

The Quebec Winter Carnival



The Ice Palace, one of the main attractions of the Carnival of Quebec.

The hospitality of Quebec City is especially evident during its annual winter carnival when the city becomes a snow paradise. In proportion to its size, the Quebec Winter Carnival ranks as popular as the carnivals of Rio de Janeiro, Nice and New Orleans. Quebec City's population is more than tripled by tourists during this annual celebration. To many it is the most joyful winter event available anywhere.

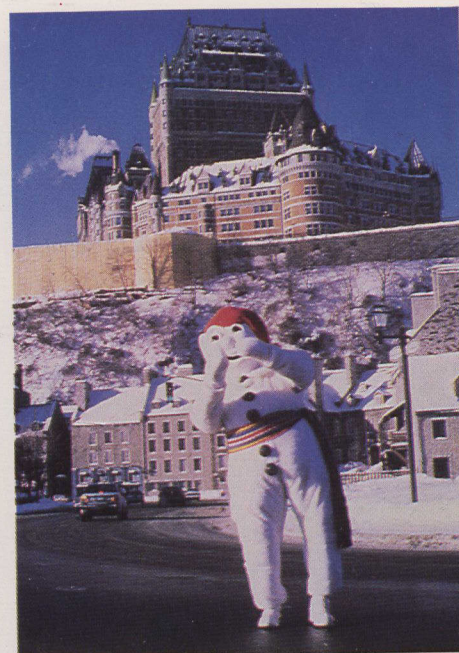
The first Quebec carnival was held in 1954 to promote winter tourism and to enliven the old capital. Thirty-three years later, the festivities continue to be directed by the jolly *Bonhomme Carnaval* who, prior to the carnival, pops up in small towns and large, spreading news about the upcoming event. Dressed entirely in white, a tuque perched on his head, and a multi-coloured Quebec-crafted sash around his waist, this king of the carnival resembles a plump snowman.

This symbol of the festivities, representing joy of life in Quebec, visits the sick and others unable to move, bringing them pleasure and hope.

The ten-day carnival begins with *Bonhomme Carnaval* crowning his queen and introducing his court of six duchesses to the audience. As the king of the carnival, presiding over all the activities, he is the most important person in town. At one event he presents the keys of the city to the mayor of Quebec City.

Inspired by carnivals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Quebec Winter Carnival perpetuates popular Quebec traditions. Memorable activities include a canoe race across the ice floes of the St. Lawrence River, international dog sled races, motorcycle races on the ice, and an international "pee-wee" hockey tournament.

On two nights, floats that tell a



"Bonhomme Carnaval" in front of the Château Frontenac.

story, majorettes and masked participants parade the streets. Since Rendez-Vous 87 runs at the same time as the Quebec carnival, a third parade is planned for this year. Marching bands, clowns and 30 floats, 21 representing each team in the National Hockey League, one from the league, the *Bonhomme Carnaval* float, and six from the Quebec Winter Carnival will further enliven night time in Quebec City.

The Quebec Winter Carnival also intends to honour Rendez-Vous 87 in other ways. The international snow sculpture contest, in which 15 countries are entered, will base its theme on "sports and hockey" and the ice sculpture contest theme will be the reproduction of the logos of the 21 National Hockey League teams. Holding Rendez-Vous 87 at the same time as the Quebec Winter Carnival will give participants a chance to enjoy a wide variety of activities.