

# School debate continues in QC

MONTREAL – There is popular support for establishing a new film school in Quebec, say members of a panel who gathered recently, to discuss the time-worn question: Does Quebec "really" need a film school?

"After five years of debate, discussion and correspondence, the accent is on the word really," says Michel Coulombe, moderator of the panel discussion and executive director of Les rendez-vous du cinéma québécois (Feb. 10 to 15), who adds that there is strong support within and outside of the Quebec film industry for *l'école supérieure de cinéma et de vidéo*.

A post-graduate film school, says Coulombe, would be unique in providing an intermediate step between existing, accredited university and college film programs and a place within the industry for aspiring filmmakers.

The gradual development of a Quebec film industry over the last two decades has meant an increasing number of film courses and degree programs at the CEGEP (junior college) level and at Concordia University, University of Montreal, and the University of Quebec in Montreal.

However, it is no less difficult today, says Coulombe, for a first-time filmmaker to "break into the industry."

"Obviously for the young filmmaker the expense of a first film is a big problem," says Coulombe, who adds that the absence of proven credibility in the film industry is the second part of the novice filmmaker's dilemma.

Monique Champagne, a panelist and executive member of the Institut québécois du cinéma, who has been working on the film school dossier for several years, says there is no question of duplicating existing film-study programs. Rather, she explains, the numbers of students graduating from these schools who are interested in filmmaking need a place to apply their knowledge and learn technical skills.

"We have to organize a school that will provide what these people need and help in a concrete way," says Champagne.

As a veteran continuity person on Quebec film sets, Champagne has observed the frustration of ambitious young filmmakers anxious but unable to find employment in the industry.

"There is a lot of undeveloped talent out there. You see them on the set one day and they are gone the next," she says.

The film school would assist in developing projects suitable for television broadcast which, says Coulombe, the student could use as a sort of "calling card."

Support for the school is currently spearheaded by both the Institut and the National Film Board of Canada, represented on the panel by George Dufaux, head of French-language programming.

"We will do as much as we can to support a school," Dufaux told *Cinema Canada*.

Dufaux does not rule out the possibility of associating a proposed six-month NFB training program, which he hopes to launch in the next fiscal year, with the school.

Another possibility for the school, he says, would be to serve as the French-language wing of the National Screen Institute (see article).

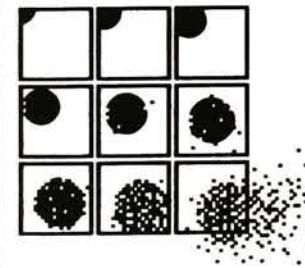
Champagne and Coulombe agree that the co-operation of the NFB is essential, and that the school must make the best use of existing resources including the NFB.

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# National Screen Institute poised

EDMONTON – Dramalab 1987, will begin its search for aspiring writers, directors, and producers from across Canada to participate in a three-phase training program. An announcement is expected in late February.

Plans for the expansion of the National Screen Institute, launched in April 1986, as a result of the success of Dramalab 1984 and 1985 will also be announced, says Tom Radford, executive director of the NSI.

In a recent interview with *Cinema Canada*, Radford explained that the evolution of Dramalab through the first cycle in 1984, the second cycle (begun in 1985 and now nearing completion) and the beginning of the third cycle (1987) shows an expanding national orientation from a western base to a national base, and is resulting in the expansion of the NSI.

"The NSI," he says, "is the Dramalab model extended into other areas of filmmaking. It exists to help find ways to create training programs in, for example, animation."

Radford says the Quebec/Alberta connection, as characterized by the recently signed

Quebec/Alberta co-production agreement, sets up a strong impetus for the NSI to become involved in programs in both languages.

An on-going feasibility study in Quebec for a new film school (see article) could become the Quebec wing of the NSI, says Radford, who is in consultation with the Institut québécois de cinéma.

Dramalab is comprised of teams of filmmakers who have been selected from the five major regions of Canada to make a series of dramatic productions in a three-phase, inter-disciplinary training program.

Phase one consists of film drama studies at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, followed by a hands-on practical training at the National Film Board studios in Montreal. The third phase sees the filmmakers returning to their respective regions where, under the supervision of executive producers, they write, direct and produce segments of a series of half-hour television programs.

To date, the second phase of Dramalab 1985 has resulted in a six-part series of 15-minute

NFB-produced films entitled **Tech Change**.

The incomplete results of the third phase of Dramalab is entitled the **Border Series**, currently in development. Negotiations are on-going with CBC and Radio-Quebec. Shooting is scheduled for the summer.

The 18-member board of directors at Dramalab consists of representatives of both the public and private sector. Administrative offices are in Edmonton.

## Super 8 festival

MONTREAL – The 8th Quebec International Super 8 Film and Video Festival will feature over 100 films of non-professional filmmakers, March 3-8, at the Cinémathèque québécoise in Montreal.

For the first time, video productions are included in the Intercollegiate, Quebec and International sections of the festival.

Organizers say that the inclusion of video is acknowledgment that video "has become a creative tool as effective and as accessible as super 8."



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