

He's the starmaker directing Canada's bonanza in films

By Val Sears Toronto Star

"I have nothing but contempt for Michael McCabe" — Gerald Pratley, Director of the Ontario Film Institute.

"He's got brains" — Michael Levine, film investment counsel.

"I think its just a great life" — Michael McCabe.

So okay, maybe he only makes a mere 45 grand a year, drives a three-year-old Honda, has just been dropped by his girlfriend and came up by way of Hamilton but, dammit, he's the biggest thing in Canadian movies since, well . . . Cecil B. DeMille.

In the 15 months since he's been executive-director of the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC), Michael McCabe, a 41-year-old civil servant, has boosted feature film production in Canada from a little more than zilch to \$150 million.

He's got 32 films going this year, has sold \$61 million outside Canada, has set half a dozen producers on their way to riches, made stars, encouraged nearly \$100 million in film investment . . . and sponsored — with taxpayers money — some truly awful schlock.

He's also (gasp) about to become the Culture Czar of All Canada. When the Progressive Conservative government announces the formation of the Cultural Industries Development Corporation in the throne speech, Michael McCabe will be smiling.

"If I don't get it, I'll quit," he says, musing about the heady prospects of a cultur-

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