to tilt the idea of national film projects toward an educational discourse, one that highlighted issues of citizenship over all other alternatives for national film culture. This was done through written argument (*Films in School*), cataloguing and film evaluation (*Canadian Films Reviewed, 1939-1941*), and the creation of units to collect and circulate educational film (the National Film Library). The Film Society and the Committee were mechanisms by which an apparatus of discourses became fixed through the coordination of public and private film agencies. The informal connections between key individuals and the network of like-minded contacts relied upon for funding and programme decisions, turned into lasting relations and institutions. What may have been a "hotel interpretation" of Canadian cultural activism was becoming a legitimated, state-sponsored enterprise. However shaky and fragmentary the hegemonic structure may have been, and regardless of its distance from the everyday cultural life of the country, this shift marks the production of an emergent regime of social power in the Canadian cultural field.

NOTES

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1. E.A. Corbett, *We Have With Us Tonight*, (Toronto: Ryerson, 1957), 142.
2. Martin Allor and Michelle Gagnon, *L'état de culture: Genealogie discursive des politiques culturelles québécoises* (Montréal: GRECC, Concordia University, 1994), 26.
3. Michael Dorland, *So Close to the State/s: The Emergence of Canadian Feature Film Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 22.
4. Charles R. Acland, "National Dreams, International Encounters: The Formation of Canadian Film Culture in the 1930s," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 3.1 (1994): 3-26.
5. Donald Buchanan, *Educational and Cultural Films in Canada* (Ottawa: National Film Society, 1936), and Donald Buchanan and D.S. McMullan, "Report to the Executive of the National Film Society of Canada" (1938), Rockefeller Archives Center, Rockefeller Foundation Collection, record group 1.1, series 427R (hereafter referred to as RAC), box 27, file 270.
6. One important exception here is Blaine Allan, "A National 'As Distinct from Departmental' Film Board, and the Case of Heritage," *Canadian Journal of Film*

Studies 9.1 (2000): 30- 54.

7. Peter Morris, "Praxis into Process: John Grierson and the National Film Board of Canada," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 9.3 (1989): 279. See also Zoë Druick, "Documenting Government: Re-examining the 1950s National Film Board Films about Citizenship," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 9.1 (2000): 55-79.
8. Peter Morris, "Re-thinking Grierson: The Ideology of John Grierson," in *Dialogue: Cinéma canadien et québécois*, eds. Pierre Veronneau, Michael Dorland and Seth Feldman, (Montréal: Mediatext, 1987), 21-56. See also Joyce Nelson, *The Colonized Eye: Rethinking the Grierson Legend* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1988).
9. Andrew Rodger, "Some Factors Contributing to the Formation of the National Film Board of Canada," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 9.3 (1989): 265.
10. Director's Report to the 1938 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (hereafter referred to as CAAE), November 14-15, 1938, ms 1-3 A105, Adult Education, Canada, Dalhousie University Archive.
11. *Film Society News* 1.1 (February 1936): 8, in Visual and Sound Archives, Ottawa (hereafter referred to as VSA).
12. *Film Society News* 1.2 (March, 1936): 8, in Gordon Sparling Papers, University of Toronto Rare Books, box 8, file 131.
13. They were E.A. Corbett; Sidney E. Smith, President of the University of Manitoba and of the NFS; Walter C. Murray, President Emeritus of the University of Saskatchewan and National Film Society (hereafter referred to as NFS) board member; Donald W. Buchanan, Talks Director of CBC, former Secretary of the NFS, and NFS board member; Donald Cameron, Director of Extensions, University of Alberta and member of the Council of CAAE; D.S. McMullan, Principal of Commissioner's High School in Québec, secretary of the Visual Education Committee of the Canadian Teachers' Federation; H.O. McCurry, Assistant Director of the National Art Gallery of Canada, Secretary of the Canadian Museum Committee and NFS board member; Captain Frank Badgley, Director of the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau and NFS board member; T.W.L. MacDermot, Headmaster of Upper Canada College and NFS board member. Locally, Mrs. G.V. Ferguson, of the Canadian Junior Leagues, Mrs. Howard Hastings [sic], member of the Visual Education Committee of the National Council of Women, and Mr. Robert England, former Director of Extensions, University of British Columbia and member of the CAAE, participated. Director's Report to the 1938 Annual Meeting of the CAAE, November 14-15, 1938, p. 14.
14. Buchanan and McMullan; for a more complete discussion of this document see Acland, *passim*.
15. Director's Report to the 1938 Annual Meeting of the CAAE, November 14-15, 1938, p. 15. A copy of the minutes of this meeting, and of the resolutions adopted, were also sent to John Grierson, showing a desire to keep him abreast of Canadian developments. Letter, Sidney Smith and E.A. Corbett to Grierson, "Minutes first preliminary meeting of the CFC, September 19th, 1938," VSA.
16. Rodger, 264.
17. Letter, McCurry to Marshall, November 29, 1938, RAC, box 27, file 270, p. 2.
18. Marshall Interviews, with McCurry, November 25, 1938.
19. *Ibid*.
20. Letter, McCurry to Marshall, November 29, 1938, RAC, box 27, file 270, p. 2.
21. *Ibid*.
22. Marshall Interviews, with McCurry, November 25, 1938.
23. Marshall Interviews, December 1, 1938, RAC, box 27, file 270, p. 1.

24. Ibid.
25. Letter, Marshall to McCurry, December 6, 1938, RAC, box 27, file 270.
26. Marshall Interviews, with Grierson, July 15, 1938, vol. 5.
27. Letter, from C.G. Cowan, December 31, 1938, RAC, box 27, file 271, p. 1.
28. Ibid., p. 3.
29. Marshall Interviews, with Grierson, February 7, 1939, vol. 6.
30. Ibid., p. 3.
31. Ibid., p. 2.
32. Letter, Cowan to Marshall, February 18, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271, p. 1.
33. Yvette Hackett, "The National Film Society of Canada, 1935-1951: Its Origins and Development," in *Flashback: People and Institutions in Canadian Film History*, ed. Gene Walz (Montréal: Mediatext, 1986), 143.
34. Ibid., 144.
35. Letter, Grierson to Marshall, May 18, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
36. Grant decision for NFS, May 19, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 269.
37. Letter, Buchanan to Marshall, March 31, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
38. Minutes, Canadian Film Committee (hereafter referred to as CFC), January 10, 1939, VSA, p. 2.
39. At this time, the CFC chair was Walter Murray, former President of the University of Saskatchewan, and the executive officers were Corbett, Cowan, McCurry, R. Wallace (President of Queen's University), Joseph McCully (Headmaster of Pickering College, Newmarket), W.L. Grant, and MacDermot.
40. Letter, Marshall to McCurry, January 17, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
41. Letter, McCurry to Marshall, January 28, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
42. Minutes, CFC, February 10, 1939, VSA, p. 3.
43. Ibid, pp. 4-5.
44. NFS-CFC, May 5, 1939, VSA, p. 3. The Film Society general membership at this time was 4,333. For individual branches, this represented the following make-up: Toronto, 630; Hamilton, 310; Ottawa, 386; Vancouver, 1050; Edmonton, 305; Calgary, 250; Regina, 652; Winnipeg, 400; Saskatoon, 100; and the junior branch of students at University of British Columbia, 250. Letter, Naomi Slater to Marshall, April 29, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
45. Letter, Marshall to Cowan, February 21, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
46. Marshall Interviews, with Grierson, February 7, 1939, vol. 6.
47. Letter, Marshall to Grierson, May 9, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
48. Letter, Atkinson to Marshall, April 20, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271, p. 1.
49. Ibid.
50. "Director's Report on Program," December 11, 1935, Rockefeller Foundation (hereafter referred to as FR), record group 3-1, series 911, box 5, file 51, p. 33. For a detailed discussion, see Haidee Wasson, "'Some Kind of Racket': The Museum of Modern Art's Film Library, Hollywood and the Problem of Film Art," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 9.1 (2000): 5-29.
51. *Annual Report of the General Education Board, 1936-1937*, General Education Board (hereafter referred to as GEB), New York, 1938, p. 76.
52. *Annual Report of the General Education Board, 1939*, GEB, New York, 1939, pp. 101-102.
53. Untitled report, "Association of School Film Libraries," December 10, 1938, GEB, record group 1.2, box 225, file 2157, p. 9
54. Grant decision for NFS, May 19, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 269, p. 2.
55. Letter, Slater to Norma Thompson, August 19, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
56. For additional detail on the overall context of the Rockefeller Foundation and their

- interest in mass communication, see William J. Buxton, "Reaching Human Minds: Rockefeller Philanthropy and Communications, 1935-1939," in *The Development of the Social Sciences in the United States and Canada: The Role of Philanthropy*, eds. Theresa Richardson and Donald Fisher (Stamford, CT: Ablex, 1999), 177-192.
57. Grant decision for NFS, May 19, 1939, p. 3.
 58. "New Programmes in the Humanities," April 10, 1935, RF, record group 3.1, series 911, box 5, file 51, p. 15.
 59. "Comments on Marshall's Memorandum on Next Jobs in Radio and Film," 1938, RF, record group 3.1, series 911, box 5, file 51, p. 1.
 60. Letter, Marshall to Slater, May 25, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
 61. Minutes, CFC and NFS meeting, August 9, 1939, VSA.
 62. Minutes, CFC meeting, June 10, 1939, VSA.
 63. Minutes, CFC and NFS meeting, July 12, 1939, VSA. Given the timing, the film was most likely *The Case of Charlie Gordon* (Canada, 1939, Stuart Legg).
 64. Minutes, CFC and NFS meeting, August 9, 1939, VSA.
 65. Ibid.
 66. Letter, McCurry to Marshall, August 28, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271.
 67. Minutes, CFC and NFS meeting, August 9, 1939, VSA.
 68. Hackett, p. 147. I have not been able to verify this number.
 69. Forsyth Hardy, *John Grierson: A Documentary Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 99.
 70. Minutes, CFC and NFS meeting, October 4, 1939, p. 1.
 71. Letter, McCurry to Marshall, August 28, 1939, RAC, box 27, file 271, attachment.
 72. Minutes, CFC and NFS meeting, October 4, 1939, VSA.
 73. Newsletter, ASFL, October 1939, GEB, record group 1.2, box 225, file 2158, p. 6.
 74. Marshall Interviews, with Wilson, October 8-9, 1939, vol. 6.
 75. Newsletter, ASFL, October 1939, GEB, record group 1.2, box 225, file 2158, n.p.
 76. Ibid., p. 7.
 77. Minutes, CFC and NFS meeting, October 4, 1939, p. 1.
 78. Minutes, CFC and NFS meeting, December 19, 1939. For more on its influence, see Blaine Allan, "Canada's Heritage and America's The Plow that Broke the Plains," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 19.4 (1999): 439-472.
 79. Letter, Wilson to Marshall, January 2, 1940, RAC, box 27, file 272.
 80. Minutes, CFC meeting, December 14, 1939, VSA.
 81. Ibid., p. 2.
 82. Minutes, CFC and NFS meeting, December 19, 1939, VSA, p. 2.
 83. Ibid.
 84. Minutes, CFC meeting, December 14, 1939, VSA, p. 2.
 85. NFS Newsletter, January 1940, RAC box 28, file 277.
 86. Letter, Wilson to Marshall, April 16 1940, RAC, box 27, file 272.
 87. Letter, Marshall to Wilson, May 23 1940, RAC, box 27, file 272.
 88. By May 1940, membership stood as follows: Toronto, 300; Ottawa, 380; Hamilton, 336; Edmonton, 230; Regina, 425; Vancouver, 800, for a total of 2471, down by approximately 2000 from the year before. Organizing Secretary's Report, August 1939 to May 1940, VSA, p. 2.
 89. Organizing Secretary's Report, August 1939 to May 1940, VSA, p. 2.
 90. Ibid.
 91. Ibid., p. 4.
 92. Letter, Wilson to Marshall, November 11, 1940, RAC, box 27, file 272, p. 4.
 93. Letter, Wilson to Marshall, November 13, 1940, RAC, box 27, file 272.

94. R.S. Lambert, *Films in School* (1940), RAC, box 28, file 277, n.p.
95. Letter, Wilson to Marshall, January 29, 1941, RAC box 28, file 273.
96. Ibid.
97. Marshall interviews, telephone conversation with Wilson, February 18, 1941, RAC, box 28, file 273.
98. Ibid., p. 3.
99. Letter, Wilson to Marshall, February 24, 1941, RAC, box 28, file 273, p. 1.
100. Ibid., p. 5.
101. Letter, Wilson to Marshall, March 9, 1941, RAC, box 28, file 273, p. 1.
102. Letter, Grierson to Marshall, March 3, 1941, RAC, box 28, file 273.
103. Letter, Thompson to Marshall, March 17, 1941, RAC, box 28, file 273.
104. "Presentation of Canadian Film Society item at April 1941 Board Meeting," RAC, box 28, file 273.
105. Grant decision for NFS, April 2, 1941, RAC, box 27, file 269.
106. Letter, Wilson to Marshall, May 30, 1941, RAC, box 28, file 273.
107. Marshall, "NFS: Appraisal of work under the grant made in 1941," October 14, 1942, RAC box 28 file 274, p. 1.
108. O.C. Wilson, Transcript, August 12, 1963, VSA, p. 2.

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