

IN PROGRESS...

If you don't know by now that there is a five million dollar feature being shot of Roger Lemelin's novel, **Les Plouffe**, then you must live under a rock. From Saskatoon to Sault Ste. Marie to Charlottetown, journalists have been beefing up their expense accounts to get to Montreal and catch a glimpse of what they are sure is history in the making. Director, Gilles Carle, appears to agree: **Les Plouffe** is to Quebec what **Les Misérables** is to France or what **Gone With The Wind** is to the United States."

But for people who take film seriously, there is reason to believe that **Les Plouffe** may turn out to be to Quebec what Von Stroheim's **Greed** was to America or Bertolucci's **1900** was to Italy. Mr. Carle says he's making a four-and-a-half hour feature film — that's it and that's all. "They may decide to show it in two parts or with an intermission, but I don't think people will be at all bored by seeing this film in one sitting." On the other side of town, however, Denis Héroux (executive producer, along with John Kemeny), is telling anyone and everyone that he's overseeing production of a two-hour feature film and a five-hour television mini-series that are being shot simultaneously. A case of who has the final cut? The financing for the film includes a reported million dollars from Radio-Canada (the CBC is said to be considering the purchase of a dubbed version that Carle may or may not supervise) and that tends to tip the scales even more towards Héroux's vision.



Les Plouffe

The interest generated by this project is due, of course, to the memory of **La famille Plouffe**, a half-hour situation comedy that began on Radio-Canada in 1953 before being televised in English as well in 1954. The series continued to enjoy its unique success on both networks until 1959 when it was dropped. But those who are awaiting a re-run of the

Gathered around the patriarch, Emile Genest, are Juliette Huot, Gabriel Arcand, Denise Filiatrault, Serge Dupire and Pierre Curzi: **Les Plouffe**

television series are in for a surprise. "Hopefully people will be disappointed at the beginning of the film but happy at the end," says Carle who is credited with co-authorship of the script along with Lemelin. "The TV series was okay — sort of the Archie Bunker of its day — but a little too cute. In the film, we are taking "les Plouffe" out of the kitchen and into the streets."

Although the setting of the novel is Quebec City's Lower Town, only two weeks of the thirteen-week shooting schedule were spent there — shooting exteriors that will open and close the film, and a religious procession that involved 1,500 extras. In Montreal, they have literally taken over approximately one city block in another kind of lower town, Pointe St-Charles — which, ironically, has come to be known as roughly the Anglophone version of Plouffe-land

through the plays of David Fennario. Where there once was an empty lot, there is now the maison Plouffe, outside balcony and all. On the street in front of the house they've laid tramway tracks, and the familiar noises of the tram are used as background effects through most of the shooting — except, of course, when Onésime, the tram conductor, drops in to visit.

The plot of the film is taken directly from the novel with only minimal changes. Essentially it concentrates on the members of one family as they go about trying to live their lives with dignity during a period of history when such aspirations were difficult to realize. "The Plouffe family is a

wonder of the daily life of an entire people as seen through the eyes of a family," Carle says. "They are screaming to live and are betrayed by everyone. I am one of the Plouffes. I was born into it and I lived it. I have a right to do anything I want in this film except step outside and look down on these people. This is me."

The issues the family confronts are those that one would expect in an epic: sex, religion, nationalism, war, conscription, royalty, les Anglais — even baseball. It is the first time Carle, a veteran of fifteen features, has worked from a novel, and he says he wouldn't do it again unless he had the help of the author. Lemelin, presently publisher of *La Presse* and a man notorious for his strongly held individualist's views, was sometimes surprised to find what he had written in 1948. "Whenever we had an argument," says Carle, "I would say, 'Roger, let's go back to the book. But he was always willing to start over again and write anything. He has a wonderful memory of this era.'"

Included in the cast is Émile Genest, who played the role of Napoleon in the TV series and is now cast as Papa, Théophile Plouffe. Juliette Huot, Denise Filiatrault, Gabriel Arcand, Pierre Curzi and Serge Dupire make up the rest of the family and are joined by two French actors, Stéphane Audran and Rémi Laurent. The crew is basically the same one Carle had for *Fantastica* (which is scheduled to open in Montreal at the beginning of November... *enfin*), including director of photography, François Protat. The only new-comer is an Englishman, William McCrow, who is the production designer; seemingly an odd choice for such a film, but Carle says, "On the contrary. He knew exactly what kind of chairs and curtains the Plouffe kitchen had to have from reading the book. Many of the actors don't even remember the TV series but they know exactly what to do — it's in them. This is their culture. I don't have to direct this, I'm really the film's first viewer — I stand back and watch." But will all this watching still produce a Gilles Carle film? "I hope so. But then again, I hope not."

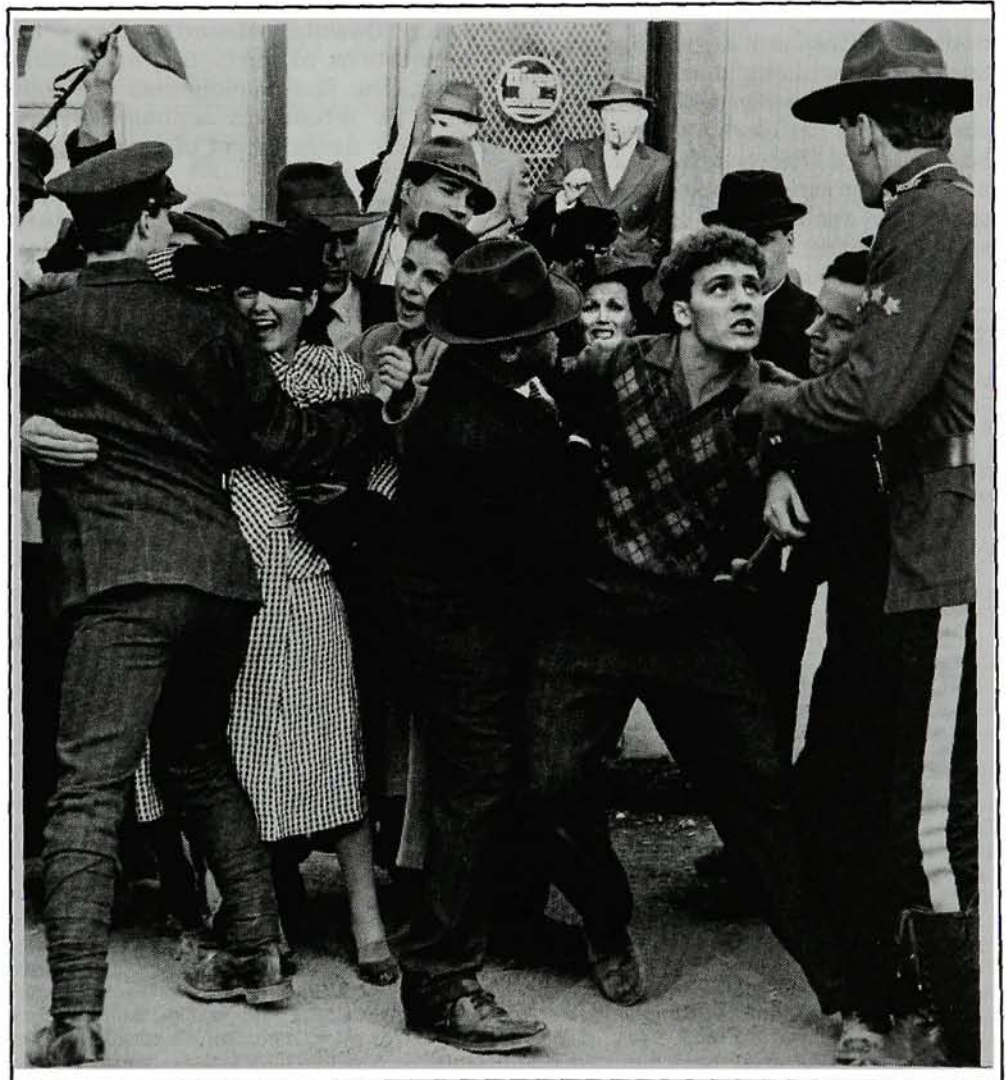
Listening to Carle as he speaks, it is hard not to get caught up in his enthusiasm for this lengthy film and the sincerity and humility he brings to it. The question is, will the powers that be at ICC feel the same? Will the public, in fact, be treated to a four-hour epic, or some other variation on the theme?

Kevin Tierney

Les Plouffe

p.c. I.C.C. - Cine London 1980 **exec. p.** Denis Héroux, John Kemeny **p.** Justine Héroux **d.** Gilles Carle **sc.** Roger Lemelin, Gilles Carle from novel by Roger Lemelin **p. man.** Micheline Garant **p. sec.** Jacky Fritz **d.o.p.** François Protat **p. design.** William McCrow, François Lamontagne (1st asst.) **set dress.** Réal Ouellette, Daniel Larose (asst.) **dressers** Renée April, France Gilbert **ed.** Yves Langlois, Jean-Guy Montpetit, Jocelyn Genest (asst.) **mus.** Stéphane Venne **sd.** Patrick Rousseau **boom** Thierry Hoffman **cost. design.** Nicole Pelletier, Louise Jobin (asst.) **make-up** Marie-Angèle Protat **hair** Gaétan Noiseux **a.d.** Pierre Magny (1st), Marie Thérberge (2nd), François Mercille (trainee) **unit man.** Pierre Laberge **loc. man.** Carole Mondello **sec. of p.** Carmella Guillemineau **asst. cam.** Robert Guertin (1st), Michel Girard (2nd) **props mast.** Normand Simpson, Jacques Chamberland, Hélène Hébert (asst.), Vincent Fournier (asst.) **p. asst.** Christiane Lacroix, Christian Bénard, Jean-Pierre Fritz,

Pierre-Paul Rodrigue, Pierre Plante **construct. co-ord.** Melvern Prupas, Roméo Turcotte (man.) **carp.** Léo Mioussé, Claude Bertrand, Jocelyn L'Heureux, Ernest Corsol, Honoré Doyon, Lactance Fillion, Roger Riendeau, Marcel Guérin, Daniel Perreault, Raymond St-Georges **vintage cars** Jacques Arcouette **elec.** Jacques Fortier, Claude Fortier (asst.) **key grip** Serge Grenier **i.p.** Émile Genest, Juliette Huot, Denise Filiatrault, Gabriel Arcand, Pierre Curzi, Serge Dupire, Stéphane Audran, Daniel Ceccaldi, Paul Berval, Louise Laparé, Rémi Laurent, Anne Létourneau, Donald Pilon, Gérard Poirier, Paul Dumont, Kate Trotter, J. Léo Gagnon, Gilles Renaud, Marc Gélinas, Gilbert Comptois, Amulette Garneau, Ghyslain Tremblay, Marielle Robert, Denis Lavergne, Guy Thauvette, René-Daniel Dubois, Malcolm Nelthorpe, André Breton, Sylvie Lachance, Pierre Fauteux, Jean-Guy Deschamps, Charles Dansereau, Jean-Claude Giguère, Léo St-Pierre, Steven Mendell, Gilles Rochette, Jean Guimond, Claude Grisé, Jean Ricard, Georges Delisle **compt.** Armand Soussan **acct.** Pierre Guèvremont, Carole Lagacé **pub.** Lucienne Appel, David Novek Assoc. **press attaché** Maurice Elia



"We are taking 'les Plouffe' out of the kitchen and into the streets," says director Gilles Carle: Serge Dupire illustrates the point