

EQUITY FOR SASKATCHEWAN ARTISTS

A BRIEF HISTORY OF STATUS OF THE ARTIST IN CANADA

In the development of arts and cultural policy in Canada the issue of artists' access to social and economic benefits has been critical. A 1973 brief from the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) pointed out the artist's " *real situation, is that of a beacon in intellectual circles but a pauper in practical terms*". By the 1970's many forces became vocal on the issue of 'status' (1) or equity for artists.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION:

In the 70's international forums began the call for examination of the status of the artist.

- **1976** - UNESCO met in Kenya, again in **1977** at a joint ILO / UNESCO meeting in Geneva. Canadian Paul Siren chaired the Joint Committee to draft recommendations for member states on 'status'.
- **1980** - the **UNESCO Belgrade Recommendations on Status of the Artist**, which Canada signed, urged member states to act on a broad range of policy, including access to social programs and protection of artists' rights.
- **1980-90's** - other states developed programs designed to address status issues in the area of income, benefits and social policy.
- **2001** - UNESCO has continued forums on Status, most recently in Sweden.

FEDERAL ACTION:

- **1978 Disney Report** on taxation. This is the most comprehensive analysis of the difficulties imposed on artists by the tax system. It recommended, among other aspects, "dual status" for professional artists.
- Other reports on taxation have also dealt with the inequities for artists, including the **1984 Taxation of Visual and Performing Artists and Writers**, and the **1986 Funding of the Arts in Canada (Bovey Report)**.
- **1982 - Applebaum-Hebert Report** on Federal Cultural Policy Review, following extensive hearings and consultations, concluded that in 30 years, despite their overwhelming contribution to Canadian life, artists' living conditions remain virtually unchanged: "the income of many, if not most, of these artists classifies them as highly-specialized, working poor."
- **1986 - Task Force on the Status of the Artist**, established by the federal government, made recommendations over a broad range of issues, particularly on labour relations within federal jurisdiction.
- **1987 - Canadian Advisory Committee on the Status of the Artist** created by the federal government, the first step in implementing Task Force recommendations.

- **1988** - the Advisory Committee developed draft legislation, with the assistance of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, referred to as the *Canadian Artists' Code*. While not enacted the Code formed the basis for further action.
- **1990 - Bill C-7, Status of the Artist Act** was first introduced and in **1992** passed by the federal parliament. The Act covers the formation of an Advisory Council and collective bargaining within federal jurisdiction.
- **1995 - CAPPRT (Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal)** was established to administer professional relations provisions of the Act. CAPPRT has dealt with numerous certifications and collective bargaining issues since then. In **2001 – 02** there will be a review of the legislation.
- **1999 - A Sense of Place A Sense of Pride**, a Canadian Heritage report on support of culture in Canada called for examination of self-employment issues, including for artists as creators, formation of a review task force and invited provincial governments to put in place complementary legislation on status.
- **1999 - Connecting to the Canadian Experience**, federal government's response endorsed the recommendations related to self-employment and promoted provincial status legislation.
- **2001** – HRDC study on EI extension to self-employed, including artists, has been launched.

PROVINCIAL ACTION:

- **Quebec** became the first province to develop status legislation. In response to considerable pressure from the artistic community the Quebec government enacted **Bill 90 (1987)** dealing with collective bargaining for performing artists, and **Bill 78 (1988)** covering visual and literary artists.
- **1992 - B.C. and Saskatchewan** appointed artists committees to make recommendations for programs and legislation.
- **1993 B.C. "In spirit and In law" Report of the B.C. Advisory Committee on the Status of the Artist** was produced. While some action has taken place the B.C. government has not yet proceeded with the major elements of the report. A report produced in **2000 "The Labour of Art"** reexamines status issues in B.C.
- **1993 Saskatchewan - The Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Status of the Artist** was published containing 115 recommendations across a broad spectrum of issues affecting artists. An initial start at examining implementation of the report did not proceed.
- **2001** - the **Saskatchewan Arts Alliance** took up the Report and mobilized the Saskatchewan cultural community in support of provincial government action.
- **2001** - The Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation has indicated that the government is considering legislation and programs.
- Other provinces have also examined status issues, notably Ontario and Manitoba.
- **2001 NFLD** - a major policy report of Association of Cultural Industries (ACI) in has called to status programs and legislation. It is currently under review.

CULTURAL COMMUNITY ACTION:

From the emergence of the demand for equity for artists many provincial and national arts and cultural organizations have taken direct action lobbying for support of status.

- ***The Canadian Conference of the Arts*** has been in the forefront of activity with numerous briefs and representations to the federal government on issues of taxation, benefits, legislation and social programs over many years.
- **2000** - The CAA issued a study - ***A Call to Action*** dealing with Status of the Artist policy and legislation.

(1) “Status” is used here as the historic title for the concept, however the issue is better understood by government and the public to be one of “equity” for artists, and this is the term SAA prefers to express the issues encompassed.

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