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Posted: Thurs., Dec. 13, 2001, 6:38pm PT

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waddell

Northern exposure

Biz gets visit from Canadian runaway alliance

By [DAVE MCNARY](#)

HOLLYWOOD -- Don't blame Canada; runaway production is not our fault.

That's the basic message brought to Los Angeles this week from leaders of the Alliance of Canadian Cinema Television and Radio Artists in confabs with SAG, AFTRA and the Alliance of Motion Picture & Television Producers.

"The migration to Canada is mostly due to the lower Canadian dollar and the globalization of the economy," said ACTRA topper Stephen **Waddell**. "All the rhetoric about us taking the work is unfortunate."

SAG's national board has inflamed relations with Canada by backing an investigation into the legality of Canadian production subsidies but the ACTRA toppers pledged they will not push the Guild to switch its policy. And they promised they will continue work with SAG on such issues as supporting SAG's plans to beef up global enforcement next May of its ban on non-union work.

ACTRA prexy Thor Bishopric said the actor unions have agreed to disagree, adding, "We have no plans to try to change the position of the SAG board."

Waddell noted the industry's current production slump will lead a decline in 2001 earnings for the 18,000 ACTRA members, who earned about \$180 million Canadian last year.

Bishopric asserted Canadian thespians are often at a disadvantage in seeking parts in American productions even if they are shooting north of the border. "There is such a demand for American culture that Canadian actors often can't even get an audition," he added.

SAG treasurer Kent McCord said his confab with ACTRA leaders had gone smoothly, focusing on issues of joint concern such as safety and better contracts.

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The ACTRA toppers also discussed details of granting of work permits for U.S. thespians in Canada, protocols for thespians with dual memberships and firmed up plans to host a confab for union leaders on global protection issues in Toronto on Feb. 16-17.

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