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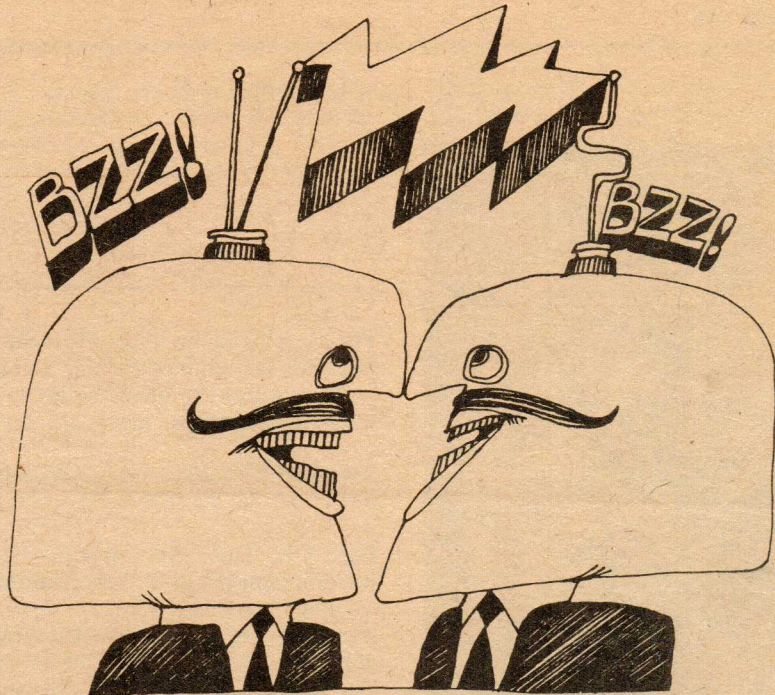
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content

for Canadian Journalists

PROFILE:
BERYL FOX

MEDIA 71



A CONFERENCE OF JOURNALISTS
UN COLLOQUE DE JOURNALISTES

- ST. CLAIR BALFOUR: PRESS FREEDOM
LIBERTE DE LA PRESSE
- DONALD CAMERON: REPORTER POWER
LE POUVOIR AUX JOURNALISTES
- DOROTHY HENAUT: OTHER VOICES
AUTRES VOIX
- CLAUDE PICHE: INFLUENCES
- TED SCHRADER: PROFESSIONALISM
PROFESSIONNALISME
- JEAN SISTO: STANDARDS
NORMES
- ERIC WELLS: PERFORMANCE
RENDEMENT

FILM-MAKER

Beryl Fox

**DISCUSSES:
SEVEN DAYS
THE SEVENTIES
PHOTO-JOURNALISM
CABLECASTING
SURVIVAL**



BERYL FOX won 13 major awards for five TV documentaries produced during three years for the CBC. Her *The Mills of the Gods*, filmed in Vietnam in 1965, probably has yet to be surpassed as a TV comment on that war. She now is married to Douglas Leiterman, her former boss on the controversial CBC-TV public affairs show, *This Hour Has Seven Days*, which was dropped in 1966. They live and work in an unpretentious brown brick house in North Toronto, the home of Hobel-Leiterman Productions Ltd. Their nine-month-old daughter Barbara coos in a playpen in the same room with files and films; the place smells of homemade soup, celluloid and fresh laundry.

As a producer, Beryl Fox is responsible for many of the documentaries in the 26-week series (recently extended to 52), *Here Come the Seventies*, being telecast on the CTV network. Hobel-Leiterman also has been granted a cable-TV licence covering part of eastern Metropolitan Toronto.

In this editing of a two-hour taped conversation with Toronto free-lance writer Barrie Zwicker, Beryl defends sensationalism and discusses why she chose to open each of the *Seventies* shows with a live nude woman; the value in retrospect of *Seven Days*, and how cable-TV just may give power over TV programming to the people. She also reveals publicly that she intends to leave TV journalism to make feature films—probably westerns and perhaps a comedy about the war in Vietnam—and why.

Fox: . . . it's a funny thing; I've done what you just did—in talking flip the switch (of the tape recorder)—to others so many times but when it happens to me I still get nervous.

Zwicker: TV journalism is our interest. Why don't you go ahead?

Fox: OK. Since we talked a week ago I haven't had time to sit down and think. Also, as much as I can I've avoided interviews because what I think is always changing. I don't have the kind of overall statements that are really useful in an interview, broad general theories about we must do this and Canada means that. I didn't come up through the ranks of reporting, as many did, through print media and then into reporting for television and then broader documentary films. I came up totally differently—originally as a secretary—but really through the social sciences. Everything that I've done has really been directed to the individual. I think in terms of the country but that's like fourth or fifth. So what I have is personal journalism, and in a way you have to demerit that, because personal journalism is filtered through one person's inabilities or one person's traumas or one person's hang-ups, so you can't always trust it. So in that case, is it really journalism, because I don't know what the definition is of journalism any more.

Zwicker: You deal in important topics, with how people can live, and with survival. Yet I've met people who say pollution is a fad, something the media thought up to sell papers, and that it will pass. How do you reach people? And do you think we're going to survive?

Fox: Well, professionally I know that you can't reach people unless they're listening. To a very real extent the role of television is not to give all the information—we're not an information bank—part of what we're supposed to do is motivate, titillate, to anger, to somehow move people off their butts. . . . In the series *Here Come the Seventies* we have to do investigative reporting. None of the experts will agree about the future; predicting is risky and so we have had to take a point of view, which is generally that human beings will survive.

If we pass information on in a way that says "Look, this is your world, you can change it. Decide now what kind of future you want." If our journalism has a higher purpose, that is its higher purpose.

Zwicker: To show people alternatives?

Fox: I don't mean the people who have a higher morality they try to live by. I mean the ordinary people who work, who have problems with their kids, have problems with themselves, have ordinary marriages, have ordinary incomes—the masses of people are the ones that I really care about. You cannot, because they are really loaded down with ordinary day-to-day problems, move them unless they believe it's in their self-interest.

Any contribution I can make through television is in making people understand that it's in their self-interest to end the war in Vietnam, to establish day-care centres, in their self-interest to free women, to live in racial harmony. You can argue the theory of this from today 'til tomorrow but unless you put it into dollars and cents, into something like better schooling for their own children. . . . they won't move. Why should they?

Before you convince anyone, you first have to get them, and the way to get them is not by the standard well-thought-out highly intellectual panel of experts; the way to get them if necessary is by a naked woman walking into the water. I have all kinds of other lovely rationales as to why we should use her. Because she represents fertility and Mother Earth, and the water represents life, and depending which meeting I happen to be at and who's attacking me and who's for me, I will trot out all my theses. But I happen to know that you grab people—you grab men, women and children—by having a naked woman walk into the water. I also know that the tolerance is such that it's got to be from the back. So the opening is a naked woman walking into the water and you sneak in the starving child, the Chinese hordes marching and singing or soldiers carrying backpacks. . . . So any film I make will always have the jazziest opening that I can get, and the one that's slightly irresponsible and what they used to say about *Seven Days* all the time which was. . . ah. . . what was the expression. . . I heard it so much I thought I'd never forget it. . . sensational. Grab them in the first three minutes.

We understand from the ratings that *The Seventies* is one of the most popular Canadian-produced shows on television, that it beats out shows like *Mannix* and a lot of pure entertainment shows.

Zwicker: *Seven Days* was not only watched by more people than had ever watched a public affairs program before, but that also included, surely, most intellectuals.

Fox: No, it didn't. *Seven Days* is still hated by an awful lot of people, and every time I get nostalgic for it I'm swatted down by somebody who says it was a rotten show, dishonest and arrogant and narcissistic.

Zwicker: I guess my experience was not typical then.

Fox: Well, you're younger; most of those who hated it were older or were in the CBC. One last comment on the self-interest bit we talked about: the most exciting thing that has happened really is that the younger generation has made morality a viable force. For cynics like me who say that the only way you get things accomplished is by making them in the individual's economic self-interest, the new morality is very exciting. I'm still not sure it works.

Zwicker: Do you also see your work as a TV journalist to be somewhat pure entertainment, providing nice experiences, valuable in themselves?

Fox: No, I certainly don't feel I'm doing that.

Zwicker: Then basically your shows are means to ends, the ends being to trigger thought and really to trigger social change?

Fox: It depends where you stand when you look at us. If you look at us dead on, we're a company. We have to make profits or we can't stay alive. From another point of view, there's no one in this little constellation with whom I work who is not concerned, enormously concerned, about the state of the world, the state of this society, or the state of the future. What we're doing is chipping at the mountain.

Zwicker: Is your audience changing? How much do you pay attention to ratings?

Fox: Ratings are not the end-all, but without ratings you have no idea what's happening. Is anybody listening, is anybody watching, or are you just talking to yourself or your friends and relatives? The fact that shows live or die by ratings is very bad, because good shows die for the wrong reasons. If you go by what lives or dies on the air, audiences are not changing for the better at all. Public affairs programs and public information programs are still as lowly as ever, except ours.

Zwicker: Is there any reason to believe that younger people watch more or less television than previously?

Fox: According to the last "statistics" I heard about, younger people are not watching television; they're going to films, and older people are watching television and they're not going to films. I suspect, I hope, that cable will change that. I think part of the reason that young people are not watching television is because they are not in it. Television is really run by older people...

It's also very hard for young people to get into TV. At the present, it's not an expanding industry and you've still got encrusted personnel who are damned if they are going to give up their jobs.

Zwicker: Where do journalists in television come from?

Fox: It's a smallish market and there's a very high mortality rate among the small film companies, but I would think that they should be the real training ground for film. We are constantly looking for good film journalists. One of the reasons I was so interested in *Content* was to look through it to see if I could find the guys who could write visually because we are hungry for them. Our problem has been that there are an awful lot

of people looking, and not that many really talented people.

Zwicker: So a lot of people come to you with dreams of glory?

Fox: Most are willing to work their hides off. We have to choose the ones that seem to have the combination we need—an ability to see things visually, administrative capability because when you're out with your crew you have to be a unit manager. You have to be creative when you start putting film together. You have to be capable of listening to others and incorporating. You have to work with a team, and you have to be determined to get your story. If you're turned down three times that's nothing, that's just the first round.

You have to believe in your product. You often come onto situations where you have to behave like a pig, but you've got to evaluate your actions in terms of who you might be hurting and in terms of what will the larger benefit be. This sounds like a rationalization but every journalist knows it to be true. You have to decide who you're going to lie to and who you're not going to lie to...

There are a lot of people in Edmonton or in Nanaimo, people who really have talent and don't know which way to go, or how to develop their talent and how to exploit it. If I were making a public address, I would say that the best thing to do is to try to get to a school so that you can find out if the talent is real. You can hone it, you can learn the vocabulary and you can find out who's doing what. You get into the environment and start sorting things out for yourself. Maybe you're not supposed to be a director; maybe you're supposed to be a cameraman. The other advantage is that it gives you a little more time to think about it before you go knocking on doors, exhausting and frustrating yourself and finally going back to Nanaimo.

Zwicker: Which schools?

Fox: There are a number of good schools. I think Ryerson is particularly good.

Zwicker: There's a lot of hit-and-miss, isn't there?

Fox: I think luck is a form of hard work. I think talent is mostly hard work and a little information and a little bit of creativity but mostly hard work. The best thing people can do is to get a little training. If they already are journalists, that's pretty important. If we can see something that they've done and it's the kind of thing we enjoy reading and learning from, boy that is very exciting.

Zwicker: Where is television going?

Fox: I don't know, despite the fact that I am up to my neck in this program about the future. The only thing I do know and care about very much—and that's only partly because we're into it—is cable. I believe that cable is going to change the social fabric. Up to now the airwaves have been owned by corporations who decide what's best. They decide by ratings or by advertising or what can make the most money.

When a community owns time and owns the right to broadcast for itself, it's very, very exciting. For one thing the citizen suddenly becomes aware of his *power*. I don't think that's going to corrupt people; I think it's going to mean that they talk to each other.

Zwicker: Is Hobel-Leiterman specifically planning to have feedback mechanisms in its cable operation?

Fox: Oh yes, this is what I think turns all of us on.

Zwicker: All media to all the people?

Fox: Yes, and not to be Utopian about it, there are lots of things wrong. If you have a fascistic community it's going to get on the air and it's going to propound its own ideas. The thing is that you have to allow the community to work out its own destiny; what you are doing is giving them access. The programming is fairly obvious. We make sure the high school kids have access to their own time so that they can talk to each other, so they can talk to the community. You also make sure that various ethnic groups have their own time...

Zwicker: What are the implications, for journalists, of giving the media back to the people?

Fox: One involves the way the TV journalist gets his training. As a student you could get credits for canvassing your neighborhood or organizing litter-cleanup parties, talking with your local police or firemen. You would learn to handle information in a way which is relevant to the people in the community, so that people would become really excited about their communities, would no longer be alienated from each other—little nuclear families living in private little houses and not communicating with their neighbors who live three blocks away.

Zwicker: What about the cassette?

Fox: I don't know anything about it.

Zwicker: Well, I'm no expert either, but there has been this bally-hoo that you have this thing on your TV and you can pick up and record a program and play it back whenever you want. What social consequences, if any, do you see?

Fox: Once EVR (electronic video recording) catches on, there'll be a lot more life within the home. A lot of education will move out of the school and come home. Very nice, because a reason for family groups busting up is simply that, people have to go outside the home for personal satisfaction and growth. EVR could help the family start interacting again as a group.

Zwicker: One critic of EVR claims the opposite, that EVR will essentially be like phono discs with a picture. He calls it "congealed information." In other words, all the consumer-oriented programs that treat people like ciphers will simply be home recordable and played back...

Fox: He's absolutely right. You can put Shakespeare and all the classics on EVR or you can put on endless comic books. But cassettes? I can't help thinking they will be useful. Who wrote the Forsythe Saga?

Zwicker: Galsworthy.

Fox: How many people have read Galsworthy?

Zwicker: Well, since the Forsythe Saga on television, lots.

Fox: Okay, a lot of people are becoming aware of what life was like at that time. It can be done. These things can be done, and I guess the question is who's going to control it? When television licenses were first assigned, General Sarnoff said that television was going to belong to the people. Well, it hasn't turned out that way at all, and now we're saying the same thing about cable; we're saying the same thing about EVR, and maybe it won't turn out that way, but let's try. There are those of course who say that people get what they deserve and it may be that all they want is entertainment.

Zwicker: What people think they deserve is partly in the hands of the media. Is it possible for us to make breakthroughs in communications by arranging for people to experience alternative futures? I know of one proposal in which a community would set aside a day to simulate a disaster such as a fatal smog. The various authorities and as many people as possible would act out the event and the press, radio and TV would cover it as live. Then there would be an analysis and discussion through the media. People would get a feeling for this potential future. There could be a whole series of futures, not just disasters.

Fox: You know, what you are saying is very right and I wonder about it a lot. Just how do you break through this pattern of lethargy? It's quite true that when a catastrophe happens, like in Los Angeles with the earthquake, people came together very quickly... in a way they never had before. It's very interesting, but putting something like that together is mammoth.

Zwicker: What has been the legacy of *Seven Days*?

Fox: To me the most exciting thing about it was the realization that you could get so many people interested in public affairs. The other thing was that a lot of people believed that program belonged to them and cared about it. When *Seven Days* was being slaughtered, I heard one woman say: "They

\$5 REMINDER

This is Issue No. 6 of *Content*. When the magazine was being born, a mailing list was compiled from directories and staff lists provided by editors in many news media outlets. Journalists not included subsequently have asked that their names be added. It seems imperative that, economics being a fickle world, practising journalists will be invoiced in due course. In the meantime, non-journalists on the mailing list were billed last month. Of those who haven't already done so, a \$5 cheque or money should be remitted immediately (for 12 issues, effective March) to ensure continued receipt of *Content*.

can't do that to our program." You know, that kind of thing was very important to us. And the other thing was that the program performed a kind of ombudsman role, perhaps not as well as it could have or should have, but that sort of thing is desperately needed.

It's not the end point of television, but it is one step along the way to bring people back to, oh, the classic role of the citizen determining his own future. The first thing to do is to think about it, talk with your neighbors and then transmit it all the way down the line, to the levers of power, to Parliament, to your representatives.

Zwicker: Did *Seven Days* win some extra freedom for journalists around *CBC* and elsewhere?

Fox: No, I think there was a real reaction against it at *CBC*.

Zwicker: What are you doing now?

Fox: Working as a director on the continuation of the *Seventies* series.

Zwicker: You mentioned the brain. What are some of the other topics you are considering?

Fox: That are coming up? Now let's see. We have poverty, the family, war, weapons and armaments, ecology—I suppose by that I mean survival—cinema, oceanography. What else have we got? Physics, labor, religion, computers, architecture of the future, man versus authority, music...

Zwicker: After the current series, what?

Fox: Well, I'd like to get into feature films. Doug and Phil feel that one of the directions they want to go with their company is features, and that just happens to coincide with my interest also in features. All of us are getting very frustrated with the limitations of our medium, the documentary. In terms of personal professional growth there is something pretty exciting about features. Feature films are changing as well; they're coming closer to documentary style and documentary style is coming closer to feature film style. Something new is evolving...

Zwicker: I think of *Easy Rider* and *Little Big Man*...

Fox: I wish I had made *Little Big Man*, because I like that very much. I'd like to do westerns, at least one western, in fact that's what I'm working towards. The things that interest me primarily are comedies, because I think comedy is the very hardest thing to achieve... Bernard Shaw said "if you want to make people see themselves, you'd better make them laugh or they'll kill you." For instance I can even see... well I'm not sure enough about comedy at this point to say I'm going to make a comedy on the war in Vietnam.

Zwicker: Do you wish you'd done *M.A.S.H.*?

Fox: I couldn't have done *M.A.S.H.* There are certain things I understand. But with features, it's not enough to understand; you have to be able to teach it, project it.

Anyway, probably the first feature will be a western comedy, partially because I love

westerns. They're fairy tales, with simple everlasting values and they're great fun to make fun of.

Zwicker: How long have you been thinking about this?

Fox: After I did *Last Reflections on a War*, I had this sure feeling that I was preaching to the converted, that I wasn't reaching the average Canadian or the average American.

Zwicker: But comic westerns just don't seem compatible...

Fox: I'm just looking for a new way... In television journalism and documentaries, you're not exposed personally. The statement is never supposed to be your statement; you always find someone who is an expert, or find people whose situation demonstrates what it is you want to say, but the director or producer is not directly exposed. You manipulate celluloid; you're hiding behind other human beings. With a feature film you're laying your own talent on the line, you're really laying yourself on the line.

M.A.S.H. is a good comedy and it probably did more for the anti-war cause in terms of reaching middle America...

Zwicker: Where are you at, planning this?

Fox: I'd like to shoot this summer.

Zwicker: What kind of comedy, what format exactly?

Fox: I suppose from time spent with the army and from time spent dating and from time spent married, I have some ideas about men, and I guess... it would be fun to make a loving comedy about men. The other thing I'd like to do is women. I know that politically this is the best time to do something about women. Probably I could do something that other people couldn't because my experience with them is not just North American and because I like and admire them so much. I think I have a pretty realistic assessment of how unbelievably foul and vulgar they can be, how mysterious they can be in terms of cosmic purposes, how ignoble—worse than men could ever be—while they can be unbelievably beautiful. I'd like to encapsulate that.

Zwicker: My final question is—and it's damnable to leave Canadianism to the last, which I didn't mean to do...

Fox: I'm not sold on Canadianism anyway.

Zwicker: But you are a Canadian...

Fox: To be a Canadian? It's an awfully good passport to have.

Zwicker: But it would seem in some ways as if the country was in danger... you don't believe that?

Fox: No, and I get very tired of the fears of economic takeover...

Zwicker: Well, what about cultural penetration, if you want to call it that?

Fox: If you're sure you want to talk about that, we'll talk it out. Why don't you make something up and put it in there?

Zwicker: No, you answered it of course.

for people
with a taste
for
something
better...



today's du MAURIER

PROGRAM

SATURDAY, MAY 1

- 10.15 a.m. Opening plenary session
Speakers: Senator Keith Davey; Beryl Fox, film producer; Gilles Gariépy, president, Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec.
- 12.00 Lunch.
- 2.00 p.m. **Confronting today's media workshops:**
 - Power and Ownership*—are review boards the right response?
 - Other voices*—are development/aid funds the right response?
 - Media performance*—did the Senate committee give the public a coherent and valid appraisal?

(NOTE: Workshops are to be audience-participatory, and position papers prepared for the conference are to be used as a basis for discussion only.)

- 5.00 p.m. Adjournment until Sunday morning.
- Evening Entertainment, National Press Club

SUNDAY, MAY 2

- 9.30 a.m. Plenary breakfast
Speakers: Claude Ryan, Montreal Le Devoir; Peter Gzowski, Toronto free-lance broadcaster and writer.
- 10.30 a.m. **Planning tomorrow's media workshops:**
 - Journalistic freedom, control and accessibility*—are press councils and journalists' organizations the right response?
 - Search for journalistic standards*—how, what, when, where, why.
 - Media upcoming*—new directions, new techniques.
- 1.00 p.m. Lunch
- 2.30 p.m. Plenary session—reports from workshops. Discussion. Consideration of resolutions. *Senator Davey will be present.*
- 5.00 p.m. Adjournment and closing.

MEDIA 71

REGISTRATION INSCRIPTION

A CONFERENCE OF JOURNALISTS
UN COLLOQUE DE JOURNALISTES
OTTAWA
MAY 1-2 MAI

Name _____ Tel. Home _____
Nom _____ Tél. à domicile _____

Position/employer _____ Tel. Office _____
Poste/employeur _____ Tél. au bureau _____

Mailing address _____
Adresse _____

Registration fee: _____ Cheque _____ Cash _____ Money order _____
Cotisation: \$10.00 Chèque _____ Comptant _____ Mandat _____

— Please reserve hotel room for me (\$16.50-\$20 nightly):
Veuillez me réserver une chambre d'hôtel (\$16.50-\$20 par nuit) :

For nights of: _____ Pour les nuits du : _____
Fri. April 30 _____ Vendredi, 30 avril _____
Sat. May 1 _____ Samedi, 1er mai _____
Sun. May 2 _____ Dimanche, 2 mai _____

- Please arrange billeting if possible
Veuillez, si possible, me loger chez un particulier _____
- Will arrange own accommodation
Je ferai des démarches personnelles au sujet du logement _____
- Will need transportation subsidy
Je désire une aide financière défrayant le coût du transport _____

Make cheques and money orders payable to: Media 71
Etablir tout versement à l'ordre de : Média 71

Send registration form to: Media 71, 2082 Clark St., Montreal 129, Quebec
Retournez cette formule d'inscription à : Média 71, 2082, rue Clark, Montréal 129, P.Q.

There's little to say about the Media 71 journalists' conference now except that it's on: May 1-2, Skyline Hotel, Ottawa, and attendance likely will be in the vicinity of the projected 250.

Registration forms arriving at the conference mailing address (2082 Clark St., Montreal) reflect a wide representation from all media and from across Canada. A few people from distant points have requested transportation subsidies and arrangements are being finalized to provide travel aid.

In this respect, a request to publishers and broadcast station owners for freewill contributions to an independent travel fund has been reasonably successful. A list of contributors will be published in the May issue of *Content*. Individual registration fees of \$10 will cover administrative expenses.

Plans have been made to install simultaneous translation facilities for the conference's plenary sessions and workshops. The bilingual nature of the two-day symposium is seen in this issue of *Content*, which publishes position papers in English and French. The position papers, designed only as departure points

for discussion, will be available at the conference in an information kit for delegates. They'll be supplemented by papers which arrived too late for publication in *Content*.

Rooms (\$16.50 to \$20) remain available at the Skyline Hotel. Arrangements also have been made to provide billeting for those who don't wish to stay at the hotel or with friends in Ottawa. A note to the casual dressers: the Skyline has fairly strict rules regarding attire in lounges and dining rooms, so women should pack dresses, skirts or pant-suits, and men should remember to bring along jacket and tie.

The registration desk will be functional Friday, April 30 from 4 to 10 p.m. for early arrivals, from 8.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 1 and from 8.30 a.m. to noon on Sunday, May 2.

The National Press Club of Canada (150 Wellington St., Ottawa) has recognized the importance of the Media 71 conference and has postponed its annual meeting by one week to May 8. Club executives, who welcome all delegates to the bar, are organizing special entertainment for the

evening of May 1.

The national Ad Hoc Steering Committee, and the core planning body of journalists in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, have set a two-pronged objective for the conference: an examination of the report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media and a look beyond the committee's conclusions, with emphasis on the practice of journalism in Canada. Whether conference delegates reach a consensus on any topic is of less concern to the organizers than the fact that journalists from across the country are gathering, for the first time ever, to discuss common interests and difficulties.

Among groups officially endorsing the conference are the Canadian Society of Professional Journalists, Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, Association of English-Media Journalists of Quebec, Canadian Women's Press Club and the Association of University Journalism Teachers.

Last-minute information can be obtained from: Media 71, 2082 Clark St., Montreal 129, Que. Tel. (514) 845-1529, or from *Content*.

LEGISLATION CAN BE INTIMIDATING

by ST. CLAIR BALFOUR

The Special Senate Committee on Mass Media was a worthwhile exercise. It has made the communications industry examine itself critically and it has gathered together and published much useful data. It is unfortunate that the report itself contains a number of factual errors.

The most serious of these is the charge that the Vancouver newspapers took no editorial position in defence of the *Georgia Straight* and that newspapers generally are not really concerned about the question of press freedom, especially where their own revenues are not affected.

An allegation that a newspaper is not really concerned with freedom of the press is surely one of the most serious which can be made about a publisher. A careful examination of the facts will show that the statements made in the report, including those made in the research papers published as part of the report, as to the Vancouver newspapers' treatment of the *Georgia Straight* matter are false and that, therefore, the conclusions are erroneous.

As to the committee's recommendations, I would accept most of them and I would support many of them. There are two to which I object because they constitute a danger to press freedom.

The committee urges the government to

establish a press ownership review board with broad terms of reference including, "all transactions that increase concentration of ownership in the mass media are undesirable and contrary to the public interest unless proved otherwise". The report goes on to say "...it would be up to the board to define its own criteria of the public interest... what would be likely to happen to the editorial character of the newspaper to be purchased in view of the purchaser's past performance on the newspapers he already owns in relation to the profits they generate. The onus should be on the purchaser... to demonstrate that he is in as good or a better position to serve the public interest than is the present owner".

In my view, some of the suggested terms of reference are subjective and highly dangerous. The committee states that the criteria would have to be "fairly subjective". They could give the federal government a very wide power to direct and limit the growth of the press. While it is undoubtedly undesirable that there be a concentration of press ownership which inhibits competition, equally it is undesirable that the press be controlled by the government, directly or indirectly, because in some cases, it constitutes the most effective opposition to the government. The suggested criteria are so broad

they could be used by a government or its nominee for the purpose of controlling the press if they were inclined to do so.

In any case, it is objectionable to give a tribunal the right to make decisions using such general criteria that no one can predict in advance what the decision is likely to be and to permit the decision maker to come to conclusions guided largely by what he himself believes to be desirable.

Such legislation is dangerous. It is particularly dangerous in the case of the press because the press in a free society constitutes an essential source of criticism of the government.

It is suggested "the board should function as the CRTC does—as a tribunal empowered to issue binding decisions, not merely recommendations to the Cabinet...". In my view, the great powers exercised by the CRTC have had a definite effect on the expression of opinion by those governed by the CRTC. If such a body had a power over the press which could be exercised so as to endanger its future, I have no doubt that such a power would constitute an inhibiting influence. One has only to look abroad to see that this is so.

It is suggested that there should be no limit to the right of the review board to examine mergers. It would be proper under this to examine the purchase of a weekly by a daily,

even though both were subject to effective competition. Surely, if there was to be such an examination, it should be on the basis of some very objective criteria which determine how it shall be made.

Such power in the hands of a tribunal could very well change the whole nature of a company. If dynamic changes occur in the nature of communications, the power to prevent any newspaper from making acquisitions or entering into joint ventures to meet such changes will give to the holder of that power tremendous influence over the future of newspapers. Such a board could exercise a moulding influence over the future of the press of Canada. I do not believe any government body should have such wide powers.

The power to legislate with respect to freedom of the press is clearly a matter for the federal Parliament; the Alberta press decision established this. I submit that this is a power which Parliament should zealously guard and not fritter away by conferring such wide discretions on a tribunal because Parliament will have little conception as to how the tribunal may regulate the future of the press. The importance of a free press to a democracy is so vital that Parliament should be very loath to delegate wide powers of supervision to any other body. It should be reluctant, I submit, to place any body in a position of such power that its approbation may be so vital to the future of a newspaper that the newspaper may be loath to incur its displeasure.

The proposal that there should be no limit

on the basis of circulation of the board's powers to rule on proposed mergers or takeovers would open up the whole press to a regulation which could have most unfortunate results. In England, the powers of the Board of Trade are limited to cases where there appears to be some real possibility of a danger to competition.

It would appear that the committee has failed to recognize that the public has two different interests to be served. One is in having a number of competing voices in the community, but equally important is the maintenance of a free press which cannot be intimidated by threats of great limitations on its future from its duty boldly to criticize the government. If it does its job properly, the press is unlikely to be popular with the government and therefore with any future body nominated by the government.

If some government authority has power to approve or disapprove any sale or acquisition of a newspaper by subjective standards, its power over publishers will be very great. It seems to me that the interests of freedom of the press make it essential that the legislation as to takeovers apply only to cases where the takeover is likely to represent a reduction in competition and where there is a shortage of other competitive voices which would secure the public interest.

In its brief to the committee, Southam Press opposed the establishment of a special board, but said that it was prepared to accept broader Combines legislation. This legislation should prevent excessive concen-

tration of ownership but the criteria should clearly delineate the powers to prohibit mergers. They should be definite so that persons governed by them would have a clear idea of what mergers might be prohibited.

Mergers should only be prohibited where it is clear that the merger will constitute a danger to the continuance of competition in the media in the area. It should be recognized that a merger of a failing newspaper is preferable to its death.

Any legislation governing the press should recognize the limitations on the part of anyone to predict the future and the authority should have power to interfere only when there is a clear danger to the continuance of competition.

Even if administered by dedicated people there is a risk, but if administered by persons who are not dedicated to the maintenance of a free press, it could constitute a very great danger to a free society in this country.

The second recommendation about which I am concerned is the proposal to establish a publications development loan fund. Although the terms proposed by the committee constitute a substantial protection against its abuse, nevertheless I believe the development of such a fund would almost inevitably lead to abuses. Furthermore, a publication which is dependent on government financing cannot, by its very nature, be considered free of government influence.

St. Clair Balfour is president of Southam Press Limited.

LES MESURES LEGISLATIVES PEUVENT ETRE INTIMIDANTES

MEDIA 71

par ST. CLAIR BALFOUR

Le travail effectué le Comité spécial du Sénat sur les moyens de communications de masse a été profitable. Ce comité a incité l'industrie des communications à faire un sérieux examen de conscience; il a en outre recueilli et publié plusieurs renseignements intéressants. Il est regrettable toutefois que son rapport contienne plusieurs erreurs de faits. La plus sérieuse est l'accusation portée contre les journaux de Vancouver qui, selon le comité, n'auraient pas adopté une attitude défensive dans leurs éditoriaux, à l'égard de l'affaire du *Georgia Straight*, et contre les journaux en général que la question de liberté de presse ne préoccuperait pas véritablement, surtout lorsque leurs propres intérêts financiers ne sont pas menacés.

Une accusation de ce genre, à savoir qu'un journal se soucie peu du problème de liberté de presse, est l'une des plus graves qui puisse être portée contre un éditeur. Un examen soigné de la situation indiquera que les déclarations de ce rapport—y compris celles des travaux de recherches publiés dans ce rapport—sur la façon dont les journaux de Vancouver ont traité la question du *Georgia Straight* sont fausses et que, par conséquent, les conclusions qui en ont été tirées sont également fausses.

Quant aux recommandations du comité, je les accepte pour la plupart et serais prêt à en appuyer plusieurs. Il en est deux, cependant, auxquelles je m'oppose car elles constituent

un danger pour la liberté de presse.

Le comité exhorte le gouvernement à établir un Conseil de surveillance de la propriété de la presse dont la loi habilitante aurait comme principe: "toutes les transactions qui augmentent la concentration de la propriété des moyens d'information sont indésirables et contraires à l'intérêt public à moins de preuve du contraire". Le rapport ajoute: "il incomberait au Conseil de définir ses propres critères en matière d'intérêt public... à quel avenir le contenu du journal en cause semblerait-il promis, compte tenu de ce qui se fait dans les journaux que l'acheteur possède déjà et des profits que rapportent ces journaux. C'est à l'acheteur qu'il devrait incomber de démontrer qu'il est aussi bien ou mieux placé pour servir l'intérêt public que le propriétaire du moment".

A mon avis, certaines parties du mandat suggéré sont subjectives et très dangereuses. Le comité déclare que les critères devraient être "assez subjectifs". Ils pourraient attribuer au gouvernement fédéral un très grand pouvoir de diriger et de limiter la croissance de la presse. Une concentration d'entreprises de presse où ne serait pas stimulée la concurrence est sans contredit indésirable; il n'est également pas à souhaiter toutefois que le gouvernement ait mainmise sur la presse, que ce soit directement ou indirectement, car c'est elle qui, dans bien des cas, constitue l'opposition la plus valable.

Les critères suggérés sont tellement généraux qu'ils pourraient être utilisés par le gouvernement, ou un agent choisi par lui, dans le but de faire main basse sur la presse s'il le désirait.

De toutes façons, il est très discutable que l'on confie à un tribunal le soin de prendre des décisions basées sur des critères tellement généraux que personne ne puisse prédire la nature éventuelle des décisions; il est également controversable que l'on permette à celui qui prend la décision de tirer des conclusions qui soient grandement influencées par ses convictions personnelles.

Une législation de ce genre est dangereuse. Elle l'est tout particulièrement lorsque la presse est concernée, car la presse, dans une société libre, constitue une source essentielle de critique à l'endroit du gouvernement.

Il est proposé que "le Conseil devrait fonctionner comme le CRTC, c'est-à-dire comme un tribunal spécial ayant le pouvoir de prendre des décisions exécutoires, et non pas seulement d'adresser des recommandations au Cabinet...". J'estime que les pouvoirs dont est investi le CRTC ont eu une influence certaine sur les opinions exprimées par ceux qui sont sous sa tutelle. Si un tel organisme avait quelque pouvoir sur la presse, exercé de façon à mettre l'avenir de celle-ci en péril, il ne fait aucun doute, selon moi, qu'un tel pouvoir constituerait une influence inhibitrice. L'on a qu'à regarder ce qui se

pas ailleurs pour constater la véracité de ce fait.

Il est proposé que ne soit pas restreint le droit du Conseil de surveillance d'analyser les possibilités de fusion. Dans cette optique il conviendrait d'analyser l'achat d'un hebdomadaire par un quotidien, même si tous deux faisaient l'objet d'une concurrence efficace. Il est certain que si un examen de ce genre devait avoir lieu, il devrait se baser sur des critères très objectifs qui en détermineraient la marche à suivre.

Ce pouvoir, entre les mains d'un tribunal, pourrait très bien changer tout le caractère d'une compagnie. Si des changements d'envergure surviennent quant à la nature des communications, l'organisme investi du pouvoir d'empêcher tout journal de faire des acquisitions ou des coalitions dans le but de mieux faire face à ces changements, aurait du même coup acquis une influence sans bornes sur l'avenir de la presse au Canada.

J'estime qu'aucun organe gouvernemental ne devrait être investi de pouvoirs aussi importants.

Tel qu'établi par la décision de l'Alberta Press, c'est définitivement au Parlement fédéral qu'appartient le droit de légiférer en matière de liberté de presse. Je suis d'avis que c'est un droit que le gouvernement doit jalousement conserver et non annihiler en le confiant à un tribunal, car le Parlement ne pourra avoir qu'une idée vague de la façon dont le tribunal décidera de l'avenir de la presse. L'importance que représente la liberté de presse pour une société démocratique est tellement vitale que le Parlement répugnerait à confier à un autre organisme de tels pouvoirs de contrôle. Il hésiterait, je crois, à investir d'un tel pouvoir quelqu'organisme que ce soit : en effet, il serait tellement vital pour l'avenir d'un journal d'être dans les bonnes grâces de cet organisme qu'il pourrait hésiter à faire quoi que soit qui puisse attirer sur lui son mécon-

tement.

La suggestion selon laquelle on ne devrait pas, pour des raisons de tirage, limiter les pouvoirs du Conseil, de surveiller les fusions ou les acquisitions, rendrait la presse sujette à des règlements qui pourraient entraîner des conséquences des plus regrettables. En Angleterre, les pouvoirs du Board of Trade sont limités à des cas qui semblent présenter quelque véritable possibilité de danger pour la concurrence. Il semblerait que le comité ait omis de reconnaître qu'il existe deux intérêts différents à servir chez le public. L'un consiste à maintenir un certain nombre de forces concurrentielles dans la société; mais il importe également de maintenir une presse libre qui ne cède pas à des menaces visant à mettre son avenir en jeu, et qui chercheraient à l'éloigner de son rôle, celui de critiquer vigoureusement le gouvernement. Si la presse fait bien son travail, il est peu probable qu'elle soit populaire aux yeux du gouvernement et, par conséquent, aux yeux de tout organisme choisi par celui-ci.

Si une autorité gouvernementale a le pouvoir d'approuver ou de désapprouver, en se basant sur des normes subjectives, la vente ou l'achat d'un journal, son pouvoir sur les éditeurs sera très étendu. Il me semble qu'il est essentiel, dans l'intérêt d'une presse libre que les mesures législatives sur les acquisitions se limitent aux situations dans lesquelles cette acquisition est susceptible d'entraîner un affaiblissement de la compétition et à celles où il y a pénurie de forces concurrentielles, qui assureraient l'intérêt public.

Dans le mémoire qu'elle a présenté au comité, Southam Press s'oppose à la création d'un Conseil spécial mais a ajouté qu'elle était disposée à accepter une législation plus étendue. Cette législation empêcherait une concentration excessive de la propriété mais ses critères délimiteraient de façon précise les pouvoirs d'empêcher les regroupements.

Il faudrait que ces pouvoirs soient clairement définis de façon à ce que les personnes concernées puissent avoir une idée exacte du genre de regroupement susceptible d'être interdit.

Une fusion ne devrait être interdite que dans le cas où elle menacerait la prolongation d'une compétition entre les organes d'information d'une région.

Il faut reconnaître que dans le cas où un journal est voué à l'échec, il vaut mieux accepter l'éventualité d'une fusion que de le voir disparaître.

Ceux qui prendront des mesures législatives en matière de presse ne devront pas oublier que nul ne peut prédire l'avenir et que les autorités chargées d'appliquer ces mesures n'auront le droit d'intervenir que lorsqu'il s'avérerait vraiment périlleux de prolonger la compétition.

Ces mesures législatives, même dans le cas où elles seraient appliquées par des personnes responsables comporteraient déjà un risque; il va sans dire que, lorsque mises en pratique par des gens qui ne soucient pas du maintien d'une presse libre, elles mettraient indubitablement en danger la liberté de notre société.

La deuxième recommandation qui me préoccupe est celle qui propose la création d'une Caisse de prêts pour le développement des publications. Même si les modalités proposées par le comité sont susceptibles d'empêcher dans une large mesure les abus éventuels, il reste que la création d'une caisse de ce genre conduirait presque inévitablement à des excès. En outre, une publication qui relève d'une caisse gouvernementale ne pourrait de par sa nature, être tenue pour libre de toute influence gouvernementale.

St. Clair Balfour est président de la Société Southam Press Ltée.

JOURNALISM IS (SHHH) A PUBLIC TRUST

MEDIA 71

by DONALD CAMERON

"Well, I'm pretty close to the editor, and Smith has a lot of respect for him. If I spoke to the editor, maybe he could get you in to see Smith."

I am sitting in the office of a Big Byline, a man whose work I have been reading and admiring for years. I am in Toronto to raise money for a college of journalism of which I'll say more elsewhere. Oddly enough, I had thought the men who own Canada's media just might be willing to contribute some money.

"Smith" is the President and Publisher, and I am trying to get an appointment with him. But he's a busy man. So we sit like two hours trying to guess the pleasure of the Caliph.

The Big Byline is enthusiastic about the college. The journalists are enthusiastic: Robert Fulford, Peter Gzowski, Peter Newman, Harry Bruce, Peter Desbarats, Dick MacDonald, Gerry Anglin, Sandy Ross, Frank Lowe. Keith Davey likes it. Fast Eddie Goodman likes it. Harry Boyle likes it. Pierre Berton. Laurier LaPierre. It sounds

good to Walter Gordon and Pat Watson and Borden Spears.

All the college needs now is money: about \$45,000.00. And since its products will be working for Beland Honderich, Donald Campbell, John Bassett, St. Clair Balfour and Derek Price, we've gone to them, and to the foundations and the broadcasters. Five thousand each from nine of them, and we've got the most exciting little college of journalism you ever saw in your life.

"You might get some money out of Max Aitken," thunders John Bassett. "Have you spoken to Max? Of course you might have to call it the Beaverbrook College of Journalism."

"If it would get us the money we'd cheerfully call it the K. C. Irving Military Academy."

"I like your style," roars Bassett. "If I had any money I'd give it to you. But I don't think you'll get very far with publishers. You'll find them a very *hidebound*, narrow-minded, *conservative* lot."

No mean prophet, this Bassett.

"I don't mean conservative in the partisan sense," he adds, keeping the record straight. "Nothing wrong with that."

St. Clair Balfour and the Southam Press agree to gamble \$5,000 on the idea, conditional on our raising another \$40,000. But the others!

"We like it, fellows. We like it. But this is a bad year for business."

"Have you gone to your provincial government?"

"We prefer to train our people ourselves. *On the job.*"

"I can't see why we should finance something outside Ontario."

"What about K. C. Irving?"

"Well, once you got going, we'd give what we give Carleton"—which turns out to be a big \$500. Five hundred: you heard me. From a chain which owns forty-five newspapers.

It isn't as though we were asking for anything very revolutionary. What we were asking was in their damned interests. Five or ten thousand to us spruces up the image and takes some sting out of the Davey Report.

It's tax-deductible. It even does something for regional disparity. And in the long haul it probably raises the quality of their own product. Journalism, after all, is what they're selling.

Of course we assumed they were interested in good journalism. That may have been naive.

The journalists themselves had told us. *These cookies are businessmen. They'll put out a dollar when they can see a buck and a quarter coming back. Not before.*

I never saw so much cynicism and defeatism in my life as I saw among our best journalists in the course of three days. Good guys. Talented, articulate guys, with ideas and principles. Guys who care about truth and the public interest.

And yet—and yet—when you come right down to it, they were not only depressed, they were servile. I don't say they wouldn't fight if their backs were against the wall. But they were accustomed to living in a milieu in which the whimsical, arbitrary power of the publisher was an unquestioned fact. Though I was furious, they were resigned.

I was furious. If Mark Harrison, Martin Goodman and Borden Spears think the answer should be Yes, where does Beland Honderich get the right to say No, all by himself? I flew out of Toronto reading—at last, I should have read it long ago—*The Communist Manifesto*. A week with the Toronto media bosses would make a revolutionary out of Peter Rabbit.

"They are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the supervisor, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself," snapped Marx and Engels. "The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is."

Right on, boys!

In Ottawa, the sight of Harry Boyle

calmed me down. Even in Canada, some of the powerful still care about truth and the public interest. But is it possible to be an owner and care?

I am supposed to be writing about the need for alternate media—and yes, yes, that's important: little dots of light to remind us that journalism can talk honestly and openly when the profit motive disappears. But I remember Ed Broadbent, who knows why to organize, and Fred Jones, who knows how.

Fred Jones is the lean, dry head of the Toronto Newspaper Guild. He knew what we were up against: he deals with the caliphs every day. The Guild has no money: all it has is the dues it collects from journalists. Jones agreed to try to spring some. He didn't, but it bothered him. It didn't bother the caliphs.

Ed Broadbent's *The Liberal Rip-off* I read on the plane up to Toronto. It concludes with a chapter on "Industrial Democracy", where Broadbent points out that the labour movement now is demanding a voice for workers in crucial decisions about production, about the allocation of capital, about the nature and price of products and about the distribution of profits." The U.A.W., for instance, has made demands recently about automobile prices and pollution control.

My point: our proposal was recognized by journalists, who know better than anybody else, as being in the interest of good journalism, and thus in the public interest. If votes in the newsrooms could have done it, we would have had the money. If the Guild had a say in Honderich's decision, we'd be all right. But Honderich decides alone.

The reality in Canadian journalism, so far as I can see, is that journalists are bought and sold like crude oil or potato futures or any other commodity a businessman may need. They have about the same amount of influence on the men who own them.

Opposition papers? Sure, groovy. But the

reality is that K. C. Irving can close down *The Mysterious East* whenever he wants. Or, less messily, he can simply wait it out. With no capital behind it, relying on volunteer staff, *The Mysterious East* can't last forever. It can hardly hope to become a powerful and permanent force in the Irving country. And the same is true of almost every opposition journal in Canada. Sure, *Canadian Forum* is fifty years old, thanks largely to various angels. And it has a circulation of—whoopee!—2,000.

I don't say the opposition press isn't important. It has an impact far greater than its circulation figures would suggest. But profound, structural, long-range improvement in Canadian journalism is going to come from one source, and one only: from journalists who demand a say in how their paper is run, from industrial democracy in the Canadian media.

Journalists who want to hold their heads up are going to have to organize, fight, strike. Take your case to the public: nobody can do it better. Forge your alliances with the Keith Daveys, the Ed Broadbents, the Eddie Goodmans. Make contact with the universities, where you'll find a good number of open ears. Make it clear that journalism is a public trust, that you care about it and that, by and large, the caliphs don't. Quit being houris.

In the long run, it's your profession and your struggle.

Journalist power!

Donald Cameron, contributing editor of The Mysterious East, is associate professor of English at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton. A short-story writer, he contributes frequently to CBC public affairs programs.

LE JOURNALISME, UN TRUST PUBLIC (SHHH)

MEDIA 71

par DONALD CAMERON

"Je suis en bons termes avec le directeur et Smith a beaucoup d'admiration pour lui. Si je lui demandais, peut-être vous présenterait-il à Smith."

Je suis dans le bureau d'un vieux routier que je lis depuis des années avec émerveillement. Je suis à Toronto dans le but de recueillir des fonds pour une école de journalisme dont je dirai un mot plus loin. Curieusement, j'avais pensé que les propriétaires des grands moyens de communication seraient disposés à contribuer.

"Smith" est le président et directeur général. Je tente d'obtenir une audience, mais c'est un homme occupé. Nous nous asseyons donc, comme deux houris cherchant à deviner le bon plaisir du calife.

Le vieux reporter qui me tient compagnie est enthousiaste au sujet de l'école. Tous les journalistes sont enthousiastes: Robert Fulford, Peter Newman, Harry Bruce, Peter Desbarats, Dick MacDonald, Gerry Anglin, Sandy Ross, Frank Lowe. Keith Davey trouve que l'idée est bonne. Eddie Goodman aussi. Et Harry Boyle. Et Pierre Berton. Et Laurier LaPierre. Elle plaît aussi à Walter Gordon, à Pat Watson et à Borden Spears.

Tout ce dont l'école a besoin, ce sont des fonds: environ \$45 000. Et comme ses élèves travailleront plus tard pour Beland Honderich, Donald Campbell, John Bassett, St. Clair Balfour et Derek Price, c'est à eux que nous nous sommes adressés, ainsi qu'aux fondations et aux radiodiffuseurs. Cinq mille billets de neuf d'entre eux et nous mettons sur pied la plus belle petite école de journalisme qu'on ait encore vue.

"Avez-vous pensé à Max Aitken? me dit John Bassett. Peut-être vous donnerait-il quelque chose, quitte à appeler l'école le Beaverbrook College of Journalism."

"Pour de l'argent, nous serions prêts à appeler l'Académie militaire K. C. Irving."

"L'affaire me plaît", continue Bassett. "Si j'avais de l'argent, je n'hésiterais certes pas à vous en donner. Je crains cependant que vous n'ayiez beaucoup de succès avec les directeurs de journaux. Ils sont pas mal fermés, étroits d'esprit et conservateurs, vous savez."

Il ne pouvait frapper plus juste.

"Je ne dis pas conservateurs en politique, précise-t-il. Il n'y aurait rien de mal à cela."

St. Clair Balfour et le groupe Southam

consentent à investir \$5,000 dans l'affaire pourvu que nous recueillions les autres \$40,000. Mais les autres!

"Bravo, mes petits. Le projet est sensationnel. Mais c'est une bien mauvaise année pour les affaires."

"Avez-vous approché le gouvernement de la province?"

"Nous préférons former le personnel nous-mêmes. *Au travail.*"

"Je ne vois pas pourquoi nous devrions financer quelque chose hors de l'Ontario."

"Et K. C. Irving?"

"Une fois que vous aurez démarré, nous serons bien prêts à vous donner ce que nous donnons à Carleton", c'est-à-dire \$500. Cinq cents dollars, vous me lisez bien! D'un groupe auquel appartiennent 45 journaux.

Nous ne demandions rien de bien révolutionnaire. Ce que nous demandions était dans leur intérêt. Cinq ou dix mille dollars redoreraient leur blason et ils en ont grandement besoin depuis le rapport Davey. Leur contribution serait déductible de l'impôt. Elle aiderait même à corriger les disparités régionales. A long terme, elle aurait peut-être pour résultat d'améliorer la

We intend to influence Canada.

In May of this year, Canada will be introduced to the most vital publications in the Canadian market—MACLEAN'S and le magazine MACLEAN. Certainly, MACLEAN'S has been serving, entertaining and informing Canadians for sixty-five years; le magazine MACLEAN for over ten—but—the time has come for a re-commitment, a re-dedication to fulfill an important role for Canada during this era of increased self-awareness. With May, MACLEAN'S has a new Publisher, a new Editor; new editorial objectives and content, and even greater visual impact. But, both MACLEAN'S have something else—they have renewed commitment to be recognized as the most dynamic magazines in Canada; to making themselves more vital than ever to Canadians. Under Publisher, Lloyd Hodgkinson and Editors, Peter Newman and Jean Sisto, MACLEAN'S and le magazine MACLEAN set forth their goals to— □ develop and inject new ideas, new interpretations into Canadian society □ involve their readers with what is happening across Canada; presenting a fully-integrated, probing portrait of the Canadian reality □ fulfill an important educational and cultural role □ have greater warmth and human content, sharing experiences, humor and pleasures □ present a contemporary product visually and editorially. Beginning with May, significant changes will take place in MACLEAN'S and le magazine MACLEAN. We intend to influence Canada.

Maclean's
Canada
is our
raison
d'être.

qualité de leur produit. Le journalisme est leur affaire après tout.

Bien entendu, nous présumons qu'ils s'intéressaient au *bon* journalisme. Ce peut être de la naïveté de notre part.

Les journalistes eux-mêmes nous avaient dit : *ces malins sont des hommes d'affaires; ils risquent un dollar quand ils pensent en retirer un dollar vingt-cinq, pas avant.*

Je n'ai jamais vu autant de cynisme et de défaitisme que parmi les journalistes que j'ai rencontrés en trois jours. De bons types. Bourrés de talent, articulés, pleins d'idées et de principes. Des types qui ont le souci de la vérité et de l'intérêt public.

Et pourtant, pourtant, quand vous allez au fin fond d'eux-mêmes, vous vous apercevez qu'ils ne sont pas seulement déprimés, mais qu'ils sont aussi *serviles*. Je ne prétends pas qu'ils ne se battraient pas s'ils avaient le dos acculé au mur. Mais ils ont accoutumé de vivre dans un milieu où le pouvoir fantaisiste, arbitraire du directeur est incontesté. Moi, j'étais furieux. Eux, ils étaient résignés.

J'étais proprement furieux. Si Mark Harrison, Martin Goodman et Borden Spears jugent que l'affaire est valable, comment Beland Honderich peut-il se permettre de décréter qu'elle ne l'est pas? En partant de Toronto, je me suis mis à lire—finalement, j'aurais dû le lire il y a longtemps—le Manifeste communiste. Une semaine en compagnie des grands patrons des communications de Toronto ferait un révolutionnaire de n'importe qui.

"Chaque jour, chaque heure, ils sont soumis à la machine, au contremaître et, par-dessus tout, au manufacturier bourgeois lui-même, écrivaient Marx et Engels. Plus ce despotisme proclame ouvertement que son but et son objectif sont le profit, plus il devient frustrant, méprisable et haïssable."

Bravo, chefs!

A Ottawa, je me suis calmé au contact de Harry Boyle. Il reste encore quelques puissants qui se soucient de la vérité et de l'intérêt public. Mais est-ce possible d'être

propriétaire, patron et de s'en soucier?

Je suis censé parler des média de rechange et, bien sûr, c'est un sujet important : de petits points de lumière qui nous rappellent que le journalisme *peut* s'exprimer honnêtement et ouvertement quand l'appât du gain s'estompe. Mais je me rappelle Ed Broadbent, qui sait pourquoi il faut s'organiser, et Fred Jones, qui sait comment.

Fred Jones est le chef de la Guilde des journalistes de Toronto. Il savait à qui nous avions affaire : il traite quotidiennement avec les califes. La Guilde n'a pas d'argent, sauf les cotisations des journalistes. Jones a tenté d'en recueillir. Il n'a pas réussi et ça l'a ennuyé. Mais ça n'a pas ennuyé les califes.

J'ai lu le livre d'Ed Broadbent, *The Liberal Rip-off*, sur l'avion qui me menait à Toronto. Il se termine par un chapitre sur "la démocratie industrielle" dans lequel Broadbent révèle que le mouvement ouvrier réclame maintenant voix au chapitre "pour toute décision relative à la production, à l'appropriation de capitaux, à la nature et au prix du produit et à la répartition des profits". Les Métallos, par exemple, ont montré des exigences récemment en égard au prix des automobiles et au contrôle de la pollution.

Où je veux en venir: notre projet a été agréé par des *journalistes* qui s'y connaissent mieux que personne; ils estiment qu'il serait de nature à améliorer la qualité du journalisme et qu'il servirait, par conséquent, l'intérêt public. Si les salles de rédaction avaient eu à se prononcer, nous aurions touché l'argent. Si la Guilde avait eu quelque chose à dire dans la décision de Honderich, nous aurions obtenu ce que nous voulions. Mais Honderich décide seul.

La vérité dans le journalisme canadien, pour autant que je puisse voir, c'est que les journalistes s'achètent et se vendent comme du pétrole brut ou toute autre denrée que transigent les brasseurs d'affaires. Ils ont à peu près la même influence auprès des hommes qui les possèdent.

Des journaux d'opposition? Bien sûr. Mais la vérité, c'est que K. C. Irving peut fermer les portes du *Mysterious East* quand il le désire. Ou, mieux encore, il n'a qu'à attendre. Sans fonds et reposant sur un personnel volontaire, le *Mysterious East* ne peut pas durer éternellement. Il ne peut surtout pas espérer devenir un journal influent dans le pays d'Irving. Il en va de même de presque tout journal d'opposition au Canada. Bien entendu, le *Canadian Forum* est cinquanteenaire, grâce à divers mécènes. Et son tirage, youpi, dépasse 2000!

Je ne prétends pas que la presse d'opposition soit insignifiante. Elle exerce une influence bien plus grande que son tirage ne permet de le supposer. Mais les vrais changements, les vraies améliorations dans le journalisme canadien proviendront d'une source et d'une seule : des journalistes qui exigeront d'avoir leur mot à dire dans la façon dont leur journal est mené, de la démocratisation des communications.

Les journalistes qui voudront pouvoir marcher la tête haute devront s'organiser, combattre, faire grève. Portez votre cause devant le public : personne ne s'y entend mieux. Faites alliance avec les Keith Davey, Ed Broadbent, Eddie Goodman. Prenez contact avec les universités où vous trouverez bon nombre d'énergies disponibles. Proclamez bien haut que le journalisme est l'affaire du public, que vous vous en souciez, que les califes ne s'en soucient pas. Cessez d'être des houris.

A long terme, c'est votre profession qui en dépend.

Le pouvoir aux journalistes!

Donald Cameron, rédacteur au Mysterious East, est professeur adjoint au département d'anglais de l'Université du Nouveau-Brunswick, Frédéricton. Nouvelliste, il participe fréquemment à des émissions d'affaires publiques du réseau anglais de Radio-Canada.

ACCESSIBILITE ET PARTICIPATION A L'HONNEUR

MEDIA 71

par DOROTHY TODD HENAUT

Printemps 1970. Douze spécialistes du milieu urbain sont conviés à Halifax pour analyser les problèmes de la ville. Chaque jour, durant sept jours, le groupe s'est dispersé dans la ville et a parlé avec toutes sortes de gens des problèmes de l'habitation, de l'industrie, de l'éducation, de la santé, de l'assistance sociale. Le soir, les membres du groupe faisaient rapport à une assemblée publique. L'assistance participait aux débats, posait des questions, faisait part de ses réactions aux comptes rendus des 12.

Durant les sept jours, CJCH, poste local du réseau CTV, a modifié le calendrier régulier de ses émissions pour rapporter en direct les discussions. Une bonne partie de son auditoire a suivi ces reportages. A la fin de la semaine, l'assistance dans la salle—de 800 qu'elle était au début—était passée à 1200, pour la plupart des gens qui n'auraient pas eu connaissance de l'événement autrement et qui n'auraient certes pas pensé pouvoir y participer.

Depuis, de profondes transformations ont commencé à s'opérer à Halifax.

Mais cette sorte de dialogue communautaire ne survient pas souvent. En général, voilà plutôt ce qui arrive :

Des millions de gens sont témoins passifs des drames qui surviennent dans leur milieu, dans leur région, dans le monde mais ils n'ont pas accès aux centres de décision. Cependant que les minorités crient dans le désert, la majorité silencieuse est aliénée et incapable d'agir. Les frustrations s'accumulent. Peut-être beaucoup de gens ont réfléchi à des solutions, mais ils n'ont aucun moyen de transmettre leurs idées à leurs concitoyens.

Ce n'est pas là l'image d'une société saine.

Que fait un particulier ou un groupe de particuliers s'il veut aujourd'hui faire part de ses idées? Il peut ou bien 1) écrire une lettre à la rubrique des lecteurs; 2) émettre un communiqué; 3) tenir une conférence de presse en espérant que quelque journaliste s'y

présentera et ne déformera pas trop ses idées en les rapportant dans la presse, à la radio ou à la télé; 4) soudoyer un reporter; 5) crier; 6) manifester ou bien 7) planter des bombes.

Pourtant, ce n'est ni à la presse ni à la télévision que ces gens veulent s'adresser, mais à leurs concitoyens. Ils doivent passer par ces grands moyens de communication pour atteindre leur but.

Les moyens de communication sont devenus un obstacle. Pourquoi? Peut-être parce qu'ils opèrent à sens unique, de haut en bas : depuis les spécialistes (qui sont à même de les dominer) jusqu'aux consommateurs.

Mais ces consommateurs ne sont pas simplement un auditoire, ce sont aussi des citoyens qui désirent participer.

De vraies communications supposent un échange d'idées et d'informations, de même qu'une possibilité de réponse. Aussi longtemps que cette possibilité de réponse n'existe pas, les média ne remplissent pas

leur fonction.

Comment peut-on renverser le courant? C'est un travail lent et difficile. La population se sent si aliénée et si impuissante devant les média. Il ne suffira pas de dire : voilà, les portes sont grandes ouvertes, venez.

Il faut consentir un effort pour enseigner aux gens comment se servir des média pour communiquer les uns avec les autres. Il faut démystifier les média, en faire des outils fonctionnels de communication dans un communauté.

Dans une tentative d'amener les gens à se servir des média, l'Office national du film a placé une équipe de tournage à la disposition des habitants de l'île Fogo, à Terre-Neuve, à l'été de 1967. Aidé d'un animateur social de l'Université Memorial, Colin Low a tourné des films présentant les gens des îles avec leurs problèmes, leurs joies et leurs peines. Soixante pour cent des gens de l'île dépendaient des allocations sociales, la pêche était mauvaise, l'éducation insuffisante, la population morcelée et le gouvernement envisageait sérieusement de rétablir tout le monde ailleurs.

Low a assuré à chacune des personnes qu'il a photographiées le droit de voir ces métrages avant le montage et d'en retrancher tout ce qui pouvait être de nature à les embarrasser. Puis, chaque village a décidé s'il permettrait qu'on montre les films dans le village voisin. Enfin, la population de l'île a décidé si les films pouvaient être présentés à l'extérieur.

Bien que l'expérience ne dura pas longtemps elle a eu une portée immense. Les gens et les villages se sont beaucoup mieux compris après s'être vus à l'écran. Des villages qui ne s'étaient pas parlé depuis des dizaines d'années ont communiqué à travers le film. Cette réconciliation a donné à l'île l'énergie d'affronter ses problèmes.

Aujourd'hui, trois ans et demi plus tard, les habitants de l'île ont bâti 14 bateaux à long cours par l'entremise d'une coopérative de construction maritime. La coopérative de pêche a pris en main les quais et les installations d'emballage du poisson et la production de pêche a atteint un sommet sans précédent. Les écoles ont été réorganisées et il existe maintenant une école secondaire sur l'île. Le coût des prestations sociales est tombé de 20 pour cent.

Plutôt que d'attendre les décisions d'en haut quant à leur avenir, les gens l'ont pris en main et ont trouvé des solutions. Les média, en l'occurrence le film, n'ont fait que les aider à se rejoindre.

Recherchant toujours le moyen de placer les média à la disposition des gens de manière pratique, rapide et économique, l'Office du film a mis à profit une nouvelle technique et mené des expériences-pilotes avec des magnétoscopes avec ruban vidéo d'un demi-pouce. Elle a confié ce matériel à des comités de citoyens et à des animateurs sociaux à travers le pays. Des gens jusque là inexpérimentés ont appris à se servir de caméras, de microphones, à interviewer, à monter et à concevoir des émissions. Et ils n'ont pas mis beaucoup de temps. "La télévision n'est plus un mystère. Maintenant, nous savons nous en servir pour parler à notre milieu."

Il en est résulté naturellement une meilleure compréhension et un renforcement du milieu. La communication se faisait directement et n'avait pas à passer à travers un filtre.

La plupart de ces expériences ont été menées en circuit fermé, bien que la

technique ait progressé au point qu'on puisse maintenant retransmettre sur câble de télévision le ruban d'un demi-pouce. Il devient donc possible pour une communauté de transmettre des émissions par câble.

Ce champ n'est cependant pas sans limite, la plus sérieuse étant le temps qu'il faut pour préparer et monter une émission. Pour l'instant, la télé par câble n'atteint pas non plus tous les foyers, ni même un auditoire représentatif du milieu. Mais les temps changent et, selon tous les pronostics, la télévision sera d'ici quelques années transmise surtout par câble. Déjà, les postes de télévision répondent à un besoin en produisant plus d'émissions à caractère local.

La tendance est évidente. Les média doivent, de toute urgence, ouvrir leurs portes au plus grand nombre. Il leur faut développer des aptitudes nouvelles, découvrir le moyen d'aider et d'encourager les gens à

engager à travers eux le dialogue communautaire.

La population aura besoin de l'aide de tout le personnel des média pour les démystifier et apprendre à s'en servir. Et les média devront prendre une orientation nouvelle et mettre leur pouvoir au service de la population.

La fonction des journalistes, qui est de découvrir, de rapporter et d'analyser l'information, demeure indispensable. Mais aucune forme de reportage ne saurait remplacer la participation directe de la population au dialogue qui peut s'engager à travers les média.

Ensemble, la population et les journalistes peuvent faire une fameuse équipe. Peut-être aussi une société meilleure.

Dorothy Hénaut est au service de l'Office national du Film (Challenge for Change).

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to simply say, okay the doors are open, come on in.

A conscious effort must be made to teach citizens how to use the media to talk to each other. We need to demystify the media, to make them a functional tool for communication in the community.

In an effort to develop citizen access to media, the National Film Board's *Challenge for Change* program put a film crew at the disposition of the inhabitants of Fogo Island, Newfoundland, in the summer of 1967. Working with a community development worker from Memorial University's extension department, Colin Low shot film about the people and problems, joys and pains of the islanders. There was 60 per cent welfare on the island, fishing was bad, education was inadequate, the population fragmented, and the government seriously was considering moving everyone off the island to a new settlement.

Low gave to each person he filmed the right to first viewing of the rushes, and the right to edit out anything that embarrassed them. Then the villages decided whether the other villages might see their film, and the islanders were given the right to decide if the films might be seen elsewhere.

Although the film input did not last long, the actions it catalysed have been far-reaching. The individuals and communities came to a much deeper self-understanding when they saw themselves on the screen. Communities which had not spoken to each other for decades communicated to each other through film. This coming together gave the citizens the strength to tackle their problems.

Now, three and a half years later, they have built fourteen longliners through a ship-building co-operative; the fishermen's co-op has taken over all the available fish-packing and wharfing facilities and has had record fish production; the schools have been consolidated and there is now a high school on the island, and welfare has dropped by 20 per cent.

Instead of waiting for decisions from on high about their future, the citizens tackled their problems themselves and are finding solutions. The media simply brought them together.

Looking for easier, cheaper and faster means of putting the media in the hands of citizens, *Challenge for Change* jumped on a new technology and carried out a few pilot experiments with half-inch videotape, in the hands of organized citizen groups or community development workers in various communities across Canada.

In these experiments, completely inexperienced citizens used the cameras and microphones, learned to interview and edit, tape discussions and design programs. And it didn't take them long. "Television is no longer a mystery—now we can use it to talk to our community."

The social result inevitably has been to develop self-understanding and reinforce the strength of the group or community in question. The communication was direct, and did not pass through a filter.

Most of those experiments were in closed-circuit situations, though now technology has advanced to the point where half-inch video can go on cable-TV, and the possibility of citizen production on cable is a reality.

There are limitations to citizen production, though, the most serious of which is the time it takes to prepare and edit programs. At the moment cable-TV has the limitation that it does not reach into every living room in the country, and in fact does not reach a cross-section of the community. But the patterns are changing, and some projections indicate that in a few years most television reception will be by cable. Already-existing TV stations are responding with more local programming. The trends are obvious.

There is an urgent need for *all* the communications media to give access to real citizen involvement in the communications process. To do this, they will have to develop new skills—those of helping and encouraging citizens to use their media as a channel for community dialogue. Citizens will need the positive help of all the media people, if they are to demystify the media and learn to use it actively for understanding and problem solving. And the media will have to shift their approach and learn to use their power for community problem solving—not sensationalism, confrontation and polarization.

The journalist's essential role—ferreting out, reporting and analyzing news—will remain indispensable. But no amount of clear and concise reporting of events and ideas can obviate the need for a citizen's direct participation and involvement in the discussion and the solution.

Journalists and citizens together can make a great team. And perhaps a healthier society.

Dorothy Todd Hénaud is with the National Film Board's Challenge for Change.

C'EST A CEUX QUI PRODUISENT QUE REVIENNENT LES DECISIONS

MEDIA 71

par CLAUDE PICHE

Il m'est apparu en rédigeant le texte suivant, destiné à servir de schéma de travail pour la Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, qu'on restreignait trop souvent la notion de la liberté de presse, ou celle des journalistes, à celle de publier sans contrainte ni censure, celle de s'exprimer. On omet ainsi d'aborder un corollaire important de cette notion: celui des moyens dont disposent les journalistes *pour informer*. Ce qui touche directement à l'organisation de son travail. Donc, en grande partie, à l'administration des entreprises de presse.

A quoi peut servir la liberté du journaliste si elle est d'autre part circonscrite par une organisation de son travail qui l'empêche réellement d'exercer avec compétence son métier? S'il ne dispose pas du temps suffisant pour la recherche? De la documentation nécessaire pour connaître ce dont il parle? De l'espace, ou de la période de temps aux bonnes heures d'écoute, pour traiter devant son public de la matière sur laquelle il veut informer avec qualité et compétence? Des moyens de se spécialiser dans des domaines de plus en plus complexes de l'activité d'une société modernisée?

Comment l'organisation de son travail sera-t-elle adéquate s'il ne participe pas aux décisions qui l'affectent?

Il est vain d'invoquer le principe de la liberté de presse pour se dérober aux critiques souvent fondées adressées aux journa-

listes dans divers milieux: dans les parlements à l'endroit des correspondants parlementaires; dans les divers groupes sociaux à l'endroit des chroniqueurs spécialisés; dans la population en général à l'endroit de l'ensemble de l'information.

Les reproches faits à la presse ne sont pas toujours inspirés par des motifs de bas intérêt. Mais en les adressant aux journalistes, on manque souvent la cible: les administrateurs responsables de diriger et coordonner le travail des journalistes. Des administrateurs souvent portés à s'en laver les mains sous divers et futiles prétextes, on par pure insouciance ou irresponsabilité. Pourtant le fait d'être coincé entre un conseil d'administration qui surveille les intérêts des actionnaires, ou la réalisation d'un mandat, et les journalistes assignés à des tâches quotidiennes et isolés par rapport à l'ensemble d'une politique d'information, ne suffit pas à expliquer la réticence des administrateurs de l'information à mettre en oeuvre des moyens cohérents pour développer une organisation du travail efficace. Ne suffit pas non plus à justifier des décisions à courte vue concernant les critères d'embauche et de promotion, la distribution équilibrée des tâches, l'attribution intelligente des moyens matériels nécessaires aux journalistes dans l'exercice quotidien de leur profession.

De se renvoyer la balle entre propriétaires,

administrateurs, journalistes et pouvoirs publics ne redressera pas la situation bien sûr. C'est pourtant la tournure que prend la discussion au sujet du rapport Davey. Et ce rapport, incomplet comme il l'est, n'est pas étranger à l'allure de la discussion. Il est étonnant que les commissaires n'aient traité de ce problème de l'organisation du travail que par des allusions ou des biais furtifs. C'est pourtant une question majeure dans le contexte d'une situation où le public exige une information de plus en plus complète, détaillée et documentée et où la presse, aussi bien écrite qu'audio-visuelle, se trouve souvent dépassée par la complexité et la vitesse de l'évolution des situations collectives, comme des événements.

Il faudra donc que la presse trouve elle-même les mécanismes qui permettront aux appareils de fabrication et d'administration de l'information d'élaborer une politique cohérente visant à fournir au public l'information de qualité à laquelle il a droit. Le texte qui suit cherche à en dégager les composantes.

* * *

Au nombre des objectifs consignés dans ses statuts et des principes sur lesquels elle a fondé ses activités, ses attitudes et ses prises de position, en particulier dans la négociation préparatoire à la fondation du Conseil de presse, la Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec a clairement

établi et manifesté sa volonté d'assurer et de promouvoir le droit du public à une information honnête, complète et de qualité.

Ce droit du public a aussi constitué l'une des préoccupations majeures au cours des rencontres avec divers groupes de journalistes et du congrès qui ont abouti à la fondation de la Fédération, comme au cours des discussions auxquelles ont donné lieu ses colloques d'orientation et son deuxième congrès.

Il est ainsi tout naturel que ce principe de son action amène maintenant la Fédération à en explorer et définir la pratique dans l'exercice professionnel à l'intérieur de l'entreprise: dans les décisions des directions de l'information; dans les structures de production; dans l'organisation générale du travail et autres aspects liés directement d'abord, mais aussi par rapport à l'ensemble des politiques de gestion comme la définition des objectifs de l'entreprise; les moyens qu'elle se donne pour les atteindre; le choix des mécanismes de production; les décisions d'investissements; les pratiques commerciales et publicitaires et autres aspects liés indirectement à l'exercice professionnel en le déterminant de quelque façon.

Beaucoup a été dit sur l'importance de la presse, de l'opinion publique formée par elle, de l'évolution des communications à ce moment-ci de l'histoire des démocraties contemporaines. Ce document ne se propose pas d'élaborer une théorie des communications modernes et du rôle des mass media dans les sociétés actuelles mais de dégager un certain cadre pour l'élaboration d'une orientation et d'une action collective des journalistes dans le contexte de la société dans laquelle ils exercent leur profession.

Cette société attend des journalistes qu'ils définissent et garantissent leur apport au droit du public à l'information. Comme elle l'a précisé dans divers documents, en particulier dans son mémoire au comité parlementaire du gouvernement du Québec sur la liberté de presse dans la concentration des entreprises de presse, la Fédération définit la notion contemporaine de la liberté de presse en soulignant qu'elle a évolué jusqu'à nos jours pour dépasser le seul principe du droit de publier en l'élargissant au droit du public à l'information. Mais si l'entreprise de presse n'assure pas les services auxquels le public s'attend, ce droit du public à l'information restera lettre morte et voeu pieux.

Si les entreprises de presse sont soumises

comme les autres aux lois économiques, comme celle de l'offre et de la demande, elles ont toujours, par ailleurs, historiquement défini leur fonction sociale et politique en prise directe et constante sur leur fonction économique. Elles se sont ainsi défendues contre l'intervention de l'Etat au nom de leur fonction politique et cherché généralement à s'attacher leur public au nom de leur fonction sociale. Mais au nom de leur fonction économique, elles ont toujours appliqué des méthodes traditionnelles de gestion.

L'élargissement de la notion de liberté de presse au droit du public à l'information n'a pas encore trouvé son extension dans la gestion, qui repose encore sur le principe unique du droit de gérance.

Devant l'importance croissante des media d'information, les pouvoirs publics, les groupes sociaux et le public en général remettent de plus en plus souvent en question le rôle des media dans la société et surtout les moyens employés pour le jouer. Pour se défendre, les entreprises de presse se retranchent derrière des énoncés dont on ne retrouve pas l'application pratique. Les décisions de gestion se prennent toujours à sens unique de haut en bas de la structure et souvent de la façon la plus arbitraire.

Quand de telles décisions détériorent la qualité de l'information, les directions n'ont d'autres comptes à rendre qu'à ceux uniquement préoccupés par la rentabilité de l'entreprise: actionnaires ou propriétaires. Ni le public, ni les journalistes n'ont les moyens d'intervenir. Même si le public continue à voir les journalistes comme les principaux garants de la qualité de l'information. Il ignore cependant que les journalistes ne disposent d'aucun moyen, à l'exception parfois d'une convention collective dont ce n'est pas le principal objectif d'ailleurs, d'intervenir dans les décisions où leur activité professionnelle est concrètement concernée. Il s'agit la plupart du temps de l'organisation du travail ou de la répartition des tâches.

Pris entre la direction de l'entreprise et le public, les journalistes, sans pouvoir réel de participer à la prise de décisions, sont réduits à devoir interpréter confusément la correspondance entre les décisions de politique gestionnaire et l'attente du public. Leur expérience, leur formation, leur talent, leur connaissance pratique de la réalité actuelle et des besoins en information de divers milieux sociaux ne sont aucunement mis à contribution

Il importe peu d'exposer dès maintenant les modalités techniques de diverses formules d'association en cours d'application comme les sociétés de rédacteurs françaises, les comités paritaires, les comités consultatifs de l'entreprise, les formules de participation à la propriété, la coopérative ou le comité de rédaction.

Le travail préliminaire consiste à dégager certains paramètres à l'intérieur desquels doivent s'élaborer ces modalités techniques:

- la définition des droits et des responsabilités de la gérance
- la transmission des informations relatives à la gestion
- la fonction des diverses associations de journalistes dans la structure
- la définition des objectifs de l'entreprise de presse
- la notion du droit d'association dans son fondement légal
- les politiques de l'ensemble des entreprises de presse et leurs responsabilités dans l'évolution du journalisme professionnel (formation, critères d'emploi, reconnaissance de l'expérience, organisation d'ensemble du travail, définition des situations, etc. . . .)
- la fonction des cadres à l'intérieur de l'entreprise et dans la gestion
- la répercussion des contraintes de la rentabilité dans les décisions
- la coordination administrative des services dans la structure d'opération
- la frontière entre la démarche consultative et le pouvoir de décisions
- la surveillance de la marche opérationnelle des décisions et autres.

L'exemple des sociétés de rédacteurs françaises illustre que les journalistes sont loin de participer de façon déterminante aux décisions portant directement ou indirectement sur les questions professionnelles. Ces exemples illustrent aussi les probabilités d'échec des mécanismes consultatifs; les sociétés de rédacteurs interviennent surtout au niveau de l'organisation du travail sans pouvoir administratif réel. Une formule qui permettrait aux journalistes de récupérer certains pouvoirs, avec les rouages techniques adéquats reste à être élaborée et mise en pratique.

Claude Piché, vice-président de la Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, est au service de Radio-Canada.

DECISION-MAKING BY THOSE WHO PRODUCE

MEDIA 71

by CLAUDE PICHE

The following text was used as a working paper for la Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec and as I prepared it, the thought occurred to me that the idea of freedom of the press, or of journalists, too often is restricted to that of publishing without constraint or censorship, to that of expressing oneself. An important corollary to the idea is forgotten: That of the means at the disposal of the journalist for passing on information. This touches directly on the organization of his work and, therefore, largely on the administration of the press.

What is the point of a journalist using his freedom if it is circumscribed by working conditions that prevent him from exercising

his trade competently? If he doesn't have enough time for research? Or sufficient documentation to understand his subject? Or space, or enough time in prime time to give the public the information he has collected? The chance to learn new methods developed in a period of rapid technical progress? Means to specialize in increasingly complex fields within modern society?

How will the organization of his work be adequate if he does not participate in the decisions which affect it?

It is useless to invoke the principle of freedom of the press to shrug off criticism—often founded—aimed at journalists by various segments of society. These

include complaints from parliaments aimed at press gallery members; from various social groups aimed at reporters on beats; from the population in general aimed at the whole package of information they are getting.

The criticisms aimed at the press are not all based on self-interest. But in aiming them at journalists, they often miss the target—the administrators responsible for directing and co-ordinating the work of journalists, administrators who are often led to wash their hands of it under various and futile pretexts, or through pure carelessness or irresponsibility.

Being squeezed between a board that watches over the interests of stockholders, or the

carrying out of a mandate, and journalists assigned to daily tasks, isolated from an over-all information policy, is no excuse for the reticence of administrators to use coherent means of developing an efficient working organization. Nor is it good enough to justify short-term decisions concerning criteria for hiring and promotion, the fair distribution of tasks, the intelligent supply of material means needed by journalists in the daily exercise of their profession.

Naturally, passing the buck around among owners, administrators, journalists and the public powers will not correct the situation. Yet, this is the way the debate on the Davey Report is going. And, incomplete as it is, the report is part of the discussion.

It is surprising that the commissioners only dealt with the problem of working organization through allusions or furtive hints. Yet it is a major question in the context of a situation in which the public demands increasingly complete, detailed and documented information and in which the press—written as well as audio-visual—is often overtaken by the complexity and speed of evolution in events and collective situations.

The press itself must find the mechanisms by which the information apparatus and the administrative apparatus can draw up a coherent policy aimed at giving the public the quality information to which it is entitled. The following text is an attempt to point out some of the constituent parts of such a policy.

* * *

The "Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec" has made clear its desire to ensure and promote the public's right to honest, complete and high-quality information. This is one of the aims of our constitution and a principle on which we base our activities, attitudes and decisions, particularly in preliminary negotiations for the establishment of a press council.

This right to information has been one of our main considerations throughout our meetings with different groups of journalists and the convention which led to the birth of FPJQ, and also throughout the discussions resulting from policy seminars and the second convention.

Hence, it is not surprising that the FPJQ now feels ready to investigate and define how the principle works in practice in our professional organizations: in decisions concerning news policy; in the way production is organized; in the way the administration works, including such related subjects as definition of the organization's principal aims; methods used to achieve them; choice of production methods; investment choices; commercial and advertising practices and other activities linked indirectly to professional duties and determining them in some form.

All kinds of things have been said about the importance of the press, about how it forms public opinion and about the evolution of communications at this point in the history of contemporary democracies. This document does not intend to work out a theory of modern communications nor of the role of the mass media in contemporary society, but to set up a framework within which we can work out a direction for collective action by journalists in the context of the society in which they work.

Society wants journalists to define and support the public's right to information. As we have stated in several documents—specifically in our brief to the Quebec parliamentary

committee on the freedom of the press and monopolies—the FPJQ defines freedom of the press in a broad sense, going beyond the journalist's freedom to publish to the public's freedom to be informed. But this is no more than a pretty sentiment unless the publishers endorse it by setting up proper structures.

Information must become a real public service. When we apply this principle to publishing organizations, the free enterprise ideal becomes more than just the interplay of economic forces because it includes the fundamental right—freedom of expression, of opinion, of publishing.

If publishers are subject to economic forces like supply and demand, as are all commercial enterprises, they have always considered their social and political function in more direct terms than their economic function. They protest against state intervention by invoking their political role and they try to identify with the public in terms of their social role. But when it comes to their economic function they have always applied traditional administrative methods.

The enlarged notion of press freedom in terms of the public's right to information has not yet been paralleled in administration, which still rests on the basic right of management.

As the information media grow in importance, the authorities, social groups and the public in general become more skeptical of the role of media in society and the methods used to enact this role. The publishers defend themselves by making statements which have no real practical application. Management decisions are always taken in a single direction from the top to the bottom, often in the most arbitrary way.

While such decisions lower the quality of information, the directors are only responsible to people worried about profits: shareholders or owners. Neither the public nor the journalists have any recourse, even though the public continues to regard the journalists as protectors of the quality of information. It does not know that journalists have no tools (except sometimes a collective agreement and then it is not a principal objective) for participation in decisions which directly concern their professional activity. Most of the time it concerns the organization of work and the distribution of labor.

Caught between management and the public, the journalists with no real power of participation are reduced to setting a confused channel between administrative decisions and the expectations of the public. Their experience, training, talent, practical

knowledge of situations and needs at all social levels, are never called into play.

Can journalists go on waiting for the boards of directors to take the initiative for change? The question implies its own answer. Examples in the past are conspicuous by their absence.

There is no point in outlining here the various possibilities and formulae now being used, such as the "sociétés de rédacteurs françaises", joint committees, advisory committees, joint-ownership agreements, co-operatives or editorial committees.

The preliminary work consists of defining certain common characteristics by which to work out technical methods:

- definition of the rights and responsibilities of management;
- transmission of information relative to management;
- role of the various journalists' associations within the structure;
- definition of the aims of the publishing company;
- legal basis for the concept of the right of association;
- overall policies of the publishing businesses and their responsibilities in the development of professional journalism (training, employment criteria, seniority, overall planning, job definitions, etc.)
- the role of management personnel within the enterprise and administration;
- recurrence of profit motives in decisions;
- administrative co-ordination of services within the centre of operations;
- border-line between the consultative process and decision-making;
- control of implementation of decisions.

The examples of French editors' societies prove that journalists are far from active in participation in decision-making which directly concerns professional issues. It also proves the fallibility of consultative machinery: the editors' societies intervene mainly at the level of workload distribution, without real administrative power. What is needed is a formula which would give journalists access to certain levels of power, complete with the technical workings of such a system.

Claude Piché, vice-president of the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, is with Radio-Canada.

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WHO CAN CALL HIMSELF A PRO?

MEDIA 71

by E. U. SCHRADER

True and fair reporting and editing could serve as the foundation for professional journalists because this tenet seems to be acceptable on an institution-wide basis as an individual ethic.

Friction in defining professional journalism seems to rub on traditional concepts of professionalism. Lawyers and doctors, for example, assert that a profession requires institutionalizing, with a code of conduct (such as the oath of Hippocrates), and with formal training which can be assessed by a body of peers to validate an applicant's entry. Such competence is expected to be put to socially-responsible uses, as defined by a licensing authority. The College of Physicians and Surgeons can expel doctors for malpractice.

The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences dismisses journalism as a profession because it consists of "non joiners" controlled by employers who, more often than not, regard their socially-accepted function to provide a factory delivering pools of readers or listeners to advertisers.

Some journalists are recruited from academic institutions while other highly-respected journalists (such as John W. Dafoe) have slight formal education. Journalism has no system of certification and policing of professional activities, nor is licensing desirable for fear of political surveillance.

The Toronto *Star's* Rae Corelli has argued, to the Canadian Society of Professional Journalists, that membership could indicate to an employer that a recruit is acceptable to his peers. This concept encounters dissent when one attempts to define "journalist" for purposes of membership.

Phil Sykes, former editor of *Maclean's Magazine* and now a Toronto *Star* editorial writer, submitted a paper to the Society. His definition embraced daily and weekly newspapers, radio and television news rooms, business and consumer magazines, and company (or industrial) publications. Corelli regards this definition as too broad, and lumps industrial editors with public relations personnel. CSPJ President Frank Drea, of the *Telegram*, is caught on the hook of definition because he thinks that to be an effective watchdog of the profession, and of freedom, the Society must have the clout of widespread membership.

The question, of how broad a base professionalism requires, torments Professor Edward Gerald, of the University of Minnesota. He sees a difficult realistic environ-

ment for idealistic journalists unless advertising and other business departments also subscribe to high standards of professionalism. (What good is a journalist with a sloppy circulation department? And how can there be integrity in serving the public when a businessman controls the purse?) For that matter, how can a reporter accept responsibility for work mutilated by a quack copy editor?

Individual responsibility seems to be the basis for defining a professional journalist. But because the human psyche rejects dissonance, and a reporter adjusts to his peers' norms, he requires an external code against which to brace his personal ethic. If the institution of journalism accepts truth and fairness as cardinal virtues, then the painful development toward professionalism can begin.

Accuracy may be far from being an absolute, because the truth of an article depends on the coloured perceptions of writers and readers. It also depends on the writer's and reader's positions on Freud's hate-love spectrum, in the selection of facts (which of necessity involves omissions. Omissions that *Time* readers regarded as creating falsehood, Henry Luce justified as confusing truth.) In his search for truth, the reporter's definition of accuracy provokes a philosophical debate.

Some absolutes, however, can be pinned down. Perhaps the symptoms of professionalism can be detected in such little things as the care exercised in the spelling of names. Repeated surveys of news sources have established the mis-spelling of proper names as the most frequent cause for complaint. Errors in figures rank next in frequency. (Readers may well wonder whether a reporter who can't report figures can get anything right.) Improper emphasis distorts a story. Unions have long protested that Labor "demands" while Management "offers." And surely the words inside quotation marks should be the actual words spoken.

Balance is important to fairness, because in today's controversial world each story has more than one point of view.

Accuracy is a personal matter which a reporter can control. But the reporter protests pressures of deadlines and distortions inserted by copy editors as negating his drive toward professionalism. Does a reporter have to work quickly on stories without immediate deadlines, as if against the Press

Club clock? The reporter can overcome the copy desk by avoiding loose, sloppy writing. He can learn "house style" and other spelling, punctuation, grammar. He can present a clean typescript (or at least correct his typos).

Accuracy also is affected by the reporter's knowledge of the field he covers. Should the court reporter have some grasp of law, of the adversary system of trials, of legal jargon? The Toronto *Star* and the Windsor *Star* have programs of in-house training, during which they bring in experts. The Windsor *Star* rotates reporters, and leases an apartment in Ottawa for the next "student" to occupy when he arrives for his three-month "course". Southam Press is organizing such a program, not merely for recruits but for veterans as well. And Southam Fellowships are available to all journalists.

Others, less favored, can take night school courses and read books. How many newspaper libraries stock professional literature?

In the United Kingdom, the National Council for the Training of Journalists, in which all newspapers participate, conducts a nation-wide qualifying program. In addition, persons who entered journalism to be useful to society and find their consciences dulled, can draw full financial support from the National Union of Journalists if they are victimized by refusing to do work incompatible with the honor and interests of the profession.

As a Canadian start, I submit that a journalist can call himself a "pro" if he accepts responsibility in matters over which he has control. A news organization becomes professional when each of its members develops his personal ethic. And the occupation of journalism will deserve the word professional when practitioners reach a consensus on what is good conduct, then set up courses (as the public relations society did) which all persons must take, regardless of experience, to be certified as professional.

The marketplace then could sort out the good from the bad, with no need for licenses to imperil freedom. The well-qualified journalist would gravitate to newsrooms that subscribe to professional practices.

E. U. (Ted) Schrader, retired chairman of the Journalism Department at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, is secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Society of Professional Journalists.

QUI PEUT SE DIRE PROFESSIONNEL?

MEDIA 71

par E. U. SCHRADER

Rapporter des faits et rédiger un article avec honnêteté et impartialité sont deux principes qui pourraient servir de fondement au journalisme professionnel car ils semblent constituer une éthique personnelle acceptable à

l'échelle institutionnelle.

On ne réussit pas à s'entendre sur la définition du journalisme professionnel et ce désaccord semble faire chanceler les concepts traditionnels du professionnalisme. Les

avocats et les médecins, par exemple, affirment que toute profession doit être "institutionnalisée", posséder son code d'éthique (comme le serment d'Hippocrate) et que son exercice doit avoir été précédé d'une for-

mation méthodique pouvant être évaluée par un ensemble de pairs chargé de valider l'admission d'un candidat à la profession concernée. La compétence du médecin ou de l'avocat est destinée à des fins comportant une responsabilité sociale qui aura été déterminée par un corps autorisé à délivrer des permis. Le Collège royal des médecins et chirurgiens a le pouvoir de licensier un médecin pour négligence.

L'Encyclopédie internationale des sciences sociales ne considère pas le journalisme comme une profession parce qu'il rassemble des membres "non-engagés", assujettis au contrôle d'employeurs qui, le plus souvent, estiment que leur rôle, sur le plan social, consiste à voir à la bonne marche d'une usine produisant en quantité des lecteurs et auditeurs à l'intention de l'annonceur. Certains journalistes ont été recrutés dans des institutions universitaires, tandis que d'autres, tenus en haute estime, (John W. Dafoe, par exemple) ont peu de formation spécialisée. Le journalisme ne possède pas de système de certification et de réglementation d'activités professionnelles; en outre, les permis ne sont pas souhaitables, crainte d'intervention gouvernementale.

Monsieur Rae Corelli, du *Toronto Star*, a soutenu devant l'Association canadienne des Journalistes professionnels que le fait d'appartenir à cette association pouvait servir d'indice à l'employeur quant à la valeur du candidat. Ce concept se heurte à un désaccord lorsque l'on tente de définir le "journaliste" à des fins d'adhésion à cette association.

Phil Sykes, auparavant rédacteur-en-chef du *Maclean's Magazine*, et présentement éditorialiste au *Toronto Star*, a présenté un mémoire à cette association. La définition qu'il propose englobe les quotidiens et les hebdomadaires, les salles de rédaction de la radio et de la télévision, les publications commerciales et les revues d'affaires ainsi que les journaux d'entreprise. M. Corelli est d'avis que cette définition est trop étendue et il réunit sous un même toit le rédacteur industriel et le relationniste.

Le président de l'A.C.J.P. monsieur Frank Drea, du *Telegram*, n'arrive pas à proposer une définition, car, estime-t-il, pour que l'Association puisse devenir un vigilant chien de garde du journalisme et de la liberté, il faudrait que les membres qui en font partie

soient recrutés sur tout le territoire.

Quelle importance devraient avoir les fondements sur lesquels repose le professionnalisme? Voilà une question qui préoccupe le professeur Edward Gerald, de l'Université du Minnesota. Il estime que ce n'est qu'avec peine que le reporter idéaliste pourra évoluer dans son milieu, à moins que les services de publicité et autres ne se conforment également au degré d'excellence qu'exige le professionnalisme. (A quoi sert le reporter, si le service du tirage laisse vraiment à désirer? Et comment peut-on servir le public avec intégrité lorsque c'est l'homme d'affaires qui surveille la caisse?) En outre, comment un journaliste peut-il assumer la responsabilité d'un article qui sera par la suite tronqué par un piètre réviseur?

Il semble que l'on puisse fonder la définition du journalisme sur la responsabilité individuelle. Toutefois, étant donné qu'il est dans la nature de l'homme de rejeter la discorde et que le reporter se mettra au diapason de ses confrères, il a besoin d'un code venant de l'extérieur grâce auquel il pourra tonifier son éthique personnelle. A partir du moment où le journalisme, en tant qu'institution, reconnaît l'honnêteté et l'impartialité comme principes de base, alors peut commencer la difficile évolution vers le professionnalisme.

L'exactitude d'un article est souvent très relative car elle est reliée aux façons très nuancées dont le journaliste et le lecteur perçoivent un article. Elle dépend en outre de l'attitude du journaliste et du lecteur face au spectre freudien de l'amour et de la haine dans le choix des faits (choix qui nécessairement implique des omissions). Les lecteurs du *Time* ont estimé que les sujets laissés de côté par ce magazine faisaient naître le faux, tandis qu'Henry Luce a prétendu qu'ils brouillaient le vrai. La définition de l'exactitude, à laquelle veut en arriver le reporter à la recherche de la vérité, donne lieu à un débat philosophique.

Il existe toutefois certains absolus dans le journalisme. Peut-être pourrait-on observer les symptômes du professionnalisme dans des détails aussi banals que l'orthographe des noms propres, par exemple. De nombreuses enquêtes ont démontré que, de toutes les erreurs commises, c'étaient les fautes d'orthographe, retrouvées dans les noms propres, dont on se plaignait le plus. Viennent ensuite

les erreurs de chiffres. (Les lecteurs ont raison de se demander ce qu'il faut attendre d'un journaliste qui ne sait même pas rapporter des chiffres sans commettre d'erreurs.

Trop d'importance accordée à certains mots peut fausser un texte. Les syndicats contestent depuis longtemps les expressions "demandes des employés" et "offres du patronat". De plus, tous les mots qui s'insèrent entre guillemets doivent de toute évidence avoir été prononcés par l'auteur de la citation.

L'impartialité constitue un facteur important, car, vu ce monde très controversé dans lequel nous vivons, chaque situation comporte plus d'un point de vue.

L'exactitude est une question personnelle que le journaliste peut être en mesure d'atteindre. Toutefois, le journaliste s'élève contre la pression exercée sur lui par les échéances qui lui sont imposées et contre les modifications que subissent ses textes en passant par les mains des réviseurs: deux handicaps qui, selon lui, freinent son élan vers le professionnalisme.

Doit-on imposer au journaliste des échéances impossibles pour des articles qui n'en exigent pas, comme si son horaire devait être réglé sur l'horloge du Press Club? De plus, le journaliste peut éviter la salle de révision si son style est clair et précis. Il peut apprendre le "style de la maison", perfectionner orthographe, ponctuation et grammaire. Il doit être en mesure de soumettre une copie clairement dactylographiée (ou du moins, de corriger ses erreurs de dactylographie).

L'exactitude d'un texte dépend également des connaissances du journaliste sur le sujet dont il traite. Le journaliste affecté aux affaires juridiques, par exemple, doit-il avoir quelques notions de droit, du jargon juridique? Le *Toronto Star*, ainsi que le *Windsor Star* ont mis sur pied un programme de cours que les journalistes peuvent suivre sur place et qui sont donnés par des hommes de loi.

Au *Windsor Star*, les journalistes vont tour à tour habiter un appartement que le journal a loué à leur intention à Ottawa; l'"étudiant" y fait un stage de trois mois. Southams a également organisé un programme de ce genre à l'intention de ses employés, nouveaux ou anciens. Tous les journalistes peuvent faire des demandes de bourses d'études Southams.



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Les autres, moins fortunés, peuvent suivre des cours du soir et lire. Nombreuses sont les bibliothèques d'entreprises journalistiques qui renferment de la documentation professionnelle.

Au Royaume-Uni, le National Council for the Training of Journalists dont font partie tous les journaux, offre un programme préparatoire, à l'échelle nationale. En outre, les personnes qui ont choisi le journalisme pour servir la société et qui voient leur conscience se ternir, ont droit à l'aide financière du Syndicat national des journalistes, si elles ont subi des pertes, à la suite de leur refus d'accomplir un travail qu'elles jugent incompatible avec l'honneur et les intérêts de leur

profession.

Pour ce qui est du Canada, j'estime qu'un journaliste peut se dire professionnel s'il assume pleinement la responsabilité des tâches qu'on lui confie. Une entreprise journalistique devient professionnelle à partir du moment où chacun de ses membres détermine son propre code d'éthique. On pourra qualifier la fonction de journaliste de "professionnelle" lorsque ceux qui la remplissent s'entendent sur la définition de "bonne conduite", pour ensuite mettre au point un programme de cours (comme en relations publiques) que tous devront suivre, quelle que soit leur expérience, pour être reconnus professionnels.

On pourrait ensuite laisser au public le soin de distinguer les bons des mauvais, sans qu'il soit nécessaire de délivrer des permis qui briment la liberté. Le journaliste qualifié rechercherait alors les salles de rédaction qui souscrivent à des pratiques journalistiques professionnelles.

E. U. (Ted) Schrader, auparavant directeur du Département de journalisme de l'Institut polytechnique Ryerson, est secrétaire-trésorier de l'Association canadienne des journalistes professionnels.

ETHIQUE, NORMES ET DU TRAVAIL BIEN FAIT

MEDIA 71

par JEAN SISTO

L'information, c'est la démocratie et la quasi totalité des Canadiens croient que les médias influencent leur pensée et leur mode de vie. C'est une lourde responsabilité et pour les journalistes et pour les éditeurs. Une responsabilité qui n'est pas policée: aucune norme d'exercice, aucun permis, aucune carte de compétence requis. Aucune surveillance non plus, ce qui entraîne des aboiements sporadiques, de gauche, de droite et de plus en plus hargneux, pour dénoncer "la presse". Mais ce fétichisme est une autre histoire.

Qu'un code d'éthique de la profession soit essentiel à la fois pour les journalistes et le public ne fait aucun doute. S'il n'en existe pas c'est d'une part que la profession est apathique et d'autre part que les gouvernements n'ont pas encore osé l'imposer.

Dans la recherche de cette toison d'or, il faut pour commencer réunir les gens concernés (Elémentaire? Voyons notre assemblée d'Ottawa . . .) Journalistes bien sûr, mais aussi cadres, éditeurs-propriétaires et syndicats. Chacun de leur côté, puis tous ensemble. Il y a déjà là matière à palabres indéfinies.

Pour qu'un code joue son rôle, il semble évident qu'il faille que l'ensemble de la profession y souscrive: inutile, pour prendre un exemple trivial, d'interdire au petit poisson le pot-de-vin quand le requin se gave à même le tonneau; inutile d'y penser sans l'accord et la participation des syndicats: à quoi servirait de définir (et d'interdire et de sanctionner) le conflit d'intérêt si les diverses conventions collectives ne l'incorporent pas?

La profession réunie, il faut définir des normes déontologiques: c'est généralement la première grosse pierre d'achoppement car

le consensus en la matière est loin d'être fait. Le journalisme, c'est quoi? Une dévotion à l'intérêt public—le droit du public à l'information—ou une façon de vivre de sa plume—qu'elle gribouille pour un journal, les relations publiques d'une entreprise ou de l'Etat et les officines d'un parti politique en même temps important peu? Doit-on souscrire au principe de "l'information avant tout, envers et contre tous"—c'est-à-dire jusqu'à briser les embargos, contrevenir aux lois, publier les confidences et toujours toute l'information sans tenir compte de l'intérêt public "supérieur" et de raisons d'Etat—ou faire la part des choses?

Les normes déontologiques établies, le code d'éthique doit aborder l'exercice même de la profession. Entre autres:

- Des normes d'entrée: profession ouverte à tout vent—il suffit de se faire engager quelque part pour être journaliste—comme aujourd'hui ou une sorte de corporation fermée, moitié fermée ou moitié ouverte?

- Des normes de pratique qui dépassent les lieux communs et les intentions pieuses, style: "Nous serons objectifs; nous serons au service du public . . ."

- Des normes d'expulsion: les conflits d'intérêt identifiés, il faut pouvoir les sanctionner et donc garantir l'honnêteté des journalistes; honnêteté intellectuelle et honnêteté tout court. Sur ce dernier point, le problème ne se situe plus tellement au niveau du simple pot-de-vin passé de main à main: le progrès s'est fait sentir; là aussi; le problème se situe plus subtilement au niveau de ce que le rapport Davey appelle si pudiquement "les bonnes occasions" qui s'offrent aux journalistes. Ce qui à mon

avis est du pareil au même, et parfois du pire. Entre le chroniqueur de l'auto qui recevrait \$20 pour affirmer que l'auto est bien belle et celui qui toucherait \$1,500 pour vanter ses mérites dans un message purement commercial, mon coeur balance! Sans compter le journaliste sportif véhiculé aux frais du club qu'il suit, celui du tourisme aux frais de la princesse, etc., etc.

- Des normes de ré-entrée: le principe des vases communicants entre le journalisme et le propagandisme, privé ou d'Etat, me semble quant à moi un peu trop libre. Le propagandiste vit de sa plume, c'est son métier: je doute fort que sa reconversion au journalisme se fasse si aisément.

Un code, c'est bien mais il faut aussi un organisme de surveillance, de défense à la fois du public et des journalistes. Autrement dit, un Conseil de presse comme le Québec est en voie de se doter. Sans aller jusqu'à lui donner des pouvoirs coercitifs, un tel Conseil—représentant les éditeurs, les journalistes et le public—peut prétendre à une force morale suffisante pour faire respecter le code.

Loin d'être exhaustif, ce rapide tour d'horizon souligne les difficultés et les intérêts parfois contradictoires à concilier pour en arriver à un Code d'éthique valable et efficace—c'est-à-dire coercitif, d'une façon ou d'une autre. C'est possible puisque le Québec est en train de le faire: c'est même fait dans les grandes lignes. Reste à voir et à espérer que lorsqu'il abordera les questions concrètes, les vraies, il les résolve.

Jean Sisto est rédacteur en chef du Magazine Maclean.

ETHICS, STANDARDS AND A JOB WELL DONE

MEDIA 71

by JEAN SISTO

Information is democracy and almost all Canadians believe that the media influence their thinking and their way of life. This creates a heavy responsibility both for journalists and publishers. This is a responsibility that is not policed—there are no standards of performance, no permit, no competency cards required. There is no supervision, which results in sporadic baying from right

and left denouncing the press. And it is becoming more snarly. But that is another story.

There is no doubt that a code of ethics is essential for journalists and for the public. If one does not exist, it is partly because the profession is apathetic and partly because governments have not dared to impose one.

In the search for this golden fleece, we

must start by bringing together the people concerned (Elementary? That's why we're meeting in Ottawa . . .). Journalists, of course but also editors, publishers and unions. There already is enough material for unending talk.

For a code to be effective, it seems obvious that the profession as a whole must subscribe to it. It is useless, to give a trivial example, to

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A Southam Newspaper



forbid the little fish from sipping at his glass while the shark is gorging himself at the wine cask. It is futile to consider it without the agreement and the participation of the unions. What would be the use of defining (and forbidding and sanctioning) conflict of interest if it was not included in the various collective agreements?

Once the profession is together, ethical terms must be defined. Generally, this is the first big stumbling block because a consensus on the matter is far from being reached. What is journalism? Is it a devotion to the public interest—the right of the public to information—or a way of earning a living by the pen, whether scribbling for a newspaper, in public relations for a company or the state, or in a political party? Should we subscribe to the principle of “information above all, before all and against all”—that is to the point of breaking embargoes, contravening laws, publishing confidences and always all the information without regard for the “higher” interest and reasons of state—or should we be recorders of events?

The definitions of honesty and conflict of interest hang on this introductory definition. If a journalist is defined as a man who earns a living with his pen, there is no conflict of interest in the case of the showbusiness reporter who owns his own production company and has a stable of stars...

Once ethical terms are established, the

code of ethics should tackle the exercise of the profession itself. Among others:

Entrance standards: Should the profession be open in all directions—get hired anywhere and you're a journalist, as it is today, or should it be a sort of closed corporation, semi-closed, or semi-open?

Standards of practice which go beyond commonplaces and pious intentions of the kind that read “we will be objective, we will be at the service of the public.”

Standards for expulsion: Once conflicts of interest have been identified, there must be a power to sanction and thus guarantee the honesty of journalists, intellectual honesty and honesty, period. On this point, it isn't a question of a simple little bribe. There has been progress here too. The problem is more subtle, involving what the Davey Report so delicately called the “opportunities” available to journalists. In my opinion, it is one and the same, and sometimes worse. I am equally divided between the automobile writer who is slipped \$20 to say that a car is beautiful and the guy who gets \$1,500 to praise it in a commercial. Never mind the sports writer who travels at the expense of the club he's covering, or playing the tourist at the expense of the host country.

Standards for re-admission: The idea that journalism and propagandism, whether private or state, are linked, seems a little too free, to me. The propagandist lives by his

pen, that's his trade. But I strongly doubt he could reconvert to journalism so easily.

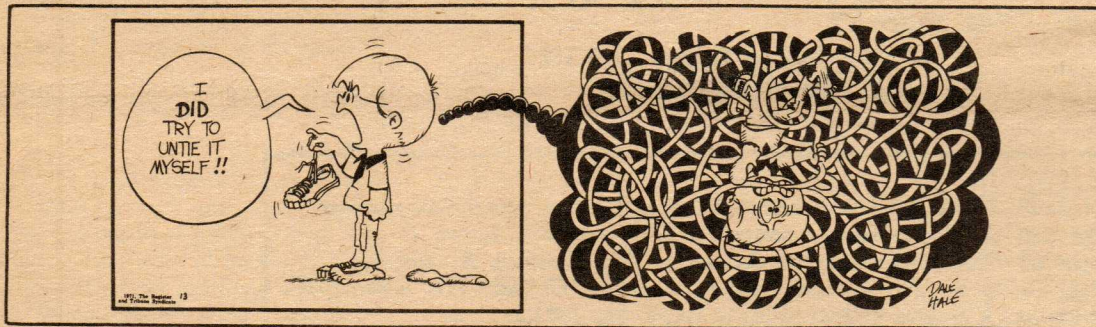
A code is fine but there must be an organization to supervise, to defend both journalists and public. In other words, a press council, such as the one being created in Quebec. Without going so far as to give it coercive powers, such a council, representing publishers, journalists and the public, could claim to have sufficient moral force to make the code respected.

And since this is Canada, there is the eternal question—at what level of government should a press council be created? But since the differences between English and French are not so great that each has their own honesty and the Queen stays home, there should be rapid agreement—an autonomous council for each province and a supreme federal council, a court of last resort, responsible among other things for integrating codes on essential points, for example.

This quick review shows the difficulties and the sometimes contradictory interests which must be reconciled if we are to have a worthwhile and effective code of ethics, one that is coercive in some way or other. It is possible—Quebec is doing it, the outline is already in place. It remains to be seen, and to hope, that when it tackles the real, concrete questions, it will resolve them.

Jean Sisto is editor of Le Magazine Maclean.

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OVERCOME THE CONDITIONING

MEDIA 71

by ERIC WELLS

One of the characteristics of the press, noted by the Davey Committee, was mediocrity. On the broad spectrum I agree with the observation, and I think it a waste of time to ferret out exceptions. Some papers are better than others; all papers at some time, on some subjects, are good. But mediocrity is the prevailing standard.

In my view, attempts to establish rapport on this subject have revealed rigidity on the part of the press in contrast to the fluid changes in society. The newspapers have become enmeshed within an apparatus of their own creation, and have difficulty in responding to the challenge of change. I suggest they are some decades behind the times, that for the most part they are produced by persons out of touch, and that the newspapers are atavistic reflections of their own problems, rather than reflections of society around them.

Both journalist and reader are victims of the newspaper apparatus, and I advance these examples:

Mechanical Journalism. The production of newspapers today demonstrates the erosion of deadlines. Papers which at one time carried the day's news in their afternoon editions have retreated to yesterday's news. Technology has not been harnessed to the paper's basic purpose—news. Instead, whatever advances have been made in production, basically, were related to the advertising market and circulation. Even in direct news relationships, such as TTS, the emphasis has been on mechanical and cost factors, rather than news.

The Ad Ingredient. The ad-news ratio has steadily mounted over the years in favor of

ads. The ad content places the greatest burden on the production facilities and is directly dependent on the circulation. The ads also determine to a considerable degree the definition of reader interest, and the paper's news space is allocated to support ad interests. This furthers the erosion of the paper's basic intent—news.

Space Breakdown. If a newspaper has 100 columns of non-ad space, the allocation would be about like this:

- 14 columns **sports**, no matter how drab or trite.
- 12 columns **women's**, mostly a hangover from 1910.
- 10 columns **stocks and business**, mostly rote stuff.
- 10 columns **assorted advice**, from chess to piles.
- 10 columns **pictures**, many of them cheque-presentations.
- 8 columns **comics** which always must get in no matter how tight.
- 8 columns **editorials** and boiler plate.
- 4 columns **do-gooder stuff**, from cancer to heart foundations.
- 3 columns of **super-optimism** for projects which will never materialize.
- 12 columns **local news**.
- 9 columns **national and international** stories.

Average Reader. On the average newspaper, such precise space allotments are the definition of the readers' interests. The formula determines the vitality of response to challenge and opportunity. Journalists are trapped within the formula, and the subscriber becomes a "conditioned reader"—this is the only kind of newspaper they know. That the paper is hard to read, restricted in its explorations, are accepted facts.

Drones at Work. To present this newspaper daily is not hard or challenging work. The

actual creative production is limited, and a few drones can handle the routine and spread the accumulated barnacles through the ads. The creative bees are almost submerged by the inertia of the drones who want nothing to change. My surveys indicate that very few newspaper men read their own newspapers.

The Shallow News. Under these long-established conditions it is almost irrelevant to ask, as some newspapers do, "What does the reader want." Most of the answers will be based on what he has been conditioned to expect, perhaps with some recitation of deficiencies. The usual response within the newspaper is defensive, to explain away all examples cited as being isolated instances. The defence is based on the deadline, the pressure of production, or lamentation on staff shortage. Still, the deficiencies are repeated endlessly. No consistent effort is made to find the depth of understanding.

Creative Journalism. As long as newspapers entertain the belief that society is ignorant and doesn't want to be informed, they will perform only a superficial function, and they will be produced by persons who are not interested in the events around them. When the inhibitions of production and attitude are broken, the newspaper will breathe and attract journalists who won't have to be told, "This is what the conditioned-reader wants."

Eric Wells, former editor of the Winnipeg Tribune, is a free-lance writer and consultant in Winnipeg with his own firm, Info.

S'AFFRANCHIR DU CONDITIONNEMENT

MEDIA 71

par ERIC WELLS

L'une des caractéristiques de la presse, selon le rapport de la Commission Davey, est la médiocrité. De façon générale, je suis d'accord avec cette observation et je pense que de chercher des exceptions serait une perte de temps. Certains journaux sont meilleurs que d'autres; tous peuvent être bons, à certaines époques, dans certains domaines. Mais il reste que leur note dominante est la médiocrité.

A mon avis, les démarches qui ont été faites pour établir une communication en ce sens ont témoigné d'une rigidité de la part de la presse et d'une flexibilité de la part de la société. Les journaux sont venus s'intégrer à un mécanisme qu'ils ont eux-mêmes inventé et ont peine à faire face au changement. J'estime qu'ils sont maintenant poussiéreux et dépassés, que leur responsabilité, pour la plupart, incombe à des êtres inaccessibles et

qu'ils sont le reflet atavique de leurs propres problèmes plutôt que celui de la société.

Le journaliste et le lecteur sont tous deux victimes de la machine journalistique. En voici des exemples :

La publication d'un journal de nos jours démontre les effets nocifs des échéances auxquelles il est soumis. Le journal qui autrefois rapportait les faits du jour dans son édition de l'après-midi se contente maintenant de rapporter les nouvelles de la veille. La technologie dans ce domaine n'a pas été conçue en fonction de ce qui fait la principale raison d'être d'un journal : les nouvelles. Au contraire, tous les progrès qui ont été faits dans ce domaine sont de façon générale reliés à la publicité et au tirage. Même en ce qui a trait aux moyens de communication directe, comme le TTS, l'accent a été mis sur des facteurs de mécanique et de

coût plutôt que sur les nouvelles.

Le rapport entre la réclame publicitaire et la nouvelle s'est accru à un rythme régulier, au cours des années, en faveur de la publicité. C'est la réclame publicitaire qui occupe la majeure partie de l'activité des services de production; elle est directement reliée au tirage. De plus, elle contribue grandement à déterminer, les intérêts du lecteur. L'espace consacré aux nouvelles est distribué en fonction des intérêts publicitaires. Voilà qui accélère la destruction de l'objectif premier d'un journal : les nouvelles.

Supposons qu'un journal ait à sa disposition 100 colonnes consacrées à tout ce qui n'est pas de la réclame; l'espace y serait réparti de la façon suivante :

- 14 colonnes : nouvelles sportives, banales et monotones, aucune importance;
- 12 colonnes : pages féminines, presque toutes

les rengaines de 1910;

10 colonnes : pages financières, en général, des histoires déjà ressassées;

10 colonnes : conseils divers... depuis les échecs jusqu'aux hémorroïdes;

8 colonnes : bandes illustrées qui, même faute d'espace, doivent à tout prix être insérées;

8 colonnes : pages éditoriales et articles passe-partout;

4 colonnes : bonnes oeuvres : fondations pour le cancer ou les maladies du coeur;

3 colonnes : projets super-optimistes qui ne se concrétiseront jamais;

12 colonnes : nouvelles locales

9 colonnes : scène nationale et internationale.

Dans le journal moyen, une répartition de l'espace aussi précise que celle-ci cristallise l'intérêt du lecteur. Le degré d'enthousiasme face au changement et à la nouveauté dépend de la formule. Les journalistes sont prisonniers de cette formule et l'abonné devient un "lecteur conditionné" car le genre de journal qu'il lit est le seul qu'il connaisse. Que le journal soit difficile à lire, limité dans ses expériences sont des faits indiscutables.

Un journal de ce genre, qui paraît quotidiennement, est le fruit d'un travail qui n'est ni ardu ni innovateur. La dose d'originalité y est très réduite. Une poignée de faux-bourbons peut facilement venir à bout de cette petite besogne routinière et répandre ça et là les nouvelles accumulées. Les vaillantes abeilles sont perdues dans cette masse inerte de faux-bourbons qui s'opposent à tout changement. Les enquêtes que j'ai effectuées indiquent qu'un petit nombre seulement de journalistes lisent leur propre journal.

Dans ces conditions, fermement établies, il est presque inutile de se demander comme le font certains journaux : "Que veut le lecteur"? La plupart des réponses seront fondées sur ce qu'il aura été incité à attendre d'un journal, avec peut-être quelque faible allusion à certaines carences. La réaction habituelle d'un journal à ce sujet est défensive : l'on tente d'éliminer les exemples précités en prétendant que ce sont des cas isolés. Cette attitude défensive sera basée sur des excuses telles que les échéances, la pression exercée par la production ou le manque de personnel. Il reste que ces carences se perpétuent et qu'aucun effort n'est fait pour aller au fond des choses.

Aussi longtemps que les journaux seront d'avis que la société est ignorante et ne désire pas être renseignée, ils ne rempliront qu'une fonction bien superficielle et ils seront rédigés par des individus qui ne s'intéressent pas vraiment à ce qui se passe autour d'eux. Lorsque les inhibitions engendrées par la

production d'un journal et l'attitude générale seront enrayées, alors les journaux pourront respirer et attirer des journalistes sans avoir à leur dire : "Voilà ce que veut le lecteur conditionné".

Eric Wells, auparavant rédacteur en chef du Winnipeg Tribune, est conseiller en communications et rédacteur à la pige à Winnipeg.

PEOPLE

¶ Carman Cumming, assistant professor of journalism at Carleton University in Ottawa, will act as director of the School of Journalism for the 1971-72 academic year. Director T. Joseph Scanlon will be taking a sabbatical at the International Center for Advanced Study in Mass Communication, University of Strasbourg. Cumming, a Southam Fellow in 1965-66, has been at Carleton since 1969. He started his media career with the Canadian Press in 1955. ¶ Al Palmer, one of Montreal's best-known newspapermen, died March 28 at the age of 57. He had been in hospital for two weeks following a massive cerebral hemorrhage while at work at the *Sunday Express*. He had written for The Canadian Press, a number of suburban weeklies and *La Chronique* in Trois Rivières before World War II. His reputation grew as a columnist with the old Montreal *Herald* and later with the *Gazette*. He joined the *Express* a year ago after surviving lung cancer. ¶ Montreal-based cartoonist Aislin will spend a year out of the country starting in mid-May when he and his family leave for Europe. Publication of a collection of Aislin's cartoons, tentatively entitled *Idiots Both of Us*, is planned for the autumn by Fitzhenry and Whiteside Co.

April 12-18 was National Press Week and among the highlights was an announcement by the Toronto Men's Press Club that three new members have been added to the Canadian News Hall of Fame. They are Ross Munro, distinguished war correspondent and now publisher of the *Edmonton Journal*; the late Mark Edgar Nichols, managing director and vice-president of the *Vancouver Province* until his retirement in 1945; and, Henri Bourassa, founder of Montreal's *Le Devoir* and a renowned parliamentarian who died in 1952. The Toronto club also announced the names of winners of the 22-year-old National Newspaper Awards competition. Toronto *Star* cartoonist Duncan Macpherson picked up his fifth NNA and two other *Star* staffers were successful—Tom Hazlitt, for spot news reporting, and Anthony Westell for staff corresponding. Others: Jacke Wolf, *New Westminster Columbian*, editorial writing; Michael Popovich, *Toronto Telegram*, feature writing; Franz Maier, *Toronto Globe and Mail*, spot news photography; Glenn Baglo, *Vancouver Sun*, feature photography; and Robert Hanley, *Hamilton Spectator*, sports writing. Complete details will be published in the May issue of *Content*.

MISCELLANY

The British Columbia government plans to ban all media advertising of liquor and tobacco starting Sept. 1. A Canadian Press report following Premier W.A.C. Bennett's announcement showed that publications and radio stations will be hit hard by the ban, while television outlets and the manufacturers will be relatively unaffected. For many of the former, revenue from liquor and cigarette advertising is the key to a healthy profit margin or even to their survival. Jim Schatz, president of the B.C. Weekly Newspaper Publishers Association, said liquor advertising accounts for about 10 per cent of the average weekly paper's revenue and its loss could put some in jeopardy. Federal Health Minister John Munro promised in March he would introduce regulations soon concerning cigarette advertising. The LeDain inquiry on the non-medical use of drugs has heard at several hearings that liquor and tobacco advertising, as well as that for other drugs, should be discouraged.

The University of Chicago will conduct a sociological study of practicing journalists in the United States, designed to draw a comprehensive portrait of the occupational group responsible for the day-to-day informational needs of the American public. Funded with a grant of \$188,000 from the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation, the university's National Opinion Research Centre first will find out how many journalists are employed in different media. Then, a cross-section of 1,800 full-time journalists will be interested this spring and summer from 400 outlets. Data will be collected on the background and training of journalists, how they are recruited into the field and how they view current issues in American journalism. The Markle Foundation is the largest foundation in the U.S. which is devoted exclusively to fostering a better understanding of the media and to improving their educational service through grants for research, educational programs and special projects. Final results of the journalists' study will be published in June, 1972.

Newspapers in Nova Scotia rarely carry editorials which are favorable toward Canada's French-speaking citizens, according to Rev. Leger Comeau, director of La Federation francophone de la Nouvelle-Ecosse. He said as much to Senator Keith Davey in Halifax, observing that for the past seven years he had detected a continuing sense of discrimination in the province's dailies. Father Comeau didn't identify the papers. Senator Davey said a national press council might be able to deal with such complaints.

Periodicals could profit from the new ana/nan postcode introduced at Ottawa in March and to be phased into the remainder of Canada starting with Manitoba. The seven-digit zip code pinpoints mail to its address and ana/nan can be sorted mechanically. Publishers (or the post office) can sort address labels according to the carrier's walk and affix them to magazines later, thus eliminating the slow hand sorting of magazines by postmen.

content

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