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GOOD COVERAGE MEANS EXACTLY WHAT

by ROBERT STEWART

On that awful clammy morning after Pierre Laporte was killed, I experienced a twinge of the old self-reproach which is common to newsmen when they are confronted with real tragedy. I felt sick at the turn of events; my nice liberal faith in the ascendancy of civilization had been kicked in the knockers. Yet I had to admit that, deep-down, I, too, was excited by the story.

I mention this because I think it indicates the ambivalence of a reporter's reactions. And ambivalent is the word that leaps to mind when I think about the coverage of the Cross-Laporte affair. The twists and turns in the attitudes and performance of the media during the crisis were, I believe, reflections of the characters of the people reporting and commenting on it. The telling of the story told a lot about the kind of people by whom it was told.

Despite their air of cynicism, most of the news people I know are what I would call humanistic romantics. When things like the Cross-Laporte kidnappings and murders take place, they share the normal humanistic feelings of compassion and shock. But being romantics, they also feel a guilty sort of thrill at being involved in a big story. I think it is this streak of romanticism that causes journalists to overdramatize what they observe.

The heartbreak and horror of the murder and kidnappings themselves defied exaggeration. It was on the fringes of the story and after it began to cool off that most of the exaggeration occurred. I think this was partly because the media were at the centre of the story in its first stages. The more they got away from it, the more erratic and irresponsible their coverage and comment became.

Of course, being at the centre of the story also posed a serious test of responsibility. It was obvious to begin with that the media were being used. Marshall McLuhan made this point in a letter to the *Toronto Daily Star* in which he said (or at least I think he said) that today's revolutionaries have the edge on the authorities because they have a better idea of how to manipulate opinion through the media. The line of reason in the letter is hard to follow even for those who are used to McLuhan's obscurantism, but his point comes through in his concluding sentence: "As long as the FLQ can get coverage, it can win."

The Economist put it more directly in an article about urban guerrillas based on the Montreal situation: "... once the hostage has been grabbed, the guerrillas know that television and the newspapers will do the work for them if they remain uncaught." Prime Minister Trudeau took the same tack in his celebrated slanging-match with the CBC's Tim Ralfe and CJOH's Peter Reilly: "The main thing the FLQ is trying to gain from this is a hell of a lot of publicity for the movement. And I'm suggesting that the more publicity you give them, the greater the victory is..."

While most of the media were used indirectly, Montreal radio stations CKLM and CKAC were smack in the middle. There can

be no doubt that the decision of the news editors of the stations to broadcast FLQ communiqués before turning them over to the police restricted the authorities' flexibility in dealing with the threat. They could not move surreptitiously, nor could they ignore the terrorists into a sense of futility, as long as the communications between the two camps were conducted in public. On the other hand, in the prevailing atmosphere, a decision not to broadcast the communiqués might have resulted — who then was to know? — in the loss of the hostages' lives.

The editors made a difficult choice, and no one can fairly judge whether they were right or wrong in retrospect. Since it is naive to assume that we have seen the last of terrorism in Canada, this is the kind of choice that may face members of the media again. The aim of the terrorist is, after all, to terrorize — and he can't do that effectively unless people are told what he is doing.

This means that people in both media and government must ask themselves whether the public is best served in cases like this by being given all the facts or being left in a state of suspense punctuated by speculation and rumour. The key events like the kidnappings and murder are bound to be reported. If the public knew only that they had occurred and then only what the governments chose to release, would the public be better off?

I think that even George Davidson, the president of the CBC, would not find the world quite so black and white if he were faced with that question in future. Davidson, you will recall, applied restraints on CBC coverage early on in the crisis and justified them by saying that the tension built up was being fed by television and the press. What he apparently did not stop to contemplate (but may have in the light of ensuing events) is how more tension might build up with the public being fed a diet of rumour plus a dribble of disjointed facts.

The Globe and Mail, which is sometimes not too good at seeing shades of gray itself, commented editorially that Davidson was showing "the responsibility of an ostrich." It went on to say, however, that there are circumstances in which the press must discipline itself. "The country is more important than the headlines," the *Globe* said. In the end, no one can argue with that.

Nevertheless, we were soon to see what happens in a jittery atmosphere in the absence of complete and pertinent information. The media were at their worst on this story when the facts became scarce. Even before that, the best-balanced journalism came from people who were in a position to get plenty of facts and who put them out plainly. Sleepy and overwrought as they were, the reporters up front generally kept their cool.

Further back of the line, the perspective seemed to become distorted. When, for example, Peter Newman of the *Toronto Daily Star* broke out his journalistic mallet and chisel to inscribe that "dark and violent discontents are tunnelling under the ramparts of our society, disclosing the turbulent new

perceptions of our future," etc., etc., one of the men at the scene, James Ferrabee of the *Montreal Gazette*, countered: "Peter Newman's assessment of where we are in this country today seems to me to be an overdramatization of the events of the last few days."

That was on October 17, before Pierre Laporte was murdered, but I do not think the assassination changed the validity of Ferrabee's conclusion: "It is difficult to feel, as Mr. Newman does, that 'the politics of terror has changed the inner climate of our society forever.' For one thing, one of the main objects of the terrorists was to cower the citizens of this city. They didn't succeed, as anyone saw who took the trouble to wander around yesterday."

As far as I could tell from going around Montreal, they were nowhere near succeeding even after Laporte's murder. Newman must have been forgiveably bedazzled by the contradictory headlines in his own newspaper: "City gripped by terror" ... "Despite troops in streets, life goes on in Montreal." Anyway, the *Star's* editor was not the only pundit to let his typewriter run away from him. It was as if, being so used to making mountains of molehills, the pundits did not know what to do when they were faced with an actual mountain. The story was too big, too real, to lend itself easily to the kind of speculative punditry we know.

There were, however, some flashes of the insight which columnists are supposed to provide for their livelihood. Witness Charles Lynch on David Lewis' speech on the War Measures Act. In it, according to Lynch, Lewis laid most of the blame for the War Measures Act on Quebec unemployment and poverty. "Is it possible," Lynch wrote, "that Mr. Lewis really believes that the FLQ, with its hard-bitten core of professional terrorists preaching global revolution, could be assuaged with money and jobs, or that they have nothing in mind but to see that Quebecers are better fed?"

A good point well put — and it reminded me of another standard journalistic practice which, along with punditry, did not fare well in the crisis. This is backgrounding — the launching of an immediate, and often ill-prepared, digging expedition into the sociological and economic roots of what goes on.

In line with this practice, *CBC Weekend*

COVER:

The drawing by Aislin of the *Montreal Star*, depicting Quebec union leader Michel Chartrand when he paid a visit to the House of Commons earlier this year, won first prize in the editorial cartoons category of the Seventh International Salon of Cartoons at Man and His World. Chartrand has been charged with seditious conspiracy and membership in the FLQ as a result of the War Measures Act.

jumped on the airwaves after the Cross kidnapping with some moody scenes and commentary on Pierre Vallieres' old neighbourhood; both the Toronto *Star* and the Montreal *Gazette* imply (in a review of Vallieres' writings by Robert McKenzie) that the revolutionary impetus came "out of Montreal's teeming slums." Much else was written along these lines by at least some people whose knowledge of Quebec was obviously scanty. I have a feeling that out of it all, ordinary readers and television-viewers might have got the impression that social conditions in Montreal were solely to blame.

I am not saying that poverty and social discontent in Quebec do not have a lot to do with the feelings behind the FLQ. I do think, however, that much of the backgrounding overemphasized these influences to the exclusion of revolutionary thinking around the world. From what I saw, the British and American press got events in better perspective by relating them to the blurry-minded applications of revolutionary philosophy that have occurred almost everywhere in the last few years.

The trouble with the foreign press, I think, was that many of the reporters and editorial-writers did not make a clear distinction between the provincial and federal governments. By and large, foreign comment was very much on the side of tough action,

presenting Mr. Trudeau as a hero in the international struggle against political violence. The Quebec government's call for troops and for the invocation of the War Measures Act was largely ignored.

Meanwhile, back home, the War Measures Act threw the media into a crisis of conscience. When it was not known precisely what really was behind this drastic move, most of the media seemed to feel honour-bound in the national interest to put aside their natural scruples about interference with civil liberties and trust that the government knew best.

Some newspapers quietly vacated their former editorial positions on the need to save the hostages' lives, and that was as it should be as long as it appeared that there were facts we didn't know which may have presaged widespread bloodshed. Then the Laporte murder came along to still just about every voice that had risen to say the War Measures were extreme.

When the facts became fewer, as I mentioned, there was a turn for the worse in coverage and comment. This culminated in the hysterical tempest-in-a-teapot over the provisional government plot. Granted, the pieces to put the plot together were provided by federal cabinet ministers and Mayor Jean Drapeau — as had been the business about the connection between the political opposi-

tion to Drapeau and the terrorists. But it is worth asking whether such a far-fetched tale would be reported and commented on with such solemnity in more normal times.

It shows what happens when the media do not apply their usual grain of salt to the pronouncements of politicians. This, of course, is bound to happen more readily when the politicians are in possession of the truth and journalists are not. As George Bain put it in the *Globe and Mail*, "trust in one's government is a fine thing, very gratifying to the beneficiaries of it." But, as he added: "trust obliges no one to check his mind at the door."

The pronouncements of politicians — any politicians — soon began to get their usual dreary play in the absence of fresh developments. Soon we were back to the tired old run of news that is not news — such as the revelation that Tommy Douglas does not think the government is doing the right thing. Mountains again began to be made out of molehills, tempests again were stirred in teapots. Hence, to sum up, the coverage of the crisis was a high point despite some lapses. And that of its aftermath was pretty low.

Robert Stewart, a free-lance writer in Montreal, previously was managing editor of The Financial Times of Canada.



PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU: "Very often when people in the south think of the north, they think of the oil, the mines and the wealth of the north... but the important questions are not those that have to do with the riches but with the people of the north. That is why we are more and more interested in what will happen to the Canadians who live in the north and work in the north... we know the value of the land will depend upon the value of the people and it is only the people who know the Arctic: the Eskimos who have always lived here and the whites who have come to work here... the hope that is expressed in the north will only be fulfilled if the people up here continue to have faith in the north."

In Yellowknife, N.W.T.

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CLAUDE RYAN'S *LE DEVOIR* : ETIQUETTE, ETHICS OR EXCELLENCE?

CLAUDE RYAN
INTERVIEWED BY
JEAN-PIERRE FOURNIER



Claude Ryan of *Le Devoir* at a news conference announcing joint support, with Parti Québécois leader René Levesque, of the proposal to release 23 prisoners in exchange for kidnapped James Cross and Pierre Laporte. Mr. Ryan expressed opposition to the War Measures Act. Through a tragedy of errors, including political chicanery, he also was accused of being involved in a so-called plot to create a provisional government in Quebec in October.
Photo by Gordon Beck, courtesy Montreal Star

FOURNIER: *How would you assess the work of the media during the recent crisis?*

RYAN: I think we have to distinguish between the facts that were presented to the public and the opinions that were expressed in the various media.

So far as the presentation of the facts are concerned, I think that there were great differences from one paper to another, from one media to another. The electronic media were much in evidence during the crisis. A posteriori, I would have some questions to ask about the opportunity of handling the information the way it was handled in those tragic weeks. Radio stations were informed ahead of the police of certain facts which could have been of vital importance in finding Mr. Laporte or Mr. Cross and the kidnapers. I don't think that society could sustain this kind of information indefinitely. We were all caught with unforeseen problems during those weeks. I think that the radio stations which were more immediately involved did their best under the circumstances. In the absence of indications to the contrary, they did what they should have done, but some of them indulged in a kind of sensationalism, which is not a matter of pride for the profession. I remember some accounts which I heard after the discovery of Mr. Laporte's body. They went into all kinds of details in a rather complacent way. A thorough study of the way facts were collected and presented to the public would be extremely helpful to the profession without any underlying thought of pinning blame on this or that particular station or journalist.

I think it should be done by a body enjoying the confidence of the profession. We have a professional federation of journalists in Quebec. If this body undertook a review of the facts that occurred during the crisis insofar as the profession was involved, it would be extremely valuable.

FOURNIER: *Le Devoir came under severe criticism for its editorial opinions during the crisis. What is your reply to that?*

RYAN: In *Le Devoir*, we insisted on sobriety and moderation in the presentation of facts. We would not easily heed rumours of all sorts which were being spread in different directions, from different sources. We tried to concentrate on the facts, we tried to abstain from overstressing rather sensational dimensions which would have added little to the genuine information of the readers. I think our record in this respect was very good. I don't think we committed any mistake against the ethics of our profession. I'm proud of the way our people behaved. They maintained their calm during the entire crisis.

Regarding opinion and commentary, our paper was placed from the very outset of the crisis in an extremely delicate position. Our first reaction, which we maintained throughout the crisis, was that governments had to seek a negotiated solution of the drama raised by the kidnapping, first of Mr. Cross,

and then of Mr. Laporte. At the beginning, this position had real credibility with people in high places. I think they also thought that this might be a suitable approach because, in view of the completely novel aspect of the situation, nobody would have coldly concluded that we must send Mr. Cross and Mr. Laporte to their deaths without trying all that was possible in order to save them. But as events unfolded, it became clear that the position of the governments was on the side of firmness, even of intransigence. But we maintained our original line and it appeared more and more radical as we were moving ahead. In fact, it was an extremely moderate position. Of course, when the governments came out with a different line, we had to raise questions and to examine certain aspects of such position which had not been clearly explained and justified. Then, we became identified as the voice of opposition, as the voice which was trying to prevent the governments from doing their job with the nearly complete support of public opinion.

My position on this is that a newspaper must not act first as a reflection, a mirror of public opinion but rather as an institution whose duty it is to speak out of its own conscience.

Here at the newspaper, we worked in a collegial atmosphere. All problems were discussed around the editorial table. All members of the editorial team were extremely assiduous in attending the meetings and in participating in all the discussions. All the important attitudes which were defined in the editorial columns of the paper were worked out with the full participation and general assent of all members of the editorial team. So, we were not trying to reflect what citizens A, B, or C thought about the matter. We asked ourselves: What does our conscience dictate to us? That is what we expressed in our columns. We spoke on the basis of convictions, on the basis of certain principles, certain values which we were trying to preserve, and all the rest was secondary. I do not mean that we are indifferent to the reactions which have come to us by the hundreds from our readers. We are extremely attentive to all that comes from our readers, but we've never accepted here that our opinions would be dictated to us by the letters which come to us from our readers. I think, in this crisis, our position has been vindicated because the reactions of our readers have been extremely numerous and the majority of them—more than half—were favourable to our position. This is interesting because here you have a balance, a fair cross-section of what your public may think. In our case, it had a further effect. A lot of readers who had abandoned us over the years returned to us because they discovered in our articles during those five or six weeks the echo of a freedom for which they were longing, the echo of a conscience which was trying to speak in all liberty.

The crisis reached far beyond the lives of the two abduction victims. It raised pro-

blems regarding the future of French Canadians, the future of Quebec, problems regarding the validity of the present social and economic structures in our society.

A good number of our readers felt that, by adopting this particular position, we were implicitly stating that we wanted to examine other, far-reaching problems with an open mind. This, they did not accept because they had considered us as the spokesmen for certain established values and attitudes which must not be challenged. Others came back to us because they thought that we had undergone a deep inversion and that, from now on, they could expect practically everything from us. These people may be disappointed in the months ahead because we will continue to speak not with the intention of pleasing them, but out of the conviction that will come from our conscience as a team trying to put out a free and responsible paper in a democratic society.

FOURNIER: *Did those forty-five per cent of your readers who disagreed with your position have an influence in toning down this position?*

RYAN: Not at the height of the crisis. But during the past ten days, yes.

Here, you face a choice as a publisher. Are you going to cater only to those whom you may have pleased or will you attempt to recoup those you have alienated by your position? My position is that *Le Devoir* must remain the conscience of a whole people, not only of those segments of that people which may seem to be closer to it at this or that particular time. So, there have been some articles in the last two weeks which were more conciliatory in tone. We are heeding the reactions we got from the negative side, not to the point of being subservient to the persons who wrote to us in this respect but to the point of minding seriously how we can take their views into account and try to arrive at a broader approach whilst maintaining our fundamental convictions.

FOURNIER: *In situations of crisis such as the one we just lived through, Le Devoir tends to get directly involved in the events. Is it a lack on the part of other newspapers not to get so involved?*

RYAN: We're beaten by other newspapers in several departments, as you know. They have far larger resources than we have, they have material means that escape us. But I think that, at another level, we can beat them frequently during the course of a year.

I'll give you a concrete example. When the police strike occurred on October 7, 1969, I was sitting in my office when I heard that the policemen were meeting at the Paul Sauvé Arena. My first move—and this is typical, I think, of the editor of *Le Devoir*—was to go to a very quick luncheon and then, to rush to the Paul Sauvé Arena to find out by myself what was going on. Then, I was acting as a journalist. I think that the man who is editor of a newspaper is always conscious, must always remember that he is first and above all a journalist, not an executive, not a man sitting on top of things, but a man who must get involved in the very thickness of a situation. I spent five hours at the arena, talking to members of the police force, trying to assess what kind of attitude they were entertaining, talking to the leaders, studying in depth the huge file which they had collected on their

problem. When I returned to the office, I had a rather good knowledge of the factors which had caused the strike. So, I wrote an editorial in the next day's newspaper in which I was critical of the city authorities, in which I pointed to a solution which could have helped to settle the problem rapidly.

After the article was published, I got a phone call from Mr. (Lucien) Saulnier (chairman of the city's executive committee). He was blaming me for not having called him the day before. He said: "You know, I've always been at your disposal. If you had phoned me, I could have given you my version and a lot of information which you obviously didn't have when you wrote your article."

"Thank you. I'll remember that," I said, and I added that nothing he would have given me could have altered my position.

This illustrates the kind of relation we have at *Le Devoir*. When a situation develops, I have to formulate an opinion on it. Before I write, I like to hear the point of view of those who are involved. I like to get as much hot information as I can because I consider that the article I write is not just an exercise in literature or in social and political science. It is an action aimed at influencing the course of events, the decisions made by responsible leaders. So, in order to have as much impact as I hope to have, I try to mobilize as much information as possible.

Do you know of another editorial writer or editor who would have gone into the trouble of finding out himself about the facts? No. The others send one or two reporters and then, they call them for a short conference of five minutes in their executive offices and they spread their sermons.

I have no lessons to make to other editorial writers. There may be other concepts of the editorial function in a society, but if I were to be confined to my office, I would not last for two weeks. It's a job of action in my opinion. It involves some risks, as everybody knows, but I am willing to take those risks. I find that the advantages are so considerable as to far outweigh the inconveniences.

FOURNIER: *This type of journalism has subjected you to severe attacks, from Prime Minister Trudeau in particular. Do you believe that your credibility as director of Le Devoir has been affected by those attacks?*

RYAN: No. Very, very little. I think my credibility was affected among some people who thought they had confidence in *Le Devoir*, but who had very bad reasons for maintaining that confidence. If it was lost to us, I don't think it was much of a loss, in terms of substance. To people who want to go to the root causes of problems, this did not mean very much. I think our credibility is even higher than it has ever been. The whole country knows that *Le Devoir* behaved freely in this crisis, that it was not afraid of any powers that be. We're still there. Our circulation has increased somewhat. The unity among the team is stronger than ever and the reactions which I get from readers indicate to me that those who have a tendency to probe a little more deeply into situations are rather on our side.

Curiously enough, among the public of *Le Devoir*, reactions to the story about a plot to set up a provisional government were very limited. They did not pay too much attention to that story.

I think the story was planted in the press by some highly-placed people in Ottawa in order to try and destroy my credibility in English-speaking Canada. Their theory is very simple. They say "this guy has not half the influence that some people think he has in Quebec, he has far more influence in the rest of Canada; so, if we can succeed in destroying him in the eyes of English Canada, there is very little left that our machine cannot control."

I believe they were mistaken on both accounts. My contacts in Quebec are far deeper, far more diversified than they realize. I don't need the apparatus of the Liberal Party to go to any city of the province of Quebec, any village, any organization. I have been developing contacts for the last twenty-five years and I think that this is what worries them most.

In the rest of Canada, people may have been fooled by the first stories which were published. But when rectifications were made, honest readers realized that they had been fooled. You've had retractions in some papers. John Bassett published a very forthright retraction in the *Toronto Telegram* the other day in which he regretted what had been done by one of his reporters. Peter Newman had a good piece in the *Toronto Star* too. I wish the *Montreal Star* had done the same because they published foolish versions of the alleged plot which they never retracted. I find this is a type of journalism that I disagree with.

FOURNIER: *I presume that, as a journalist, you make no apologies for having been outspoken in public several times during the crisis?*

RYAN: Not at all. If I had to do it over again, I would act exactly the same.

FOURNIER: *You believe this is part of your duty as a journalist, as a "man of action", which is how you describe the editorial writer?*

RYAN: Right. I must feel free as head of this paper to participate in any action that is in line with the objectives of the positions which I have stated in the paper.

The statement I signed along with (René) Lévesque, (Marcel) Pépin, (Louis) Laberge, and others during the crisis was very, very close to the line which we had been upholding in *Le Devoir* for the previous two weeks. I would have been a weak man if I had shied away from associating with these men in an ultimate effort to save the lives of the two captives.

FOURNIER: *A matter of detail. I'm curious to know if the editorial board which determined Le Devoir's policy during the crisis included more than editorial writers?*

RYAN: We often invited a couple of key people on the information side. We kept exchanging with them not only information, but also opinions. It went beyond the editorial board proper.

FOURNIER: *So, it was very much a collective position?*

RYAN: I would say so. I would not pretend that our positions were dictated to me by a college. But there was deep communion between me and the rest of the editorial staff. The positions were worked out in an atmos-

phere of close consultation, continued dialogue, continued confrontation with the facts.

FOURNIER: *Is this a normal procedure for Le Devoir or does it occur only in times of crisis?*

RYAN: It occurs mostly in times of crisis because the time factor does not allow for this kind of intensive team work under normal circumstances. There is such a variety of problems occurring every day that we cannot stop to discuss them in detail. We have to trust one another. But, if any serious

matter is raised, we get together and discuss it. If we haven't got time during the day, we meet in the evening.

Jean-Pierre Fournier, who conducted the interview with Claude Ryan, publisher and editor-in-chief of Le Devoir, is a reporter with the Montreal Star.



Photo by Gary Bezant, courtesy Toronto Star

FEELING SORRY FOR THEMSELVES

DOMINIQUE CLIFT
A SYMPOSIUM AT LAVAL UNIVERSITY

The most discouraging aspect of the Laval University symposium on **Information in Time of Crisis** was the almost unanimous feeling of French-language journalists that they were at odds with the public, their own employers as well as with themselves.

After equating freedom of information with *Québec-Press*, *Point de Mire* and *le Quartier Latin*, participants deplored the attacks made against them by the public and rebelled against the subtle forms of censorship which served to subdue their sense of professional responsibility.

"I have noticed that journalists, individually and collectively, have not been free from this climate of fear and this psychosis which prevailed at times during this crisis. Curiously, they feel as if they constituted a minority, as if they were besieged and watched. Insecurity results in excessive caution which in turn induces self-imposed censorship", said **Michel Roy** of Montreal's *Le Devoir*.

Everyone took it for granted that journalists have a political role to play, in the sense

that politics could only evolve in the right direction if the public was being given the right information. The vast majority of participants agreed that censorship was undercutting them. A small number—thought of judicial censorship or of some form of intimidation practiced by police forces which tried to stretch the law to suit their own ideas. But, for most, the real peril was self-imposed censorship which originated in fear.

"If there must be censorship, then it should go by that name," said **Michel Bourdon** of the Radio-Canada's news service, who was suspended from his duties as an editor because of derogatory remarks he made about the corporation at a teach-in. Radio-Canada said he had compromised his credibility as an "impartial journalist in the employ of a public organization like the CBC" because of his comments.

Lysianne Gagnon of Montreal's *La Presse* said "the worst form of censorship is the kind that is self-imposed."

Far more time was spent in exploring the

psychology of fear which produced censorship than in trying to determine what information actually had been suppressed, voluntarily or otherwise.

According to **Leonce Gaudrault** of *Le Soleil* in Quebec City, "the transmission of information was achieved in an atmosphere which was particularly difficult, at a time when reporters were seen by the public as the source of society's troubles". This was echoed by Michel Roy who commented, "It's the mirror that becomes a target for resentment, instead of the reality which it reflects".

The weight of the public seemed to be another cause of the self-imposed censorship which all deplored. But no clear answers were given to the problem of freedom of information. None really was sought. What emerged in the end was that all the participants felt very sorry for themselves.

Dominique Clift is with the Quebec City bureau of the Montreal Star.

TELL ME, WHAT IS CENSORSHIP

DICK MACDONALD
A SYMPOSIUM IN MONTREAL

Journalists have assembled before, from time to time, to discuss the nature of their craft. But rarely, if ever, in Canada have they gathered under such circumstances as prevailed in Quebec this fall.

Coincidentally, two symposiums for journalists were held on the same date, November 7 — in Quebec City, jointly sponsored by Laval University and the Federation professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, and in Montreal, organized by the Association of English-Media Journalists of Quebec.

Of the multitude of topics discussed at both sessions, one concern stood out above all others. Precisely what constitutes censorship, and how does it manifest itself, in times of political crisis. Beyond that the question seems to be, even when the critical period has passed, how clearly defined is the role of the media in Canadian society and what is the role of the individual journalist as a gatherer and disseminator of information.

A whole raft of questions was raised; few answers were given and points on which there was consensus were not numerous. But in that, maybe, lies the impetus for an on-going debate among journalists. If the Montreal symposium, for example, serves as a catalyst for further discussion, it will have been worthwhile. It just might strengthen journalism.

The problem is, no one has produced definitions for such terms as participant and observer, involvement and objectivity, self-control and access to information. Nor do there seem to be clear terms of reference for debate. Possibly, with subsequent discussion,

such definitions will be found and accepted by most journalists. Solidarity would help, after all.

It can be predicted that the autumn events in Quebec and Ottawa will prompt media management and their staffs to assess their positions and to examine how editorial judgments are made and by whom and how accountable they are to the public.

Panelist **W. A. Wilson** of the Montreal *Star's* Ottawa bureau suggested that the responsibility of journalists is not more difficult or important in a time of crisis than in any other time. "Accuracy, of course, is the underlying concern. We must be on guard against unverified rumor."

Three days later, in a column from the capital, Wilson wrote that "no doubt the motives behind the temporary suppression of information on the nature of Pierre Laporte's death, which was not censorship or control but only the non-release of information, were commendable, no more than a desire to spare his relatives added anguish.

"The direct consequence, however, was the spread of quite ghastly rumours. These took such firm root that at the inquest on Saturday (Nov. 7), very specific steps were taken to establish their falsity with reporters. Meanwhile, however, if the more horrible of these rumours reached Mr. Laporte's family, they must have added to their anguish even though they would have known them to be untrue."

Shortly after the War Measures Act was invoked in October, Justice Minister John

Turner said "a fair and accurate report of an FLQ communique, or fair comment upon it, would not be a breach of the War Measures Act."

As the author of the emergency powers, the federal government apparently did reject the notion of censorship or control of news. Indeed, the War Measures Act referred only to the communicating of statements "as a representative or professed representative" of the FLQ. The Public Order Act, which succeeded the War Measures Act, speaks of communication "on behalf of" besides "as a representative or professed representative."

So why the fear of repression? Someone suggested it was "the not unusual whimpering of weak-kneed journalists." But had there been excessive self-restraint or over-caution? The answers were ambiguous.

Confusion over the precise implications of the extra government powers was as apparent after the symposium as before. **Pierre Pascau**, of French-language radio station CKLM who functioned as something of a midwife for FLQ communiqués in the early days of the kidnapping story, said he had been forbidden by the authorities to broadcast certain information.

The dilemma in which many journalists found themselves was not eased by comments from authorities. While federal Justice Minister Turner was saying in Ottawa that no government could use the law or the emergency powers to impose censorship and draw a shroud of secrecy around the FLQ cases, Quebec Justice Minister Jerome Choquette

was saying he might ask Ottawa for temporary censorship powers if the province's newspapers printed FLQ propaganda under the guise of news content. Was this one politician's attempt at intimidation?

Another panelist at the Montreal symposium, former CJAD commentator **Rod Dewar**, said he had been suspended from the station for his on-air criticism of the War Measures Act. He and the station permanently parted company after he resigned over the air. Dewar asked the symposium audience, "can we present points of view which may represent a minority... people will have to wonder whether issue-oriented material in commercial radio can be continued."

Claude Lemelin of the Montreal French-language daily *Le Devoir* said "journalists must control their emotional reaction, they must carry independent assessments of politics... the press has a duty to provide systematic opposition."

The meaning of "systematic opposition", again not specifically defined, caught a few

in the audience off guard. Panelist **Rod Blaker** of CJAD, a lawyer-cum-editorialist, retorted that "the news media doesn't have a function to oppose only for the sake of opposing. It is irresponsible to say that anytime we're in a time of crisis, it is our function to oppose... the professional should be paid to report and not comment. Some people who are not paid to comment have done everything but report."

On the other hand, what information should have reached the public which did not? If openness in public affairs is still regarded as possible despite the crisis, what was not open and why? Who made the decisions to make certain things open and others closed? Was there, as someone in the audience suggested, collusion between government authorities and media ownership in not disclosing particular bits of news? Was it done in the public interest? What is, exactly, the public interest?

In a period of crisis, are journalists part of the news-making process? Is the transmission

of reports about a person's death before confirmation responsible journalism? Is government justified in casting a cloud over information, which often breeds rumours and doubletalk? Is the news media justified in criticizing government for contributing to an atmosphere of doubt?

What are the best methods of maintaining a rational attitude in the media, to avoid panic and hysteria, and to continue to enlighten and inform and aid understanding of perplexing events? Did the English-language media carry on an alarmist behavior, catering to the self-interests of the English-speaking community in Montreal?

The answers are not easy to come by, but the questions, indeed, must be posed. The unfortunate thing, maybe, is that Senator Keith Davey's report on the mass media in Canada — scheduled for tabling in December — was written before the events of this fall and will contain no references to what has taken place.

L'AFFAIRE DU QUÉBEC

IS THIS A WAFFLING POLITICIAN?

AN INTERVIEW IN QUEBEC CITY

All through the kidnapping crisis, relations between some members of the Quebec press gallery and government officials (especially Liberal party whip Louis Philippe Lacroix) had been very strained. Part of the reason for the conflict was a communiqué issued by certain members of the gallery who happened to be visiting France at the time of the kidnappings. Their communiqué backed the FLQ manifesto and contained a strong implication that they considered it proper to use any means whatsoever to gain FLQ ends.

It is in this context that the following translation of excerpts taken from an exchange between members of the gallery and Cultural and Immigration minister François Cloutier is of particular interest. It took place in

a completely off-the-cuff manner in a corridor of the National Assembly as Mr. Cloutier was about to enter a cabinet meeting.

Reporters surrounded him because the previous day he had been on the Montreal French-language radio station CKLM and was quoted as saying he would like to see some censorship placed on the media during the crisis.

Q. You were quoted as having asked for press censorship under the War Measures Act. Would you still like to see that?

A. The published declaration is not exact. As often happens, it was taken out of context. In the statement that I made, I explained that democracy, in order to function, requires that it be founded on consensus and on a cer-

tain respect for the rules of the game.

And I added that as soon as the rules of the game are not respected, at that moment, democracy cannot function normally and certain restrictions are bound to follow. I believe this is an important principle and it is the context of my statement.

I then concluded that it was inevitable in a crisis situation that there would be restrictions of information, while also adding that it should take place, not through censorship, but with a measure of discipline on the part of interested professions. I think, for example, that it means journalists should have a code of ethics and associations which impose upon them certain limits under certain circumstances.

Q. Self-censorship?

A. Call it self-censorship if you want to. I prefer to call it self-discipline. It must be remembered that we have to face our responsibilities vis à vis society and when I say *we*, I am not only thinking of politicians. I am also thinking of those who disperse news, because they play an extremely important role.

If you keep in mind the initial principle I presented, you can easily see that my attitude is extremely liberal. There are not many countries in the world which have known the freedom that we have, since several years. And we have acceded to this fashion of democracy perhaps a little rapidly. We have also acceded to an extremely massive education of the population perhaps a little rapidly.

What I am trying to say is that democracy remains a fragile plant which requires, as I pointed out to you, a consensus and a respect for the rules of the game. It is these rules of democracy that even the criminal faction, which exists in all countries, respects to a certain point. It lives, it profits outside the law, but it still remains within the system.

But as soon as you have a terrorist movement which places itself completely outside the system, and once men in the public eye must stop being fathers of families and must

MANAGEMENT SAYS SO

As a matter of interest, the following is the text of a statement issued by the management of Montreal's major English-language radio station, CJAD, following the on-air resignation of announcer-disc jockey-commentator Rod Dewar. It was released October 19. Dewar, if it isn't apparent, questioned the wisdom of invoking the War Measures Act.

"Events of recent weeks have changed the climate of our country, our province and our city. The federal government, at the request of and with the support of the provincial and municipal governments, has imposed legislation which temporarily deprives us of many freedoms we have taken for granted.

Along with all communications media, CJAD has lost some of its freedom to air divergent opinions. CJAD recognizes the need for such sweeping legislation and endorses it wholeheartedly. To the best of our ability, we will

no longer air certain minority views while the present crisis exists. We do not wish to do anything to distress or confuse the listeners we are trying to serve in so many ways.

It is a time of sadness, as well as a time of concern, and CJAD will try to keep the public informed as events unfold and will also try to be a responsible and unifying voice in this great city. CJAD has always prided itself in airing a variety of freely-expressed opinions, but in the light of the current situation and legislation, we find it incompatible with the foregoing that Rod Dewar continue to express certain minority controversial views — and accordingly his program has been suspended for one week in order that it may be re-assessed.

As of this moment, Rod Dewar has not seen fit to accept this policy and has made public his resignation."

risk, literally, their free life — at that moment there are no rules possible. It is this which places some things in question.

Q. You just said that the underworld, the criminal faction, is more morally acceptable than the FLQ.

A. No, listen! I think it necessary not to jump to conclusions. I tried to illustrate with an example the fact that inside a democracy, certain rules must be accepted. Now the FLQ is an illegal organization. It has been declared such. It decided to go outside the rules of democracy and now it must face the consequences.

Q. Do you have the impression that during the events there has been abuse of freedom of the press?

A. Very frankly, yes. And I don't see why I should hide my opinion.

Q. Do you have precise examples?

A. I think, for example, that the use by the FLQ of certain radio stations has certainly bypassed the normal rules of freedom in an organized democracy. And this occurred only because those radio stations did not apply a self-discipline which is enforced in other countries.

Permit me to add that in European countries, the problem would not arise in the same manner, precisely because those countries are equipped to meet such urgent situations head on. Also, when they talk of the War Measures Act, and mostly when it is French journalists who talk about it like some of them just did with me, I am not hiding from you the fact that I really get fed up.

Because, I am telling you that the police in France don't even have to call for the enactment of the least little special law to ensure order. They certainly have more overriding powers. The hypothesis is that they

have stronger normal powers than those we put into special legislation.

It is necessary, vitally necessary to take note: if it is not the democracy of assassination that you want in order to keep public men from working and administering, if you want to change your politicians, then have an election and vote in some others.

Democracy established certain negotiation channels, which are there, which are clear, clean. However, as soon as you go outside normal channels, at that moment, everybody is put into danger.

Q. In summary, then, you are reproaching the radio stations for having made public the letters of Cross and Laporte?

A. I am not particularly reproaching them. I am recognizing a social phenomenon, at a very general level, which wants a terrorist movement to be able to mobilize attention without discipline from journalists themselves. I think that we can pose some very serious questions: can a journalist without a code of ethics permit himself to propagate rumours, for instance? I can give you a good number of examples.

For sure, I am not against criticism. I am against news which is not verified by those who send it out. Don't forget that there has been seized in Montreal in the past few years tons of subversive literature; and I can do no more than to tell you to read the testimony of Lucien Saulnier before the House of Commons parliamentary committee concerning the Company of Young Canadians. There is testimony there which describes all that we have been through and of which Pierre Laporte has been the victim. That is to say, above all in a democracy, it is necessary to be extremely vigilant to guard our freedom.

But liberty is not a one-way street. I think

that my attitude is extremely liberal and never will you find me using the word censorship, even if you are inviting me to. Not in this domain or any other.

However, I would like to see the different factions of society each accept their responsibilities. It is a sociological analysis that is interesting. We are no longer in the age when information is transmitted by word of mouth. We are in an age when everything that goes on in the world is known at the same moment. And that entails a responsibility for democracies. There are no longer ideological frontiers, whatever they are. We are instantly aware of what goes on in Vietnam. There is, consequently, a sociological modification which is very important. We now have among the youth demonstration of a new generation, which is the audio-visual generation.

Certain professional bodies which have a role to play in democracy, including journalists, should take their responsibilities and situate themselves vis à vis the new phenomena. It is a question of education. In certain countries, the journalists' code of ethics is very rigorous. You all have an interest to evaluate, to avoid excesses, because this is an age when the reports of events can be more dynamic than the events themselves.

Q. The whip of the Liberal party has accused journalists in general of being the cause of Mr. Laporte's death. Would you agree with that?

A. No, you are not responsible for Mr. Laporte's death. If those are the words of Mr. (Louis Philippe) Lacroix, they are not mine. You are no more responsible than I am or the population in general. It is totally irresponsible to say that. Perhaps it is simply a moment of heated language.

L'AFFAIRE DU QUÉBEC

THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE MONTREAL

VARIOUS INTERVIEWS

If it was difficult for the native news media of Quebec to comprehensively cover the events of October, try to imagine the plight of the dozens of journalists who converged on Montreal from outside the province. Earl Garrety, a free-lance broadcaster, was curious and talked to several out-of-towners. Excerpts from their recorded conversations follow.

Question: Did you find this a difficult and frustrating story to cover?

John Smith, London *Daily Mirror*: This is the first story of some proportion I can recall where there is no scene to go to. It's a question of waiting for a series of announcements from the terrorist side. It's almost been an electronic story, covered by French-language radio. For us it has been a matter of waiting for the next word from the terrorists as received by radio. An ideal would be to arrange clandestine meetings with the kidnapers, as I found in Cyprus, where it was possible to be taken blindfolded to see a kidnapped victim first-hand. One hasn't been able to get as personally involved as one would like.

Uwe Sienon-Netto, North American correspondent for Germany's *Der Stern* magazine: It was easier to cover than similar events

in Guatemala or Brazil. At least one could establish a certain number of contacts and could talk to a certain number of people. My editors and readers in Germany are at somewhat of a loss as to what this series of events means. We don't know in Europe what the FLQ is, so the object is to learn.

Bob Olson, Toronto *Star* photographer: It has been an extremely difficult and unusual story to cover. Rumors fly high and you have to be in 14 places at once. You must come to a point where you rely on your own hunches; you seem to spend all these hours and come back with nothing. I've relied on radio to inform me of what's going on. Without radio and television we'd have been lost. Some of our boys went out and bought transistor radios; they keep them in their pockets all the time.

Bill McGuire, London *Free Press* reporter: I find it difficult that I'm not talking to anyone in officialdom. The cops don't talk, the damned politicians don't talk. Honestly, I can't pinpoint where I'm getting stuff from. Premier Bourassa is in a room two floors above us in the hotel and we can't talk to him. The strong-arm guys say, 'let's see your identification'. We show it and they say, 'ok, now screw off'.

Question: Would it have helped if the government had appointed a press representative or spokesman?

Smith, *Daily Mirror*: It would have been better if the government had realized at a very early stage that this was a story which was going to attract international attention and had named someone as liaison. As it was, though, the government responded quite well, in Quebec City and Ottawa.

McGuire, London *Free Press*: Of course, it would have made it much easier for us if government had given us somebody to talk to. I think they're dummies that they didn't appoint someone. Take the electronic media: some of the guys were putting out god-damned rumors.

George Hutchison, London *Free Press*: It would have helped if there had been a central source of information. On the other hand, I don't like dealing through intermediaries. It's best to have direct contact with the principles. Bourassa's press secretary should have been under an obligation to provide us with a translation of his remarks in French when he didn't speak in English. He didn't, and misinterpretations went out across the English-speaking country.

Question: How did you react to the news

conferences called by Robert Lemieux (lawyer appointed to negotiate on behalf of the Front de liberation du Quebec)?

Hilary Brigstocke, *The Times* of London: Mr. Lemieux reads in French and English and has been very fair in that respect. That some in the room insist 'en français, en français', well, that happens in other parts of the world too. I would deplore any move to demand that it all be in English. The Reuters correspondent who was ejected, well, he hadn't been here before and didn't realize the delicate situation. It was a most unfortunate scuffle.

Smith, *Daily Mirror*: From the very beginning, the Lemieux news conferences have had a circus-like atmosphere, which didn't help the situation one bit. Maybe it helped him — notoriety, color, he seemed to be enjoying it. The FLQ supporters seemed to outnumber the newsmen in the Nelson Hotel (Old Montreal hotel where conferences were held) at one stage. It had all the atmosphere of a revolutionary political meeting. The whole thing could have taken place in Algiers rather than in the sedate city of Montreal.

Olson, *Toronto Star*: Maybe 30 per cent of those at the conferences were newsmen,

the rest were FLQ supporters or just people off the street. They were a bit scary — the high tensions, being conducted in French, with a feeling against the English language. As a cameraman, I was scared to even sneeze in English. I'm probably over-exaggerating, but there was a fear in asking a normal question because there were so many non-newsmen present.

McGuire, *London Free Press*: I think Lemieux was grandstanding a little. We all know how people behave when they're introduced to press coverage. The Reuters guy probably deserved what he got. Well, maybe he should have been told to shut up for saying 'en anglais, en anglais': he didn't deserve a smack in the eye.

Question: Because of the nature of the story, there was much dependence on the electronic media by people in print. How did you react?

Brigstocke, *The Times* of London: It's a very sterile story for us. We have to rely very much on the electronic media; we can't cover spots, we have to get the details across to London with a five-hour time difference to

meet our editions. We have to stick by the radio and then write new leads for our stories. I would like to be able to do something in depth.

Smith, *Daily Mirror*: It was not so much an embarrassment, although newspaper journalists have tended to resent the emergence of on-the-spot radio and TV coverage. It really does wipe us out in terms of immediacy. It was a question of hearing details almost directly on radio.

Sienon-Netto, *Der Stern*: People working for papers and magazines have to get used to the idea that the electronic media are faster. Newspapers and the electronic media are complementing each other.

McGuire, *London Free Press*: Obviously, any tips would be gone into and checked out, reports would be verified, since the terrorists were acting through the electronic media. The print guys seemed to do the checking and the verification.

Question: Which is the largest-selling newspaper in the world?

Answer: Japan's *Asahi Shimbun* with a daily circulation exceeding 10 million. It is one of that country's five national newspapers.

L'AFFAIRE DU QUÉBEC

A PLEA FROM THE ACADEMY

by LAURIER LAPIERRE

As I write this column we are still living under the War Measures Act, Mr. Cross has not been found, rumour has replaced fact in the processes of decision-making and all of us remain ignorant of why so much is being done to so many by so few.

This terrible affair troubles me in many ways but what I want to deal with here are those aspects that directly involve the media. While conceding that the situation was beyond any of our experiences and that everybody was caught by surprise and, at times, horror, my first observation is that Canadians have not been served well by their newsmen, journalists, pundits, and commentators in this time of crisis.

It is particularly upsetting to me to have to agree with those who charge that the media have contributed immensely to the state of panic, insecurity, and inertia that has accompanied this event. Too many rumours that could have been checked were not, and when the denial came it never seemed to occupy the same place of importance.

Whether this was due to valid technical limitations within the various media or simply reflected irresponsibility and maybe even a surprising low level of professional competence is an academic question to the general public. We should be concerned that our newspapers and radio and television stations revealed serious inadequacies in covering an event of such profound importance.

The second thing which disturbs me about the role of the media in the Cross-Laporte abductions is the great amount of biased and destructive commentary that took place. Too many commentators adopted editorial positions which distorted the situation and tended to increase the panic of the people. It certainly appeared to me that their one aim, one which was totally political in nature, was

to assist the three governments in making their decisions acceptable.

This criticism is directed mostly at radio broadcasters, and those of the Montreal private English-language stations in particular. The same criticism does not so much apply to the French radio broadcasters, with perhaps the exception of CJMS and to a certain degree CKVL. Stations CKAC and CKLM, as everybody knows, were caught right in the middle of the action in their roles as mailboxes. But, of all stations they seemed to be most determined to maintain balanced reporting in order not to cut off their communication links.

The best commentaries which I read in the press originated from George Bain in the *Globe and Mail*. In reading Bain one was aware that profound issues were personally at stake within him. With rare lucidity and a poignancy which so little characterizes Canadian journalism he was able to situate himself in the middle of the crisis and to fight his way out of the morass into which the events and governments and the FLQ had placed him. One could easily feel oneself working one's way out in the same way that Bain did. I am not so much interested here in his conclusions or in the position he took, but rather in the way in which he reached it and communicated it. To my knowledge no one else avoided the uninformed pontification to which we are usually subjected as successfully.

Another element of my concern has to do with television. In its news coverage, the French-speaking CBC appeared to me to be much more immediate and more involved than anyone else. One could sense the search for a disciplined approach to the conveying of information and at the same time a profound desire to remain as involved as possible.

Unfortunately, for valid reasons this discipline and search turned into what has been described as "une auto-censure", that is, an internal obsession with the need not to allow one to be censured. Consequently, the censoring which took place in the French network seemed to have come more from the anxiety and insecurity and involvement of the personnel rather than from directives from above.

As for English-speaking television, one can only describe it as voyeurism. Of course, the usual pundits of French Canada were brought before the cameras to repeat what they had said in the past or what they were writing at the present. However, one did not get the feeling from the English-speaking broadcaster that he was really involved. Quebec and its tragedy became a sort of play which had to be dissected, analysed and rescrutinized. The profound emotion, the quandary and the intolerable sadness of too many French-speaking Canadians were only presented and not lived. The only notable exception to that pattern came from Pierre Nadeau in two or three brilliant interventions on CBC's *Weekend*.

I was also very much disturbed by the man-on-the-street interviews on radio, in the press, and on television. This form of participatory communication tends to be rather indecent and in my experience is indicative of nothing but the biases of the interviewer and the editor.

Laurier LaPierre, a professor of history at McGill University, was co-host of the lamented This Hour Has Seven Days program on CBC-TV. An unsuccessful candidate for the New Democratic Party in the 1968 federal election, he sometimes refers to himself as a "marginal journalist."

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 INFORMATION
CANADA

THERE'S THIS WATERING HOLE DOWNTOWN

OR, HOW TO WRITE A SCRIPT WHEN SMASHED

by KEN STRACHAN

The editor asked me to write something about "my favourite watering hole." I do not have a favourite watering hole.

I do have a favourite tavern: the Bleury Tavern in Montreal. Its general atmosphere of unrelieved squalor hides a happier reality. The Bleury is an institution of long and sometimes honourable service to the profession of journalism.

For, if you go through the Bleury, past the pool-table and out the back door (as did the FLQ gunmen after killing a man at the International Firearms store just down the street), you will see an old building with "Herald" painted on the front wall.

While the *Herald* lived, the Bleury gave refuge and inspiration to its staff. In return, the *Herald* staff gave the Bleury the name by which I know it best: the Gluepot. Legend, too attractive to be disbelieved or even checked out, has it that not only were the front page stories conceived here, but that the pages themselves were dummied at the little tables, with ruler, scissors — and gluepot.

The *Herald* died on honourable death in the late 1950s. After a brief interval, the torch was passed into the hands of *Financial Times of Canada*. The *Times*, until early this year (when torch and premises passed to *Canadian Press*), occupied a building right across the street from the Bleury.

It was thus very easy to get to. Getting out was something else again. There was something in the air, or in the draft, that set the creative instincts ablaze. Shakespeare and Dickens would have felt at home in the Gluepot. I know we did.

It was at the Gluepot that we wrote the entire shooting script of the movie, *The Song That Won The War* — starring, among others, Jack Hawkins, Trevor Howard, Peter Sellers, Donald Pleasance, Noel Coward, John Colicos, Richard Attenborough, Sir Alec Guinness, John Mills, Sir Laurence Olivier, and Margaret Rutherford.

I was reading a report in *Time* magazine of the autopsy on Adolf Hitler, which had just been released by the Russians. The report included the fact, which I read aloud to the group, that Hitler had only one testicle.

"Good God," said someone. "The old song was right on the button after all."

You know the song. The melody is the "Colonel Bogie March." The Allies sang it. The people in bombed-out British cities sang it. As a little Scots schoolboy, I sang it. It helped to win the war.

Hitler has only got one ball.

Goering has two, but they are small.

Himmler has something sim'lar,

But poor old Goebbels has no balls at all.

De de dum dum . . .

Hitler has only, etc.

We began to wonder how on earth British Intelligence had found out the peculiarities of Hitler and his colleagues. To cut a long story short, this is what we came up with, all thanks to the Gluepot:

Ken Strachan, managing editor of The Financial Times of Canada, spends spare time preparing humor for radio and television and periodicals.

Opening scene. London, 1940. The blackout. It is raining. A man vainly tries to hail a taxi from the steps of his club. Cursing, he strides off into the downpour.

Cut to room where MI6 staff are meeting. Enter man in raincoat.

Raincoat: Damn! Soaked to the skin! Look at my suit! Ruined!

Officer: You know, I haven't been able to get a decent suit since that little Jewish chappie left Maynard's.

Raincoat: Oh yes? What happened to him? Damn fine tailor.

Officer: Bloody fool had some relatives in Germany. Grew up there, you know. Went over last year to try and get them out. Got stuck there when the balloon went up.

Officer: Hmmm.

Several scenes later, Intelligence has an idea: Contact the tailor chap in Germany, set him up in business as tailor to top people in Berlin, have him report gossip from high-ranking officials. If he is unwilling, threaten to expose him to Nazis. Plan works. (There is an exciting sequence here as a Mosquito with extra wing tanks flies into Germany to drop bolts of pure virgin wool cloth, unattainable in wartime Germany.)

Cut to interior of exclusive men's tailoring establishment on Wilhelmstrasse. The tailor (Donald Pleasance) is measuring Goebbels for new pants. Kneeling to measure the inside length, we see his hand with tape measure move toward Goebbels' crotch. Look of puzzlement crosses tailor's face. Gently raises hand again. His eyebrows rise.

Cut to meeting of British Intelligence brass.

General (Trevor Howard): Look, we're going to have to do something about Agent 14 in Berlin. Finance is on my back. Sixty thousand pounds for premises. Two planes lost carrying load of summer worsted. And all we get back is stuff like this: Goebbels has a 32-inch waist and no testicles. Herr Goering has 52-inch waist and very small testicles. Likewise Herr Himmler. . . I ask you, gentlemen . . .

Finally, the report on Hitler comes in. Hilarity in the code room. Then the question: Well, it's all very amusing, but what can we do with it? Deflation.

In fast sequence, the idea of a propaganda song is born, lyrics are written, intelligence men round up British Tin Pan Alley types, rush them in black cars to secluded country house, give them lyrics, order them to get cracking on the melody, mate.

Country house scene. General (Sir Laurence Olivier) strides through Blue Room with adjutant. Blue room divided into cubicles, each containing piano and pathetic little tunesmiths trying to get the right melody. General and adjutant come to large door.

General: And what's in here?

Adjutant: Our best bet, sir. Listen! I think he's got something.

General peers through keyhole. We see Noel Coward at grand piano under chande-

liers, singing "I'll see You Again . . ." to a Philippino houseboy.

Eventually, Chiefs of Staff hear a charlady (Margaret Rutherford) whistling the "Colonel Bogie March." Zap! A song is born! Chiefs of Staff sing it to Churchill (John Colicos), who is in bed.

Churchill: Mmm. I like it. Carry on.

(Churchill rings bell rope by bedside. Manservant enters.)

Manservant: Brandy, sir?

Churchill: No. Champagne! The '98!

Fast sequence as MI6 agents fan out across Britain to try out the song in the pubs — and fail to get anyone to join in. Despondency at HQ. Phone rings. Peter Sellers from Cardiff.

Sellers: Listen!

Chiefs of Staff crowd round earphone. Triumph transforms their faces. Camera closes in on earphone. Sound of singing swells up. Cut to Cardiff pub. The entire population is crowded into it, singing their guts out. (We dub in massed choirs of entire British Isle.)

As the sound soars and builds, louder and louder, a montage of footage of-Ghurkas, Aussies, Yanks, Black Watch, Canadian, Free French, etc., fighting, bombing, conquering, winning the Second World War to the tune of:

Hitler has only got one . . .

The audience leaves the theatre, utterly drained.


* * *

Well, that was that. After agreeing on the royalties split, we went to the Press Club to celebrate. Someone tried to get hold of Norman Jewison in Hollywood. He failed.

Came the dawn, and we all forgot about the whole thing, or tried to. The Gluepot had worked its magic. Leave it at that.

About a year later, one of the scriptwriting team met Trevor Howard in London, and told the actor about the movie. Howard was enthralled; he loved his part in the film. He was ready to sign up. He pressed his agent's card upon my colleague.

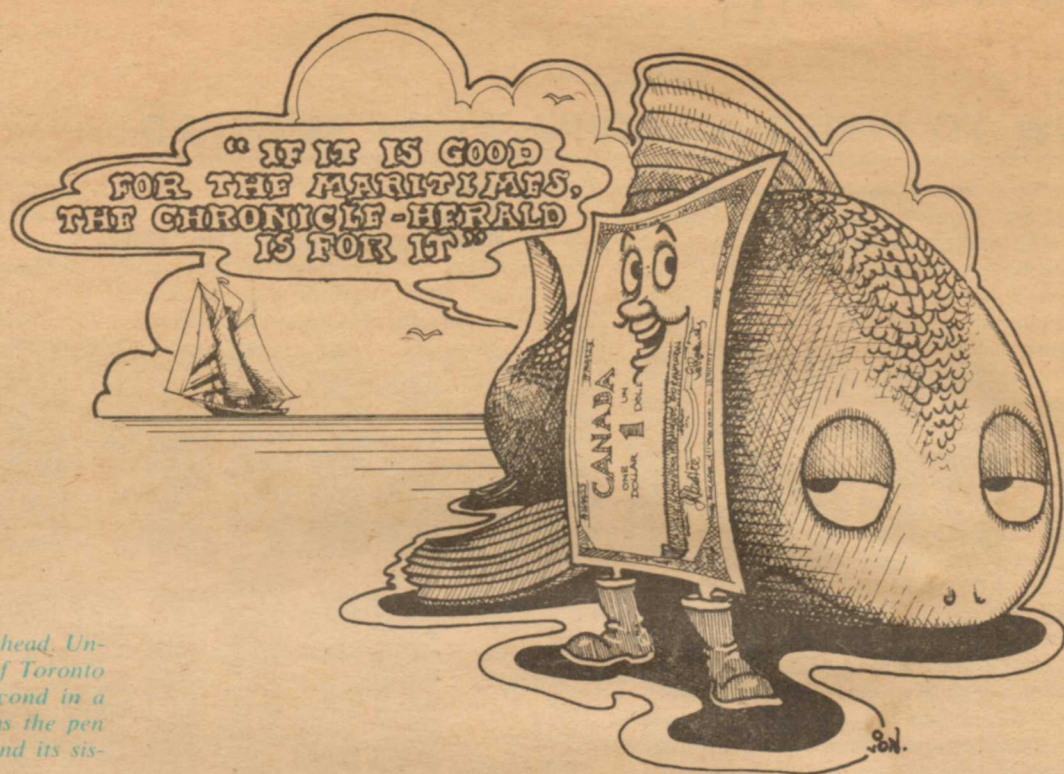
That was the end of that. Of course, they had both been drinking.



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WHEN THE MEDIUM WAS THE MOTTO



A masthead is a masthead is a masthead. Unless one sees it through the eyes of Toronto cartoonist Jon McKee. In this second in a series of satirical sketches, he aims the pen at the Halifax Chronicle-Herald and its sister daily, the Mail-Star.

NICHOLAS JOHNSON MAY BE THE HARRY BOYLE OF THE U.S.A.

by SARAH RIDDELL

Members of federal agencies in Washington are, for the most part, an anonymous bunch. Although frequently distinguished and influential in their fields, their names would mean little to the average person. Commissioner Nicholas Johnson of the Federal Communications Commission is, however, the exception. The youngest, most controversial and conspicuous member of the Commission, he is dedicating his seven-year term to the reform of the communications media. And he is making sure everyone knows it.

Johnson was appointed to the FCC in 1966 by President Johnson at the age of 31. His background is based on the law, having been a clerk to Supreme Court Justice Black and having had a teaching job at Berkeley and a law practice in Washington. In 1964, he was named head of the Maritime Administration, where he battled for reforms in the shipping industry over the protests of both management and labour. The reputation for toughness and independence which he earned in those two years has grown since he took office at the FCC. He has directed indefatigable energy towards bringing about changes in the communications industry and, in particular, television.

With many other enlightened critics of American society, he would agree with George Kennan's recent observation that "American advertising and its hold on the mass media is a national scandal." Television, Johnson argues, not only plays a critical role in all our lives but must be held in no mean way accountable for many of America's current ills. He quotes the National

Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders' conclusion in 1968 that the "communications media, ironically, have failed to communicate."

Johnson believes that the fault lies with the "media barons" and their vast conglomerate empires which threaten to stifle the life out of a free and independent industry.

He sees dangers not only in the concentrated ownership of the media but also in censorship, both corporate and governmental. On the one hand, powerful private corporations control the quality and content of television programming and operate it on the basis of maximum profit for themselves. Johnson feels that on the whole this is a more insidious form of censorship than government control.

On the other hand, he has spoken out strongly against the Nixon administration's attempts to subpoena newspapers, magazines and television networks. He is also concern-



ed about the Vice-President's impact on the media and admits that "Agnew has scared the bejesus of the networks." Johnson blames the FCC for having totally abdicated its responsibilities as a regulatory agency.

Viewed altogether the situation looks unhealthy and Johnson's crusade to improve the quality of television has wider moral implications. As he said in an interview, "I want to make America a better country in which to live."

The FCC was established in 1934 under the Communications Act to act as the regulatory agency over wire and radio communications. As Commissioner Johnson is anxious to point out, it was agreed at the time that broadcasting was a public preserve and that a station could have the use, but not the ownership, of the airwaves. These were to be operated in the interest of the public. The FCC today grants licences for a fixed three-year term to private users, who may renew the licenses after that time if they are found "substantially" to be serving the public interest. Under a recent FCC ruling, strongly contested by Commissioner Johnson, competing applicants for the use of a station will not be considered unless the incumbent licensee has first been found unsatisfactory. Since this is hard to prove, Johnson argues that license renewals become virtually a rubber-stamp process. "The FCC is simply not doing its job in acting on behalf of the public," says Commissioner Johnson. "It has become a captive of the very industry which it is purportedly attempting to regulate."

The FCC has little money and few resources. It has failed over the years to formulate any standards whatsoever as guidelines for the industry. It has caved in to the constant pressures from industry sources. As it is currently constituted the FCC is obviously unsympathetic to Johnson. He is worried by the Nixon Administration's most recent appointment of Dean Burch as chairman of the FCC. Johnson has nothing against Burch personally but finds it "bizarre" that Nixon should have appointed a man who was formerly a Republican National Committee Chairman. "This appointment contrasts unfavourably with the previous Democratic administration's choice of Republican Rosel H. Hyde as FCC chairman. It is essential," he says, "that the FCC appear to be above partisan considerations."

Frustrated by his six-to-one minority position at the FCC, Johnson has chosen to conduct his campaign in the open. Bypassing what he considers to be a largely defunct agency, he makes his appeal directly to the public and thereby to the United States Congress. He is a prolific and fluent writer of magazine and newspaper articles and can be relied upon in public discussions to be an amusing and articulate advocate of his cause.

He is given wide publicity in the press and his dissenting opinions usually cause a greater stir than the FCC majority ruling itself. He has been asked to testify at numerous House and Senate hearings, and in March of this year testified before Senator Keith Davey's Special Senate Committee on Mass Media in Canada. He recently published a powerful book entitled *How To Talk Back To Your Television Set*, which sets out his proposals for reforming television. He is giving

the royalties of the book to organisations devoted to this end. The book has won him considerable acclaim. Inside the jacket there is a quote from John Kenneth Galbraith, "Nick Johnson is currently the citizen's least frightened friend in Washington and this book tells why."

Johnson's practical suggestions for improving the quality of television are various. Like other individuals and commissions before him, he recommends the establishment of a citizens' commission on broadcasting or some other kind of standing independent ombudsman. Such an institution could look into broadcasting practices and performance, create and evaluate programming standards and set up the machinery for hearing grievances about the media.

He believes strongly in citizen participation in FCC proceedings. He holds out great hope for public broadcasting and its impact on commercial television. He calls for more funds to be appropriated for the Corporation of Public Broadcasting and hopes that cable television will be allowed to develop its potential. Johnson inserts a caveat that unless something is done to investigate the patterns of ownership in this new technological field, CATV, it will soon be in the hands of vast monopoly concerns and the promise of a diversified communications system lost. Johnson's book explains and focuses attention on the problems of the television industry, suggests solutions and, what is most important, encourages a more critical attitude on the part of the public and those who work in the media.

Commissioner Nicholas Johnson has his critics. His irreverent and iconoclastic approach has on occasion angered his fellow-commissioners. It has been suggested that

he might be more effective within the framework of the FCC if he were less vociferous. His persistent attempts to get tougher broadcasting controls and more quality programs have infuriated the industry. The trade magazines have called him a "showman" and "publicity-monger." He has been accused of being consumed with his public image and motivated by personal political ambition. But Johnson refuses to be deflected and merely accepts these attacks as the inevitable outcome of a strategy which depends on maximum public exposure.

In September of this year, the Vice-President, charging Johnson with condoning a drug culture promoted by the mass media, gave a boost to his notoriety by adding him to his list of "radical-liberals." Agnew said that Johnson was typical of those "super-permissive" public officials whose "puddle-minded philosophy" had "run rampant" (whatever that may mean).

The following Sunday, the New York *Times* printed a four-column reply by the commissioner which suggested that Agnew "turn his attention to the corporate campaign contributors (of both parties) who finance their fat campaign donations with the profits they make from worthless or harmful drugs." On October 10, NBC bleeped the commissioner off the air for using the phrase "getting laid" while discussing the sex-theme commercials ceaselessly served up by television.

The next day, Johnson bounced back with an enraged statement complaining of the "arrogant irony" of Big Business and "big Television in using the censor's scissors to snip out the words, of all things, of an FCC commissioner. Commissioner Johnson certainly knows how to fight.



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ACROSS CANADA



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News is basically whatever the news editor says is news

The media is too heavily concentrated on politics

We're not binding ourselves together through information

A CONVERSATION



There is no intent in the Canadian newspaper industry as to why it is in the business, except to sell more ads.

ERIC WELLS, communications consultant and former editor of the Winnipeg Tribune, discusses nationalism, regionalism and the role of the printed media with Content editor DICK MacDONALD

MacDonald: Can we talk about the fact of regionalism in Canada as it relates to the role of the media? Are the various regions being served well by the media now? If not, what is the basis for improvement? We might also discuss the matter of how the media serve national interests and goals.

Wells: On the question of regionalism, I would say that, in respect to the print medium, we have today an admission by most of the newspaper owners and publishers of this country that outside of perhaps Toronto and Montreal we simply cannot afford to have a competitive press. This poses a very serious problem in terms of regionalism as to how these regions are going to be served. I think in that respect we'd have to first look at the economics of why these regions cannot have an active and good press. And secondly, as to the role of the press, we should ask: As a catalyst of the various regional conflicts and interests of this country, does the press really translate these affairs into their own areas of circulation? This is an important question because from the western situation, with which I am most familiar, we've seen a considerable drift away from the expression of regional interest in this country, so that we're not binding ourselves together through information.

In general, as far as western Canada is concerned, I would say from my reading of the press that we only attract national attention when there are big barn fires or disasters and catastrophies, and the constant vigilance

and mining of news does not take place. I'm not sure of the exact service given by *Canadian Press* at the present time, but for many, many years, Saskatchewan was never covered. All it had there was one man who, in effect, was little more than a telegraph operator. He took the dupes of some of the local papers and what he chose to put on the wire would be a condensation of these local stories. Now we know that you cannot translate an area's true concern by such an elementary rewrite. You have to develop the story. You'd see a great contrast, for instance, in what *Time* magazine has done in this country. For many years before *Canadian Press* even became interested in Quebec, as far as sending it out on the western wire at least, *Time* carried stories of deep insight from Quebec. This requires having editors and reporters who can see the potential in a story and follow it through and present that story. It cannot be done simply by taking the duplicates off some city desk, and asking: What would Toronto like out of this? Because you have to get out of the office to develop the story. Now we do not have any press in Canada that reflects these regional interests in that way. Even the *Globe and Mail*, which used to have a page reflecting various regional interests, appeared to separate on a basis that one day it's the Maritimes' turn, the next is the Prairies' turn, the West Coast's turn, and so forth. These stories are written by and large by very tired stringers, and the deadline has to be met on Thursday, so the reporter takes the most simple thing at his command. Now this is quite different from actually exploring the news situation in depth. So I would say we do not have any reflection in our press of our various regional interests. If areas outside Toronto and Montreal cannot hope to have a good and aggressive press, their economic, social, and cultural growth is going to be far more painfully gained.

MacDonald: It is inevitable that in talking about communications and the dissemination of various kinds of information, we must also talk about what Canada is; what constitutes the country, not just in terms of political segments or regions, provincial boundaries, but what it is that makes a Canadian a Canadian; what factors mould him, what are the effects of environment on a Canadian, on an individual living in Canada — how he feels a part of the cultural-social-political package in this country which is somehow different from that south of us, different from that across the Atlantic, or the Pacific.

Wells: I would say that the media, in its reflection of what a Canadian might be, is too heavily concentrated on politics. It's as though politics are the end-all of man's activity. I remember making a survey some

This interview was one of a series conducted this year in a "philosophy of communications" project for the *Montreal Star*.

years ago on the actual national news content of our papers across this country, and the preponderance of government or political information was overwhelming. I took two psychologists and locked them up in a sort of exploration-of-space. I said, you stay out here at the university for ten days, and the only communication you're going to have with the world is through the daily papers that I send you, and at the end of ten days I want you to tell me what your impression of Canada is. So I selected five or six papers, and this is the only contact they had, and they wrote me the report. The one thing they said, overwhelmingly: "Are Canadians only interested in politics?" Is this the only thing that is important — government handouts and political situations, because the vitality of the country and the people, are not reflected in the press. For instance, I think we have something like 120 correspondents in the Ottawa press gallery. They go around a merry-go-round and most of them are on the same kick. In my opinion, they engage in very little actual "digging" reporting, and they have little identity with the various regions of this country. This country is so big and volatile that somebody in Ottawa just cannot capture the scene, let alone express the Canadian viewpoint. I think this is a serious development in the press and it's in contrast to the papers of even fifty years ago, when the papers often reflected stronger regional identities in relation to federal affairs than what they do today. We have syndicated columnists, syndicated writers of various chains. This is a common syndrome now, that goes from coast to coast. So where do we have the expression of the regional interests?

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MacDonald: Let us assume that a fundamental function of communicators is to help people understand each other; call it self awareness or awareness of people around you, and extend this beyond an individual to a group of individuals, to a region. One serious complaint of mine is that the media in each region have failed to live up to the responsibility of helping their readers understand people in the rest of the country. This is an extension of your point that we've been concentrating our concerns with Ottawa and politics and crises and drama. Undoubtedly these matters are important, but I don't think they get down to the real guts of our country. How many western papers have sent people to the Maritimes? How many papers from the Maritimes, from Newfoundland, even in some minor way, have sent their own people to the Prairies or to British Columbia to help explain the moods and characteristics and atmospheres? It is not being done.

Wells: Certain papers make occasional forays into various regions and do a series, or something like this. But to me this is not sufficient because the occasional forays do not capture the moods and the feelings of these various regions. But, secondly, I don't think the papers in the various regions actually reflect the people either. I mean, they're not doing a very good job reflecting one region to another, and I believe that the newspaper industry, particularly, is so inhibited that it doesn't even reflect the society around itself. It doesn't even reflect its own readership. There was a time, you know (and this still pertains in certain areas of the world), where certain publications did have an intent as to why they publish. There is no intent in the Canadian newspaper industry as to why it is in the business, except to sell more ads. And this is the pattern. Take a publication like *Time*, which I admire in many ways for the way it develops and goes after news — the same dedication it shows to developing stories and developing news does not take place in our daily press, because it goes in just like so much lard, or so much mortar between the bricks.

There is a lot of hypocrisy here, you know; how many times have I sat in at big dinners addressed by publishers who tell me that higher education is going to be the salvation of all the problems of this country, including our identity. Everything is going to be solved by education. All reporters are going to have degrees. Where is the intellectual ingredient in the average paper? The truth is that there is a big yahoo syndrome which exists right through the press of this country. The yahoo syndrome operates when there is a story involving an intellectual exercise, and many editors or news editors will say: "We don't want it for our average reader." So we work against creating intellectual participation. Also, we don't develop the craftsmanship necessary to explain difficult propositions.

MacDonald: How do we encourage the development of competent journalists with strong intellectual backgrounds?

Wells: There is no limit on the number of people who go into journalism, intending to dedicate their efforts to that very end. I would suggest that if Senator Davey really wanted to look into one of the perplexing problems of a newspaper and journalism, he should look at turnover. Why do so many

people when they are young, whether in university or not, want to go into writing. These young men and women want to go into journalism. Then, we look at the papers today, and I would say that if you have ten per cent of your editorial staff really dedicated to that end, and competent, that paper is fortunate, because the rest, to me, are drones. The good ones have fallen out along the way, they have been forced out. I noticed in some of the testimony at the committee hearings that Toronto, particularly, attracts the more aggressive journalists across this country. Many of these people are desperate. They've been locked up in some remote area, perhaps where they didn't have any encouragement to do intelligent reporting. They come to Toronto as a last desperate measure, not just for the money — they're looking for expression.

MacDonald: I want to get back to our discussion about regionalism and how it is interpreted to the people in the regions themselves as well as to outside. You so often hear somebody bleating about "those damned westerners complaining about agriculture again," or "all the Maritimers can do is cry for more money." Canadians just don't seem to understand each other's problems.

Wells: I would agree; I think we have stereotyped cardboard impressions of one another. Maritimers, to most westerners, perhaps are fisherman. All westerners are farmers or something along that line. And of course, as we know, this is not even the substance of the people that are living in the area. People in the west are naturally concerned with agriculture. Most of them are not even engaged in agriculture any longer, but it is still a very fundamental and important part of the western economy.

But our press perpetuates the idea that we are limited to agricultural interests, or fishing interests, and so forth; and we forget that these people are interested in everything that goes on in this country.

MacDonald: A recent issue of *Maclean's* has devoted pages to what its editors interpret as new, positive nationalistic feelings in Canada. I, too, detect new nationalistic feelings emerging in Canada which are based more on a concern for building the country in our own image than isolating ourselves from the Americans. Assuming that this kind of feeling is going to grow and develop during the seventies, what will be Ottawa's role and how will the media react?

Wells: I think it's very difficult to predict either how the government or the media will react. I would say from travelling around western Canada that there are a great number of people who feel that nationalism has become some sort of an obsession in Ottawa, and that this country would be in a much better position and in harmony if we sort of just got along with the job, rather than always talking about it. With Quebec, there is a real desire to establish rapport, but they genuinely resist having desperate impromptu measures introduced all along the line. During the last two federal elections, for instance, the emphasis was on unity and nationalism when western political opinion, by and large, knew that the present economic crisis definitely was coming.

Now, I think we have to have sound economic development in all regions, which doesn't

necessarily mean that every region has to be self-sustaining or even have similar aspirations for population growth and so forth. Nevertheless, we have to have a basis for a good life for all regions of this country, and in the west we would say that these are things that we should be paying most of our attention to. If there was the genuine prospect of separatism by Quebec, I don't think it would disturb western Canada. It would disturb western Canada more from a feeling that we had failed, but not any threat to real nationhood.

I think television did a wonderful thing for the print media when it came. I've worked on newspapers, where prior to the advent of television, for instance, many aspects of foreign affairs in Africa, United Nations, were treated in a most superficial manner by papers which thought that if it happened outside the province, it goes down another fifty per cent. If it goes on outside the boundaries of Canada, it almost disappears. Whereas television, at least, did widen the area of curiosity. And those who had their area of curiosity widened started to look to the printed media for more information. So now we have people who are interested in a wider field, and somebody has to put it in print.

MacDonald: What is news?

Wells: I don't think we'd ever be able to really have agreement, even among newspaper people, as to what news is. News is basically whatever the news editor says is news — that's news. But we do know of various news areas which are underdeveloped or neglected and so forth. I think it's an abandonment of news on the part of a daily paper when it presumes to be, say, an afternoon paper, but finds that its deadline is at 10 o'clock in the morning, so that it can't even go down to city hall or to the legislative buildings, and get current comments on the subject under discussion. That is an abandonment of news. Of course, radio or television may cover it, but all too often they base their news broadcasts on what's in the newspaper. Again, we may have a certain listener who'd like to learn more about a situation through the print media, but his paper has nothing to add because the news editor has decided that its old stuff.

MacDonald: I am finding that whenever you talk about improving content, you are immediately given the argument by management that it is necessary to cut back on editorial space due to costs. Management keeps insisting that it cannot engage really competent editorial staff. The mass of obstacles in the way of producing a truly relevant publication in Canada is immense. But, at some point, we have to decide as a Canadian nation and individually as publishers and executive editors and middle management and editorial staff to overcome them. Now, I wonder whether we'll reach the stage where we have to have some sort of subsidy for information. We subsidize virtually everything in the country. If information is considered important — supremely important for Canadians — and to gather and disseminate it well is going to cost "X" dollars, how do we find that extra money to do the competent journalistic job required?

Wells: First of all, we'd have to find out what the cost really is. We can't take the word of the publishers because they're talking about a huge advertising vehicle. Here we

must look at a paper with a budget of, say, \$6 million overhead a year. It may have a staff of 400. It may have an editorial news staff of perhaps 90 or 100. But when we go through this entire structure, we find 60 per cent of its cost is based on servicing the advertising volume. So we have to find out what it really costs to turn out a good paper, and then examine where its revenues should come from. Now if we're going to get the revenue at, we'll say, a dollar a week, then we wouldn't need any advertising at all.

But in Canada we have a conditioned reader. The average person who is used to receiving a paper of 60 pages, that's all he knows. He thinks that's the way a paper ought to look. He hasn't had precise information given to him in focus, such as we see in certain elements of the European press. There are many European papers and there are some weekly papers like the *National Observer* in Washington which have brought about a new technique of journalism, which we

are ignoring, and yet, they are more interesting papers. One of the measurements of the mediocrity of the Canadian press is to go to a strange city and pick up the local paper, and after glancing at the front page ask: What else is there to read? There's very little to stimulate your interest in the affairs of the world.

We do know of excellent publications in the world today with huge circulations, which nevertheless inject a heavy intellectual ingredient. However, newspapers in North America insist, by and large, on reaching for the lowest common denominator. Their pages are full of incomprehensible articles, in contrast to much of the daily and Sunday press in a country like England. These papers manage to hold huge circulations and still carry strong intellectual content. I believe that the intelligence and the curiosity of man, and the common, everyday public is much wider than most newspapermen recognize.



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THE WRAPPING ISN'T NECESSARILY THE WHOLE PACKAGE

by THE EDITORS

Tinkering around with newspaper design and format is a tricky business. Very few papers which try ever manage real improvement. Changing the tinsel is useless, for new packaging does not a new paper make.

Many publications have been experimenting. The big failure of most in attempting a new look is that they don't go nearly far enough. Rather than charging out boldly to create a completely new visual style, they resort to such minor devices as different type faces and a reorganized opposite-editorial page. Some even may be so radical as to drop from eight columns to six.

An exception to the rule is the Montreal *Star*. It revamped its Saturday Entertainments section, from tabloid to broadsheet, and except for the occasional initial complaint proved that an Entertainments section could, indeed, be entertaining in form as well as in content. The two ingredients cannot be separated.

But the rule itself may be exemplified by the *Telegram* — now the *Toronto Telegram*, note. What it did this fall would send William Shakespeare into a rereading of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Had it not been for a series of full-page advertisements placed by the promotion department, it would be a safe guess

that many of the *Tely's* readers would have remained ignorant of what publisher John Bassett called the most significant changes in the paper's ninety-four year history.

The change at the *Tely* easily can be seen as a gasp for survival.

Ten years ago, the *Telegram*, a strong second among Toronto's three daily newspapers, was preparing to move into a spanking new building and was challenging the circulation leadership of the *Toronto Daily Star*.

Today, the *Star* is about to move into a high-rise waterfront edifice, has fattened its circulation lead, and the *Globe and Mail* has slipped ahead of the *Telegram* to become the city's second-largest paper, due in part to its new emphasis on regional bureaus across Canada.

When Bassett launched a \$200,000 promotion campaign at the time of the changes in graphics, he said they were being undertaken with the hope that the "financial difficulty" of the paper would be overcome.

The alterations, which did not affect the basic nine-column format, nine-point news-type or Bodoni-set headlines, essentially were a reorganization of the contents.

The juggling, so far at least, doesn't indi-

cate that the paper itself will be improved, nor will its rapport with the public. Insertion of "Toronto" in the masthead hasn't meant an increase in community orientation, although it makes sense that the *Tely* should strive for more local coverage since the *Star* and the *Globe and Mail* perform quite well in the national and international theatres.

The new format — essentially break-pages only, for the inside is as junky as ever, as are the inside pages of most newspapers — is a trifle grayer than previously. This does not indicate, however, that the *Tely* is to be any less concerned with drama; witness its coverage of the recent events in Quebec.

The editorial page was lifted from the first section to permit concentration on news to satisfy those who claim they can't tell one from the other. The editorial page, accompanied by a page of reader's letters and cartoons, moved to the second section under the title "Your World." Wisely, reader feedback has a larger forum.

The third section is being called "Contact" and features the "Action Line" column and classified advertising, which one assumes is regarded as contact among people.

The fourth section combines the women's and entertainment pages under the misused term "Life Style." If anything, any paper probably should be called "Lifestyles" for it is ridiculous to isolate patterns of living from the other concerns of man.

You certainly don't use the term in a singular sense. What the *Tely* seems to be doing in this section is lumping together fashion, food, entertainment — and strictly women's — and a miscellany which doesn't seem appropriate anywhere else.

On Saturdays, two additional standard-size sections are included — "On View," incorporating real estate news and classified, and "Travel." The Saturday paper also carries *Weekend* magazine, colour comics and the demi-tabloid *Toronto Week*, also entertainment-oriented, similar to a *Toronto Star* production. On Fridays, the *Tely* publishes a pocket-size TV weekly.

Audit Bureau of Circulation figures show that the *Telegram* has lost circulation during the past year, while the *Star* and the *Globe* have gained. The *Telegram* slipped from a six-day average of 242,805 at March 31, 1969, to 242,497 at March 31, 1970. Saturday circulation dropped from 298,311 to 293,633. The *Globe and Mail*, on the other hand, saw its six-day average climb from 255,733 to 264,277. And the *Star*, Canada's largest daily, had a six-day average last September of 386,013. That grew to 398,268 by the end of March. Saturday sales went from 466,181 to 489,279.

The structural changes in the *Telegram* are so minimal that a resurgence in the paper's popularity seems unlikely. Compartmentalization of editorial material is a laudatory step, however, and an emphasis on visual style can help make a newspaper appealing and inviting.

The *Tely* is trying, though, and that's more than can be said for most Canadian newspapers.

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WHERE DID ALL THE VIOLENCE GO?

It was thrown out with the garbage

by BOYCE RICHARDSON

A team from the Centre for Mass Communications Research at Leicester University (England) has made a thorough study of the press and television coverage of an event which it chose in advance — a great demonstration in the streets of London, held October 27, 1968, against the war in Vietnam.

Their totally humourless book about the investigation (a pervading solemnity is the mark of the communications researcher) is an excellent, dispassionate study of how we go about our work. Their findings are very discouraging.

They discovered that in the two weeks before the demonstration the newspapers defined the nature of the event-as-news and, having done so, then reported the event in relation not to what happened but to the framework they had provided for it. Led by the *Times* and the *Guardian*, two serious newspapers, the press decided in advance that the event was likely to involve violent clashes between police and demonstrators, and for two weeks they worked every conceivable news angle that would keep the story alive.

The most fruitful of these was the foreign student angle; then there was the scheme to occupy important buildings, the likely occupation of the London School of Economics; the splits within the organizing movements; and finally the discovery of the personalities behind the whole thing.

These angles fed on each other: the newspapers too. Eventually an MP got up to demand that all foreign scum be kept out of the country. Some student leaders in fact were banned from entry. Thousands of police turned up. The Home Secretary accepted the press's framework. When asked why they did not give prominence to the repeated assertions by the organizers that no violence was intended, the newspapermen told the researchers that it was not news.

Given this framework, what point in covering the main march, or the speeches made to 20,000 people in Hyde Park about the Vietnam war? These were not news. Everybody looked out for only one thing — violence. In fact the march was peaceful; a small group of demonstrators broke away in Grosvenor Square and tried to get through police barricades. This incident led the television news, and the press got their picture of P.C. Rogers being kicked in the face by a demonstrator. (Best Press Photograph for 1968!)

Some of the newspapers had it both ways: there was violence (though not much), which justified them; but it was not a violent march, not a riot, no occupations, the main march did not even go near the American Embassy, so they were able to write within the context of violence having been prevented by the wonderful British police. ("It couldn't have happened in any other country" — the patriotic angle).

Even more startling is the fact that though the press's framework was proven completely wrong, months later the *Times* was writing a leader which treated the fictional framework as if it were actual fact.

The researchers, it seems to me, are extremely gentle with the journalists. They

attribute the bias largely to professional and technical reasons. They tried to get at some meaningful definition of news value, but could not produce anything really coherent. They found their subjects unwilling, on the whole, to discuss news value, since the journalists appeared to believe that they had a sense of news as if by instinct.

An important concept is developed by the researchers: There is an "inferential structure" developed about an event which leads to a "process of simplification and interpretation which structures the meaning given to the story around its original news value" and which leads to "an unwitting bias."

My only quarrel with this is that the bias may not be so "unwitting" as the researchers claim. While there is no doubt a lot to their belief that the frequency with which the media appear structures the nature of the news they present, the researchers have examined only half the story. On their last page they say journalists should be trained to see positive news and turn away from the overwhelming concentration on individual events and élites, but they say even that would not fundamentally alter news selection. Then they hint at "institutional rearrangement." They add: "The selection and presentation of news is not simply a function of conscious attitudes and deliberate policies. It springs from an underlying frame of mind which itself is related to occupational and institutional arrangements."

Like, for example, the economic and social interests, unmentioned in this book, of the people who own the media and everything else?

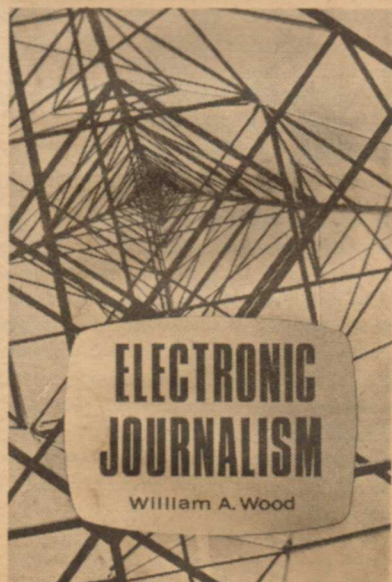


DEMONSTRATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: A Study. James D. Halloran, Philip Elliott and Graham Murdock. Penguin Books, 328 pages. \$1.50

Boyce Richardson, associate editor of the *Montreal Star*, spent most of the 1960s as the *Star's* resident correspondent in London.

INDIGESTION CAN BE UNPALATABLE

by WAYNE CLARK



ELECTRONIC JOURNALISM. William A. Wood. Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1967. 175 Pages. \$5.50

THE NEW FRONT PAGE. John Hohenberg. Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1966. 362 pages. \$8.75

Available in Canada through McGill Queen's University Press.

Few journalists would disagree that their responsibility today is larger than holding up a mirror to the world and saying, damn the consequences.

Riots, credibility gaps, the sheer weight of news, and the speed of today's communications have made such practice not only irresponsible but dangerous.

Much has been written about the effects of

TEACHERS OF JOURNALISM WANT IN

I have just read the brief account in *Time* of your new publication. May I offer my sincere congratulations; an effort such as this cannot but help improve our profession (or craft, as some would have it).

Here at Carleton, in the School of Journalism, we deal quite substantially with the increasing trend toward self-appraisal on the part of working journalists. Hence, I would be pleased if you might manage to place my name on your mailing list, as well as providing me with a copy of your first issue. I note that you expect subscribers to eventually contribute copy: I hope that expectation includes the growing number of teachers of journalism in this country who find themselves without ready forums of publication.

Joel Weiner, B. Sc., M.A.
Assistant Professor of Journalism
Sessional Lecturer in Political Science
Carleton University

TALKING "CONTENT" IS NECESSARY

I would very much like to be on your mailing list for *Content*. I'm writing personally because the ANG list won't include me — I remain outside for the very reason that it resolutely refuses to deal with any of the matters that you are threatening to deal with; in fact, I have been outside it since a number of years back when a group of us who attempted to talk "Content" were told formally that we must not attempt to act in the name of the Guild. But that's an old story.

This kind of thing is most necessary and I would like to offer, seriously, my fullest support.

Donald Stainsby
The Vancouver Sun

THE COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW OR NEIMAN REPORTS OF CANADA?

I have just read Vol. 1, No. 1 of your excellent publication *Content* and congratulate you on filling a conspicuous gap in Canadian publishing. Selection of material, layout, illustrations and writing quality are highly commendable. Particularly noted were the interview with Keith Davey, the article on *Le Droit*, the photo-journalism spread headed Shanghai 1949 and the "Academic as Journalist". The other articles which I have yet to read look equally good at first glance.

Content should become the *Columbia Journalism Review* or *Nieman Reports of Canada*.

Earle Beattie,
Professor
The University of Western Ontario

HALF READ BETTER THAN NOT AT ALL

Put me down on your list of subscribers. I thought at first your mag would be of the same ilk Harry Bruce bitched about in your first issue.

But I read about half your mag, and that's a better batting average than for most of the Indian Affairs communiqués. Good luck.

Don Thomas
Herald Outdoors
The Calgary Herald

THE MONEY, POWER AND GLORY ARE SO FAR AWAY

Regarding Harry Bruce's prayer, "Please Release Me," and its mention of the "yawn-making head," Three Indians Get Scholarships in Lethbridge. Please don't put dear old Lethbridge down. Read the material about us, Mr. Bruce.

Toronto, Montreal, the CBC, *Globe and Mail*, the money, power and glory are so damned far away from us. Lethbridge (it's in Alberta) has to do what it can to let the outside world know we're still here. Honest we are. At least we were when the Indians got their awards.

(Mrs.) Joan Bowman
Staff Writer
The Lethbridge Herald

BE SAUCY

Your first issue to hand and it looks good.

Keep clear of Ivory Towers, be saucy and stay out of the libel court and you will produce a publication that will fill a Canadian void. Best of luck.

Kenneth Lyall
Editor and Publisher
The Durham Reporter

A COPY, PLEASE?

Would you please send me *Content*. I am a journalist and a photographer and my husband is a professional photographer. We were both very interested in *Content* and what it has to say. Could we have an October issue, even if it is a little late. Everyone around here wants to hang onto theirs. Thank you.

Linda Turner
Editorial Dept.
The St. Catharines Standard

We're glad people want to hang onto their own copies, and sad we can't send you No. 1, because the stock has been depleted. We had, at last count, three for posterity. Ed.

AIR CANADA AD BRILLIANT

Enjoyed first copy of *Content* very much. Looks promising and will certainly be informative for news media personnel. Particularly glad to see the interview with Davey. And that Air Canada ad was brilliant, didn't you think? Agency should be proud!

Paul Sparkes, Editor
The Compass
St. John's, Newfoundland

HIGH AMONGST JOURNALS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

I want to congratulate you on the first issue of *Content* which I consider one of the brightest, most intelligent publications I have seen in Canada in my own lifetime of writing and editing for papers, magazines, and television. Size, shape, form and make-up place *Content* high amongst journals of special interest. I hope to make your name known in my circles and shall be pleased to assist in other way.

All the very best of luck, and a long and successful publication career for *Content*.

Norman Klenman
Galanty
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

CONGRATULATIONS

I read the first issue of your magazine with interest. The idea of a publication for journalists is an excellent one and I will not be alone in wishing you every success.

Ted Arnold
CFAC, Calgary

REFERENCE BOOKS WANTED

I'm pleased to see a publication of this type. It's long overdue. I notice you list a few reference books for journalists. A search of our (public) library shelves, and book stores, never seems to yield any dealing precisely with Canadian newspapers. Do you run into any?

Congratulations on your efforts. I'm looking forward to reading future editions. Every success with the venture.

(Miss) Blaire McKenzie, Editor
Juan de Fuca News-Review

There is, indeed, literature dealing specifically with newspapers and broadcasting in Canada and one is advised to contact university libraries if public facilities are lacking. Universities with courses or faculties in journalism and communications are recommended. Carleton in Ottawa probably could acquaint you with the existing catalogue. Special efforts will be made in the book review section to include information dealing with Canadian journalism. Readers are invited to submit reviews for publication — approximately 750 words — or advise *Content* of recommended books. Ed.

SORRY!

Where have I failed? Oh, I know I don't have a beard, but my hair is suitably long. And my press gallery credentials are in good standing. I can't type or spell and yet I write, so I must be a reporter. I read the *Fourth Estate* and the *Last Post* openly in this den of high finance. I scorn the coffee cliques of the old "Hill" men. But I didn't get a copy of *Content*.

Tell me the error of my ways — and send me a copy of Volume one, Number one.

Peter Calamai
Science Writer
Southam News Services

Many regrets, but the simple fact is that a number of bonafide journalists weren't included on the mailing list of the first issue. In compiling it, we worked from staff lists and directories obtained from media outlets across Canada. But not all were available immediately — hence our request for others to contact us directly. You did, you're on the list and you should be reading your own copy this very instant. Ed.

DO I QUALIFY?

Ross Munro of The Edmonton Journal recently sent me a copy of Volume 1, No. 1 of *Content*. I am not sure whether or not I qualify as a journalist. If I don't, please put me on your list anyway and send me a bill. If succeeding numbers are as good, it will be worth reading.

St. Clair Balfour
President
Southam Press Limited

You do. Ed.

the information explosion and the global village. No longer is the media's audience simply asked to digest a smattering of foreign strife, a few national unemployment statistics, and the baseball scores. It is now being asked to digest the growing unrest and starvation of most of the world, violent social conflict at home and, most indigestible of all, the real threat of environmental or nuclear destruction of man.

To lay that on the reader's or viewer's plate — unadorned — and to ask him to eat it is like asking him to commit himself to a mental hospital.

Although the authors of *Electronic Journalism* and *The New Front Page* don't discuss global village concepts per se, they do discuss the "garnishment" required in reporting the news today.

William A. Wood and John Hohenberg, both of Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism, make clear the necessity of "new journalism" — personal, interpretive journalism, journalism more committed to the public than it has ever been, journalism that is much more than "just reporting" the news.

However, to what degree this is necessary is an open question. As the president of CBS once said: "Certainly in ten years we will have an instant communications capability, world wide. But as to what we are going to say to the world when we have their attention, I'm not yet certain."

Both books are helpful in evaluating the status of today's journalism. Wood's *Electronic Journalism* traces the development of television journalism from its birth and perhaps is the more exciting of the two because television has not only gone so far so fast, it has had a more observable effect on events; the civil rights movement and political campaigning are two good examples.

What is also encouraging in these days of attacks on network news monopolies is his optimistic and thorough accounting of the growth of responsible and aggressive local news programming. While local stations can't afford the spectacular documentaries the networks produce, they can become intimately involved in communities. They can also do something which networks can't — editorialize.

Wood admits that concern about television editorializing is legitimate — be it in its strict form or one in which stations imply a position by emphasis through documentaries and regular news programming.

However, with the advent of multi-channel equipment and therefore more choice, that problem and the problem of network news monopolies may not exist in the next few years.

One failing of Wood's book is his almost cursory attention to radio today. The success of 24-hour news stations in the United States and the degree to which the public relies on

radio during major "live" events are just two indicators of radio's value. There are others and *Electronic Journalism* would have been an ideal framework in which to discuss them.

For anyone who occasionally has doubts about what the press can accomplish, John Hohenberg's *New Front Page* is inspiring. It's an anthology of the best examples of modern journalism, many of which brought their authors Pulitzer Prizes.

Between articles, Hohenberg discusses the reporting behind the stories and compares the methods of earlier years. Whereas a gangland murder could likely have led the day's news forty years ago, the top crime reporting today is more likely to involve complicated corporate fraud and government malfeasance. There was also little to compare with today's space age experts, or the foreign correspondents who had to fight their own war to get at what was really going on in Vietnam.

What Hohenberg has done in part is to describe the transformation of journalism from a trade into a profession and, by example, show the type of public responsibility journalists as professionals must assume.

From that aspect alone, it's worth reading.

LETTERS

The positive response to the appearance of *Content for Canadian Journalists* was more gratifying than anticipated even during our most optimistic moments. Our sincere appreciation is here and now expressed to the hundreds of people who contacted us. We trust that this and subsequent issues will maintain the standards about which some of the following correspondents write. The Letters-to-the-Editor page will, we hope, be a regular feature in which colleagues in journalism and related fields and professions isolated from public information speak their minds. It should become a forum; respond to the articles, take issue or agree, make suggestions about how we can better perform. For it is our aim to have *Content* reflect and explore the concerns and interests of all forms of journalism in all parts of the country.—*The Editors*

KEEP IT CANADIAN

I've just finished reading a second-hand copy of your magazine. It would be unfair to say anything about a first issue, but I can say it could fill a need. Never mind Spiro Agnew — please keep it Canadian.

I'm interested enough to ask you to send me further issues — and to wish you good luck.

Guy Demarino
Editorial Writer
Edmonton Journal

INTEGRITY CHALLENGED

In the first issue of *Content* there is reference (page four) to The London *Free Press* as among the "bad guys" of Canadian news-

papers. The inference from the article is that this newspaper is comparable in its editorial policies to what you feel are Canada's poorest newspapers.

If you had written that after having visited London and The London *Free Press* and after talking to people in this community and to our staff, I would accept your right to be wrong. As you have not, to my knowledge, done, either, I challenge your integrity as a journalist. You are obviously repeating second-hand rumour without any knowledge of the situation.

This is an ethical and responsible newspaper which shades its editorial opinion to suit no one...advertisers, professional groups, labour leaders, politicians, businessmen or anyone else. We have taken strong editorial positions against the social, political and economic ills of our society and equally strong stands in support of social, political and economic change.

Our news columns tell it like it is...ask any reporter. I challenge you to come to London, talk to students and administration at the university, Tory and Grit politicians, all economic levels of the city, this staff's reporters and editors, those who hate us and those who like us, and to me, and then go back and write another article for *Content*...telling it like it is, not the way you heard it on the grapevine.

I assume you will publish this letter to the editor in your next issue of *Content*.

William C. Heine, Editor
The London *Free Press*

The reference to "bad guys" in the interview with Senator Keith Davey may have been misread as a slight on the London *Free Press* and, if so, we apologize. However, whether the Senate Committee on Mass Media may have started its hearings with preconceived notions about heroes and villains in publishing was a valid question, especially in view of the excessive questioning directed at some of the people who appeared before the committee. The Senator

acknowledged the committee's concern about monopoly situations, as in London, but noted that the relationship with the *Free Press* was healthy and happy. Ed.

CLASSIFIEDS

25 cents per word of text (please indicate bold face words), 14 pt. display head \$2.00 per word, 24 pt. display head \$6.00 per word. Display classified billed at regular display rates after insertion, but all others payable in advance. Box numbers available at \$1.00.

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MICHENER AWARD

A new award for public service in journalism is expected to be conferred for the first time early next year.

It is the Roland Michener Award for meritorious public service in journalism. Governor-General Michener is the donor and the Federation of Press Clubs of Canada is the administrator.

The award will be given to a journalistic medium, rather than to an individual. Eligible are newspapers, magazines, news agencies, radio and television stations and broadcasting networks.

Judges for the first award, which will be for public service performed during the calendar year 1970, are: A. Davidson Dunton, president of Carleton University, Ottawa; George Ferguson, editor-emeritus of the Montreal Star; Yves Gagnon, director of the school of communication at Laval University, Quebec City; and Sam Ross, Vancouver, retired veteran news broadcaster.

The award emerged from the desire of the Federation of Press Clubs to become involved with professional upgrading, coincidental with the interest of the governor-general in donating a journalism award.

Since it was thought individual awards in journalism were well covered by the Toronto Men's Press Club National Newspaper Awards program, it was decided to establish the Michener award for journalistic media.

The award was conceived a year ago and final arrangements for the first competition were completed at the annual meeting of the Federation of Press Clubs at Moncton on Oct. 10.

The federation itself was established at a meeting in Kitchener in 1968. It is supported by most press clubs in Canada.

Deadline for entries in the first Michener Award competition is Feb. 15, 1971. Further information may be obtained from the secretary, Federation of Press Clubs of Canada, second floor, 150 Wellington St., Ottawa.

WINS \$1,000

John Harbron, associate editor of the Toronto Telegram, recently was presented with a Maria Moors Cabot Prize for "distinguished journalistic contributions to the advancement of inter-American understanding." He received the gold medal and \$1,000 honorarium at the October 29 presentation of the Cabot prizes at Columbia University.

Mr. Harbron, the third Canadian journalist to receive a Cabot gold medal, is regarded as an expert on inter-American topics. He helped plan the first Latin American conference in Canada in 1960. Last year,

he was the only newspaperman at the Canadian government seminar on Latin American policy and last spring he testified before the Canadian Senate's Committee on Foreign Affairs, answering questions regarding the Caribbean area.

The Cabot Prizes were established by the late Dr. Godfrey Lowell Cabot of Boston in 1939.



"That, Senator, makes it five hundred and fifteen thousand, three hundred and seventy-five dollars and twenty-six cents."

SENATE PROBE

Senator Keith Davey, chairman of the special Senate committee inquiring into operations of the mass media in Canada, recently reported that the cost of the probe to the taxpayer has mounted to \$515,375 so far. Almost half this total has been spent on research. Senator Davey's report, incidentally, is scheduled for release in early December. The final draft was written by the senator as publisher, the committee's executive assistant Borden Spears as editor and Alexander Ross, on leave from the *Financial Post*.

NOT WITH US?

Journalists receive Content free. If you have not received this issue personally addressed to you, send us your name, address, position and name of employer.

People who are not practicing journalists can receive Content for an annual subscription fee of \$5.00. Send a cheque or money order, with your name, address and occupation.

**CONTENT, for Canadian Journalists
Post Office Box 1778, Station B,
Montreal 110**

PEOPLE:

Nester W. Hryciuk, editor of the Prince Albert *Herald* editorial page, has resigned. He is a former reporter, sports writer and city editor.

Jack MacAndrew, formerly a Halifax-based newsman and now director of the Confederation Centre in Charlottetown, is acting as manager of singer-songwriter Gene MacLellan whose songs, including "Snowbird", are making Anne Murray famous.

The Toronto *Telegram* has closed its Moscow bureau after a six-year operation. Difficulties in dealing with USSR authorities, a stronger orientation to home and an austerity program were believed to be among the reasons.

The Fredericton *Gleaner* has been undergoing a face change these recent months, now that **Brigadier Michael Wardell** has retired and **Reg Wamboldt**, previously on the desk of the Montreal *Star*, has become editor-in-chief.

Late as it is, and familiar as it may be to the Atlantic Provinces, the death of general manager **Ben Isner** of the Moncton *Daily Times and Transcript* was followed by a sweeping reorganization of senior personnel. **J.G. Grainger** remains publisher, but former managing editor **Ed Larracey** assumes some of Isner's duties as do new advertising manager **John Ward** and business manager **Harold Crawford**. **Jim Nichol** is the new managing editor.

Malcolm Mayer of the *Financial Times of Canada* has left Montreal for either Victoria or Vancouver; no new position confirmed at deadline.

PRESSMEN GET RAISE

Five newspapers in British Columbia owned by Thomson B.C. Newspapers Ltd. have settled a contract dispute with their pressmen with a wage agreement offering an increase of about 28 per cent. A company spokesman said the agreement involves a \$1.02 package on a base rate of about \$3.75 over two years. The newspapers involved are the Kelowna *Courier*, Kamloops *Sentinel*, Penticton *Herald*, Vernon *News* and Nanaimo *Free Press*.

content

Published monthly by Reporter Publications (president: Harry E. Thomas) at Suite 1501, 550 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal 111, P.Q. Canada.

Subscription rate: \$5.00 per year. Distributed free to journalists in all media. Advertising rates on request.

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