

Labour negotiations on in QC

MONTREAL - In a mutual effort to bring both sides back to the negotiation table, representatives of the 700-member technicians' union in Quebec, the Syndicat des techniciennes et des techniciens du cinéma du Québec (STCQ), met during the last week in July with the chief executives of the Association des Producteurs de Film et de Vidéo du Québec (APFVQ).

Rock Demers, newly elected president of the producers' association, told *Cinema Canada* prior to the meeting that he is hopeful negotiations will continue and that a collective agreement can be signed by the end of the summer.

The APFVQ-STCQ agreement has not been renegotiated since it was signed in 1979. Negotiations over the last 18 months resulted in arduous clause-by-clause discussion, but final agreement was held up by two delays of several months with both sides being unable to agree on the composition of the APFVQ negotiating team.

"We changed our team twice upon their request last fall," says Demers, elected as president in June. "It took them six months the last time to agree to meet with us."

The most recent break in negotiations came in May when, after three solid days of talks and with two outstanding clauses in the way of an agreement, the STCQ team, headed by former union president Michel LaVeaux, allegedly walked out of the meeting.

Acting STCQ president François Leclerc explains that the APFVQ misinterpreted the technicians' intentions.

"They interpreted a need to take a break as an indication of not negotiating in good faith," Leclerc told *Cinema Canada*.

Demers sees it another way. "Due to the insignificance of these clauses, their leaving the table was an indication that they were not willing to sign with us", he says.

The first outstanding clause pertains to the French/English translation of job classification titles which the STCQ says must be considered individually. In the second clause, the technicians are seeking a general film screen accreditation for the STCQ.

Leclerc is also hopeful that an agreement will be reached with the new APFVQ executive.

"We hope that the change of executive might lead to some necessary changes in the collective agreement. Demers and

Claude Bonin (APFVQ vice-president) are very representative of the producers as a whole and have a good reputation and relationship with the technicians."

Once a collective agreement is signed, says Leclerc, both sides might then begin to consider more flexible working conditions in various types of productions - TV movies, video, theatrical film, and small budget Quebec films.

"All of these will need special consideration with an collective agreement. We are hoping that if we can get all the producers to respect the agreement as it stands we can then open doors for special needs," says Leclerc.

Another reason for the delay in reaching an agreement was the unexpected resignation of STCQ president Michael LaVeaux and three executive members, Pierre Doucet, André Gagnon and Louis Marion.

Know as a "strong, full-time president" LaVeaux and his colleagues resigned in early July due to internal political differences, according to Leclerc who will remain as acting president and treasurer until a general assembly is held in September.

"He was a strong president and fully occupied on all fronts, which lead him to inevitable confrontation," Leclerc says.

Neither LaVeaux and nor his executive colleagues were available for comment at presstime.

Vidéotron buys up French Télé Métropole

MONTREAL - After several years of trying to divest itself of Télé-Métropole, the J.A. DeSève estate and foundation has finally found a buyer.

Le Groupe Vidéotron, Quebec's largest cable company, agreed in early June to purchase the controlling interest of Télé-Métropole for \$127 million, subject to Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) approval.

The DeSève estate, anxious to sell the profitable Montreal-based broadcasting network because of tax problems, preferred a French-Canadian buyer.

The new agreement to purchase comes just two months

after the CRTC blocked an earlier \$98 million purchase offer by the Montreal-based Power Corp.

The CRTC ruled at that time that Power Corp. had failed to demonstrate that the transfer of ownership would benefit the communities served, the Canadian broadcasting system or the public interest.

With over 680,000 cable subscribers in Québec, Vidéotron is the second largest cable company in Canada after Rogers Cable system in Toronto with 1.2 million subscribers.

Vidéotron executives say they have studied the CRTC conditions for purchasing Télé-Métropole and foresee no difficulty in obtaining the Commission's okay. As of the last week in July, a hearing had not been scheduled by the CRTC.



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