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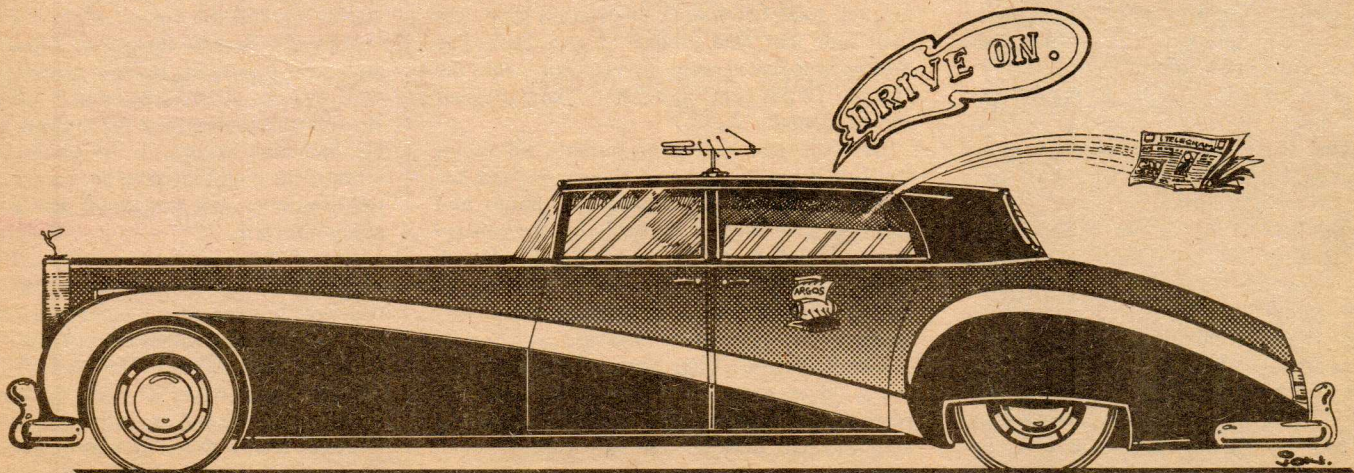
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The paper
that couldn't



AND IT WAS DECREED IN HIGH PLACES . . .

THE TELY

by MARC ZWELLING

Only the most pathetically unsophisticated still believe newspapers deliver the news to anxious readers. The real function of our nation's press for quite a long time has been to sell readers to advertisers.

The code of Canadian publishers is simple: print the news that fits. Newspapers are a business. Roy Thomson, the chain-paper magnate, wasn't boasting when he said a few years ago that "money must be used to make more money." He was articulating the fondest wish of most Canadian newspaper owners: to be rich.

It's surprising, then, in a business where cynicism serves as dogma, that so many can't understand why the Toronto *Telegram* is folding this month. It is worth more dead than alive.

Tely publisher John Bassett didn't break the rules of the press game by killing the *Telegram*. He honored them. As his friend Lord Thomson once put it: "I am completely dedicated to success. And the proof of success is making money."

Bassett likes to be thought of as a man who fought hard and was overwhelmed by staggering odds. Some might say he took a dive. For \$10 million of the Toronto *Daily Star's* cash, he closed the *Telegram* and left the *Star* sole possessor of the richest afternoon cycle in the country.

It's understood Bassett will rent the Tely presses to the *Star* for two years at \$1 million a year. Still owning the plant, land and equipment, he can then sell the assets for at least \$7 million and probably more to the *Globe and Mail*, which needs new facilities.

The pay-off from the *Star* will cover the Tely's debts and the severance pay for 1,200 employees. The rest virtually is gravy.

Bassett may also like to be regarded as a sagacious capitalist who takes bold risks for high stakes. In fact, he is much more conservative. His ability to make money flows as much from luck as acumen.

When the Tely was picked up for \$4.25 million from the George McCullagh estate in 1952, Bassett had the backing of department store owner John David Eaton. With Eaton backing the loan, what bank could refuse?

It was Eaton's apparent refusal to continue backing Bassett's loans which helped force the decision to cease publication.

The death of the *Telegram* meant that *Weekend* magazine stood to lose its second-largest subscribing newspaper—and its entry to the crucial Toronto market. Into the breach came the *Globe and Mail*.

Globe publisher J. L. Cooper said their Saturday magazine had been losing advertising revenue "at an accelerating rate" and that it would be folding shortly. *Weekend* and the *Globe* signed an agreement. *Weekend* is carried in 39 papers across Canada and *Weekend* president William Goodson says the *Globe* contract is identical to those of the others; namely, that what's left after total costs are deducted from total revenues is shared according to circulation, with 30 per cent to the Montreal Standard Publishing Co.

If it was fair of Bassett to kill the Tely for his

own gain, then it's fair to judge him on the business standards he stridently upheld. "I'm sorry, I couldn't do better," he said in a front-page epitaph September 18 announcing the decision to close.

He let the paper atrophy in the control of underlings who knew little, it seems, about successful newspapering. Indifferent management wracked the paper's final years. The malignancy attacked all departments. Broadcaster Charles Templeton, a one-time *Star* executive, mused recently: "I saw the *Telegram* becoming, in my view, sloppy journalistically . . . I don't think the people who ran the *Telegram* were tough enough."

The malaise struck hardest, though, in the pocketbook sections. During the protracted negotiations with the *Telegram* unions, a management source leaked portions of a confidential consultant's report on top-level *Telegram* leadership to union bargainers.

Asked about existence of the report at one bargaining session, Bassett retorted, "I'm not prepared to answer that question." There's nothing to indicate that to date Bassett has even seen the whole report, which was commissioned by his top finance official.

The Telegram, said the consultant, didn't even have a marketing or research department.

The management consultant, Kenneth M. Vagg, confirmed that the leaked portions of the report were authentic but refused to discuss them. Vagg thinks, however, that his report was the blueprint for the success the Tely needed to survive. Vagg spent 15 months inside the *Telegram*.

His data and conclusions atomize two myths Bassett has been anxious to perpetrate since he announced his decision to sell out. The first is that Toronto cannot support two afternoon newspapers. The other is that the *Star* was just too formidable an opponent for the Tely.

Vagg slammed the Tely's brass in two vital spots: advertising and circulation. Taken as a whole, the three big Toronto dailies have not performed well in the past decade. While population expanded by nearly one-third in the market, total newspaper circulation grew less than half that rate, about 14 per cent. The *Star's* circulation went up 16 per cent, the *Globe's* 18 per cent since 1961. The *Telegram* stayed virtually static.

Bassett's own view of his paper's difficulties conflicts dramatically with Vagg's. Bassett believed the paper's slump in circulation and revenue was "largely the result of the general business atmosphere." The expert concluded: "Since external conditions are the same for all three dailies, the major circulation and advertising problems must be internal."

The *Telegram*, Vagg found to his astonishment, "does not even possess a marketing or research department." When the *Star* exaggerated the gap between the two papers' reach

Jon McKee, who did our cover illustration, is a Toronto cartoonist. His work appears frequently in Content.

with a new readership survey in 1968, the Tely "never even fought." The *Telegram's* nonchalant response to the *Star's* survey was "without precedent in the history of newspaper competition in any country," says Vagg.

In July, Bassett demanded a one-year moratorium on wage increases from the Newspaper Guild and the two craft unions. He offered five-per-cent increases for 1972 and 1973. Unconvinced by Bassett's rantings about the paper's condition, the unions agreed to inspect the books. The union auditors concluded Bassett was "fair" in depicting the paper's woes. Since 1968, the last profitable year, the *Telegram* lost \$2 million and anticipated another \$1 million loss in 1971.

(The auditors substantiated Bassett's analysis that a one-year wage freeze was required to save the Tely, although they were allowed to inspect the books only back to 1962, when the publisher reorganized his paper and opened new headquarters. On the auditors' advice, however, the unions agreed to ask for an IOU.)

(The auditors pointed out that one good year could take the Tely back into the black. It was the unions' duty, observed the auditors, to protect their 900 members so they could share in future profits, if any, should the employees' sacrifices make the paper profitable again.)

(Vagg, the auditors and the union leadership all were convinced the Tely simply needed time to return to financial health. By the Tely bosses' own estimate, the paper would break even in 1972 and turn a slight profit in 1973.)

(The losses of the last three years are not lethal for a paper generating circulation and advertising revenue approaching \$30 million a year.)

It was about this time, after continually denying the paper was for sale, that Bassett began looking for a way out. He threatened to break a strike should the unions not submit to his wage freeze. He said he'd shut "the joint," as he liked to call it, if the strike forced him to suspend publication.

On August 1, say broadcaster Templeton and author-broadcaster Pierre Berton, Bassett offered to sell to them for \$11 million. Later he discouraged them from buying. They could have raised the money, says Templeton, but couldn't afford the commitment of time.

Why did Bassett change his mind? Only he and *Star* publisher Beland Honderich know that. It's speculated by union officials that Bassett was betting on a strike to get him out of his financial hassles. If he could break the unions, he could dictate his terms and keep publishing or sell the union-less paper as a going concern.

But if the conjecture is right, the unions bamboozled his strategy by agreeing to the one-year freeze and asking for an IOU for unpaid salaries that would bring *Telegram* wages to parity with the *Star*. The unions were reasonable. In a strike, it would be Bassett who looked bad. Worse, a strike would sabotage Bassett's deal with the *Star*. It would cost Honderich almost nothing to pick up a sizeable number of Tely subscribers if the unions struck.

On September 15, the day after he had ped-

dled the paper's home-delivery list to the *Star*, Bassett had his last negotiating session with the unions and rejected their IOU proposal. The next day, the unions, which had hoped the IOU would unlock the negotiations, took "strike" votes which their leaders knew—and which Bassett later admitted he knew—would never be used. Twenty-four hours later, Bassett wrote the paper's obituary in his office and dropped the statement and the duplicates into the copy box on the city desk.

Besides profit, what were the motives in the death of the *Telegram*? Clearly, Bassett was losing interest in newspapers. Losing money at the game made it intolerable as well as uninspiring.

In an interview last year with the *Windsor Star*, Bassett's character was startlingly clear.

"My ambitions are boundless," he was quoted. "I'm only bound by two things. Money and the CRTC. If I had unlimited wealth and the CRTC would let me have all the electronic media I wanted, I'd be a real pig. I like it. And if you're in business, you want more, you want to be a pig."

In Windsor, he picked up *CKLW-AM* and its FM sister station. Already he had *CFTO* television in Toronto. He has applied to pick up *CKPM* radio in Ottawa for several hundred thousand dollars.

There's a report he was involved in an offer to buy the broadcast division of Canadian Marconi Co., which includes Montreal stations *CFCF-TV*, *CFCF-AM*, *CFQR-FM* and *CFCX* short-wave . . . *CHUM's* Allan Waters now, however, seems to be the major bidder.

Sports are still fun because they make money. Bassett sold the Maple Leaf Gardens shares owned by the *Telegram* in September and got \$5 million, most of which he said would be used to reduce the paper's debts and erase part of the staggering interest charges that led to its chronic losses since 1968.

But he bought nearly 100 per cent control of the football Argonauts later that month through Baton (Bassett-Eaton) Broadcasting, which he controls.

Back in December, the plant and equipment of Inland Publishing Co. Ltd.—the weekly arm of the Tely interests—were sold to Maclaren Power and Paper Co. Ltd. The group of eight weekly newspapers had a combined circulation of about 100,000 in Metropolitan Toronto and the suburbs.

Inland Publishing was managed by Douglas Bassett, son of the *Telegram* publisher. A sale price for the hardware was not divulged at mid-October, but it was understood the *Telegram* group had leased the printing plant in Mississauga Township from Maclaren with the intention to continue publishing the weeklies.

More than business failures, of course, helped the demise of the Tely. Frequently in its final years, the paper was missing the Big Story. Keen reporters quit in exasperation. Nearly a dozen by-liners and other key editorial staffers left this summer.

Sen. Keith Davey's committee on the mass media came close to describing the *Telegram's* problem. It was losing touch, especially with those younger readers the paper would have to attract to keep pace. Davey found that nearly twice as many people between ages 20 and 24 turn on broadcast services first "for the facts." More than half the men and women surveyed said the press is "not really honest" or only "somewhat honest." Seventy per cent said their news is "controlled" and three-quarters believed they got biased reporting on politics.

The *Star* seemed more honest in its exposés, more pertinent in its crusades. The *Star* found

The Telegram The Telegram The Telegram The Telegram The Telegram The Telegram

Gerda Munsinger, central figure in a federal cabinet scandal. The Tely clamored on its front pages on behalf of anti-vivisectionists.

Part of the problem was manpower. For months the *Telegram's* provincial parliament bureau was staffed by one man against three or more reporters for each of the other papers.

Bassett's fetish for style crimped the paper's news staff, too. For years the Tely had correspondents in Moscow, Washington, Tokyo, Rome, London, Bonn and Paris—but no one in Montreal.

The paper seldom seemed as gutsy about sacred cows as the *Globe and Mail*. A long story on CTV and CBC advertising rates was killed because it didn't support a managing editors' preconception that the public network was unfairly undercutting the private network and its flagship station, Bassett's *CFTO*.

Fresh ideas were not the Tely's formula.

Mid-way through a major series on Quebec, the reporter complained about wholesale changes in the copy and demanded removal of her by-line. The series was discontinued.

Bassett personally scuttled a story by columnist Ron Haggart on how T. Eaton Co. was laying off 200 maintenance workers in an economy move.

A rock-music festival promoter was hired for a time as the paper's rock critic.

Competition with the *Star* was fanatical. Occasionally it produced excellent journalism; often the procedure was to "get it first" and then get it right. In one edition, August 20, 1970, the banner headline was:

Storm slams Sudbury, 10 killed

In the next, it read:

Storm slams Sudbury, 5 killed

Fresh ideas were not the Tely's formula. The *Star* began illustrating its editorials with drawings last year. The Tely started to illustrate its editorials with photos. The *Star* opened a Voice of the People page to readers' letters. The Tely filled a page with readers' letters, too. The desire to imitate got so intense that the Tely began a few months ago to use its own red-ink banner headline on page one, long a *Star* trademark. (The *Star* plagiarized the Tely's reader-service column, Action Line)

Bassett was responsible for part of the paper's credibility trouble. Former labor reporter Norman Simon told the Davey Committee he had been ordered to play up violence in his strike stories and downgrade "the egghead stuff."

The testimony came at the night session, and by two o'clock the following day Bassett was telling reporters he had conducted an investigation into the alleged incident which purpor-

tedly occurred three years before and had satisfied himself it never happened.

Other incidents may have had little impact on the public but eroded the confidence of the editorial staff and stifled their morale. Pollution fighter Tiny Bennett, for example, continued to appear, unidentified, in house ads weeks after he quit the paper.

A full-color, front-page picture of the sons of an assistant managing editor adorned Saturday editions one day.

A doctored "color" photo of the moon taken by a U.S. space flight crew was printed a few years ago although no color photographs were available at the time.

Reader confidence might well have been shaken by the front-page story one day earlier this year proclaiming the supermarket discount price war was over. The next day, on an inside page, a story appeared declaring there was "no sign" the discount war was ending.

The paper let Action Line conductor Frank Drea write ubiquitously about the Progressive Conservative government's departments and agencies and about prominent Tory politicians while he was receiving several thousand dollars from a government consulting job. He was running in the October provincial election on the Tory ticket with the slogan "Drea Means Action" while his column appeared daily with his picture. (Drea has been president of the little-known Canadian Society of Professional Journalists, based in Toronto.)

As far as the *Star* is concerned, its actions in the death of the *Telegram* must be suspicious enough to warrant an investigation by the federal government's Combines Investigations Branch. The unions at the *Telegram* are pressing for such a probe, though it can never revive the paper.

Because of the furor raised by the unions, the *Star* was defensive about its deal to pick up the Tely's subscribers, even offering to back out of the deal if Bassett would allow should a purchaser be found. The *Star's* commitment lasted just until a buyer was found.

Newspaper Guild official Robert Rupert spent nearly three frustrating weeks trying to consummate a deal to save the Tely. He got Bassett to agree on the price twice, but each time obstacles developed.

Discount retailer Ed Mirvish got frightened away by the commitment of time and energy needed for the Tely to recover.

Uranium king Stephen Roman offered \$12 million over three years. The offer looked cheap compared with Beland Honderich's \$10 million on the spot. Honderich let Bassett know the *Star* would require some compensation for expenses incurred since making its offer.

Bassett claimed until the end that the *Star* was underpriced at 10 cents an issue. If the *Star* went to 15, so could the Tely, and both, Bassett believed, would be alive today. While low news-stand prices controlled by Honderich did their part, rising *Star* ad rates hurt the Tely another way. It was becoming too costly for a some advertisers to buy in both p.m. papers. Most picked the *Star* when they had to chose.

Obviously shy about the unfavorable publicity his deal was getting, Honderich sent letters to *Star* employees explaining the \$10 million pay-off. Fearing the *Globe* would get the Tely's lists, he said, the *Star* felt "justified" in making the offer "to protect our competitive position." (*Globe* executives denied they were interested in the Tely's subscribers, which makes Honderich's justification a little weak.)

Not surprisingly, the *Star* announced less

than a month after the Tely deal that ad rates would go up nine per cent December 1. That's worth an estimated \$3 million in additional revenue in the next 12 months.

The *Star* made it plain the hike was consistent with gains in circulation made even before the *Star* put the Tely out of business. More increases are no doubt imminent.

The *Star* expects to pick up at least 100,000 of the Tely's 226,000 readers. The Tely's carrier boys were absorbed to deliver the *Star* to their same customers in an all-out drive to hold *Telegram* subscriptions.

Relatively few employees, however, were taken by the *Star*. About a dozen from the editorial side landed jobs. A handful of salespeople and the circulation department was taken over. But as shutdown approached the vast majority of the *Telegram* staff was jobless.

(*Content's* classified-ad column is open and free-of-charge to men and women seeking new ground and to potential employers. The Toronto Newspaper Guild is doing its best to ease the employment problem. And the Media Club of Canada (c/o Miss K. Rex, 486 Oriole Parkway, Apt. 305, Toronto 7, Ont.) has surveyed branches across the country to find openings for available members of the Tely's editorial staff.)

How good is the *Star*? The *Star* still hasn't matched its record circulation figures of 20 years ago but is getting close at 410,000. Bassett could add only 3,000 to the Tely's total in his 20 years as owner.

That, perhaps, is the most interesting aspect of the newspaper business. Unlike most capitalists, publishers have been unable to make a product that has kept up with natural population growth—automobiles, steel, baby strollers, fried chicken.

Ethically, Honderich and his associates are blood brothers with Bassett. Success, as Lord

Thomson said, is what counts. Honderich may relish his monopoly position, but is not above romanticizing to keep up the myth that he did it with talent instead of money.

In his letter to employees after the *Telegram* sale, he asserted: "I would... like to emphasize that while we may soon be the only afternoon newspaper we do not, by any means, have a monopoly position...."

"Competition in Toronto is far from dead and no one has a monopoly position. In my view, we will have to work harder than ever to

No one in Toronto, says the Star's publisher, has a monopoly position.

make sure the *Star* remains number one."

Number One is more than a slogan to the *Star's* management. It is an almost psychotic preoccupation. The *Star* is on a power-trip. It can make no little plans. Sometimes this manifests itself in colossal hubris. The biggest story on the Davey Committee's hearings in the *Star* was about the *Star's* own brief, ostentatiously spread over three pages.

The way the *Star* helped do away with the *Telegram* was more a *coup de grace* than a bludgeon. Honderich was not content merely to squeeze the paper to death and pick up the remains. He went for the only part of it he considered worthwhile: the list of subscribers.

Not content with being a mammoth, he wants to be a leviathan, all the while draping the *Star* in sanctimonious righteousness.

Beaten by Bassett for the *CFTO* licence, Honderich has not let the taste of TV slip from his jaws. In May of this year the *Star* withdrew its application for a UHF station in Toronto because after "careful analysis" it was decided the station "couldn't provide the quality of programming people expect from an organization like the Toronto *Star*."

Perhaps Honderich sniffed even as early as May that the *Telegram* would soon be done away with. In that political climate, with the unions crying monopoly, the *Star's* chances of picking up a broadcast licence would be dim.

Somehow, *Star* vice-president Burnett M. Thall remarked recently, the *Star* must get into television "to protect our future."

Some day, not too long from now, the heat will come off. The *Star's* Liberal friends in Ottawa will declare there was no sinister intent in the *Telegram's* sell-out. Then the *Star's* entry into television will be easier.

Already, it has asked the Canadian Radio-Television Commission to make available a third VHF station in Toronto. In a letter to the CRTC, the *Star* admits with incredible self-effacement that it "would probably be among the applicants."

Til then, Honderich and his team are doing everything they can to make sure no one else enters Toronto TV. The *Star* took the extraordinary step of entering a "philosophical intervention" when a community group including ex-CBC producer Moses Znaimer sought CRTC approval for a low-power UHF station at a hearing in September.

Clearly, the Znaimer group is a threat to Honderich's nascent communications empire. How much of the \$20 million or so in ad revenue the Tely took in would go to a small, community-oriented TV station is anybody's guess. But the *Star's* owners apparently can't bear the thought that anyone but the *Star* should get a modicum of the retail advertising pie—worth an estimated \$80 million annually.

The *Star's* objection—joined by the city's richest radio station, *CFRB* of the Standard Broadcasting chain—was that a new UHF channel wouldn't be viable.

Why should the *Star* care? Obviously, if the *Star* can't get into the electronic game, no one should. Why else would it try to sabotage an application it wasn't even competing for?

The *Star's* pretensions to public service cannot overcome the suspicion that it wouldn't keep alive an unprofitable newspaper with revenue from TV or other enterprises. John Bassett wouldn't either.

As an organ of journalism, the *Star* is erratic and pitifully unprepared ethically to accept the awesome responsibility of the only news mouthpiece for one million readers.

The *Star* promoted the tawdry story of plans for a provisional government in Quebec to take over from the elected cabinet during the FLQ kidnapping scare last fall. The *Star* didn't hesitate to give big play to the spurious report in September that a high government official directed the FLQ.

Nor is the paper more inclined to sober judgment on its editorial page. In one recent editorial, the editors commented that Yippie Abbie Hoffman's book was "properly" banned from Canada by federal authorities.

Equally distressing to advocates of a freer press, several pages of stories on the *Telegram's* closing prepared for the first edition September 18 were ordered held. The Tely was permitted to break the story of its own demise though *Star* staffers knew about it moments after the Tely's overnight crew did.

Such phony respect seems hypocritical since *Star* management closed the deal to sink the opposition three days earlier. Was it an attempt to cover the *Star's* complicity?

(There is also the intriguing possibility—told as a vignette, perhaps apocryphal—that Beland Honderich threatened to

If the trend towards ownership concentration is allowed to continue unabated, sooner or later it must reach the point where it collides with the public interest.

—Senate Report
on Mass Media

announce the Tely's closing himself when he learned Bassett had been quietly buying up *Star* Ltd. stock.)

For some readers in Toronto, the new monopoly has already failed two crucial tests of a free press. The *Star's* managers are ready to endorse censorship of a book (Hoffman's) they may not even have read. And they are perfectly at ease engaging in news suppression when it serves the *Star's* interests.

It's a discomfiting legacy.

Marc Zwelling, former labor reporter on the Toronto Telegram, is president of the Toronto Newspaper Guild.

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content

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REST EASY, JOHN ROSS ROBERTSON

THE TELY

by RON POULTON

It is ten o'clock on a Sunday morning and lights blaze down on the white desks and walls of the *Telegram's* city room. One body is on view, giving faint signs of life at the rewrite desk.

What lately has been a place for wakes and rumors looks like a morgue. Roy Thomson would buy it. Ed Mirvish would buy it. Steven Roman would buy it. But let the chips (mainly blue) fall where they may, the deal is final and the Tely is dead. There's nothing left but the post mortem.

Days have passed since some workman unscrewed the names of prize-winning reporters from a wall at the head of the escalator. The founder's bust has been removed; bronze bulk, plinth, nameplate and all. If the portent gets any heavier, the building will buckle.

Or, to put it another way, as one sardonic staffer has already done: "Working around here is like being asked to polish the brass on the Titanic."

To sum up the history of the *Telegram* seems, in such an atmosphere, as idle an exercise as kicking a ghost. It was born one spring morning and it died one midnight in mid-September, trailing 95 years full of words in its wake, and not a little grace.

So, Sic Transit Gloria Mundi. Goodbye, Jack. Take your story, and blow.

What killed it? All kinds of embittered people have all sorts of venomous theories. They are all marked down, going fast, and feather-light; offered with satisfaction guaranteed, or capable of quick renewal. And so, because judgment is the brother of prejudice just now, it is more temperate to say what didn't kill it.

Old age didn't kill it. Lack of know-how didn't kill it. Want of manpower didn't kill it. A relatively short look back will show that it looked older in the Thirties than it did in the Fifties and Sixties when George McCullagh and then John Bassett rejuvenated it.

The *Telegram* was always the sum of its contradictions—not the least of these being the fact that, although it passed through three owners and changed beyond all recognition from the sheet John Ross Robertson sired, little old ladies in Scarboro wept at its passing as though it had not changed at all.

Robertson was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone; working his men to death, then paying for their funerals. The trustees to whom he willed control when he died in 1918 shared his respect for a dollar but lacked his force. Their rule was unenterprising but profitable.

Not even in the depths of the Hungry Thirties was a loss ever sustained because, in the hands of the trustees, every nickle became a collector's item. "Go to the stationers and get me a dozen envelopes," a copy-boy was told. "But mind ye, laddie, get a receipt."

The policies of Robertson and his immediate successors were rigidly austere. They were all independent Tories and Mother Britain loving. Black Jack Robinson, the unlettered editor who ruled Robertson's fief for more than 30 years, was known as 'The Magnificent Bigot.'

Under Robertson and Robinson, the

Telegram was anti-Catholic, anti-American, anti-French Canadian and as Orange as marmalade. It was dedicated to an unalterable antipathy for politicians, irrelevant of party.

"You can't appeal to their heads," Robinson once said of politicians, "because they have been turned. You can't appeal to their hearts because they haven't any. But thank God they all have hides."

When Black Jack died in 1928, the roaring lessened. The *Telegram* still hounded Mackenzie King and all his works, still defended all things British, but the dust began to thicken over policies that had grown gray with the changing times.

Eccentricity and fetishism reigned. Jerry Snider, the only forceful editor among the five trustees, fell so in love with the city's Ukrainian community that reporters quaked whenever assigned to any Ukrainian story.

One reporter, wrestling with a Ukrainian name, checked it meticulously. When it appeared in print, he was blistered by Snider.

"But he spelled it for me that way and so did the directory and the phone book," the reporter argued.

"Yes, but the *Telegram* doesn't," Snider snarled.

All the dust was blown away when McCullagh bought the *Telegram* in November, 1948, for \$3,610,000. Money went like water to battle the *Star*. And the largesse continued after McCullagh died in 1952 and John Bassett, with the backing of John David Eaton, bought it for \$4,250,000 on November 18, 1952.

After that, the *Telegram* underwent several transformations in pursuit of Bassett's stated intention to make it 'Independent Canadian.' The spare-no-expense pursuit of every major story—instituted by McCullagh—was continued against the *Star*, but that cost negated the advantage of the *Telegram's* rising circulation.

Columnists by the yard were hired. Bureau men in Washington, Hong Kong, Moscow, Bonn and Paris pumped the copy home to give the *Telegram* a new and sharper international flavor. In-depth articles to chart the meaning of the news were favored. Political coverage was enlarged in spite of the evidence that most Canadians show their boredom with politics by staying away from the polls in droves. A magazine format was tried. A Sunday newspaper was launched only to founder. An appeal to youth through trendier copy was made. Most of the international bureaus were closed.

Through this series of innovations, some of which the opposition copied after waiting cautiously, the *Telegram* fought with initiative and originality in an attempt to battle the *Star*. And the *Star* continued to rise.

Through it all (and here's one mystery of it), although the *Telegram* transformed itself like an anxious chameleon, the little old ladies in Scarboro remained convinced that it was still the Tely they and their mothers had always known.

Another puzzle is the mood that prevailed among *Telegram* employees in spite of all the changes. John Ross Robertson, that austere

and Olympian Victorian, earned undying allegiance. The brief McCullagh years brought in a flood of new employees who adapted to the paper's familial atmosphere. The 18 years of Bassett's rule was just as strangely paternalistic.

Bassett-watchers are busier than ever now, polishing up their studies, and snatches of old, revealing conversations keep coming home to roost.

"He's a pirate," one of his broadcasting rivals once said in Ottawa. "Ah, but a charming pirate," he was told. "And what a sight to see when he comes leaping and smiling over the rail."

"Bassett doesn't like losers," another reporter has noted. It may also be indicative that he tried golf once and turned to other sports when the ball wouldn't go where he wanted it to. The *Telegram*, after all, was third in the city's circulation race in spite of years of effort and innovative journalism.

Tuppenny psychologists, whose ranks included a fair proportion of masochists, were at work again the day the *Telegram* died. A curious kind of dolor washed the premises

A NEW CANADIAN

The agreements concluded between RENAULT CANADA and S.O.M.A. have given to the RENAULT Company the title of 'Canadian Citizen', and this for several reasons.

It is evident that S.O.M.A. creates employment as more than 450 Canadian workers are employed by the S.O.M.A. Company in their Saint Bruno plant. Along the same lines, a recent agreement between RENAULT and S.O.M.A. has considerably increased the proportion of Canadian-made parts and accessories manufactured in Canada. Therefore, we know that each automobile assembled in Saint Bruno procures in Canadian content the equivalent of five weeks' work for a Canadian employee.

This increased incorporation of Canadian-made parts in our automobiles also favours the activity of the companies producing these parts. Since the beginning, RENAULT and S.O.M.A. have always collaborated closely with one another. A concrete example of this is that S.O.M.A. exports RENAULT automobiles to the United States and, we expect, by year's end, that 6,000 automobiles will thus have been exported.

By buying a RENAULT automobile you are not buying an 'import', but a Canadian-assembled automobile with a good proportion of Canadian-made parts.



while certain mourners spoke in the past tense as though it was Bassett who had gone.

A few more realistic souls remembered that there used to be a saying down in Arkansas, where men were said to be so durable that

their enemies had to decapitate them and hide their heads before they would know they'd died.

Bassett? He's alive and well and living in Rosedale, as if you didn't know.

Ron Poulton is author of *The Paper Tyrant: John Ross Robertson, a biography of the Toronto Telegram's founder.*

WHEN YOU'RE NO. 3, WHY EVEN TRY?

THE TELY

by GARTH HOPKINS

I want to say right off that I have not seen either audited or unaudited financial statements of the Telegram Publishing Company Limited or of its parent corporation, the Telegram Corporation Limited.

Nor have I spoken in person to John Bassett since a brisk fall day two years ago when I sat in the *Telegram* board room and listened to him intone "none of your damn business" or, alternatively, "yeah, you can have that," as he worked his way through the detailed financial questionnaire we had presented to him on behalf of Keith Davey's Senate committee. The "none of your damned business" rulings far exceeded the "yeah, you can have that," a not unpredictable trend in view of the fact that the Tely is a private company.

Subsequently, I am told, Mr. Bassett was much more forthcoming than our initial interview indicated and apparently filed a detailed reply to our questionnaire which provided virtually all the data we had requested.

I say "I am told" and "apparently" because of the rather elaborate security procedures we implemented to deal with the 100 or so financial returns received from publishers and broadcasters across Canada. To overcome owners' fears that these jug-headed consultants might, despite our formal oath of secrecy, blab their financial position to friend and competitor alike, we set up a coding system under which the corporate name on each return was removed and replaced by a letter code. The master list for this code was kept in a bank vault and only one man in our group—a rather vague chap with an impossibly bad memory—had access to it. As a result, neither I, nor anyone else who worked on this study, ever saw the financial statements of the *Telegram* or any other company in any identifiable way.

In any event, the numbers would have served only to quantify what the broad economic facts of life about daily newspaper publishing had already told us:

The Tely, like others before it, was in a "can't win" position that would lead ultimately to its death.

The rumor mill notwithstanding, I for one see no sinister motives in John Bassett's decision to let the *Telegram* die. There is not, in my view, anything either sinister or ulterior in a decision to stop an enterprise that is losing you several million dollars a year, be it a daily newspaper or a widget factory. Mr. Bassett reckoned that losses on the *Telegram* would reach about \$3 million over the period 1969-71, and my rather crude and quick arithmetic gives me no reason to doubt that figure.

And, no, I don't think that Mr. Bassett or anyone else was "bleeding" the *Telegram* to death. The Tely was simply another victim of an immutable law of economics that economists, most publishers, and damned few reporters and editorial writers have recognized for years: that the daily newspaper industry has

all the attributes of a natural monopoly industry. And that is just fine if you are a Toronto *Star*, and a fat pain in the pocketbook if you are a Toronto *Telegram*.

A natural monopoly industry is one in which the cost of a unit of production drops as the size of the production unit increases, and any copy-boy knows that the real cost of each paper in a press run of 100,000 is substantially less than the cost of the same-sized paper in a press run of 100.

One very important characteristic of a natural monopoly industry is that share of market is never stable. The larger the share of the market that any one firm obtains, the lower its cost per unit of production. If one firm wins a larger share of the market it does so at the expense of another firm, and the weaker firm's unit costs increase as the stronger firm's unit costs decrease.

That, in an economic nutshell, is what happened to the *Telegram*.

For the purposes of this piece, the *Star* and the Tely were the real competitors; the *Globe and Mail* competes in the same market for some of the same dollars but its presence has very little influence on the factors that ultimately wrote fini for the Tely.

There are two key factors in the publishing equation:

- 1) The cost of producing and delivering a newspaper to a reader;
- 2) The revenue that can be earned by that unit, which is determined primarily by the number of readers of a newspaper.

As part of our research for the Davey Committee, we computed a cost per column figure, measured against circulation, for a number of dailies in Canada. The finding was almost painfully simple: cost per column decreases substantially as circulation size increases.

Using 1968 figures, we found that the average annual cost per 1,000 columns for a paper of 10,000 circulation was approximately \$1.60; average cost per 1,000 columns for a paper of 250,000 circulation was approximately \$0.45 or about 3 1/2 times less per column than the smaller paper. It follows logically that the smaller paper must therefore raise 3 1/2 times as much revenue per reader than the larger paper if it hopes to cover its production costs. So, it costs an advertiser 3 1/2 times as much per reader to reach the smaller paper's circulation than it does for him to reach the larger paper's readership.

These factors, plus the *Star's* inexorable move to an ever larger share of the Toronto market, in keeping with the natural monopoly characteristics of the industry, are what killed the Tely.

At the present time, the *Telegram* has a readership of 240,000 or roughly 60 per cent of the *Star's* 407,000. Basic production costs are about the same but the *Star* has a substantially lower per unit cost. Similarly, the *Telegram's* general advertising rates are about 15

per cent below the *Star's*, thus generating substantially less revenue than does the *Star*. And with advertisers being able to reach *Star* readers at a lower per head cost than they can reach the Tely readers, a steady shift of advertising into the *Star* is a natural result.

Last year, the *Telegram's* retail advertising dropped by about three per cent while the *Star's* rose by some two per cent. The *Star's* classified ads fell by about eight per cent over the previous year but the Tely's dropped by about fourteen per cent. The gap obviously was widened.

So, Mr. Bassett's decision was, in essence, made for him. There may well have been other factors that influenced the timing or the details. But the one over-riding consideration was the simple fact the *Telegram* was in a bad economic position that could only get worse. Undeniably sad and unalterably true.

What does it all mean? Again, the answer in pure economic terms is pretty simple. The natural monopoly characteristics of the daily newspaper industry will not be appreciably altered as long as the dailies continue to sell essentially the same product in essentially the same way.

What happened to the Tely in Toronto can—and probably will—happen to the *Albertan* in Calgary, the *Tribune* in Winnipeg, and to the weaker paper in those few remaining cities in Canada and the United States where two dailies compete in the same market. I stress the "pure economics" aspect of that statement because the fact that it hasn't already happened in the aforementioned cities is the result of special factors (such as informal agreements between the weak and the strong not to kill the weak) that serve to change the time frame in which the natural monopoly law has its ultimate effect.

To mourn the Tely is decent. To be surprised by its demise is naive.

Garth Hopkins firm, Hopkins, Hedlin Limited (economics communications), prepared Volume II of the Senate report on mass media, a study of the economics of publishing and broadcasting. Mr. Hopkins' newspaper years included a period with The Financial Times of Canada.

HIP.

The hippies came in their thousands. And The Calgary Herald covered a Rock Festival. Protests from splinter groups, citizens and right-wing suburbanites were duly recorded. But the story of the Rock Festival, of the fourteen thousand kids who poured into McMahon Stadium for three days of music, love, peace and brotherhood, wine and marijuana, was also told. With photographs that caught the mood, and accurate, comprehensive and responsible coverage of the scene.

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THE CALGARY HERALD 
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EDITORIALS (1): THE IGNOBLE ART

by C. E. WILSON
and F. K. BAMBRICK

In 1866 James Parton wrote in the *North American Review* that the prestige of the editorial was gone, and that many journalists felt it was time to abolish the editorial. Ninety-eight years later, Curtis MacDougall wrote there was little evidence to support "apparent majority opinion (that) hardly anyone reads editorials and those who do are only slightly if at all influenced by them."

In the past decade, increasing evidence—not just opinion—has been gathered on the editorial. Some of it suggests the editorial itself is not outdated, some of it suggests the traditional persuasive purpose of the editorial is.

First, on the matter of persuasiveness: it is the general opinion of those who study the matter empirically that the mass media have little power to persuade directly, through advertisements, public relations campaigns, or editorials. There are simply too many other factors working in and on the audience to "blame" the mass media for manipulating the reader or viewer.

There are such things as ego defenses, group memberships, intelligence, and education at work. There are the situations in which the newspapers are read, or television is watched. There is even a fair body of evidence, some of it two decades old, that feeding facts to an audience may change their knowledge level, but not their opinions. The well-worn path of attempting to relate editorials to voting behavior is a case in point.

Second, on the matter of readership: in general, readership surveys show somewhere between 35 and 50 per cent of newspaper readers read some editorial or part of an editorial. No comparable figure for television editorials appears to be available. Surveys made during assorted newspaper blackouts usually find between 15 and 20 per cent of readers who claim to actively miss the editorials. Such survey results must always be interpreted against the possibility of the "halo effect"—saying you have read or done some-

thing because it'll make you look good.

Readership of something on the editorial page rises to about 80 per cent in surveys; what is most read is not known. The Davey Senate committee on the mass media found that about six of the 44 daily minutes spent with the newspaper are spent with the editorial page. Sixty-five per cent of those surveyed reported satisfaction with the quantity of editorial opinion, and added that there was enough to read now, or that it didn't matter, since they didn't read it anyway.

The "decline" of the editorial, lamented or celebrated for more than a century, can be attributed to many possible influences, including such things as the increasing availability of alternative sources of opinion and comment, rising educational standards and levels leading to independence of mind, or simply irrelevance of the traditional editorial to the reader or the viewer.

A study of lead editorials in eight representative Ontario dailies, done three years ago, suggests support for the irrelevance explanation. For instance, the study showed just over one-quarter of lead editorials were on local matters, while Davey report research indicated 43 per cent of readers were interested in local news most. Forty-seven per cent of the editorials were on national affairs, while national news was most interesting to 24 per cent of the Davey sample. To add emphasis, newspapers were judged by the sample to be most important for local news, and television most important for national and international news.

Then, judged by assorted readability and human interest scales, the Ontario study scored editorials, on average, as requiring an Ontario Grade 13 education for easy reading and comprehension. Related news stories scored between Grade 10 and Grade 11, the probable population level according to census data.

The prize case of irrelevancy came in a paper in a major city which ran a 678-word

editorial on a story of 56 words which had appeared 11 days before on page 38.

The impact of television editorials has yet to be judged. One U.S. study showed a major difference between print and television: most television editorials are delivered by station managers rather than by journalists, and about one-quarter of the editorials are written by station managers.

In any event, using a complicated set of indexes and a panel of judges, only two of 64 stations surveyed attained a substantial level of editorial excellence. Editorials dealing with local topics generally were scored better than others. The relevance of television editorials to the audience may be indicated by the fact that nearly one-third of the stations received no reader response to editorials during the month of the survey.

Altogether, McLuhan's tribal village appears not yet to have arrived for the editorial reader and listener, and a charge of Afghanistanism can still be supported against editorial writers. It is cold comfort to learn that one study showed that the press of Afghanistan practices a brand of Afghanistanism that might be called United Statesism.

Research is one of the many areas in journalism requiring examination and contemplation. Too often, the working journalist simply lacks the time to study material which has been compiled about his profession. C.E. Wilson and F.K. Bambrick, of the journalism department at the University of Western Ontario, have undertaken research projects which warrant attention. This is another series of articles by them. They're interested in research work done at other universities and community colleges, too, and material should be sent to them directly at: Department of Journalism, University of Western Ontario, London 72, Ont.

EDITORIALS (2): IN SEARCH OF MEANING

by HENDRIK OVERDUIN

By now it is an old joke—and probably a sad truth—that editorials are among the least-read items in a daily newspaper. That is a sad truth because editorials *ought* to be the most sought-out part of a newspaper.

Why is that so? Well, consider the following quotation from an article on the role of the editorial page by Louis M. Lyons in *Nieman Reports*. He points out that facts—the essence of news—“have become repellent, irrational.” “The facts,” he says, “if you can sort them out, present such a confused mess of frustrations and irrationalities as they defy recognition as reality.”

That, it seems to me, is a correct assessment. The facts speak for themselves but say nothing. Their meaning remains hidden. It is exactly as the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein argued. He began, in his *Tractatus*, with the observation that “The world is the totality of facts, not things.” With rigorous logic and argument, he had to conclude that the *meaning* of the world is not found within the totality of facts, but lies outside the world of facts, the world of the so-called hard-nosed newsman. It is the world where one picture is worth one thousand words.

And it is the editorial which ought to be

worth one million pictures. How? In this manner. The editorial is concerned with meaning, with significance, with values and with the purpose of things and the way things are. Or rather, that is what editorials ought to be about. Too often they are nothing but cliché-like profundities strung from a philosophical vacuum in utopia. That is why their authority, and hence importance, is so small.

Too many editorials still are written from the perspective that people care about what their paper's “stand” on a certain issue is. The paper's “stand” more often than not was simply a rationalization of its publisher's pre-

judices and opinions. In the days when newspapers often were the major source of fact and argument, that type of editorializing was, perhaps, justified. It certainly is no longer true today.

What *is* true today is that all the news media—including radio, television and magazines—bombard the people with facts and opinions. There are as many facts as there are opinions about them. The newspaper's "stand" is just one of many. Why ought anyone to take the local publisher's or editor's opinion more serious than the one held by his neighbor or the local fool?

Since there is no answer to that question—or better, since there appears to be no answer to that question considering the quality of editorials being written by most Canadian newspapers—the entire enterprise of writing editorials seems vain. It is, as one hard-newsman put it sarcastically, the business of journalistic eunuchs.

Is there, then, any future to the editorial page? Is there any way in which editorial writing can get back on the ball, in the sense of being relevant to its readers, by taking a *stand*?

There is, but it will require a drastic re-orientation of editorializing. The emphasis should no longer be on what "stand" to take on certain issues—who, after all, determines what are issues?—but on a careful weighing of arguments and facts on the basis of some clearly developed philosophical outlook on the human condition.

In other words, Canadian newspapers will have to depart from their implied belief that reasonableness alone will serve as a sufficient heuristic device to create meaning and sense out of the irrationality of the facts. Editorially, a newspaper should be consciously committed

to certain principles and values, and it should weigh alternative interpretations of the facts in the light of its principles and values. I suggest that, generally, these values should be secular and humanistic, a rationalism tempered by humanism, an idealism tempered by what Russell called "a robust sense of reality."

Within such a philosophical framework, editorial writing would then become argumentation about arguments, a weighing of reasoning about facts in the light of certain values and principles. It would hardly be the kind of editorializing that results in new ideas, but it would result in editorials breathing out a certain wisdom, a way of looking at the multiplicity of facts from some sane perspective, a voice of reason in a sea of irrationality.

Also, such an editorializing approach would—because of its affinity with philosophical underpinnings of the majority of its readers—become a haven for its readers: a place where they can see that the frustration they feel about the irrationality, the chaotic multiplicity of facts, can be put into a meaningful context.

The newspaper could thus be *depended* upon in its editorials. Of course, there should also be alternative opinions available to its readers. Thus, ideally, the newspaper should present the facts of the world on its newspages, as wide a variety as possible of interpretations of these facts on its "comment" pages, and as wise as possible assessment of both on its own editorial page.

Such an editorial policy clearly precludes any claims to infallibility or pride in taking a "stand." On the contrary, such a policy entails that editorially the newspaper is trying to do corporately what most people struggle with individually; to wit, the attempt to cope with

reality, with the world of facts. That's what that much abused word, relevance, is all about.

Of course, the question remains: Why should anyone trust such editorializing? Why can it be depended upon? There is no answer to that question. The meaning of the world is outside of the world, as Wittgenstein held. The editorial ladders seeking out this meaning ultimately must be thrown away. There is only one thing that holds them up: faith. Faith in mankind, faith in the possibility of a better world.

What else is there?

Hendrik Overduin is an editorial writer with the Windsor Star.

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a year has passed an

It is with a sense of pride and, indeed, a wee bit of surprise, to be able to say *Content* is marking its first birthday. Response to the magazine has been more gratifying than even I had expected. Still, when you are endeavoring to fill a need never before confronted, and given a relatively small audience to which to appeal, the year has had its precarious moments.

Not editorially, for in 12 issues the publication has, by and large, succeeded in spanning a spectrum of interests. Material has been in good supply and people in all media have never been reluctant to contribute. The treasury, however, has been a delicate thing. This is not an exercise in poor-mouthing. It is simply to say that paid subscriptions have been flowing in only gradually and that the advertising base has been limited. A word of sincere appreciation is in order here to those advertisers who've seen fit to appear in *Content*, including those appearing on these pages. The resources of those intimately associated with the magazine, loans, thousands of unpaid hours and patient creditors essentially

have kept the publication in circulation.

To recall a brief editorial statement made 12 months ago in Vol. 1, No. 1:

"We in print and broadcast are at the core of the information which is flooding society. It is our responsibility to sift through and disseminate the concise facts, so people can find the truth and make informed decisions based on knowledge they have acquired A prerequisite for the journalist, then, is to be aware of his own capabilities, what is expected of him; and what his role is in the community. Hence, the need for self-criticism, conducted in a constructive fashion.

"Our intention is that *Content* will become a forum whereby journalists can stay abreast of trends and developments in the profession. Each month, it will talk about the aspirations, interests and problems of the Canadian journalist It will be a listening post and a sounding board . . . we have a great deal to say to each other."



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**L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
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nd content carries on

As the magazine enters its second year, the same sentiments apply, with greater emphasis.

These past 12 months have witnessed a surfeit of information about the media — Senator Keith Davey's report, Telecommission's Instant World report, the Canadian Radio-Television Commission's rulings, ever-increasing questioning about the media and the people responsible for handling the news. There was Media 71, the first national assembly of journalists which, with due immodesty, probably would not have been possible without *Content* as the trade/professional vehicle of information.

During the year we've rambled through, as indicated by the covers reproduced here, subjects both current and on-going, scholastically serious and ridiculously funny, directed at journalists specifically and media folk in general.

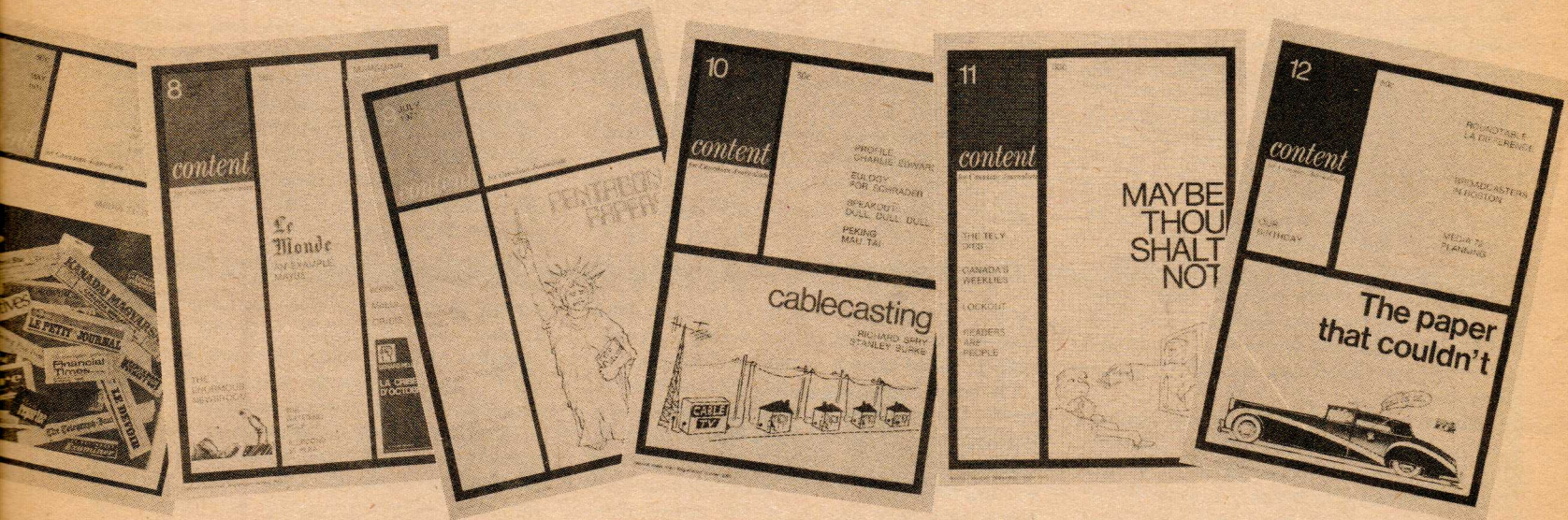
As editor, I've felt the need for a catching-up process in *Content*'s pages — there is so much that we as journalists don't seem to have considered important — and this function will continue.

During the coming year, I hope the magazine will hone its ability to be an outstanding monthly compendium of review, preview, criticism and commentary on the state of journalism and the media-at-large in Canada. With your suggestions and your support, *Content* will succeed.

It has been said the seventies would be known for concern about the environment. I believe the environment should be regarded as the whole, complex set of surroundings in which we do our best to live in harmony—physically, intellectually and materially. The media are very much a part of that environment.

We now are in, or are entering, an Age of Media Awareness, the implications and ramifications penetrating every aspect of our society. In its own way, *Content* will continue to be an *agent provocateur* of that emerging awareness, especially within the industry, so we can better respond to and serve the public.

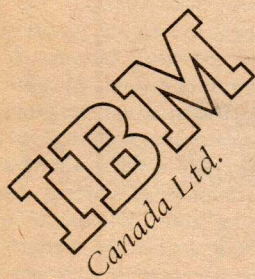
—Dick MacDonald
Editor



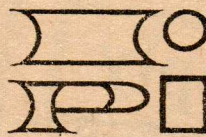
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THE CRTC FACES ALL COMERS. OR TRIES

by MARGARET COLLIER

Three weeks after the end of the September hearing of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission in Toronto, the questions remained unanswered.

Would Al Bruner of Global Communications succeed in his "final attempt" to found Canada's third television network? Which of the eager applicants would become the Belleville/Kingston licensee of Channel 6? Would any of them? Or would the Toronto *Star/Standard* Broadcasting's altruistic appeal to hold the channel for future Toronto use be heeded? Would Murray Chercover's cry for mercy on behalf of the poverty-stricken broadcasters of the CTV network touch the commission's collectively-sceptical heart?

That final question was the most speculated upon—the debatable point being whether it was, or ever had been, a question without a predetermined answer.

The proposal by the commission to amend Canadian content regulations as they applied to private broadcasters was the first item on the CRTC agenda. The three most important amendments, those which would result in fewer Canadian programs being seen by Canadians and more American, were:

—that Canadian program content be calculated on an annual basis, instead of on the present thirteen-week period;

—that the definition of prime-time—6.30 to 11.30 p.m.—be altered and that prime-time be defined as the hours between 6 p.m. and 12.00 midnight (the definition of the Board of Broadcast Governors, the CRTC's predecessor);

—that the amount of programming permitted "produced in any one country" (in effect the United States) be increased to 45 per cent. (Previously the figure was to be 40 per cent, reducing to 30 per cent.) It was also proposed that this percentage apply to the broadcast day, and not to prime-time, as in the original proposals.

When the proposals first were announced, Murray Chercover, president of CTV, had been outspokenly delighted at the opportunity to program more U.S. material to more people.

At the hearing, his manner was more subdued. He did not speak in praise of the CRTC proposals. He scarcely mentioned them, leading the more cynical observers to wonder whether he considered their adoption a foregone conclusion. Instead he pleaded, with the intensity of a man seeking blood for a dying child, for yet more concessions; for the commission to realise that the 60 per cent Canadian content regulation, due to come into force for CTV in October '72, would be the final Canadian nail in CTV's coffin. While "not objecting in principle" he asked for further delay.

Harry Boyle, CRTC vice-chairman, asked questions about the use of Canadian talent. Chercover seemed as unhappy with the questions as Boyle was with the answers.

Next, the talent appeared, with some questions—and answers—of its own. The delegation from the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists was led by president Victor Knight and Pierre Berton, acting as spokesmen for ACTRA and heading a group of twenty-five leading performers, including Don Harron, Barbara Hamilton, Warren Davis, Betty Kennedy, Gordon Sinclair, Bill Walker, Bernard Cowan, Vanda King, Jan Rubes, Catherine McKinnon, Anna Cameron, Paul Soles and Chris Wiggins.

The ACTRA brief was made up of equal parts of sorrow and anger, not necessarily in that order. In particular, it took issue with the CRTC's explanation that the proposals were necessary because the private sector of broadcasting "faced certain economic difficulties."

"It may be that we misunderstand completely the intention of the commission," said Berton, "but we are concerned that the very reasonable guidelines that were laid down in the original regulations are being diluted, even before they have been tried. We are particularly concerned that this has happened because it seems to imply that the CRTC has fallen heir to one of the worst faults that bedeviled the Board of Broadcast Governors—permissiveness under pressure."

The hearing was a long one. The vacating of Channel 6 by the CBC (wishing to move to Channel 5) produced a crop of mutually-

exclusive applications.

Global Communications, a company which, under various managements, has been attempting to sell the CRTC on the idea of a third network for some years, tried yet again, led by perennially-optimistic president Al Bruner. The Global presentation had many colorful charts and some equally colorful rhetoric. (It may be the first time entertainment programming has been compared to strip-mining.)

Global had an interesting theory concerning advertising revenue: an increase in television channels resulted in a disproportionate increase in television advertising. Charts were produced to show that a downtrend in advertising had begun when the growth in the number of television channels ceased. (It was evident, even in the highly formal, almost church-like, atmosphere of a CRTC hearing, that there were sceptics in the audience.)

Many heartening statements were made by Global concerning Canadian production, Canadian talent, new concepts in information programming and the encouragement (financial and other) of independent producers. And they would have 50 per cent Canadian content. This brought a polite enquiry from Juneau, since Canadian content is to be regulated at 60 per cent from October '72.

In reply, Bruner gave an ingenious rationalization. Two networks with 60 per cent content produced 120 per cent Canadian programs. Three networks with 50 per cent equalled 150 per cent. Therefore, surely the CRTC would be happy to grant the licence and reduce the content requirement.

Practically everyone opposed Global's application—the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, which wants to reach the lower-income group by way of a VHF channel; CBC, fearing the transmitter location might interfere with a possible new CBC transmitter on the Toronto waterfront; CTV, believing the Global operation would result in general deterioration of television service; those who want Channel 6 for Belleville-Kingston use; Toronto *Star/Standard* Broadcasting, who weren't really opposing but want underprivileged Toronto kept in mind.

Despite all the genuine Canadian content at the hearing, it was probably the lone American, from Texas, who enjoyed the highest audience-appreciation rating (excluding the commission from the rating sample). Any man who brightens the proceedings by assuring the CRTC (in a very informal manner) that in selling a cable system to the subscribers at a profit of several million dollars, he is acting as Santa Claus and who, unaware of temerity, addresses CRTC counsel as "John" has the amazed admiration of experienced board watchers.

Margaret Collier is editor of the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists' magazine, ACTRASCOPE, and unashamedly admits to a certain bias.

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What,
Why,
When,
Where,
How.

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the answer —
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radio producer
GERARD BINET,
and Content editor
DICK MacDONALD
discuss Canadian media
and how they differ—
when and where they differ
—from region to region

MacDonald: There are several areas I would like to explore, among them the influences and the changes in living habits through advertising, and because you are both Quebecers, I would like you to compare the media of Quebec, or French-speaking Canada, with the rest of the country. Before we go into those areas, can we return to what was said before the tape started; namely, some of the faults you might have been finding in the material so far in this project and where the inquiry might be failing to determine a general philosophy.

Dumas: What struck me was that there really wasn't any consensus on any point except that journalists are lousy. You have the ad people in one corner of the scene and the management people, at least the radio-television management people in another, and the technology-oriented people in still another and there hasn't seemed to be much flow of perspective from one group to the other. I was also struck by the fact that although there is considerable amount of reference to content it still seems a very elusive subject. We do say we need more quality, we need more in-depth reporting, more provocative reporting. One participant said he thinks newspapers should professionally specialize in prophecy; should look to the future constantly and then confirm or deny what has been prophesied. There seems to be a general feeling that you have to get young people into communications. Well, this, in itself, sort of bothers me. I don't think the fact that someone is young necessarily means that he is more competent or more tuned-in. This is one of the vague, broad categories which is not very useful to anyone. When you get down to the business of content and the people who are providing the content, I don't think you get very much beyond clichés.

Binet: People speak a lot of content but very few speak of the spirit of the content, the quality of the content. I have listened to radio stations in western Canada and in eastern Canada, and I know that most of the time there is no difference between radio programs or radio stations, in Canada or the United States. The exceptions are Ontario and Quebec where we feel there is something different in the spirit, in the form of thinking. It seems curious that in the same country we have this kind of programming or this kind of thinking—something special for the centre and different for the both ends of the country. I think we must try to be ourselves, I think it is possible. I have listened to and compared programs from England, Switzerland, Germany, France and Belgium. Each has different forms of thinking; it is felt in the programs.

Dumas: Do you find a difference between the French-Belgium radio and the French-France radio? Even when the language is the same, there is a different content?

Binet: Yes. And that is why I point out the spirit. Because the spirit has no language, no flags around it. No special color.

Dumas: This is very elusive, but can you pinpoint any one thing between the radio programming in Ontario as compared to the eastern United States?

Binet: Yes. Superficial and on the other side, human being. You could have a station or a newspaper to amuse. And it's what we do most of the time—amuse the listeners. Or we could have a station and programming giving them the opportunity to become themselves, to give them the opportunity to realise themselves more than they did before. From my point of view, when we listen to a program from an American radio station, most of the time we don't know much more after the program than before. We were amused or bothered. Period. In mass communication I would prefer to have more than that. We still have something different. It's more original sometimes, it gives more color, it is more personal, more up-to-date. Many radio stations have no intent except to get more ads week after week. They have nothing to say. I feel it's a pity. In mass communication we should at least try to go further than zero. Because I can see that it is mostly zero in mass communication. It is not a zero in business; in business it's good.

MacDonald: We compare Canadian radio stations with American radio stations and I see, at least, that for all intents and purposes they seem to be identical—same format, same spirit, same lack of spirit. Yet other countries, European and closely-knit, are able to retain their own character. Now one of the points which has been coming up in our discussions is, if communications is to serve a function of preserving or encouraging or reflecting the Canadian identity, the Canadian character, spirit, ourselves, what is that spirit, or what is that character?

Dumas: I have very specific ideas about what Canada is; I don't know whether it will be any help in a communications philosophy. The thing I like about this country is that it is a non-country. There precisely isn't any such thing as a Canadian identity or Canadian activity. I think that the most positive aspect of this country is the very looseness of its fabric; it's a very free country in many ways, if you think of lifestyles, if you think of things that affect people, of the divorce legislation, of birth control. A lack of cohesiveness is really not a failing but a positive factor. It should mean that in Canada a great deal more experimenting is possible. You have suggested this in referring to the programming and radio in central Canada. You should be able to go out on limbs more, at least for certain selected audiences. If my hypothesis of what Canada is is true, then you won't have a hostile, concerted opposition that you get in a tightly-knit society.

I don't know if this is reflected in radio and television. I'm sure that in newspapers, in the daily press, you find it to some extent in big cities. The newspapers in the Prairie provinces I find appalling; they are bad enough here sometimes. I am sure there are very few people who ever really wonder about what

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

kind of a product they are delivering and how they are contributing to the Canadian identity or not. Even at the Montreal *Star* I would be very surprised if the people who bring out the paper in the morning for the first edition ever think of this kind of problem. You may think of them when you make a speech or go before the Senate inquiry, but in a day-to-day process I don't think that it's really involved because you can make money without worrying about it at all. I guess the kind of freedom that you should be able to have in Canada is not being really put to use.

Binet: The question, 'what is Canada,' I will not try to answer, because it is too complicated and it would take too much time. But just to try to make us sure that there is an answer to that, let us ask if Canada is different from the United States? If the answer is 'no', then let's stop talking about a pseudo-identity, or whatever it is, and let's go straight to the United States. But if the answer is that there is a difference, what is that difference? Then it is something else to explore. My feeling is that - definitely there is a difference between both countries. We realized, just a few years ago, that we could be different, or that we could be someone. We did not have time to formulate it, to achieve it. It is something we should do now, before the next decade. And mass media has a strong responsibility to do that.

To come back to what I was pointing out before, we have many stations in Canada where the preoccupation is just to get more ads, to get their wages, but fortunately we have some others from which we get more than that. I would like to bring your attention to something that struck me, a year or two ago: the free press or the hippie press on this continent. It has given me a magnificent lesson in communications. I have realized that the hippie in Winnipeg is as well informed of what happens in Vancouver, New York, San Francisco, etc., as he is informed of what is happening in Winnipeg. You speak with a hippie in Montreal and you name the street and the beach in Vancouver or San Francisco and he knows it, and he will dialogue with you as though he had been there the week before. For me, being interested in communications, it is something important. If we can do it for one form of thinking, we can certainly do it for other forms.

Dumas: But isn't the strength of the underground press precisely the fact that it has a very clear focus of to whom it is speaking and from what point of view it's speaking. Actually, it's a sort of reincarnation of partisan—no, committed—press that you had in the 19th century. I read Liberation News Service, the news service of the underground press, and there is absolutely no attempt at the objectivity that is supposed to be the mainstay of traditional journalism. There is a very clear point of view. Actually, a much smaller number of subjects are dealt with and the same things come back all the time and are expanded on and every piece of information is brought in. There is a kind of continuity there, a kind of clarity in the stand that personalizes it, that makes this kind of medium something like a personal contact group—which is a quality you don't have in the daily press, for instance.

MacDonald: I don't doubt the underground press helps form bonds among the underground people, but does it actually generate the bond or is the underground press merely an extension of the bond which is created by many other social factors—the common life-

style of the youth who is mobile, transient, who identifies with rock music. He is somewhat anti-technology, he is mystical, he is exploratory with drugs. Their press may act as a cohesive factor; it reflects the unity, the common color.

Binet: I am not perturbed by what they communicate but the question I have is, do they communicate or not? And I think they communicate. The question is how? *What* they communicate I could not care less about, that is their own business.

MacDonald: Can we move on to the matter of advertising—its influences, the responsibilities of advertising agencies as you see them in broadcasting; the way advertising influences people and conditions people to particular ways of life, because advertising is, I think a conditioner, through repetition, through simple common messages.

Binet: You agree that advertising has great influence on the people? There is no common law for this aspect of communications and I am very worried of the future in this field. They have a free way and other mass media have many limitations. The money is there, too; it is another power. I have never seen an advertiser sit and be preoccupied with the

welfare of the society or the culture, or anything else in that sense. Instead of trying to bring something to the people from the people, they bring something from the manufacturer to the people—and that's not the only way of life.

MacDonald: Advertising in the United States is much the same as advertising here; the products are the same. What kind of overall influence does that have? Perhaps advertising agencies should be open, also, to strict control or regulation. The Canadian Radio-Television Commission has chosen to decree that there should be more Canadian content in programming. If you have to legislate that then maybe you have to legislate some sort of wisdom into the advertising game, too (not necessarily only in the cable blackout proposal, either). Advertising is all-persuasive, and may be more powerful than other media techniques.

Binet: The work is not easy for the CRTC or for anyone who wants to regulate this kind of action, because it is a level of the spirit as I mentioned before and it's quite easy to regulate the form, but for the spirit, it's almost impossible. This would mean a mood for the whole mass media. Mass media should reflect a population. Here, it seems the mass media are almost against the population. The mass

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media is one world and the population is another world. I think this is strictly wrong. We face the population instead of working with the population. I said that the mass media should reflect the population as a mirror reflects. And at the same time the mass media should stimulate and, I would say sometimes force the individual to discover himself, to discover his potential and to realize himself.

In England, for the last six years, they have experimented in little radio stations in different cities on FM, and the results have been very good. This is one form of working with the population instead of facing them. The BBC, which promoted that experiment, gets all that they can get from the city or the individuals, to put in on the national level, and I think that very soon we will have to realize the difference of facing the population with our product or working with them—being a part of the population. Instead of hiding the microphone, the administration and all the press behind walls, we will have to open our doors, we will have to bring our microphones to the population on the street, in the house, and in the public hall. And this is because we now have the society of confirmation; we are going to have very soon a society of participation. Everyone wants to participate. Open-line shows are almost finished now, because they were not enough. It was a good bon-bon seven years ago. But now, the population wants to participate; if we don't open our studio and if we don't bring out our camera, in other words if we don't stop facing the population, they will just forget us.

Dumas: My mind was sort of buzzing around with the idea of how you could do the equivalent in the written press. Because direct participation of the readership is small; it's limited to letters to the editor which is a very small quantity.

Binet: The important thing is to give the reader the impression that the newspaper is his own newspaper, his own business.

Dumas: There is a point I want to bring up about this business of participation and of rapport between the media and the consumers of the media. The B-and-B commission commissioned an inquiry about journalists in Canada and one of the things that emerged is that journalists, in the written press at least, write for other journalists. When you are writing, when you get to put things down on paper, you have to have some kind of image of who you are writing for and the majority of journalists according to this study write for other journalists. Of course, immediately people will say that's fair enough, the journalists are no good, they are lousy. But in a way it's kind of inevitable, because the very fact that you are in journalism cuts you off from the normal operation of a society. There are very few people in a society, for instance, who move from one area to another, who move along the whole spectrum. Most people in the normal course of their lives have a certain number of options and will remain with more or less the same groups of people.

I wonder if the very fact that you are sort of cut off, even though you're very close to what's going on in terms of reporting, you're really cut off from the workings of a society when in journalism. Eventually there should be some consideration of the possibility of moving people in and out of journalism—across a career. There should be an attempt at a constant retraining process. In several radio stations, and in some newspapers too, you sort of

suck out everything someone has to give and then throw him overboard; you should plan your operation and allow your people to go out and have other experiences and work, actually work in the fields that they are called on to report on. Because otherwise you end up with journalism being a sort of sub-culture that feeds on itself and produces for itself, and on which the consumer has very little impact.

MacDonald: You are both Quebecers and have worked in both major languages. I am wondering what you find are some of the fundamental differences between media in Quebec, or in the French-language, and that in the English-language and the rest of the country. If there are fundamental differences and approaches and outlooks on society and outlooks on the way the media in each language defines its role, how do the two rate, how do the two compare or relate to each other?

Binet: I don't compare one newspaper in French with another newspaper in English. I said the mass media should reflect the population as a mirror does. It should, at the same time, stimulate the personality, or the individual, to discover his potential and to realize himself. I would answer by another question. Is there any difference of thinking between both cultures? If 'yes' then the newspaper should be different. If 'no', then no.

MacDonald: We accept the fact that there are different ways of thinking. Now, does the media in each case adequately reflect and stimulate?

Dumas: I know there is a difference. I have worked in two types of French papers and for an English-language daily and there is a difference and I have been asked many times to try and define it and it's very difficult. How much of it is due to the tradition of specific newspapers and how much is generally a cultural difference? I think you would probably find as much difference between the *Gazette* and the *Star*, for instance, as you would find between the *Star* and *La Presse* in Montreal. A paper develops along certain lines, but even in deeply-different papers, such as *La Presse* and *Le Devoir*, which are not at all oriented toward the same public or to the same goal. *Le Devoir*, in certain circles, is a sort of 'forum' for a certain society. People will volunteer information for that newspaper where there isn't the same communication line to the *Star*. In some places, I think, there has been an awareness that the *Star* is trying to be more a part of Quebec; still, the reflex is not to turn to the *Star* when they have something to say or something that you want to get across. From the point of view of the paper, and from the policy of the paper, I find that the *Star*, as compared to other papers mentioned, puts much more accent on concrete, tangible pieces of news.

One of the things I used to bitch against when I was with the French papers was pages and pages of reports on speeches which really did not represent much news at all. On the other hand, there are, in the *Star's* approach, limitations. Anything that appears to be a bit intellectual, that is a discussion of ideas, and despite all the so-called new policy and everything, it's likely to get thrown overboard. Even if you change your stated goals you don't necessarily change your patterns or your habits overnight. I think there are some ideological and intellectual debates which never get across. They may get reported on a lifestyle

level, or they sort of zoom in on the human angle.

I would not want to make a public speech about it because if people said give examples, and challenged me, it would be difficult, because I am groping. Popular wisdom is that in French papers the reporting editorializes more than in the English. I don't think that's a fair comment. There is not more editorializing but there is a greater receptiveness to abstractions. Anything that is not directly accessible for people who have been trained on the kind of desks you have in newspapers is immediately a bit suspicious. So, despite the stated aim of having more in-depth reporting, of having more ideas, when you really come to grips with the daily operation of the paper I think there is more resistance to *ideas*.

MacDonald: I wonder whether we can look at the English- and French-language media on a national scale. I personally think that the media have fallen short in its responsibilities to Canadian society over the years. A comment I made some time ago is that one of the main characteristics of the media has been hindsight rather than foresight. And if it's after the fact I don't know whether it's really serving the public as it should. But looking at it with a national view, have the English media helped one part of this country better understand another part. And have the French media, in turn, helped the people of Quebec to better understand the feelings and the aspirations and the frustrations of those in the Prairies or those in the Maritimes. Or have the media simply confirmed the stereotyped views of each other?

Dumas: I think the dominant factor in all the press in Canada is that we really don't pay much attention to what is going on in other regions of the country. You will have local coverage, provincial coverage and then international coverage, and Ottawa. Ottawa is not Canada. The *Star*, as well as *La Presse*, and it is similar to *Le Devoir*, will occasionally send people out on specific assignments, and I think there have been good efforts in that direction, but it's not an on-going process. What would it mean in practical terms for the *Star* for one day to, instead of continuing reports or series on the drug scene in the U.S., we would have continuing reports on the wheat scene in the Prairies. Do you think the Montreal readers would be more interested in the wheat scene in the Prairies?

MacDonald: I suppose the rationale of whoever makes decisions about content is, what would have more dramatic appeal for the reader. There is presumed a touch of sensation to a 12-year-old who shoots heroin. But a Prairie farmer who grows wheat? They could say reports on the drug scene will be read by probably 50 per cent of our readers, but reports on the wheat scene may be read by five per cent. I'm not sure that is a valid rationale. Somehow I think we have to strive to provide as much information about as many subjects and as many people and as many regions of the countries in the world as possible. And only in that way can we assume that we are giving the public what is both wanted and needed. I sense that we are not giving enough thorough coverage, not to specific events, but to ideas, to changes in living behavior. English media have been concerned with the immediate, the dramatic, the event, and anything which is a non-event; if it didn't happen at six o'clock last night it didn't happen at all.

That's ludicrous. All we have to do is look around ourselves and see how many changes

have taken place in society. It's only recently that we began to be concerned about the possible ill effects of technology. Now that's not an immediate dramatic event; but in the long term it's going to be dramatic. Few newspapers and radio and television stations have seriously attempted to look at the computer. All of a sudden we are caught short when the reader says, I am getting rather disgusted at and discouraged with the world. I think a large part of the blame has to come back to us, because we haven't been fulfilling our responsibility of giving him the kind of sweeping information he needs.

Dumas: There is a problem about giving coverage to events and ideas in the Prairies or the west coast or the Maritimes. You can't rely on *The Canadian Press*. The reports certainly used to be mainly written from the Toronto point of view; they are written out of material that comes from the source, and is originally constructed for the immediately-surrounding audience. What you need is almost a second degree, sort of foreign correspondence, people who would be there but would still be writing and thinking of people in Montreal, trying to make some relation between what's going on in Saskatoon or Vancouver, and this is very difficult because when you live somewhere, when you are established somewhere, you eventually do not see what is unusual; you become part of the whole scene. The other possibility is sending out people, roving around the country. But in that you miss a lot too, because you really

do not get any sense of continuity. When we think of a government-operated, or a government-financed paper, we usually think in terms of an extension of the government's PR system, but the CBC is government-operated and it's not taken as an off-air extension of parliament (not usually, at any rate). There is one thing I am wondering about. It is a question to which I don't expect an answer right now. This business of demand information, when you will be able to sort of punch a card and get your newspaper; theoretically, I could punch a board and say I want the Vancouver *Sun* this morning, or I want information from Saskatoon, and so on. I suppose there is a possibility of having a really national media of this nature.

MacDonald: The elementary stage of that could be a national newspaper, distributed across the country, with regional sections or regional pages or whatever, as well as universal news, but it would be entirely possible to use the information from that print media and make it available, if facsimile printing becomes feasible for the home, anywhere, anytime. If you are concerned about what happened in British Columbia yesterday you could have a particular code, and that code signifies that you want information from B.C., and it is fed immediately into your home. Not necessarily in the pattern we know now, obviously, but it could give you virtually immediate access to the nation.

Binet: Two points I would like to men-

tion: The importance of original activities that we mentioned and culture. A house of culture, we could say, to reflect and promote original cultural activities. Another is a problem of transportation we have in Canada. Do you know that in Vancouver if you want to be informed of what is happening in Europe it's easy, if you want to be informed of what is happening in eastern Canada, it takes three days to get a newspaper. And it takes 24 hours or less to get any newspaper from Paris, London, Switzerland, Geneva, etc., but it takes three days to get Canadian newspapers. This is exactly the kind of barrier we need to keep Canada in parts.

At my level I don't have to decide if we want to bring the parts together. But the fact of transportation of newspapers is important. Some countries have a very low national rate to encourage transportation between both ends of the country, which we don't have here in Canada. The train is accessible for the majority of the people but it takes three days just to go from Montreal to Vancouver, and two days to go from Montreal to eastern Canada. And the result is that unless you have a specific, strong reason to go, you never go in your life. That is what keeps Canada like it is.

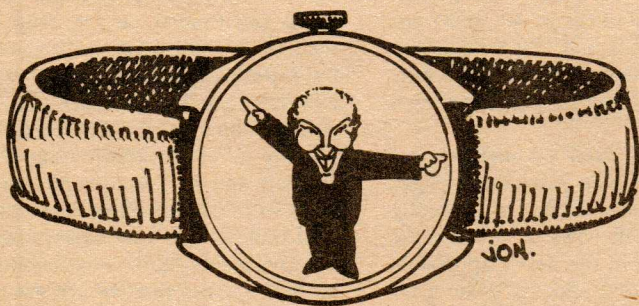
Dumas: We subsidize the movement of wheat, so subsidize the flow of information. I also would emphasize: to inform is one thing, but to interest people with our information is something else again.

SAMPLE

FUTURISMS

by jon mckee

Hail plastic! Tissot Watch Co. of Switzerland has introduced a wristwatch in which one-third of the parts are made from a new plastic material called Astrolon. It makes for easier assembly. The model may retail for as little as \$8!



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BEHIND THE MIKE IS RESOLUTION

by DON JOHNSTON

A change of mood was evident this month at the international convention of the Radio-Television News Directors' Association held in Boston. From last year's yelping at the verbal goring by U.S. Vice-President Spiro Agnew, the "handful of men who decide..." how the news gets on the air had sobered somewhat. The mood was more resolute.

They honored Dr. Frank Stanton, president of CBS, for risking contempt of Congress by refusing to turn over the out-takes of his network's "Selling of the Pentagon" documentary. That was not unexpected. Canadians, who are a small but sometimes vocal minority at the international conventions of the RTNDA, are accustomed to flag-waving about "freedom of information" at conventions of their American colleagues.

But this year's keynote speaker came from under a different flag. He was Sir Charles Curran, director-general of the BBC. When a cultivated English-Irishman makes a fighting speech, it is all the more effective because the language is so impeccably unbelligerent, but so bloody logical.

"It is suggested that there are items in the news", he said, "which we ought not to have reported because of the effect they may have. Thus, for instance, it is suggested to us in the BBC that the reporting of violence in Northern Ireland—of which I speak with some trepidation in Boston... gives rise to further violence and that we ought to censor it. It is usually put rather more politely—we are asked not to show so much, which amounts to the same thing."

In this laudable wish, Curran found a fatal flaw. "It is an essential function of news to be believed. Unless people have a conviction (they are receiving)... the whole truth, they will

cease to believe it and the most valuable quality which news can have—its credibility—will be undermined."

The BBC chief said that government attacks, as in the "Selling of the Pentagon" campaign against CBS, are world-wide. Examples can be found with the CBC in Canada, the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and in Sweden; in fact, the only countries in which it "does not arise are those where broadcasting is not free."

The mood in broadcast journalism this year will be one of resolution.

News directors of giant networks and one-kilowatt country radio stations alike expect more criticism, some of it valid, from government, minority groups, do-gooders and pressure groups protesting "lack of access". But they seem more prepared to listen; then say the system won't work with self-appointed editors looking over the editor's shoulder; and go on with the job of getting out the news.

Jim Bormann, an award-winning radio-TV news director from WCCO in Minneapolis, rapped the David Brinkley quotation, "Complete Objectivity is unattainable", at the conference's opening session.

"There are those—some of them in journalism school—who use that quote to describe objectivity as a myth. Instead of holding it up to students as a goal to be sought, even though it may be elusive, they scorn it as a hindrance to the new kind of journalism they're teaching."

* * *

Charlie Edwards, retired general manager of Broadcast News, became the first Canadian

to win the Distinguished Service Award of the Radio-Television News Directors' Association.

A Montreal radio station, *CKAC*, became the first French-language outlet to win the international's award for spot news for coverage of the Pierre Laporte kidnap-murder in Quebec a year ago. News director Pierre Robert and president Maurice Dansereau accepted the award.

Other award winners in the Canadian section were *CFPL-TV*, London, (Ron Laidlaw, news director) for on-the-spot coverage of the arrest of a sniper who had wounded a boy and terrorized passersby from a hotel window; *CJOH-TV*, Ottawa, for its documentary on abortion (Jack Van Duzen, news director) and *CKLG*, Vancouver (Don Richards, news director) for its radio documentary on drugs.

The Canadian news directors, at their annual meeting at the close of the international convention, elected Charlie Edwards an honorary life member, and Frank Flegel of *CKCK & TV*, Regina, as president to succeed this writer in 1971-72. Francois Peledeau, of Radio-Canada, became the organization's first French-speaking vice-president (for TV) and Gary McLaren, news director of *CKKW* and *CFCO-TV*, Kitchener, was named vice-president for radio.

Don Covey, general manager of Broadcast News, succeeds Edwards as treasurer of RTNDA Canada and Art Cole of *CFRB*, Toronto, was re-elected secretary.

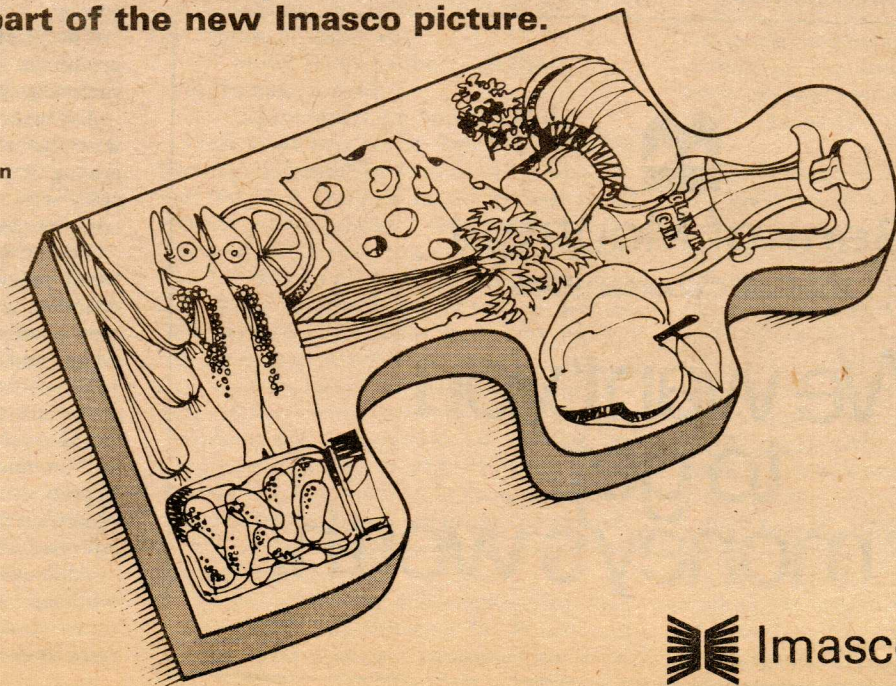
Regional directors elected: Atlantic—Elmer Harris, *VOCM*, St. John's Newfoundland (radio) and Eric Ramsay, *CKCW*, Moncton, (TV); French-language—Pierre Robert, *CKAC*, Montreal (radio) and Louis Langlois, *CFCM*, Quebec City (TV); Central Canada—Gord Whitehead, *CFPL* (radio) and Ken Brown, *CBC* Ottawa (TV); Prairies—Steve Halinda, *CJOB*, Winnipeg, (radio) and Ian Parker, *CFCN*, Calgary (TV); B.C.—John Ashbridge, *CJCI*, Prince George, (radio), and Les Jackson, *CBC*, Vancouver (TV).


Don Johnston, who compiled this article, is with CHML in Hamilton and is past president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association of Canada.

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THE WATERING HOLE

by WAVERLEY ROOT

Once upon a time there was a stock character of drama and literature, the hard-drinking newspaperman, who performed prodigies of scoop-collecting and derring-do. It is possible that he still turns up in the movies, many of which are a couple of decades behind the times. In real life this character has gone (or, to be perfectly safe, let us say is going) the way of the great auk and the dodo.

Anyone who tries to combine constant drinking and the practice of journalism nowadays risks being trampled to death by the competition.

The competition was less fierce in the old days: communications were not as swift and relatively more expensive, discouraging home offices from maintaining a tight rein on their correspondents. In 1930, when only three newspapers maintained correspondents on the French Riviera, though it was a good source for colorful copy, the co-operative incumbents got into the habit of meeting frequently on an agreeable café terrace in Nice to dream up stories certain to be printed, at space rates.

They agreed on some very good pieces indeed, since they were unhampered by the inconveniences of having to deal with facts. After sending them off, in slightly different versions, they were free to return to their drinking, in the comforting assurance of impunity, for they were all confirming one another, and there were no other journalists on hand to raise difficult questions.

The hard-drinking journalist existed in Paris, too, in those easy-going days, though he was often less picturesque when encountered in his cups than the fictional versions. There were times when it seemed to me that the essential oil which lubricated the Paris edition of the *Chicago Tribune*, of which I was the news editor, was alcohol. We usually had one or two spectacular drunks on the payroll, and there were evenings (payday nights especially) when not a man in the city room could have passed a sobriety test.

This did not necessarily affect technical dex-

terity. At one time the staff included a rewrite man whose evenings of thick fog were betrayed only by the circumstance that in this condition he seemed to be attached to an invisible bond to the carriage of his typewriter. As it rattled along, he swayed slowly with it to port, snapping back with it to starboard at the end of the line. The moment inevitably arrived when the groundswell grew too heavy, and though the typewriter carriage stopped at its extreme left, he did not, but, carried beyond the point of no return by acquired momentum, crashed to the floor, where he rested in peace. The man next to him would then nudge the body aside, occupy the vacated chair, and finish the story, which was always perfectly clear up to the point where oblivion had intervened.

The *Chicago Tribune* also possessed, about this period, a reporter who was regularly assigned to the day's leading local story because he wrote it best—despite a ritual stop to tank up before returning to the office. He arrived one evening after the bustle of the night staff had already begun, annexed a vacant machine, and announced, "I'm going to punch out a story that'll lay 'em in the aisles."

The machine crackled away for half an hour. Then he ripped the paper from the typewriter, tossed it toward the night editor, said, "There's one for the front page," and departed. It was several minutes before the busy editor reached out for the copy. It consisted of a single neatly cut slit across the top on the page. The star reporter had written the whole of his great story on a single line, without once turning the carriage of the typewriter.

The most sensational example of the effects of drinking in the annals of the *Chicago Tribune* was provided by the late Spencer Bull, who had already lost a couple of jobs because of a difficulty, when he had a snootful, of distinguishing fact from fantasy.

His last place had been with the *Paris Herald*, where he had turned in a story purporting to be an exclusive interview with the president of the Republic. When the city editor

of the *Herald*, a relatively sober paper, reached the passage where Spencer depicted himself as entering the courtyard of the *Elisée Palace*, to be hailed from the window with "Come on up, Spencer" by the president, who received him in his bedroom in robin's egg blue pajamas, the story went into the wastebasket and Spencer out of the door.

The *Chicago Tribune* hired him nevertheless, for he was a good reporter when sober. He was now at the bottom of the ladder, for the *Chicago Tribune* paid the lowest salaries of the four English-language dailies of Paris. So, for a long while, he was careful to conserve what was probably his last possible job. He was outdone when the Prince of Wales (the present Duke of Windsor) made an official visit to Paris and Spencer was assigned to cover it.

It was an assignment of exquisite boredom—layings of cornerstones, visits to British hospitals, receptions of war veterans, and the like. Spencer trotted dutifully along the first day and discovered that the effort had been unnecessary, for at its end the British Embassy prepared a handout which covered thoroughly the activities of the day.

He discovered also that there was a pleasant café near the embassy where he could while away the hours while waiting for the handout. He whiled them away.

Returning to the office armed with his official information, he set to work to tap out his story uneventfully, but when he arrived at the prince's review of the British Boy Scout troops of Paris, the creative urge overcame him. As it was reported to me, for this was before I started to work for the paper, his story then ran something like this:

"Stopping before one manly youth, the prince inquired, 'What is your name, my lad?' 'None of your God-damned business, Sir,' the youngster replied. At that time the prince snatched a riding crop from his equerry and beat the boy's brains out."

It is to the credit of the professional skill of the *Chicago Tribune* staff that this opus was handled with the utmost efficiency. The copy-reader corrected conscientiously the placing of commas, rectified a few misspelled words, revised awkward phraseology, and handed the story to the night editor.

Realizing its news value, this worthy marked it for a page one head. The headline writer obliged with: **PRINCE OF WALES BASHES BOY'S BRAINS OUT.**

The linotype operators set it up and the proofreaders corrected their typographical errors.

The make-up editor fitted it into the prominent position on the front page which such news merited.

The execution was perfect. The only flaw was that on this particular evening not one among the half-dozen persons who handled the story was sufficiently sober to realize that it couldn't possibly be true.

The next morning the staff, some of them handicapped by hangovers, succeeded in rounding up most of the copies in Paris before they could stupefy the public, but the papers which had been dispatched to London were beyond reach.

For six months the *Paris Chicago Tribune* could not be distributed in England. Spencer was, of course, out of a job again, but he lived happily ever after on free booze offered him at Harry's New York Bar by admirers of the man who had written the Prince of Wales story.

Although I heard this tale from a number of witnesses, the more I reflected about it the more incredible it seemed. One day I set out to track it down. By hunting through the files of



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other newspapers, I was able to locate the date when the Prince of Wales had visited Paris, and even the exact day when he had reviewed the British Boy Scouts. Armed with this information, I went into the publisher's office, where the bound volumes containing all the issues of the Paris Chicago *Tribune* since its founding were kept, and looked up the paper for the fateful date.

It was not in the file.

The Watering Hole customarily deals with leisure spots in Canada, or at least those frequented by Canadian journalists. The above piece, by Waverley Root, appeared in the International Herald Tribune of Paris. A copy arrived on the desk of veteran Montreal reporter Al Palmer not long after he died this year. The only message scrawled on the paper said, "From a couple of Al Palmer fans."

The Watering Hole is one of the few editorial contributions for which *Content* can so far offer remuneration. Submissions, which are welcomed, should be light-hearted, dealing with journalists and their leisure spots. Standard fee is \$25, to cover research costs.

THE LITTLE MARKETPLACE

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MEDIA 72: REPORT NO. 1

Apart from the occasional retrospective reference to Media 71, there's been nothing in *Content* to indicate whether anything was being done to prepare for a second national conference of journalists — something delegates to last May's assembly unanimously agreed should be held.

Plans are, in fact, being discussed.

Somewhat belatedly — primarily because of post-conference cleanup and the schedules of the central planning group — financial statements on Media 71 will be distributed this month to those who attended and to those publishers and broadcast owners who contributed to the conference.

At this time, it is sufficient to say that Media 71's administration account ran short of funds but was balanced by a transfer from the transportation account, with the approval of contributors.

Some time ago, letters were dispatched to all members of the 1971 ad hoc steering committee, asking whether they'd participate in Media 72 and whether they had any recommendations to offer the central planning group. There has been some response, though not as extensive as hoped.

Attempts were made by the original Montreal-based central planning group — David Waters of the Montreal *Star* and Dick MacDonald of *Content* acting as the unofficial co-chairmen — to firm up one or two persons in other centres to spearhead Media 72. While everyone approached was eager enough to contribute in various ways to another conference, no one could commit himself or herself to the task required.

Following discussions with people in all media across the country, it seemed unavoidable that the Montreal group, given the experience of the first symposium, should continue as the core body for a second conference. This is not necessarily the wisest course. However,

JOURNALISM EDUCATION

A REPORT IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF

content

Articles by:

JOSEPH SCANLON, chairman-on-leave from the journalism department,

Carleton University

BARRIE ZWICKER, free-lance writer and instructor at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute

DAVID BALCON, Ontario Educational Communications Authority

preliminary meetings have been held with representatives of several organized journalist groups — the Newspaper Guild, for instance — and by the November issue it should be possible to announce the names of those serving on the general steering committee, if a further sampling indicates both demand and need for Media 72. Members would, in many cases, represent existing organizations. They would be expected to assume aspects of organization and constantly feed ideas to a central group.

Neither a location nor a date has been fixed for Media 72. Suggestions are required from all quarters. Ottawa, centrally located and the site of the first conference, has been named as a prospect already, and February or March as a period within which the meetings could be held.

Program content and schedule require recommendations. Whereas Media 71 was a general feeling-out of the state of journalism in Canada, following debate on the Senate's report on mass media, it is likely that Media 72 could attempt to zero in on more specific subjects: the Toronto *Telegram* case, for example.

Ideally, Media 72 would be prefaced by increased activity at the local and regional levels — seminars, workshops, and the like. It would make for a better national conference.

PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU: "Very often when people in the south think of the north, they think of the oil, the mines and the wealth of the north . . . but the important questions are not those that have to do with the riches but with the people of the north . . . we know the value of the land will depend upon the value of the people . . . the hope that is expressed in the north will only be fulfilled if the people up here continue to have faith in the north."

In Yellowknife, N.W.T.

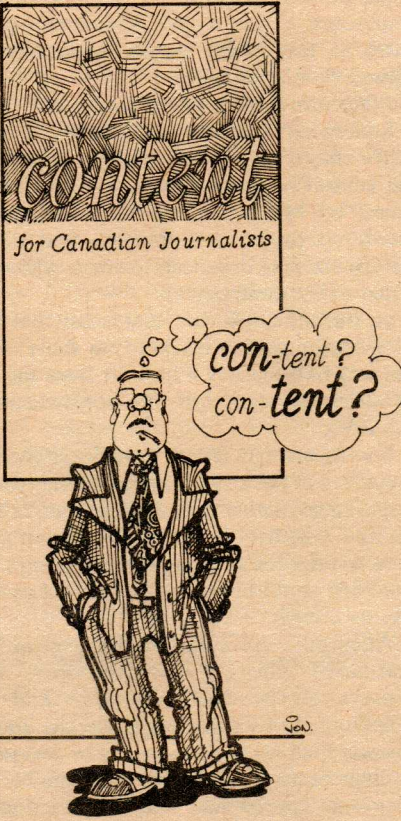
We agree. And we're committed to the words of the Prime Minister. That's why BP's conservation staff is as vital a part of our Arctic oil operations as anyone else. More so, for the environment and the people who inhabit it are precious things indeed. We were concerned about eco-systems before most other people joined the ecology movement. *Being Productive* must mean *Being Protective*. It easily could be BP's motto in the Arctic, in offshore drilling operations, or anywhere else for that matter.

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PEOPLE / MISCELLANY

Eric Dennis is new chief of the information department for the Nova Scotia government. He had briefly been with Information Canada after nearly 20 years in Ottawa for the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*. . . . Donna Logan has been appointed features editor of the *Montreal Star*. She had been in charge of the Lifestyles section, also is associate editor of *Content*. . . . Windsor has the first community press council in Canada, instigated by *Star* publisher Mark Farrell. The council will consist of an independent chairman — Essex County Court Judge Thomas Zuber — and five representatives from the newspaper plus 11 members of the public representing a cross-section of the community. The council will function similarly to the British Press Council, which means no complaint will be handled until it has first been taken up with the *Star* and the complainant has been unable to obtain satisfaction. Quebec has the only press council in Canada operating at the provincial level. . . . speaking of press councils, New Brunswick's task force on social development recommended in its report last month that the province should have one. The force complained of coverage, or lack thereof, of its year-long work and said that in general N.B.'s media did too little reporting in depth to provide the public with an informed basis on which to make opinions and judgments. . . . new chairman of the journalism department at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto is Doug MacFarlane, who had retired some time ago from the *Telegram* as a senior editorial executive. The chairmanship had been held by E. U. (Ted) Schrader until several months before his death. . . . the international executive of the Newspaper Guild met in Toronto this month, the first-ever Canadian meeting. Recently named international vice-president-at-large was Eleanor Dunn of the *Ottawa Citizen*. Re-elected a vice-president was Glen Ogilvie of the *Toronto Star*. . . . the National Press Club in Ottawa is staging a British Columbia Centennial Night Oct. 23, with food and beverages flown in from the coast. . . . if you missed the AP blurb, *Look* magazine ceases publication this month. Mounting costs, particularly postal rates, and declining advertising revenue were cited as the reasons, yet *Look* had 28 million readers and subscription response for the first nine months of 1971 was the best in the magazine's history. . . . Noel Buchanan has moved from night desk to general news reporting at the *Red Deer Advocate*. Among his assignments: every Sunday he visits a different church and writes on the sermon and atmosphere. . . . Larry Gavin has left his news directorship at radio *CKSO* in

Sudbury to try public relations. . . . Russ Hilderley has returned to *CKCY* in Sault Ste. Marie after eight months in private business. . . . new general manager of Broadcast News is Don Covey, long-time aide to recently retired C. B. (Charlie) Edwards. . . . according



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to figures released by the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association, papers registered the greatest increase of the four major media in advertising revenue for the first six months of the year. The ad dollar spent on newspapers rose 13.2 per cent over the same period in 1970, representing a total revenue of more than \$46 million. Newspapers share of the total advertising dollar increased by two per cent to 29.8. Radio revenue rose by more than seven per cent over 1970, its share of the total by one-half per cent. Television, while still taking the largest chunk at 47 per cent, dropped more than two per cent over 1970. Radio ad revenues for the six months were in excess of \$22 million, TV nearly \$73 million. Magazines received nine per cent of the ad dollar, a loss of about half of one per cent. Total ad value in the four major media was nearly \$155 million, a three per cent rise over last year. . . . Frank Sernak is new news director at *CHOW* in Welland, succeeding Jim Cassidy who has become an information officer for the Ontario department of correctional services. . . . Brian Thomas, formerly at *CFOX* in Montreal, has joined *CHUM* in Toronto. . . . the first issue of *Media*, dated October, has appeared for French-speaking journalists out of Quebec City. Editor-in-chief is Jacques Rivet. Subscription rate is \$5 for 10 issues. Write: Box 235, Quebec 4, P.Q. The initial issue contains valuable after-looks at last October's so-called crisis and the media's role in the autumn events. *Content* and *Media* will be exchanging editorial material, translated for the respective audiences. . . . Montreal's tabloid *Sunday Express* is going morning daily, effective Nov. 1. . . . Peter Tadman is new director of news and public affairs for *CHQT* radio in Edmonton. . . . Knowlton Nash, director of information programs for CBC, told the Broadcast Executives Society it would be a tragedy for television—"a fantastic tool of information, enlightenment and entertainment"—to collapse into solely an electronic comic book. The public may not want to hear "bad news," he said, "but to seek public favor by presenting only the news the public wants to hear is to fail as a journalist in a democracy." . . . John Smail, former editor of the *Powell River News*; Jack Emberley, former reporter with the *North Shore Citizen*; and Gordon Priestman, editor of the *Salmon Arm Observer*, received prizes of \$500, \$250 and \$100 respectively in the ninth annual journalism awards competition for British Columbia weekly and semi-weekly papers, sponsored by MacMillan Bloedel Limited.

content

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