

ing of **Boccaccio**. The court dismissed the obscenity charges. But of course the damage had already been done. What was to many people a good laugh, and to the financially strapped station a source of high ratings, was taken off the air soon after the charge was laid last year. Another victory for the forces of Right and Justice.

**WINTARIO.** All of a sudden Wintario has opened the coffers to a flood, and in one day about fourteen million dollars was given out, very little of it to professional cultural organizations... And in Toronto the City Council, despite protestations by Metro Arts rep David Silcox, froze cultural grants at their former level. The interesting thing is that no arts groups protested the freezing, even though total grant requests are double the budget. So now the groups are fighting to get a bigger share of the same size pie.

**GLOBAL TV** has reported a profit in the last quarter of

1975, mainly due to seasonally high advertising. Overall the network will still show an annual loss, although it will be substantially lower than expected. The goose may be ready to start laying the inevitable golden eggs... And whatever happened to Al Bruner?... On the ratings level Global has moved up significantly, mainly due to Wintario shows and reruns or new foreign shows... CBC and CTV have increased their ratings in the crucial Toronto battleground, but most of the increase comes from American shows.

**THE TORONTO FILM-MAKERS' CO-OP** has revised its fee schedule, to charge ten dollars for membership on a quarterly basis, instead of annually... Filmmaker Kenneth Anger visited Cinebooks, York University and The New Yorker Theatre in February, to promote his book *Hollywood Babylon* and to screen some films.

Stephen Chesley

**sence** by Brigitte Sauriol but today it is ready to give up its distribution rights. The same story is heard at Cinepix which invested \$15,000 in Pierre Harel's **Vie d'ange rapt de star**.

**TI-CUL TOUGAS**, which promises to be one of the more successful of the low-budget efforts, and which has a \$30,000 investment from Les Cinémas Unis (The Famous Players branch office in Quebec), has just lost its distributor, Prospe. Produced by ACPAV, directed by Jean-Guy Noel, the film has yet to line up another distributor.

**FRANCE FILM** seems to be honoring its commitment to distribute **La piastre** by Alain Chartrand. The opening is scheduled for the Complexe Desjardins but the building isn't yet finished, and so the opening has been postponed. The target date now seems to be April 16. What is needed for all these films is a distribution system adapted to the audience which is receptive to them. No one seems ready to invest the \$15,000 or \$20,000 necessary to have a Montreal première with all the appropriate publicity. At the CFDC the search is going on for this new system, and the experience of **Jos Carbone** in Chicoutimi will be watched with interest.

**ASTRAL-MONTREAL.** After six years with Astral, Claude Chené is leaving his post as general manager for Quebec. The new head of Astral (the distribution branch of Astral Bellevue Pathé) will be Maurice Attias.

**SNC.** The Syndicat National du Cinéma has sent a letter to Robert Andras, Minister of Manpower and Immigration, deploring unemployment among film technicians, and taking Ms. Marie-Josée Raymond to task for employing a non-union crew with a majority of foreign technicians for her co-production **Diane**. The SNC states that 60% of its members are looking for work and living from unemployment compensation. It wonders why it was not consulted by the Manpower Office before work permits were given to the foreign technicians, stating that precedents for this consultation were established when **Tony Saita** and **The Little Girl Down**

**the Lane** were shot in Montreal. In these latter productions, the quota established by the SNC (1 foreign technician for 3 Québécois technicians) was respected. Producer Raymond answers simply that the co-production agreements do not oblige producers to go through the unions to find technicians, and that as the investments in the film are 70% Italian and 30% Canadian, this proportion of technicians was respected. She mentions also the difficulties in dealing with the SNC since the union hoped to force acceptance of a collective agreement on April 1 which the producers found totally unacceptable.

**RADIO-QUEBEC**, the provincial educational television agency, will have to get along with a reduced budget this year if the National Assembly adopts the budget submitted to it for the fiscal year '76-77. Down 3% from \$16,345,000 to \$15,818,000, the budget reflects the transfer of government sponsored films from Radio-Quebec (Ministry of Communications) to the Ministry of Education. Last year, the production of these films cost \$1,164,000. Communications Minister Denis Hardy has stated that next year should be one of "reflection" for Radio-Québec so that it may become the "most powerful expression of the Québécois community".



M. Denis Hardy

**DGCA.** Meanwhile, the Direction Générale du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel is becoming that bureaucracy which was promised by the Law Concerning the Cinema, voted last June. With nearly 200 on the staff, the DGCA will have a budget of \$2,832,400 for its operations. This is an increase of \$1,524,000 over the combined budgets of the various agencies which did similar tasks last year. \$1,319,200 is set aside for the coordination of governmental productions (as opposed to

# QUEBEC

**RSL PRODUCTIONS** has acquired the rights to Stephen Vincer's novel **In Praise of Older Women** and plans to turn it into a \$1.5 million film, directed by George Kaczender. This is the first film by RSL, and Robert Lantos will be producing with Stephen J. Roth as associate producer. Filming should start in the fall; the CFDC is participating.

**DISTRIBUTION.** Quebec's low-budget features are having a tough time getting to the people. The latest distribution victim is **Chanson pour Julie** whose première was scheduled for March 26. Not only has Films Mutuels put off the opening of the film, it has backed out of its distribution deal, leaving the film without a distributor. And all this despite the press conference which Mutuel had given to announce the opening and to introduce Jacques Vallée, director, to the press. Although Pierre David, president of Mutuel, will make no comment other than to say that the rupture had nothing

to do with the quality of the film, it seems that personal difficulties between David and Jacques Ferland, the songster-star-and-screenwriter for **Chanson**, led to the break. Cinepix is now evaluating the situation.

**JOS CARBONE** is another low-budget film; it opens simultaneously in Chicoutimi and Jonquiére in the Lac St-Jean area where it was filmed by Cinémond with Hugues Tremblay directing. Not having been able to find a Montreal distributor, ACPAV (Association Coopérative des Productions Audio-Visuelles), which helped in the production, is responsible for the regional distribution aided by the CFDC.

**THE CFDC** has long since given up insisting that low-budget films have confirmed distribution before they are produced. But the result, at least in Quebec, seems to be that these films may well be denied any normal distribution and promotion. Distributors, even those who have invested in the films, are wary. Mutuel put \$10,000 in the ACPAV production **L'ab-**

\$627,900 last year) and \$1,120,700 for distribution (compared to \$256,400 last year). The distribution monies should permit a wider circulation of the films made by the defunct Office de Film du Québec, and will help to build the Cinémathèque Nationale foreseen in the law. Only \$392,500 is earmarked for "information". This money will go to the classification and information sector which replaces the Cinema Supervisory Board and thus represents a reduction of \$31,200 compared to last year.

**L'INSTITUT.** No mention is made, however, of the budget

which should go to the Institut de Cinéma Québécois. The Institut is made up of representatives of the private sector, and should have about \$4,000,000 to allocate for the production and distribution of films. The members of the Institut have not been chosen though the word has gone out that they will be announced before April 1.

**APFQ.** The Association des Producteurs de Films du Québec will hold its annual convention on April 9, 10 and 11 in Quebec City. Guest speakers include Denis Hardy, Minister of Communications in the prov-

ince, who will open the convention Friday evening, and André Fortier, Under-secretary of State, who will speak Saturday night. The convention includes two days of discussion and the topics include labor relations, governmental agencies (especially the re-organization of the Direction Générale du Cinéma) and the future of production for television.

**RETROSPECTIVES.** The Cinémathèque Québécois is organizing a retrospective of Gilles Carle's works. It has published the program, which will run from March 30 to April 9, and

some accompanying texts written by Carle. Meanwhile the Cinéma Outremont ran a series of films by Arthur Lamothe from March 26 through March 30. These included **Carcajou ou le péril blanc, chronique des Indiens du Nord-Est.** The showings were concluded by a discussion, organized by the Conseil Québécois pour la Diffusion du Cinéma entitled "Are We Collaborators in a Genocide?"

**Connie Tadros**

## CBC Drama-ACTRA Confrontation

by Stephen Chesley

If you take an incredibly unsophisticated political move and position it against a bureaucratic weight, what do you have? A CBC Drama-ACTRA confrontation, of course. The situation played itself out in full public view, and all the real issues, and the chances to air them, were lost.

During the second week in March, casting was completed for a CBC tape drama based on the life of Canadian suffragette Nellie McClung. The lead role was accepted by American actress Kathleen Widdoes, and when the word went out, several members of the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) picketed the CBC Drama building in Toronto to protest the choice of an American to play a Canadian heroine. Drama chief John Hirsch replied that twenty-four actresses had been considered for the role, and, because of other commitments or aesthetic reasons, none were suitable. So Widdoes was offered the part.

Radio host Peter Gzowski, usually level-headed, contacted Widdoes in New York and fairly castigated her for taking the place of a Canadian; he said that Frances Hyland had only earned \$12,000 in her best year, and wasn't it disgraceful that Widdoes was denying the opportunity for a Canadian actress to work? Widdoes replied that she, too, was unemployed at the time, that she earns the same amount every year and has to fight for work too, and made some other points, all in a lady-like manner.

Events escalated when ACTRA decided to deny Widdoes a work permit to appear in the show, and simultaneously made any ACTRA member who appeared with her subject to a fine. They couldn't appear with her anyway, because the immigration department wouldn't let her in the country; the CBC relies on the ACTRA permit to bring foreigners in (twenty roles out of several hundred cast last year, not including extras).

CBC brass cancelled the show, stating that the reason was ACTRA's refusal to grant the permit to Widdoes, and adding that any further questions should be addressed to ACTRA.

But the real story is not as simple, and it involves crucial inhibitions on CBC Drama and ACTRA people. To begin with, this confrontation was probably more severe because of a minor skirmish that took place recently over the casting of another American, Lois Smith (Who?), in the role of Stacey, the character created by novelist Margaret Laurence, and to be the subject of a one-hour drama. At that time, the CBC Casting Department went through the same futile search in Canada, and felt they had to go to the States. It's interesting that both Stacey and McClung are in the same age group for performers - about forty years old. If you consider that any actress of that age has made a definite mark in her profession - as opposed to thirty-year-olds who are still in the establishing process - and if she has not, has left the profession entirely, the number of actresses to choose from is not great.

And if you check a calendar and a list of summer festival companies, you will see that most of the actresses in this age group are committed solidly to rehearsals in March for summer festivals of theatre; and the main site is Stratford, whose massive company needs all this type of talent it can get, and which is already on tour in March.

If you're arranging a TV shoot based on a Canadian heroine, there is no doubt that a Canadian actress should be used. Why, then, does the CBC not simply re-schedule the show to accommodate the right performer? They can't. Every piece of equipment and every crew is so tightly booked that re-arranging a schedule, especially in tape, is not even considered. It's a matter of budget and dollars, and the squeeze is on CBC's inadequate facilities and inadequate budget to such an extent that they are virtually forced to go with a show in a time slot assigned much too far in advance.

The answer is to cast the part, if it is so crucial, and then assign the slot, and do it way in advance, certainly. But the real issue is whether John Hirsch and CBC who are supporting Canadian efforts, despite some grave lapses in judgment, can be expected to

