

QUEBEC

APFQ. The Association des producteurs de films had its annual convention in Quebec city on April 9, 10 and 11. The minister of communications from the province and the secretary of state and his under-secretary from Ottawa all came to address the convention at what has become an annual work and re-orientation session.

This year, two items seemed to predominate: Radio-Canada and its poor relations with the private sector, and the reorganization of the province's cinema agencies under the Direction général du cinéma et de l'audio-visuel (DGCA).



Pierre Lamy and Claude Fournier talk with Denis Hardy (centre)

The producers read a long brief concerning Radio-Canada which is now being written in its final form and will be presented to Mr. Faulkner, secretary of state. Unable to get valid statistics from the network, the producers estimated that 70 hours of its total of 2500 hours of film are made in Quebec. This figure includes the National Film Board productions. Although the figure was disputed by representatives of Radio-Canada (the APFQ holds open conventions), even the representatives could not find more than 150 hours of locally produced programming. The brief should be ready by the middle of May.

Provincially, the producers were anxious to know who will be at the head of the DGCA, the agency through which will funnel all sponsored films. Many were also alarmed by the nominations which had been made to posts within the DGCA and were anxious to hear what method had been used to fill these posts.

Gérard Frigon, assistant minister of communications, addressed a workshop Saturday afternoon and put many fears to rest. First, he specified that all nominations to the DGCA were temporary and would be sub-

mitted to the normal process of competition for civil service jobs. Second, he announced that the director of the DGCA had been chosen and would be announced within a matter of days. (At this writing, one month later, no public announcement has been made though it is rumored that Robert Bastien will soon be named. Bastien has worked with Claude Giroux, a Québécois best known for having produced *Un homme et une femme* in France.) Frigon accepted the suggestion of the APFQ that a joint committee be formed by members of its organization and the DGCA in order to discuss this new administration more thoroughly. (Although of no particular concern to the producers, the DGCA will also administer the Information and Classification Service and the Cinémathèque Nationale.)

Denis Hardy, minister of communications, spoke on Friday evening about the Institut, that organization made up of members of the private sector which he will appoint, following the recommendations of the professional associations which were consulted, and which will counterbalance the DGCA. He suggested that the contract which the law requires between his ministry and the Institut need not be annual but might be renewed every three years. The Institut will have a budget of \$4 million; he insisted that this sum does not include the funds for government-sponsored films. A budget breakdown includes production, distribution, exhibition, and might go so far as to permit the establishment of a film school, study scholarships, distribution prizes and so on. Hardy has not yet appointed members to the Institut; it is thought that he is waiting for the DGCA to get organized. Both organizations should be functioning by June.

The third item on the agenda was discussed in a closed session. The APFQ was faced with an ultimatum from the Syndicat national du cinéma



Aimée Danis, newly elected president of the APFQ, during a production last year



Pierre Thériault and Paule Baillargeon in *La piastre*

concerning working conditions and wages which were to be effective on April 1. At the end of the session, it was announced that the APFQ would begin negotiations with the SNC and that Louise Ranger had been chosen to negotiate in conjunction with the board of directors.

EXHIBITION. By the end of April, two low-budget Québécois films had made it to the screens in Montreal. *Chanson pour Julie* by Jacques Vallée and *La piastre* by Alain Chartrand were both playing in downtown theatres. They opened to generally bad critiques and small audiences. *Jos Carbone*, a film made in the Lac St-Jean region by Hugue Tremblay, opened on May 6. Meanwhile, *Second Wind* opened with the discretion now associated with English-language features from Toronto: little publicity, no effort to contact the French-speaking press, and no subtitles.

FRANCE FILM. Three new theatres have been added to the scene in Montreal; a fourth will follow. La Compagnie France Film opened the three theatres April 17 when the huge Complexe Desjardins — a new office building, hotel and shopping centre complex — opened in downtown Montreal at the corners of St. Catherine St. and Jeanne-Mance.

The largest theatre seats 500, two others have 250 places. One of these is equipped for both 16 mm and 35 mm. The fourth theatre accommodates only 109 people and is only equipped for 16 mm films.

AQDF. The Association québécoise des distributeurs de films has elected a new executive board. The new officers are Rock Demers, president; Marcel Paradis and André Link, vice-presidents; Nicole Bois-

vert, secretary-treasurer; and Richard Moranville, André Pénin and Didier Farré, directors.

CQDC. Lucien Hamelin, the director of the Conseil québécois pour la diffusion du cinéma, resigned his post in an open letter in the middle of April. His resignation was accepted by the board of directors, which consists of representatives from four organizations: the Association des producteurs de films au Québec, the Association des réalisateurs de films du Québec, the Syndicat national du cinéma and the Syndicat général du cinéma et de la télévision (section ONF).

In his letter he stated that a class struggle was going on within the administration of the CQDC and that the producers and directors were insisting upon his resignation in order to get into the good graces of the Direction général du cinéma, the provincial cinema administration. The five employees of the CQDC also resigned to underline their confidence in Hamelin, an avowed Marxist.

The CQDC distributes "difficult" Québécois films throughout the province and abroad in order to insure that films which cannot get distributed through the commercial circuits still reach the people. There has been criticism of the functioning of the CQDC, aimed both at the kind of film it selects to distribute and at the selection of provincial organizations with which it collaborated. Screenings are followed by discussions about the films and, there too, there have been accusations of manipulation of the public.

Hamelin's resignation was followed by letters of support from the unions and by silence on the part of the directors and producers. The distributors, who were once on the board of directors, withdrew last year.