

By Angela Bianchi

For The Financial Post

NEWSPAPER classifieds entice readers to earn a few hundred dollars by working as extras on a movie set — but that money pales in comparison with what they could earn if their house turned the producers' heads.

On average, a Toronto mansion rents for \$2,000 a day for its use for a shoot — and shoots can last for up to two months. Often, the homeowner gets to sit in on the shooting and mingle with the stars.

Generally, however, when a production crew moves in, the family moves out. It can be an un-

Putting your home in a movie could earn you \$2,000 a day

nerving experience, but for the hundreds of property owners who willingly uproot themselves — maybe once a year — the money's worth it.

To get your front porch, the swimming pool, or your mountainside hideaway in the pictures, you should talk to a city film commissioner or a provincial film development board. Once the paperwork is completed and the property inspected and approved,

photos of the property and its outstanding features are kept in a filing system, much like a talent bank.

The Ontario Film Development Corp. uses a computerized filing system to organize its more than 7,000 photos. By keying in pertinent information, the computer can find the most peculiar details. If a movie needs a winding mahogany staircase, private lake or period kitchen, if it's available,

it's on computer.

Property owners don't pay a fee to be kept on file.

The Bridle Path, a mansion-lined road in north Toronto, is quite popular with producers. But it has been a bit difficult to convince residents to give up their privacy for long periods of time. So there's always a need to get more mansions on file.

Location scouts are constantly combing through ritzy neighbor-

hoods, industrial areas and rural districts in search of new properties for future use in upcoming movies.

With 800 movies shot in Toronto alone in the past 14 years, it's become necessary to find new estates, factories, police stations and office buildings for shoots outside the studio.

"Our office goes scouting from time to time to update our lists," says Gail Thompson, an executive with the OFDB. "We drive through Metro Toronto and the outskirts to discover new properties. On our last outing, we added 60 new addresses to our file. Homeowners don't always come to us, sometimes we approach them."