Romeo and Juliet story modernized by directors

By BOB THOMAS

HOLLYWOOD (AP)—The lean, tanned, intense man was teaching a west side New York gang how to rumble.

"You're all excited," he instructed the youths. "You're out to show that the Jets are the toughest gang in the neighborhood. . . ."

The gang, led by Russ Tamblyn, responded with fierceness, but director Jerome Robbins wasn't satisfied.

"You've got to do some homework on this," he complained. "You've got to go home and think about the character each of you is playing—his resentments, his frustrations, his tensions."

Robbins was rehearsing a number for West Side Story bringing to the screen the same meticulous art that has made him one of the top creators on the stage and ballet.

IT'S HIS BABY

The reason Robbins temporarily abandoned the living theatre is that West Side Story is his baby.

"I got the idea for it back in 1947. I was working at the Actor's Studio then and an actor came to me with a problem. He had to play Romeo, and he couldn't figure how to make the character come alive. I studied Romeo and Juliet and it struck me what a great idea it would be to bring it up to date."

He tried to interest composer Leonard Bernstein and author Arthur Laurents in collaborating with him on it, but the pair didn't get along. The project died but not in Robbins' mind.

Ten years later, Bernstein and Laurents did an about-face and were working together on a show for which they sought help from Robbins.

"It's a pile of junk," the choreographer told them. "Why don't we go back to our Romeo and Juliet idea?"

They agreed, and the result was the love story set amid the gang warfare of New York streets.

SCREEN BEAUTY — Susan Harrison, one of Hollywood's young lovelies, plays a starring role with Jeffrey Hunter and Pat Crowley in "Key Witness," Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's exciting new drama of a man who witnesses a murder and whose family is terrorized by the youthful killers. Also starring in the Pandro S. Berman Production are Dennis Hopper, Joby Baker and Johnny Nash. Filmed in CinemaScope, it was produced by Kathryn Hereford; directed by Phil Karlson.

Parliament divorce issue gets favorable comment

By The Canadian Press

OTTAWA (CP) — "Bravo, carry on," wires an Ontario woman. "You should be ashamed. I cannot imagine just what purpose you hope to achieve," an Alberta resident writes.

"Almost a matter of life and death. If there is anything that can be done to expedite my case, I would be forever grateful to you," says a letter from a Quebec woman whose divorce petition is stalled in the Commons.

Divorce is the common theme in these excerpts taken from correspondence reaching Arnold Peters and Frank Howard, the two CCF members of Parliament seeking to get Parliament out of the divorce business.

By detailed discussion of divorce bills, formerly given final approval by batches, they have piled up some 400 petitions from residents of Quebec and Newfoundland where no divorce courts exist.

Between them they have received about 50 letters on their strategy — from the Yukon to Quebec — most favorable. Two Protestant clergymen, an architect and a lawyer are among their supporters. Men and women are equally represented.

Most are signed and few exhibit any trace of political partisanship although one scolding missive signed "disgusted" contains the information that — at least in the past — the writer was a CCF supporter.

A spokesman at Prime Minister Diefenbaker's office says several letters a day are received on the divorce question, mostly from frustrated petitioners expressing irritation.

Petitioners unable to get their divorces approved this session must start from scratch next year — requiring fresh expenses running anywhere from a few hundred dollars to more than $2,000. Both CCF MPs say they appreciate full the hardship facing some persons as a result of their campaign.

How many will get through this session? Mr. Howard, sitting for the northern British Columbia riding of Skeena and Mr. Peters, representing Northern Ontario's Timiskaming say they plan to hold right to the end.

They want Newfoundland and Quebec divorces heard outside parliament, in a federal court for example, ending the present practice they feel stained with hypocrisy, elements of a racket and connivance by Parliament and the legal profession with underhand practices.

The government has done nothing to halt or influence their campaign.

There are one or two prospects of the divorce blockade taking a new course. One is that Speaker Roland Michener has under study Mr. Howard's proposal that a divorce bill be sent to the Supreme Court as a test case. Mr. Michener's decision this week will be on the legal point involved.

Many nationalities aid Guy Brion to success

HOLLYWOOD (AP) — James Shigeta is Hawaiian — born of Japanese descent, and he had to go to Japan to find success in Hollywood.

Actually, Jimmy looks like an American, as indeed he is. After winning on Ted Mack's Amateur Hour, he embarked on a singing career, but not as James Shigeta. His billing: Guy Brion.

"It was my agent's idea," he recalled. "He thought I would get better acceptance as a continental type; French singers were the rage in those years. He gave me a name that was not identified with any particular nationality, but had a European air to it."

As Guy Brion, he had good success in supper clubs from New York to Hollywood. But the movies wouldn't give him a tumble.

JOB WITH PROBLEM

He accepted an offer to star in musical revues in Tokyo. This presented a problem: he had to learn to speak Japanese.

He learned, and for five years, he bounced from stage revues, to radio shows, to his songs, to movies and to TV.

The American break came when he was brought back to sing on the Dinah Shore Show. He was signed from it to appear in The Crimson Kimono. He drew more Hollywood attention when he starred in the Holliday in Japan show in Las Vegas for six months.

From it came the current release, Walk Like a Dragon.

Now he is starting his most impressive film to date, Cry for Happy, in which he appears with Glenn Ford. Jimmy plays a Nisei navy man who gets a post as interpreter in Japan, but unfortunately doesn't know Japanese.

Nixon, Kennedy, Rockefeller set for coming nominations

WASHINGTON (CP)—Vice-President Richard Nixon seems to hold far greater power among the Republicans than does Senator John F. Kennedy among the Democrats.

This apparent contrast in party fortunes between the two leading U.S. presidential candidates will undoubtedly have a tremendous bearing on the temper of the political nominating conventions next month.

Despite the late-hour appearance of a potential opponent in the person of New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Nixon has amassed such a wealth of Republican support it appears certain he will be nominated on the first ballot at the July 25 Chicago convention.

Rockefeller is a determined personality and his New York delegation will have 96 of the 1,331 votes to be cast at Chicago, wielding the greatest power of any single state.

But Nixon has been working for the presidency for eight years. He is reported to have the support of most of the party organizers and its leaders. In fact, all of the top convention officials appear to be handpicked Nixon men.

Thus, barring some last-minute political calamity, the Republican convention pattern is predetermined and set.

Not so the Democrats.

The July 11 Los Angeles convention promises to be a wide-open affair. The 43-year-old Kennedy from Massachusetts is likely to fail to get the required 761 of the 1,521 votes needed to clinch the nomination on the first ballot.

How events will shape up on succeeding votes is anyone's guess. Many observers predict that Kennedy will eventually win out, perhaps on the third or fourth ballot as state delegates horse-trade and switch support. But others are not so sure.

Kennedy faces stiff competition. Eager for a try at the nomination are Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas and Missouri Senator Stuart Symington.

Mitzi, the [illegible] fearless, holds [illegible] three-month-old tiger at bay in the living room of Toronto Riverdale Zoo director Dr. Norman [illegible]llard. Dr. Scollard's house guest, Satu, who now weighs 23 pounds, may become the first tiger to be raised in captivity in Canada. Her mother, Sabrina, died two days after Satu's birth at the zoo. —CP Wirephoto.

Modern age of sputniks, progress still age of dispairing refugees

By JOSEPH MacSWEEN
Canadian Press Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. (CP)—If this is the age of the sputniks and proud progress, it's also the age of the refugees, homeless despairing millions.

World Refugee Year is coming to a close and—while succeeding in limited aims—it has really emphasized the failure of nations to solve the sad plight of the victims of 20th century upheavals.

Whatever strides have been made in assisting the helpless United Nations reports still tell of wolf-eyed Korean children battling for food like orphan animals. In Jericho, people still bury their dead secretly at night, filching ration cards from the corpses for future use.

Officials estimate 130,000,000 people have become refugees since the Russian revolution in 1917. Since the end of the Second World War, the total is estimated at 40,000,000.

The UN says there are still 15,000,000 refugees—nearly equal to the Canadian population—who need a permanent home, or food and shelter, or loans, grants and training to become self-supporting.

"World Refugee Year has certainly achieved the main objective which was to focus attention on the problem," said Maurice Liu, information officer here. "It was felt that public interest had slipped. After the Hungarian crisis people began to forget about refugees."

BRITISH INITIATIVE

Ending with June this year, World Refugee Year was created by the United National General Assembly on the initiative of Britain, where the star runner Chris Chataway—now a member of Parliament—and two young friends played a large part in stirring public interest.

Nevertheless, Liu reported that the comparatively small Norway had pledged $1,700,900 and raised slightly more than that from voluntary subscription by May 15, is addition to the government pledge of $650,000. For one thing, the compact nature of the country lent itself to such a campaign in comparison with countries like Canada and the U.S., with their vast areas and many financial campaigns.

Britain has doubled its promises by contributing a total of nearly $24,000,000, by far the greater part coming from public subscription. The United States government has pledged $15,500,000 and the public subscription target is $20,000,000 but the campaign has yet to reach its peak.

Canada and several other countries are projecting their campaigns beyond the June 30 deadline.

CANADIAN REPORT

In a report, the Canadian Committee for World Refugee Year has said:

". . . An approximate $6,000,000 price tag on Canadian efforts does not measure World Refugee Year values in human terms of new hope given to refugees who are finding new homes either through resettlement here in Canada or integration abroad.

"Nor does it measure the potential values of changed attitudes and enlarged understanding of Canadians who have participated in this humanitarian year. At the same time the other side of the situation should be seen clearly.

"Even if these dollar estimates on voluntary generosity are reasonably accurate, a possible approximately $2,000,000 contribution to the central fund for the United Nations refugee programs of the UN high commissioner for refugees and the UN Relief and Works Agency is a small, almost token, contribution when it comes from people enjoying the second highest standard of living in the world to help people who have lived for years in substandard misery, and who are the world's collective responsibility."

While officials stress it is impossible to estimate in money the assistance of various countries to refugees, the fact is the pledges and contributions so far for W.R.Y. are not astronomical.

With 76 countries and 14 territories taking part, the total of announced targets come to $45,000,000, said Liu. This approximates the annual budget of one of the smaller Canadian provinces. As of May 15, $31,500,000 was actually in pocket.

FLUID SITUATION

"You must understand the situation is fluid and you have only to name a figure for it to be out of date," said Liu. "The campaign is continuing in many countries and the whole point is that public interest not die."

Liu and officials elsewhere shied away from comparisons between countries and indeed declared that an earlier system of comparison had been scuttled. This table, issued March 2, indicated for instance that Norway, with a population of 3,500,000 had a per capita contribution to W.R.Y. of nearly 55 cents, compared with less than five cents by Canada with a population of 17,000,000.

The officials said such comparisons were misleading particularly in the case of Canada which had received many refugees and immigrants since the war as well as rendering monetary and other assistance to overseas refugees.

Liu said that as of May 15 the aim of voluntary contributions in Canada was $3,300,000—"not necessarily a hard and fast target"—and this did not include a government pledge of $2,366,250. Canada's program of accepting tubercular refugees and their families from European camps was one of the more spectacular features of the W.R.Y.

Besides the federal and provincial governments, many cities from Victoria to Halifax were participating in W.R.Y.'s program to empty all European refugee camps by the end of this year.

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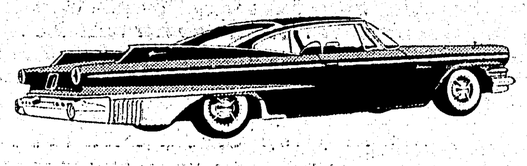

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