

Avant Jutra

1934-37: Monsieur l'Abbé Maurice Proulx made *En pays neuf* in 16mm. It was a devotional film.

1942: Monsieur l'Abbé Jean-Marie Poitevin made *À la croisée des chemins* in 16mm. It was church produced and devotional.

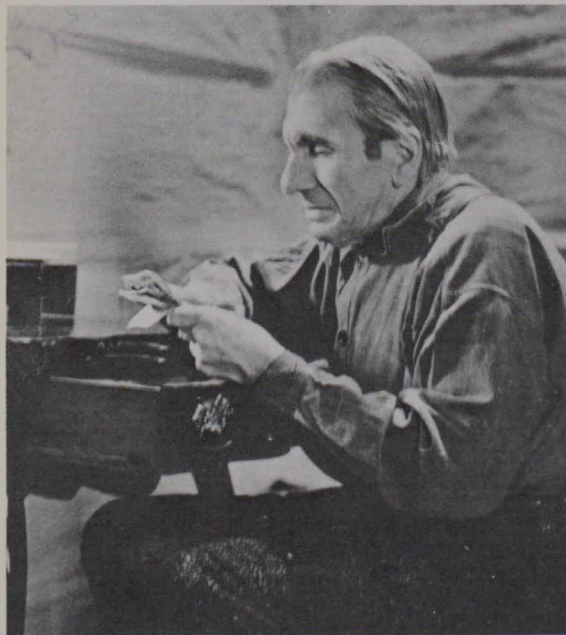
1944: J. A. DeSève made *Le Père Chopin* with a French executive producer, an international director and American technicians. DeSève had imported films made in France since 1930. When World War II cut off his supplies he made *Le Père*, the story of two Quebec brothers, one rich and lonely, one poor and happy. It was an enormous box-office success.

1946: A rival group led by Paul L'Anglais, a radio producer, organized Quebec Productions and made *La forteresse/Whispering City* in French and English versions using a Hollywood script and American technicians. The French version was a box-office success in Quebec.

1948: Paul L'Anglais made *Un homme et son péché*, the first of a planned series of three films about a Quebec village miser and his beautiful wife. It was a success.

1949: Quebec Productions made *Le curé de village* featuring the village priest as the problem solver who arbitrates conflicts, rights wrongs, advises lovers and represents justice. It was a success. The sequel to *Un homme et son péché*, *Séraphin*, was also a success, but the planned third film was never produced. DeSève organized a new production company and built a studio after the success of *Le Père Chopin*. Les Productions Renaissance made *Le gros Bill*, directed by the French filmmaker, René

Hector Charland in *Séraphin*.



Lucie Mitchell and Yvonne Laflamme in *La petite Aurore l'enfant martyre*.

Delacroix. It was set in Quebec but was only moderately successful. In the same year, in France, Delacroix and Les Productions Renaissance made a France/Canada Co-production, *Docteur Louise*, which dealt with abortion from a Catholic point of view.

1950: Les Productions Renaissance made its last film, *Les lumières de ma ville*, and then went bankrupt. Quebec Productions co-produced *Son copain/The Unknown from Montreal* in both French and English. It was directed by Jean Davaivre, a Frenchman.

1951: Quebec Productions made *Le rossignol et les cloches*, another Catholic village film. Despite its string of successes, the company now disbanded, plagued by a lack of markets outside the province and the new competition of television. A small independent company made *La Petite Aurore l'enfant martyre*, a very sad story about a step-mother who tortures and eventually kills her ten-year-old stepdaughter. It was enormously successful.

1952: *Tit-coq* was made by Gratien Gélinas. Based on his successful play, it was the story of a draftee who loses his girl to another man. It was the only film in two decades that had neither a village Catholic nor a family cruelty theme. René Lévesque, now Quebec Premier, who was then a journalist, said, "With *Tit-coq* the Canadian cinema emerges from the caverns."