Canada in Full Steam As Rail Strike Is Ended

TORONTO—Canada's recent rail strike caused some distribution problems for record labels but every-thing seems to have settled down to order again.

Many companies resorted to shipping by air during the strike which continued for more than two weeks. This naturally increased the distribution costs but prevented any serious breakdowns in supply.

Columbia's national sales man-ager, Ben Dutisch, said there had been problems, especially in the West. The label lost most of its merchandise in Ontario and Quebec and air shipments were held up by embargo problems.

New Nightly to Key Recording Acts in a Novel Approach

By RITCHIE YORKE

TORONTO—Canada is to have a new style of international night-club and a new formula for her U.S. record acts—when the Constel-lation Hotel opens its Telephone Call Booking service for the industry.

Utilizing a budget of $40,000 a month, the new club's agent and de-signer, Thomas P. Dunseith, hopes to attract artists of the calibre of Bette Midler, Gladys Knight and the Pips, the Fifth Dimension, Donny Hah-away, Sergio Mendes and the O'Jays.

"The Telephone Call will be heavily-oriented towards recording artists, as opposed to the stick, Las Vegas-styled nightclubs entertain-ers," Wayne told Billboard. "We want to be more related to the music, more concerned with what the pub-lic is buying on record."

Wayne, who operated the Nephe-llas clubs in Toronto and then Acapulco West, was ap-proached by the owner of the Con-stellation, George Kalmer, to bring a traveling night-club to a contemporary nightclub in Canada.

"They wanted to make it the fore-most nightclub in Canada over-night. I investigated clubs and disco-queers around the world but The Telephone Call is distinctly unique anywhere. It represents a new approach to the building of nightlife."

No expense has been spared in the design and construction of The Tele-phone Call, which is 25 feet of solid brass, surrounded by 70 speakers. There is a $27,000 computerized jukebox system which creates different atmospheres throughout the club and costs $70,000.

The club has a capacity of 350 persons and development costs have been $1,200 per seat, as opposed to the usual ceiling of $30. Total de-velopment costs are $500,000.

"We want to have it all the time open. The Telephone Call and we're work-ing on it now."

Owner George Kalmer recently completed the pur-chase of Montreal's Sonesta Hotel, long ago described as "the hot indus-try patronage. Wayne said that after completion of The Telephone Call, he will be involved in the operation of a similar entertainment centre on the roof of the Sonesta.

Wayne received a charge of be-tween $5 and $7 per person which should allow him to access many areas limiting their Canadian ex-pose to the occasional one-nighter.

He said the opening date of The Telephone Call has not been set but that it will fall between Dec. 15 and Jan. 5.

"The Telephone Call will rep-resent Canada's first night-club for the Seventies," predicted Wayne, who is also president of the Columbia Recording Inc.

Hibbs Signs By Marathon

TORONTO—Marathon Music has signed a long-term recording contract with Simon "Hibbs" Leigh, a former country singer, Harry Hibbs.

Hibbs has earned a wide follow-ing with the Canadian television series through CHCH-TV. The series has just begun a new season with Diane Leigh as co-star. Ms. Leigh was recently signed by Marath-on Music. The label said it hopes to release a Hibbs album by Christ-mas.

RCA's national sales co-ordinator Pat McQuade arranged an alternate trucking system right across the country. Bill Gale, traffic manager for Quality Records, said his company was not troubled by the strike.

WEA plant manager, Dave Sturg-geon, reported use of air freight, which continued for more than a week after the strike ended. WEM had an added hurdle—a shortage of cardboard for album covers which was addressed by the company when stock was released. AEM was another company to use air freight methods during the rail strike, which generally slowed business by up to a week.