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ON BEING IN A PRICKLY POSITION

by MARVIN SCHIFF

An ominous hush has fallen over the Ottawa battleground where not long ago Information Canada faced the onslaught of Opposition and media critics who would have destroyed its reputation even before it had one.

Yet it's hardly likely the lull is much comfort to Information Canada officials. The big guns of the Commons and the Parliamentary Press Gallery may well be expending most of their verbal weaponry on fresher and far more credible issues. However, the directors of Information Canada's destiny must be aware that they soon may have to face another and possibly more potent challenger—an alliance of disenchanted and jealous public servants.

It now is almost two years since Prime Minister Trudeau announced the formation of Information Canada and gave it a mandate to become—with some modifications—the agency envisioned by the Task Force on Government Information.

Opposition Leader Stanfield's cohorts now prefer not to be reminded that he responded to the establishment of Information Canada by dubbing it Manipulation Canada and promising to dismantle it if he came to power. For their part, New Democrats in the Commons can say nothing more critical than that the agency and its new minister, Martin O'Connell, are keeping a rather low profile and do not appear to be doing much of a substantial nature.

Members of the Gallery, although inclined in many cases to dismiss somewhat condescendingly most of Information Canada's proclaimed achievements, no longer see it as the informational *Big Brother* many of their number warned it would become.

But for all that, Information Canada is far from home-free. Now it seems that segments of the public service—especially many among those who refer to themselves clubbishly as the government's "information community"—are becoming restive. Among the more moderate public service critics, for example, is the senior information officer in one large department who tempers his criticism with allusions to Information Canada's achievements, but refers to many of its efforts as "silly" or "picayune." At the other end of the scale is the information director of another major department who lashes out at the agency as "inept" or "suicide-prone", calling into question the administrative capabilities and even the honesty of some senior Information Canada officials.

Pervading all the criticism voiced by public servants is a general and growing impatience with the agency's failure thus far to make any appreciable dent in what the Task Force called "the mess in government information." As the chief administrator of one federal agency put it: "They are just not a part of our life." His top information man added somewhat hyperbolically: "There's absolutely no program that Information Canada has coordinated—none."

To all this criticism, of course, Information Canada spokesmen, from Director-General Jean-Louis Gagnon on down, have answers.

Some of it they simply reject as so much backbiting by insecure departmental information personnel whose own ineptitude leads them to fear being shown up by Information Canada. They also admit to having moved slowly or not at all in some program areas. However, they attribute that largely to the problems of establishing a new agency, especially one that inevitably will meet resistance in some departments because of its horizontal or cross-departmental nature.

At the same time, Information Canada spokesmen claim—and with demonstrable validity—that they have been far more active than many other departments know or, for various reasons, care to admit. The revamped Queen's Printer Book Stores and federal exhibitions operations are just the tip of a prodigious iceberg, they argue.

Whether or not Information Canada is or can ever become the agency envisioned by the Task Force cannot be determined now. There is a difference of opinion about that even within Information Canada. But there is little doubt, even among the agency's severest critics, that it still is vitally important for the tasks assigned to Information Canada to be done. In fact, the need for overhauling federal government information services has been a central theme of five major studies carried out over the past decade or more, the Task Force study being the most recent.

Summing up the need, the Task Force reported: "The federal government has no general information policy What governs federal information activities are the separate priorities and separate preoccupations of separate departments and separate agencies. This work is often fragmented. It is generally unco-ordinated. It lacks clarity of purpose. Sometimes, in terms of the broader issues and goals of government, it is even contradictory."

The result of all of this, of course, was waste and a growing gap between government and the governed. By August, 1969, when the Task Force report was published, the situation seemed critical. "Our point," the Task Force said, "is only that there's a limit to the inefficiency (democratic governments) may safely endure and that, in the case of the government information services, the limit may already be far astern."

A grim warning, and one on which the Government acted. On February 10, 1970, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of Information Canada to the Commons. He said the agency's responsibilities would be:

■ To "promote co-operation among federal information offices now operating in mutual isolation", thereby reducing costly duplication of staff and equipment;

■ To create the "machinery to deal with information on broad governmental concerns affecting more than one department";

■ To provide a conduit through which Canadians could receive information about government and government could learn of their views.

The Prime Minister said the government had accepted all but two of the 17 major recommendations advanced by the Task Force. One exception was a proposal that all three levels of government, along with voluntary organizations and private agencies, foster the establishment of Citizen Advisory Bureaus and neighborhood councils. These would be run by non-governmental agencies to "reach" people "outside the mainstream of the government information flow."

Another unacceptable proposal suggested that Information Canada be assigned the role of "public advocate in matters of access to federal information and timeliness of replies to citizens' queries."

Rejection of these two Task Force recommendations might have served critics of government as the basis for assailing the Trudeau administration for seemingly copping out on its professed zeal for "participatory democracy." But that ploy seems to have been bypassed in favor of a more facile assault on what the critics construed as a danger that the agency would manage news and manipulate information about government.

In any event, the agency survived its embattled debut and now has taken its place in the political shooting gallery among those lesser targets in the governmental establishment that attract only the odd potshot from time to time. In fact, so quiet has the political front been of late that Information Canada has dropped the highly-defensive stance it had maintained for a year or more. Its spokesmen now seem less inclined to spend their time explaining what they are not and more inclined to assert their virtues.

Whether or not those assertions are valid must be judged in terms of how adequately the agency has fulfilled or seems destined to fulfil the mandate it was handed by the Prime Minister. As interpreted by Information Canada itself, that mandate assigned the agency responsibility for assisting Parliament and government "in listening to and informing Canadians and others with the objectives of:

"a) increasing the participation of Canadians in government policies and programs;

"b) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of government information programs at home and abroad;

"c) fostering national understanding by helping Canadians explain themselves to other citizens and government; and,

"d) informing Canadians and others of the nation's federal structures."

To achieve these objectives, Information Canada started with a budget of \$7.9 million for 1970-71 and a projected staff complement of about 500. The organizational structure included three program divisions—Information-Out, Information-In and Planning.

Information-Out, the largest division with 426 employees, was to produce information on federal government and federalism and disseminate it through the mass media. It was also expected to conduct research into media

methods and communications techniques and develop audio-visual materials and services for governmental use. It assumed the Queen's Printer's role as government publisher and bookseller and took over the Exhibition Commission from Public Works.

Information-In, as Information Canada itself puts it, "has the crucial responsibility of helping Parliament and government listen to the hopes, fears and frustrations of Canadians." To implement this lofty purpose, the division was to establish enquiry centres in major communities where people not only could obtain stock information but also query government and file comments or complaints which would be sent to appropriate sources for action. Information-In was to establish an attitudinal survey unit to assess public opinion as well as collect and publish information from news media.

Planning, with 15 staff members, was to help develop information programs on cross-departmental subjects such as federalism, study communications techniques and technology and, on request, report on the effectiveness of information programs.

In the name of co-ordination, 44 departmental information chiefs were drawn together to form a Council of Information Directors. The Council was to meet twice annually, but a 12-member Advisory Committee—dubbed the 12 Apostles by some colleagues—was appointed from the Council membership to provide more regular departmental liaison with Information Canada. With this division of labor established, Information Canada began, as one senior staff member put it, "by emphasizing services that were of real use to people." Cynics contend that these really were the least urgent of the services the agency was to provide, but the most visible and easily implemented.

Whatever the motivation, initial Information Canada efforts included an impressive start on a system of telex-linked regional enquiry centres, development of exhibits promoting federalism and the production of posters on national unity in a style appealing to youth.

Then came the Federal Identities Program under which a single, easily recognized logo—the left bar and leaf of the Canadian flag—is to be adopted by all departments to use on stationery, vehicles and other signs.

For MPs, the agency turned out a report categorizing without analysis the comments and questions received through enquiry centres about government programs and policies. And for government departments, among other things, Information Canada consolidated federal mailing lists, produced an information staff development plan and contributed manpower to other departments for their own campaigns.

In terms of developing information campaigns on cross-departmental subjects, Information Canada claims growing involvement in informational aspects of programs such as current federal efforts to combat unemployment. And awaiting further action are several studies and program proposals ranging from a pilot project on an automated media analysis system to a survey of information needs abroad.

Not surprisingly, both public and politicians have criticized Information Canada. Tales abound of enquiries that have gone unanswered for months or of instances in which Information Canada personnel have pleaded ignorance to seemingly simple queries. One of the posters, a nude design with an Adam-and-Eve theme, got a roasting from John



INFORMATION CANADA

Diefenbaker who told the Commons its creators were "artistic crackpots." The agency also came under attack when it seemed it might sack Exhibition Commission employees for want of work. And it has been characterized as an expensive make-work project for Jean-Louis Gagnon himself who has been assailed as a Liberal hack and possibly even pink.

For the most part, the agency still is young enough to be able to explain away criticisms of its enquiry service as the byproduct of inexperience and an unexpectedly large demand. Flak from the Commons, on the other hand, has been too ephemeral or blatantly political to prove seriously troublesome.

The danger within government service can't be taken so lightly. It is impossible to determine how widely discontent has spread through the public service, but where it does exist it seems to be rooted deeply. Even if assured that their comments will be given off-the-record treatment, public servants do not usually criticize their colleagues, certainly not sharply. With Information Canada as the subject, however, customary caution often gives way to anything from moderate criticism to bitter denunciation.

To a degree, public service resistance to Information Canada seems attributable to the Task Force report. The report undoubtedly wounded the sensibilities of many in the information community by implicating them as part of "a developing tragedy." That implied insult was doubly distasteful to senior information officers who considered the Task Force members to be men with little experience in or understanding of government information processes and problems.

Consequently, when Information Canada was established, many among the 400 people in federal information services saw it as the insult incarnate. That resentment was heightened by a fear that the new agency might invade and occupy some of the territory they ruled. At the same time, though, some hoped to join Information Canada themselves. Others looked forward to whatever help the agency might give in rationalizing government information services and improving their status within their own departments.

With that kind of mixed reaction to its establishment, Information Canada initially might have been able to subdue the resentment and suspicion of some parts of the information community by fulfilling the expectations of others. However, it seems the reverse may have happened.

For example, one charge made against the agency by certain departmental information officers is that it has failed to consult with the 12-member Advisory Council before taking major information policy proposals to Cabinet. In a report last October to the Council of Information Directors, Dr. Grant Carman, chairman of the Advisory Council and head of Agriculture's vast information enterprise, said:

"There have been few if any instances where Information Canada has gone through (the Advisory Committee) for advice on any project prior to taking it to Cabinet Committee. This, of course, is the prerogative of Information Canada, but it has affected the usefulness of the Committee."

Although overtly restrained in tone, the report clearly reflected that Dr. Carman's nose, and presumably those of his Advisory Committee colleagues, were out of joint. The report went on to propose yet another layer to the bureaucracy, "full-time professional assistance," to enable the Advisory Committee, among other things, to bring information directors and Information Canada into closer liaison.

Another point of contention is Information Canada's claim that it thus far has saved the government \$1 million. According to Mr. Gagnon, the savings have been effected by such measures as putting the Exhibition Commission on a 100 per cent cost recovery basis, increasing book store sales by 25 per cent and removing 50,000 unnecessary names from government mailing lists.

To all of this the information director of one of the largest departments snapped: "Horseshit. Look at the logo they developed for the Federal Identities Program. They say it'll save a million. I say it'll cost hundreds of thousands to change signs on buildings, aircraft, ships . . ."

"Maybe it's worth it in the long run, but a lot of ministers have been dragging their asses on it and a lot of departments have resisted like hell because it'll drain the budget too heavily. Economically it's a bad time to do it, but then, it's visible and Information Canada likes that."

Still another of public servants' main laments about Information Canada is that it has concentrated on showy but shallow programs and failed to meet most basic departmental needs. As one comparatively sympathetic information director put it: "They've had an uphill row. They've had to face a lot of scepticism from some of us. And they've done some good things—like the career development plan and the new image they

gave the Queen's Printer Book Stores.

"But the criticism that's going around is: What the hell have they really done? They made a big hoo-hah about their report to Members of Parliament, but that's pretty picayune. And those posters . . . they really goofed on those. Dief had fun with them and Information Canada came out looking pretty silly. There's a mass of information floating around from all departments. They should be taking it and making it more digestible for the public and other departments as well. So far they've told us of a lot of plans but they've said they're not yet equipped to implement them. That may have been OK in the past but from here on they'd better start performing."

Who is responsible for these and other alleged failings of Information Canada? With startling regularity these critics point past Mr. Gagnon, whom they consider charming but ineffectual, to his deputy, R. A. J. Phillips, whom they consider an interloper in information circles. To him they attribute the bypassing of the Advisory Committee, resignations of some top Information Canada personnel, the nudie poster furor and what one critic called the agency's "tendency to self-destruct."

But Mr. Phillips is no more apologetic for himself than he is for Information Canada. Radiating self-confidence, he claims to have done more writing than most information officers and asserts that from 1954 to 1960 he ran an information program for the Northern Affairs Department which "made the North a household word."

He also dismisses Information Canada's detractors as people whose resistance to the agency "is in inverse proportion to their own competence or the competence of their departments." To complaints that Information Canada has failed to consult the Advisory Committee on policy proposals to Cabinet, both he and Mr. Gagnon reply that some proposals, such as the one for the Federal Identities Program, went to Cabinet before there was a Council or Committee. Other decisions to go directly to Cabinet, they say, lie with their minister, not them.

Mr. Gagnon adds that, if the Advisory Committee has not been consulted on a

policy, it was because the policy affected the total information community and its development was therefore the exclusive responsibility of his agency.

The director and other Information Canada spokesmen are also unswerving in their assertions that they have effected economies in government information spending and more will become apparent once such programs as Federal Identities take root. For each of the 50,000 names removed from the consolidated federal mailing lists, for example, Mr. Phillips claims an annual saving of \$3 to \$5. And while they admit that departmental information services have expanded rather than contracted since Information Canada's inception, they argue that these new positions were budgeted for before the agency was operative.

"The view of other departments now is: The proof of the pudding . . ." Mr. Gagnon admits. He and his colleagues also concede that some of the concern is understandable, even justified at times. But they deny that the hostility of some is representative of a general attitude in the public service at large or in the information community in particular. Where severe criticism is voiced, they say, it is most often petty carping, as often as not based on a failure to recognize or admit what Information Canada has done despite criticism from the outside, resistance within and the usual problems of getting established.

The log of claims and counter-claims, charges and recriminations could fill volumes. Exactly where the truth of many of these and other issues lies is likely not clear even to the antagonists.

Undoubtedly, however, Information Canada is more of a paper organization than it should be and some of the pursuits that have occupied its time do seem somewhat frivolous or shallow. Its directors also seem guilty of insensitivity toward their colleagues in government information services whose resentment, whether petty or justifiable, could spark internecine squabbles and make information co-ordination impossible.

Even now the agency's critics gloatingly claim Information Canada was cut out of effective participation in last year's Oppor-

tunities for Youth program. Despite denials from Information Canada officials, they contend that questions in the Commons concerning the use of a Toronto-based public relations firm in the OFY program were planted by a jealous Information Canada.

At the same time, while there seems to be considerable validity to much of the criticism of the agency, there also seems to be a strong current of spite and dog-in-mangerism underlying a lot of it. Even the Advisory Committee's request for a full-time secretariat to help it establish effective relations with Information Canada seems suspiciously like a ploy to pre-empt the agency's role as information service co-ordinator.

Thus far, Information Canada has refrained from exercising a firm hand in co-ordinating what the Task Force called the fragmented and often contradictory work of government information services. Given adequate resources, says Mr. Gagnon, they would do so — "on request". Given the attitude of some senior and influential members of the information community, that request likely won't come from them.

There's a limit, the Task Force said, to the inefficiency democratic governments may safely endure. In 1969 they said the limit might already have been "far a-stern." In the past two years, it seems, it has been getting a-sterner and a-sterner.

Marvin Schiff, once a Toronto Globe and Mail staffer, now teaches at Carleton University's journalism department, having most recently been co-ordinator of civil rights in Nova Scotia.

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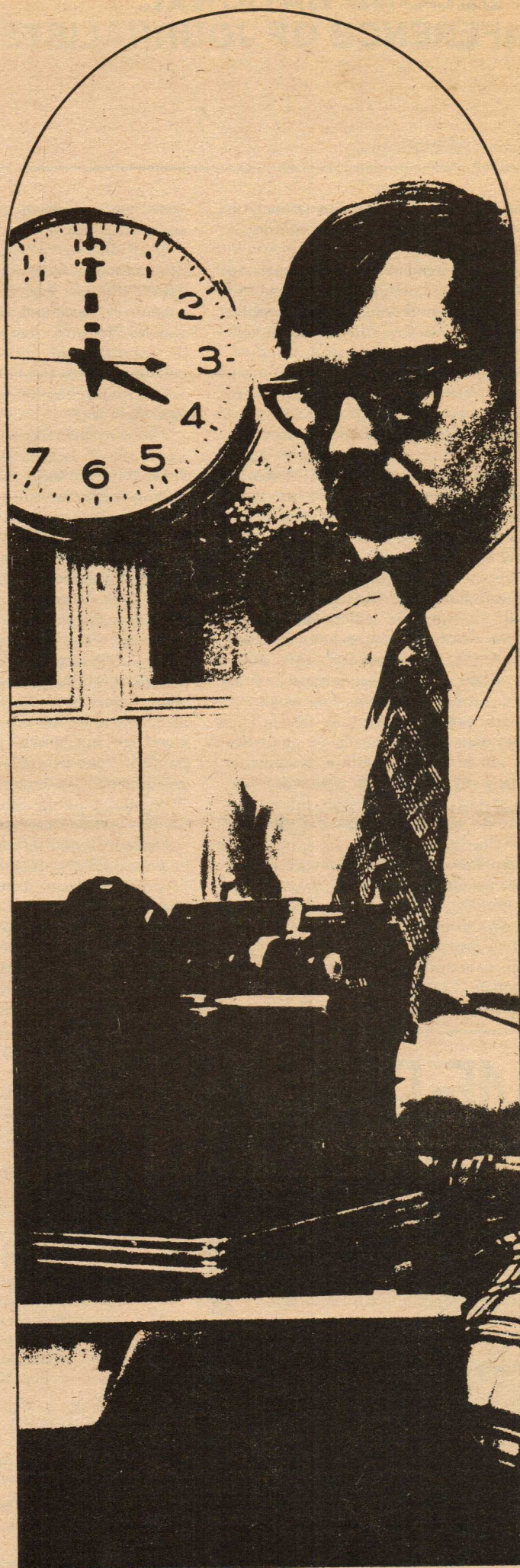
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THE SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF JOURNALISTS

OTTAWA, MARCH 10-12

It's set. Media 72 will be held in Ottawa, at the Skyline Hotel, the weekend of March 10, 11 and 12.

The second nation-wide conference of journalists—the first, Media 71, was held last May—will combine theory and philosophy with practicality in the continuing debate about the state of the art/trade/profession.

Indications to date are that this assembly may easily outdraw last year's meeting, which was attended by more than 300 journalists and other media folk from across Canada.

An advance registration form for Media 72 is on this page. Fee again is \$10, to cover basic administration and hotel costs. Hotel accommodation is extra, of course, and the registration form has space for delegates to indicate whether they require the Media 72 steering committee to make reservations on their behalf. Billeting also will be available.

Registration forms should be sent to: Media 72, 2082 Clark St., Montreal 129, P.Q. Queries can be sent to that address, or to *Content*, 892 Sherbrooke St. W., Montreal 110, P.Q. (tel. 514-843-3094).

Transportation subsidies may be available for those attending the conference from a distance: in many cases, if last year was a fair indication, papers and stations may choose to underwrite the conference costs of staffers attending Media 72.

The conference again will have translation facilities, to encourage reasonable representation from all parts of the country.

The ad hoc steering committee for Media 71 set a two-pronged objective for the conference: an examination of the report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media and a look beyond the committee's conclu-

sions, with emphasis on the practice of journalism in Canada.

That objective was achieved, according to the consensus as Media 71 drew to a close. The conference was, essentially, a feeling-out session of ideas and concerns. Above all, it was the first time that journalists from across the country gathered to discuss common and uncommon interests and difficulties.

Much has happened in the mass media since last May.

There've been local and regional symposiums about journalism and information-at-large, there've been strikes and lockouts and newspaper closings, there's been belt-tightening in some newsrooms, media concentration has increased rather than abated, little papers and magazines and broadcasting stations have been popping up here and there in response to a variety of needs, the public has been displaying an expanding curiosity about the news it gets and who provides it.

While professional standards, freedom of the press, on-the-job problems and a raft of other close-to-the-heart subjects will be discussed at Media 72, a theme which will be given its full due is the concept of "the public's right to know", or the public's accessibility to the media. Journalists' accountability to the public, and how to foster—if not revive—public trust, are basic to that subject.

Friday evening, March 10, will be devoted to practicality workshops—mini-seminars on photo-journalism, editorial writing, sports reporting, the police beat, business writing, radio and television interviewing, and others.

Saturday morning, March 11, will feature a general opening plenary session, with the afternoon devoted to workshops of both a practical and theoretical nature.

Sunday, March 12, will highlight a plenary meeting at which time resolutions originating in the workshops or from individuals will be debated and voted upon.

A complete program will be published in the February issue of *Content*. Next month's issue also will contain if not provocative position papers—as was the case last year—then a series of questions which delegates (and others, of course) should ponder prior to and during Media 72.

Members of the steering committee who have been meeting are Bob Rupert, The Newspaper Guild; Joseph Scanlon, chairman-on-leave, journalism department, Carleton University; Jean Danard, Media Club of Canada; Barry Mather, Federation of Press Clubs of Canada; David Waters, past president of the Association of English-Media Journalists of Quebec, and Dick MacDonald, Editor of *Content*.

Letters have been despatched to a batch of media associations and groups, including the weeklies, radio-tv news directors, managing editors, parliamentary press gallery, business editors, science writers, farm writers, sports writers, campus editors, and travel writers, asking for their suggestions about the makeup of Media 72 and inviting their participation on the steering committee or as resource people so that this year's conference will have even a wider representation than did Media 71.

Content has been carrying reports on Media 72 for the past three months. Location, timing and subject matter now have been clarified. Media 71 was important, if only for the fact it happened. Media 72 will be doubly so. Register now.

MEDIA 72

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OTTAWA
MARCH 10-12 MARS

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OVERLAPPING INTERESTS IS A DICEY MATTER

by JEAN-PIERRE FOURNIER

By the time this story gets into print, *La Presse* probably will have resumed publication after a lockout which lasted nearly three months.

At the time of writing, only a few details relating to compensation for lost pay and return to work arrangements needed to be ironed out between *La Presse's* management and the eleven unions of its employees. All other stumbling blocks to an agreement have been removed, which means that the matters chairman Paul Desmarais of Power Corporation described as non-negotiable—in an interview he gave Southam News Services on December 10—suddenly became negotiable and, on most of them, management gave way.

As a result, the *La Presse* journalists have achieved an impressive degree of control over the information to be published in the paper, a gain that other journalists across the country should set themselves as a goal.

The only key demand that journalists were not granted was the right to veto the appointment of the editor-in-chief and the news editor. But what they obtained was almost as good: the assurance that they would be consulted prior to these appointments. Then, should management appoint anybody against their will, journalists always can boycott the nomination, a strategy that has proved to be fairly effective in the past. During the past three years, reporters at three Quebec newspapers have publicly demanded—and obtained—the dismissal of one or several of their superiors. The latest case was at *La Presse* itself, where editor-in-chief Roger Mathieu, after coming under fire from his staff, took advantage of the lockout to resign and move to a government job.

Other demands have all been granted, though with slight modifications in some cases. They were:

1. Formation of a management-employee committee, with equal membership, to decide by majority vote the description of the editorial positions and to define the requirements of each post;
2. Joint determination of the number of positions in each particular field, suggesting as an example that a second reporter be

assigned to cover union matters;

3. Integration of all free-lancers and collaborators into the union and limitations of their contributions to the paper to 10 per cent of the monthly total of editorial material;

4. Reduction to four from thirteen of the non-unionized functions of the news desk;

5. Obligation for the employer to justify the abrogation of any function within the editorial room;

6. Freedom to dissent from the newspaper's editorial policy outside the newspaper;

7. Interdiction to re-use in other media articles written for the newspaper without previous agreement with the author;

8. Freedom to withhold signature of an article that has been modified by the news desk;

9. No journalists shall be required to write promotional or advertising copy;

10. Mechanism to settle a new type of grievance, called information grievances, pertaining to any of the professional clauses in the agreement.

Settlement of these issues, especially the first four, no doubt will allow restoration of some balance in the information columns of North America's largest French-language daily, but it does not spell the end of *La Presse's* woes.

La Presse is a diseased institution whose

la presse

recovery requires far stronger medicine. Since 1958, it has been plagued by labor troubles, not so much because it is 'a symbol in the community', as Desmarais said in the interview he gave to Southam News, but because it is a microcosm of some of Quebec society's basic ills. It is owned by an alien corporation whose interests seldom coincide with those of the community and it is run by virtual puppets who are prepared to go any distance to assuage their bosses' fancies.

As a first step on the road to recovery, the entire management team must be replaced, for it is unlikely that the staff's confidence in it can ever be restored. Desmarais himself appears to have come to the same conclusion over the last three weeks. The negotiation breakthrough which followed the Christmas season occurred as a result of stern instructions he gave to *La Presse's* president, vice-president and manager of personnel. Until then, all journalists' demands pertaining to professional standards had been deemed non-negotiable by management.

On the news side, the current management has a long record of bowing to every single pressure from government, catering to the 'Establishment' and favoring publicity stunts devised by the newspaper's marketing department over straight information. It was directly responsible for at least two-thirds of the editorial staff's grievances.

Secondly, Power Corporation must divest itself of the newspaper in favor of such

public institutions as the Caisses Populaires, the co-operatives, the trade unions, etc. A vice-president of Power is said to be working on such a project, but the intention is not enough. The project will have to materialize, and the sooner, the better.

Power Corporation had no business in the information field in the first place. Ever since it acquired *La Presse* and a string of other smaller dailies across the province, it is safe to say that it has secured more troubles for itself than it has made gains. Several of its subsidiaries have suffered financially and many observers believe there is a direct link between their plight and the trust's involvement in the field of communications.

This is not the 19th century and power can no longer be exercised as bluntly as it was. A giant conglomerate controlling billion-dollar interests, Power Corporation cannot help but figure as a symbol of 'oppressive capitalism' for as long as it occupies a position of prominence in such a controversial field as that of communications. The least trouble erupting at *La Presse* is bound to be blamed on 'the capitalist monster.'

At the same time, *La Presse's* credibility may be put in serious doubt, especially since Desmarais openly professes his intent (in the same interview to Southam News) to give it a definite political slant—pro-capitalist and federalist. No newspaper which pretends to be a popular information vehicle can operate from such a bias. It has to reflect more faithfully the various political trends within society.

Finally, the *La Presse* journalists must decide once and for all what type of information they want to disseminate and whether *La Presse* or another newspaper can best serve their ideals.

At present, *La Presse's* editorial staff is about equally divided between a moderate, right-wing element and highly-militant, left-wing separatists.

Clearly, neither of the two groups can get entirely their own way in a rather conventional, large-circulation newspaper such as *La Presse* which must seek to reflect every tendency. Each group must make concessions to the other. Each probably can have its own say in the editorial columns of the newspaper and work toward a happy medium in the information sections.

Unless those three conditions are fulfilled in the near future, it is safe to assume that the agreement which now permits *La Presse* to resume publication will be shortlived.

The alternative will be for the newspaper to go on stumbling from strike to lockout to strike until it dies of exhaustion. And this should not take too long. When *La Presse's* management locked out its employees last October 27, the newspaper had barely recovered from the seven-month lockout of 1964. It will now take months, if not years, to repair the damages caused by the last shut-down.

Jean-Pierre Fournier is a free-lance Montreal writer and broadcaster.

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ED MCNALLY, 1916-1971

by COLIN HAWORTH

At this date, roughly a month after his death, it is tough to write anything about Ed McNally without consciously or unconsciously scalping others who went to press earlier.

Dunc MacPherson of the *Toronto Star* (not famous for flattery as Ken Johnstone, writer and Ed's neighbor, pointed out in the eulogy at McNally's memorial service) pinpointed Ed's professional standing in the community of cartoonists better than the many national and international awards Ed won: "Even back in the early free-lance days he was always the fastest with the mostest."

McNally's boss, editor Gerry Clark of the *Montreal Star*, reminded readers how he took his drawing board to the hospital to keep on working while undergoing a knee operation a couple of years ago. Frank Lowe of *Weekend*, for whom Ed had long done illustration work, hit the real human tone: "He had the ability to enjoy himself even when it didn't look as though there was much to enjoy. Too bad he had to leave the party so early". Ed was only 55.

Few at the memorial service were without anecdotes, none without recollections, and all the recollections had one common quality—warmth. The service was held in Ed's 125-year-old stone farmhouse at Rockburn, Que., and old stone farmhouses are notorious for being cold, especially in December. But Ed's place had taken on much of his own warmth through years of living, thoughtful structural additions and decorating that suited and revealed his character. The warmth was noticeable and it pervaded the service.

The obit data, if you haven't already noted it, goes: Edwin Dean McNally, born Fort William (that's Thunder Bay, Ont. today, kids); started painting 10-foot-high letters on grain elevators, moved to Winnipeg as illustrator in the *Free Press* art department and served as second-string editorial cartoonist. Overseas with the Canadian Navy in 1941, and after the war started free-lancing in Montreal, much of his work getting used by *Weekend*. He joined the *Star* staff in 1960 and died 11 years later, December 19, 1971, of a heart attack (no warning) at his farmhouse, fifty miles from Montreal.

What the obits cannot say, though Frank Lowe's piece hinted at it, was the tremendously energetic and sometimes unorthodox way he insisted on getting the most out of living. His official war record, for example, doesn't tell about swiping that American jeep at Southampton just before taking off on a convoy run into the Mediterranean. After all, if you are going to put into exciting new ports a fellow ought to have some transportation so he can get in some landside touring and a bit of sketching. Nor does it mention how the U.S. jeep got swapped for an Egyptian one in Cairo just before it wore out completely. If the Egyptians are still looking for theirs it is on the floor of Southampton harbor; had to be ditched, tearfully, before they came home.

Ken Johnstone's eulogy stressed how much a part of the countryside around Rockburn Ed



had become, sometimes a difficult achievement for a stranger from the city who had only been around the district for twenty years or so. But Ed was part-country boy, part-city boy. And at Rockburn he lived like the folk there. When neighbors needed help, they got it. If he found a good trout stream, he would share the news with them (and get as much back in return). He acted like one of them.

Remember when he bought that second-hand ice-cream freezer just a few miles from his place but unfortunately across the U.S. border? Now a guy can't lie to the customs fellows, especially when they're fishing friends. So Ed parked the station wagon just a bit short of the customs house and went in for a casual chat about the weather and dogs and important things like that.

As he left the office, a friendly but dutiful customs man asked, quite properly: "Bringing anything back with you, Ed?" "Just a couple of freezer parts", said McNally. The parts happened to be stuck together into a whole freezer, but it didn't seem worth pursuing the conversation. That's living, border-style.

A good deal of the comments on Ed's death mentioned his fondness for parties. Most of the commentators share his fondness and participated in those parties at one time or another. I did. In fact, the sit-around after the memorial service included, among other things, a couple of cases of hard cider, the strict legality of which was perhaps in doubt. But none of the parties ever showed up in Ed's work. His speed was phenomenal and his drawing incisive. And he was tireless when there were deadlines. Editors and art

buyers who used McNally material knew this and admit frankly that they leaned on this valuable faculty.

He was quick and direct, too, when he talked about art, which he didn't do very often. When I started dabbling in painting I got a complete course in composition from Ed (for free, of course), in one sentence. "It has to fit together properly; think of yourself wrapping a package up so it holds tighter."

In return, I arranged Ed's audition for membership in The Coolbrook Symphony — two choruses of Chicago, one of Bill Bailey, and a scattering of odds and ends by Fats Waller. Would you believe it? Ed ended up being issued Membership Card No. 1 in the Symphony. The white upright piano at the farmhouse reminded me of it. On that piano, on the one in the Montreal Men's Press Club, and on many others, McNally helped to live up to the Symphony's reputation: "Anything written since 1922 — and, sotto voce, up to 1946."

Gordie Burwash turned up for the memorial service, as did scores of others, including René Boileau, steward from the Press Club, Joe the blacksmith from down the road and concert pianist Kelsey Jones who had to rush back to Montreal for a classical performance at Place des Arts but not before he had played some of Ed's style jazz on the old white upright in the living room.

Burwash looked out the window at the farm. Cars parked all over the hard-packed snow on the lawn and garden. Down the side-road a mile or so was Norm Lussier's farm and Gord remembers an earlier Christmas season, Christmas Eve in fact. As the evening wore on McNally decided it was time to try out the little red cutter he had picked up at an auction.

His horse, Cotton Stockings, didn't get much exercise and would like the run. But Stockings was a Tennessee walker, one of those giant horses bred with long legs for covering distance on plantations. It was snug and good-living jogging under the buffalo rug for about half the way to Lussier's; then Stockings, always an independent thinker,

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decided to light out and show how she could run.

When she put her hoofs through the dashboard of the little cutter she had a new reason to run, run even harder. She scared herself silly and took off down the road. Splinters of dashboard flew in all directions. Stockings wasn't the only one scared. Burwash, admittedly, is a man of judgment and a man of decision. He simply leapt for the snowbank as they passed the Lussier farm. Quarter of a mile beyond, Ed won the battle with the nervous horse; he steered her into a clump of alder. They walked home leading Stockings and went back for the smashed-up cutter next day.

Some of the obits mentioned how much Ed

liked working in the studio he built in his barn. Cotton Stockings' upstairs bedroom, he once called it. As much as Ed liked painting inside that studio I liked painting outside it. The barn and the stand of white pine behind it demanded to be committed to canvas or paper in either objective or abstract form. I don't know how many versions of McNally's barn I ground out but one of them today is in the collection of a wealthy businessman in Florida, one hangs in the living room of Alan Randal, news editor of the *Montreal Gazette*, and one is in the den at Ed's farm. McNally's judgment of art being what it was that last one means more than having a painting in a public museum.

This piece started with the determination

to write about Ed. Somehow the first person singular crept in. I noticed that in all the comments about his passing. It's hard to write about Ed without writing about yourself. It was a way he had of involving people with himself, and they with him.

He went fast, traditionally a lucky way if you have to go. And Frank Lowe's line did say it all: *Too bad he had to leave the party so early.*

Colin Haworth is a partner in Communications-6 Inc., a Montreal-based public relations company.

THE NEWSPAPER GUILD IN/AU CANADA

Will The Newspaper Guild provide a better service to its Canadian members, present and future, if a separate Canadian region is established under an elected Canadian director?

If so, how autonomous should such a Canadian region be? Is it feasible, from economic and/or administrative points of view, for such a region to be established with its own elected director?

These questions will be considered in submissions from Guild members and other interested parties at public hearings to be held in four Canadian cities from February 28 through March 7. Hearings are scheduled as follows:

Montreal, February 28-29, Sheraton-Mount Royal Hotel
Toronto, March 1-2, King Edward-Sheraton Hotel
Winnipeg, March 3, Sheraton-Carlton Motor Inn
Vancouver, March 6-7, Blue Horizons Motor Hotel

The Guild is holding these hearings in response to a directive from its 1971 convention and it is interested in your views—*whether you are inside or outside the Guild.*

Board members who will consider submissions and make recommendations to The Newspaper Guild's 1972 convention are:

Charles A. Perlik, Jr., President, The Newspaper Guild (chairman)
Eleanor Dunn, President of the Ottawa Newspaper Guild, and International Vice-President-at-Large
Glen Ogilvie, Past President of the Toronto Newspaper Guild, and International Vice-President Region VI (Canada)
Harry E. Ryan, International Vice-President-at-Large

Approximate time allotment per submission is 45 minutes.

For information, contact: Bob Rupert, International Representative, R.R.2, Kemptville, Ont. Tel. (613) 258-2642.



La Guilde du journalisme assurera-t-elle un meilleur service à ses membres canadiens, présents et futurs, si une région canadienne autonome est établie dont la responsabilité incombera à un directeur canadien élu?

Si oui, quel devrait être le degré d'autonomie de cette région canadienne? Est-ce pertinent, d'un point de vue économique ou administratif, pour une telle région de posséder son propre directeur élu?

Ces questions seront passées en revue grâce à des soumissions que présenteront des membres de la Guilde et autres personnes intéressées, lors d'audiences publiques qui auront lieu dans quatre villes canadiennes, entre le 28 février et le 7 mars. Le programme de ces audiences est comme suit:

Montréal, les 28 et 29 février: Hôtel Sheraton-Mont Royal
Toronto, les 1er et 2 mars: King Edward Sheraton Hotel
Winnipeg, le 3 mars: Sheraton-Carlton Motor Inn
Vancouver, les 6 et 7 mars: Blue Horizons Motors Hotel

La Guilde présente ces audiences afin de donner suite aux directives qui sont ressorties de sa convention de 1971. Toute personne, membre ou non-membre, est invitée à émettre son opinion à ce sujet.

Les membres du Conseil qui étudieront les soumissions et feront des recommandations lors de la convention de 1972 de la Guilde du journalisme sont les suivants:

Charles A. Perlik, Jr. président, La Guilde du journalisme (directeur)
Eleanor Dunn, présidente de la Guilde du journalisme d'Ottawa et vice-présidente internationale
Glen Ogilvie, anciennement président de la Guilde du journalisme de Toronto et vice-président international pour la Région VI (Canada)
Harry E. Ryan, vice-président international

La période de temps accordée pour chaque soumission est d'environ 45 minutes.

Pour tout autre renseignement, veuillez communiquer avec Bob Rupert, représentant international, R.R.2, Kemptville, Ont. Tél. (613) 258-2642.

THIS EXPRESS HAD NO PONY

by ROBERT PLASKIN

On December 30 of last year, Vol. 1-No. 44 of the *Daily Express* hit the streets in Montreal. During the early morning hours, as the first copies were coming off the press, the tabloid's staff was in the last stage of conducting a wake; the boss had come through with a Christmas bonus — a free bar at a club near the office.

Although many did not realize it that cold Thursday morning, and in fact many Montrealers still do not know what happened, the *Daily Express* folded on December 30.

'Folded' perhaps is too kind a word. Much of the staff prefers to believe the paper was killed. The machinations of the death of the *Daily Express* smack of the same kind of definition of private enterprise which led to the demise of the Toronto *Telegram*. Rumors about the possible causes of Joseph Azaria's actions have flooded Montreal's media world and they range from claims that the publisher didn't know enough about the business of putting out a daily newspaper to claims that he was bought out by the chain which runs what was the *Daily's* chief competitor.

There are those who would rather see a paper die a quick and painless death, if indeed it must die, than to suffer the extended agonies of the *Telegram's* closure. As a *Daily* staffer, I include myself in that camp but nevertheless cannot accept the post-Christmas events which killed the tabloid.

The *Daily Express* was Montreal's most recent addition to the English written market. A morning tabloid, it was an offshoot of the almost three-year-old and profitable *Sunday Express*. The *Sunday* paper had concentrated mainly on sports coverage and straight news was limited to UPI wire copy, except for the efforts of a few junior reporters.

The *Daily* entered the scene with a mixed bag of popular and professional opinion. At first it was hoped the paper could make a go of it; within two weeks, with poor local news coverage, the *Daily* seemed doomed. But by the end of November, after one month's publication, the paper showed the readers and the competitors that it was not to be laughed at. With an ever-increasing air of professionalism it gained the respect of even its most pessimistic critics and proved that a morning tabloid could compete in the English market and that competition worked wonders for all concerned.

The death of the *Express* was not based on the paper's journalistic qualities. Azaria

knows more, or at least should know enough about the business, to have been able to judge the professional aspects of the paper; he still publishes the *Sunday Express*, has long been the publisher of the *National Police Gazette* and three years ago sold *Midnight* after creating the sheet and building it up to a five million world-wide circulation.

Azaria must be given credit for these other ventures and thus also credited with sufficient business dexterity to have been able to understand that the *Daily* needed more time to prove itself.

The secrecy which surrounded the folding made it a bitter pill to swallow and negated the advantages of a quick closure.

A few days before Christmas, about 300 hundred miles north of the Panama Canal, the decision which closed the paper and sent 33 Montreal journalists packing allegedly was made because of "low circulation figures and excessive expenditures" (estimates are that the circulation had climbed to 15,000).

Azaria had gone down to Costa Rica for a vacation but, it turned out later, had really made the trip to ponder the results of a three-week survey which showed the *Daily* was not a viable proposition. No one knew of this survey — not even editor Max Crittenden, who was virtually running the paper, or managing editor Bert Marsh.

Because of the distance between Montreal and the Central American banana republic of Costa Rica, the hand of death naturally did not strike immediately. Instead, on December 28 Azaria returned to Montreal and, without setting foot in the office, completed the execution. He simply called a few people to his home — the editor of the paper was not included — and, according to managing editor Bert Marsh, wove the tale of woe involving the villainous figures the survey had given him.

Late the following night, as edition No. 44 was being put to bed, the nefarious rumors of a folding spread through the newsroom. Some did not find out what was happening until they were actually handed their pay and a severance cheque for an additional week's salary. Mark Daly, city editor on vacation in B.C., and Dan MacLean, sports writer on vacation in California, did not find out until long after the office had been padlocked under the eye of a security guard.

Most of us have stopped talking about the closure. Joe ran a survey and that is the end of that. We have discounted the fact that no one knew about the survey; that Azaria himself, when he left for Costa Rica, was not a man burdened with the bad news of this survey. He had managed, in fact, to display a wonderful, soul-inspiring facade of what we now assume must have been false hope.

When Azaria returned, the circulation department was to undergo a housekeeping job. The paper had just taken over the reins of its own distribution system and there were a few kinks to be ironed out. A few junior reporters and a deskman or two were to be hired to round out news coverage. The offices had been cleaned up enough to just

get by and, when the publisher returned, the job would be completed. The paper was in full bloom. Azaria had budgeted himself and figured he could keep the paper going for 12 months. He was willing to keep going for six months before judging the paper and making a decision on whether or not to keep trying.

Why the survey, if indeed there ever was a survey? Simply to check on the record for the first two months—a record which, according to manager Beryl Johnson, showed the *Daily* was more than \$100,000 under budget for the months of November and December. The \$100,000 was like a bonus to the paper, money that should have been spent but somehow was not because the paper was coming along so nicely. This was the money which would pay for the plans Azaria had for his return from Costa Rica.

Today, 33 reporters and photographers are drawing their dole. They don't believe the survey story, that there ever was a survey or at least a survey with the results which Bert Marsh claims Azaria laid on the line that December 28 afternoon. They would like to find out why they are on the dole and exactly what happened during those two weeks in Costa Rica.

But they can't, because on the morning of December 29, less than 24 hours before the *Daily Express* died, Joseph Azaria left Montreal for a vacation in Florida.

Robert Plaskin was with the Montreal Star before joining the short-lived Daily Express.

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CORPORATE JOURNALISM: FACT, OR FANTASY?

by RICHARD WINTER
and HENRY TURBAK

"Over the years Canada has had a party press, a labour press, a technical press, an academic press, a government press; and in some form or other all these kinds persist But the great bulk of Canada's press organs are still appropriate to a relatively free market economy."

The key words in this passage seem to be "relatively free market economy." Semantic arguments are self-defeating, but the phrase perhaps might be better expressed as "an economy that is basically flexible to the laws of supply and demand, and to the needs and wants of the people."

We will attempt to enlarge upon Wilf Eggleston's dissection of the Canadian press (as expressed in his foreward to *The History of Journalism in Canada*) by introducing a new factor into the equation, the corporate newsletter. By studying its purpose, content, and impact on society, we should be better qualified to comment on the remainder of the Canadian press and the "relatively free market economy" that it represents.

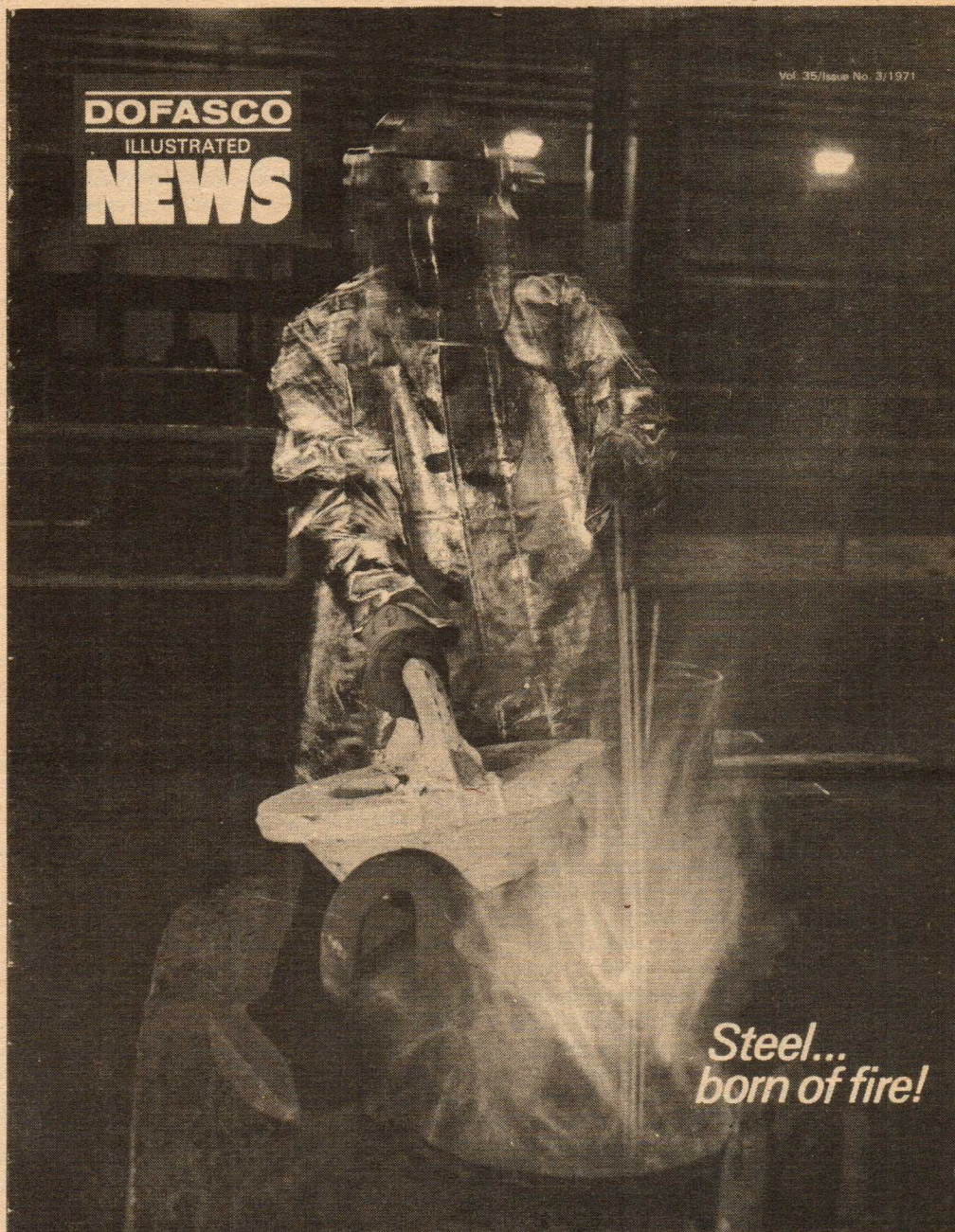
Our social commentators, even the Senate Committee on Mass Media, have glossed over the realm of corporate publications or else ignored them completely. Why? Perhaps because it looks so harmless. What the critics have not realized is that publications of this genre potentially are infinitely more dangerous to society than the most radical rag of the bombers, if for no other reason than their inoffensive appearance.

At this point a certain problem of definition arises: the difference between a letter from the president of a firm to all employees, an advertising circular, a periodical aimed at all business acquaintances of the company, and a regular newsletter for and about the employees.

Which ones are relevant to the question of Canadian society and its press? The problem is resolved as follows:

- 1) a letter from the president is a directive and may be compared to a ship captain's "All hands on deck!" There is no pretence that this is true two-way communication.
- 2) An advertising circular is news, but is often required by law to state that it is, in fact, only advertising. In cases where this acknowledgement is not required, the public's experience usually lends a grain of salt to the acceptance of the claims of the circular—that Glug may possibly not be the best mouth-wash on the market.
- 3) The periodical aimed at the company's customers, shareholders, etc., and the company newsletter to all employees are designed, ostensibly, to give them the news of the firm's doings and the various personalities involved. As such, the purpose is the communication of news and must therefore be considered in our scrutiny of the press.

But what, you may ask, about the advertising that is so cleverly disguised as news that it slips through the defences of the



public and is accepted by them as a viable truth? Let us take models:

- a) two publications of Dominion Foundries & Steel, Ltd. (Dofasco). One of them, the *Dofasco Illustrated News*, is aimed at company visitors, customers, shareholders, etc.; the other, *News and Views*, at the employees.
- b) the Royal Bank *Monthly Letter*, which is available to the general public.
- c) *THE*, the newsletter of Northern Electric.

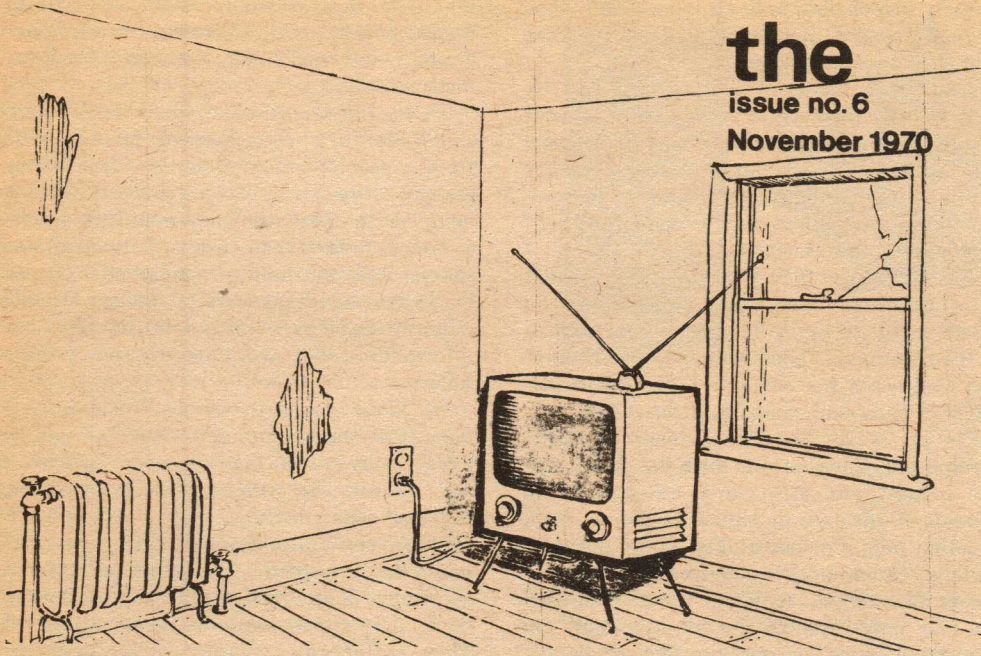
Dofasco is Canada's third largest steel producer. The company's Hamilton plant alone covers 793 acres and employs some 8,600 workers, with its motto, "Our product is steel, our strength is people."

The *Dofasco Illustrated News*, a beautifully produced glossy periodical, won the Canadian Public Relations Society's Award of Excellence as the best corporate publication

used as a public relations vehicle." Basic features usually include articles (accompanied by excellent photographs) on the various company projects, on the city of Hamilton, and on Canada in general, its achievements and its beauty, and a special section each issue on a different Canadian artist. (Average birth date of the artists in question, it may/may not be relevant to note, seems to be pre-1928.) There also is news of company promotions, the "Quarter-Century Club" for long-time employees, and there always is an essay reflecting Dofasco's concern over pollution.

The *Illustrated News* primarily is a visually-oriented magazine, and the awards that it has won for artwork, photography, and layout are well-earned. An interesting comment on the photography would be the suspicious number of pure blue, cloudless skies—a fact not unusual in publications of

the
issue no. 6
November 1970



this type, but perhaps a little bewildering for the reader who is knowledgeable about the city of Hamilton. Another sidelight: the shots of new units are invariably taken before they go into operation—it's nicer that way.

The magazine's attempts at writing are equally vulnerable. One article in particular comes to mind: "Steel Town's Golden Age." The title is taken from a quote by Mayor Victor K. (Vic) Copps, Hamilton's sincere, hard-working, aggressive, chief executive."

When it first came out, the *Illustrated News* was designed for shareholders, customers, and workers. Later on, however, a need was felt for a newsletter whose content would be of primary interest to the workers only. Mass participation in the form of a "name the paper" contest was organized, literally hundreds of replies were received, and the result was *News and Views*. Controversial content was, as always, avoided. Al Godard, head of public relations for Dofasco and editor of *News and Views* (also writer of at least 75 per cent of the content), puts it this way: "The worker wants a paper he can relax with after a hard day's work."

What about management censorship? Jim Burns, PR man and tour guide of the plant, flatly contradicts Godard's statement that there was none whatsoever. Feedback from the readers? "We hope to get something going in the future, probably in 1972," says Godard. "Right now there is very little feedback."

The name of the game is names. Says Godard, "If I write, 'I saw Harry Brown the other day, looking mighty fine,'—that's all I need—I reach all the people who know Harry, closely or distantly, and they say, 'Good old Harry, still going strong, I hear.' Harry himself is ecstatic." And this, and nothing more, seems to be the purpose of *News and Views*. The Dofasco plant is so big that workers often do not see friends for long periods of time. They need the newsletter as a focal point where they can read about other people with common hobbies, interests, and friendships. (About a story on one employee training horses in his spare time, Godard says: "Now, how many people don't like horses?" The headline: Both Horses and Dofasco Run in the Family.)

The family image works on two levels in *News and Views*: the employee and his family, and their relationship with the larger Dofasco family. The image is not a new one

in the history of corporate literature; it is the classic refutation of Marx's alienation theories. What companies such as Dofasco do not realize is that a family consciousness cannot be imposed from above, but must come about through a spontaneous kinship among the masses.

Dan Hassel ("Dofasco Dan") puts it this way: "Key to success—find a way to like what you have to do." Says Godard, "We use the soft sell."

In the Royal Bank newsletter we find basically the same forces at work: respect for the ordered present and an intense dislike for the new and creative. Let's examine a random selection of these newsletters between October, 1964 and June, 1971.

The October '64 issue is entitled "Chance vs. Informed Planning". The article contains frequent mentions of "the executive mind" and "the businessman" and draws parallels between decisions in business and decisions in private life. In short, it seems to be aimed at the businessman and the efficient running of his life.

"Respect for the Law" is the title for March, 1969. The argument commences with the basic premise that the crime rate is on the increase and goes on to say: "Evolution of a technological society leaves behind those who are unfit, those who are timid, those who do not try, and those who resent progress. They become the disturbers of the peace and criminals."

The letter states the "fact" that Canada is looked on by others as being one of the most law-abiding nations in the world, but neglects to mention that Canada has more people in jail per capita than any other country in the world.

Police, judges, and the upholders of the peace are the best-trained men for the job. "The avant-garde cry for the liberalization of our laws has nothing in common with this (that if you yourself want justice, you must come to ask for it with clean hands). It is a growling demand for the removal of the supposed 'shackles', and it is a demand that is made under the protection of the law it derides."

December, 1969, is entitled "Diplomacy in the Home". "No social institution is more essential for the human race than is the home."

November, 1970, "On being Community-Minded". This article contains a long defini-

tion of the good citizen, the good community, and "the intimacy of working together in a good purpose, the appreciation of personality, the supremacy of integrity, and the sense of interdependence."

The January, 1971, issue, "To Become a Manager", lists some of the qualities required: ambition, pride in a job well done, professionalism, open-mindedness, experience, good communication, patience, modesty, and an enjoyment of work."

"Science for Pleasure" (February, 1971) tells us that curiosity is the root of all knowledge, and that's always nice to know. "What Use is the Census?"—March, 1971—compares the taking of the census to an inventory of stock. The census "represents the confidential sharing of personal information for the public good."

The April, 1971, issue is about "Standing on Your Own Two Feet." "Canada's Cultural Riches" (June, 1971): "Jacques Cartier came to our coast seeking a seaway to the Orient; he found instead a country vast and beautiful beyond his dreams." (If you had asked Jacques to comment on that during his first winter in Canada, he might have had to be forcibly restrained from answering you.)

Let us run over the titles again: "Chance vs. Informed Planning", "Respect for the Law", "Diplomacy in the Home", "On Being Community-Minded", "To Become A Manager", "Science for Pleasure", "What Use is the Census?", "Standing on Your Own Two Feet", "Canada's Cultural Riches". There's probably one somewhere on the virtues of motherhood, too.

Peter Townsend once said that reading company literature is "like going down for the third time in a sea of maple syrup." The matter goes a little deeper than that. Writings of this kind are not only unreasonable in their optimism, but also do a certain kind of violence to the reader. They repress in him the anguish of being human, the fear of things that go bump in the night, that he doesn't understand, and they rob him of the power to think for himself.

If frustration breeds violence, then the corporate newsletter, that bastion of togetherness, innocently marches along under the black flag of anarchy. The prospect becomes frightening when we consider the number of people exposed to this kind of literature.

Thank God, we say, that we still have the regular newspapers to fall back on. Thank God that in the daily paper we can still distinguish between advertising and news. At least we can tell the difference.

Can we, indeed?

Perhaps at the root of the problem is the Bland Newspaper Syndrome. For example, when a paper such as *Guerilla* refers to policemen as "pigs" or "pig-fuckers", we may be offended, but at least we know the newspaper is being honest about its opinions. What we must decide is this: to what extent is that 8,600-man society at the Dofasco plant a microcosm, a replica in miniature, of our larger society?

There is a company publication that seems genuinely interested in improving not only the product but in improving mankind's lot. *THE* is a booklet issued aperiodically by the Communications Studies Group of Northern Electric Laboratories in Ottawa. Northern Electric is the company which supplies us with that marvelous twentieth-century toy, the telephone. It supplies Mother Bell with the telephone and Bell in turn is the distributor and service agent of the phones to the public. Although Northern Electric is not

MISSED SOME GOOD READING?

KEITH DAVEY
MEDIA
AND THE LAW
DEATH
OF THE TELY
WEEKLIES
NEWSROOM RAGS
MEDIA 71
PHOTOGRAPHY
WATERING HOLES
CABLECASTING
JOURNALISM
EDUCATION
PENTAGON
PAPERS
OCTOBER 1970
PROFILES
CIGARET AD BAN
... AND MORE

content

BACK ISSUES

Including this issue, *Content* has produced 300 pages of material . . . which amounts to a fair-sized book on journalism and the media, in Canada and elsewhere.

If you've missed back issues, or would like to replenish your files, copies are available at 50 cents each for Nos. 2 through 15. No. 1, now out of print, is available only in photocopy form at \$3.50.

Write: 892 Sherbrooke W., Montreal 110, P.Q.

directly responsible to the public, it still takes a great interest in communications and the way society is influenced.

Articles in issues of *THE* are written by authors who are experts in their own fields of communications. It is stipulated in each issue that Northern Electric takes no responsibility for the opinions and views expressed therein. Could this mean there may be something controversial in the issues? Let us look closer.

The February 1970 issue of *THE*, written by Gordon B. Thompson, delves into the relationship between technology and society in the communications business area. Thompson expresses his concern with the importance of communications in these words:

"In his book, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Teilhard de Chardin puts forth the notion that we accept our electronic extensions as aspects of our own biological evolution. Such a notion puts a responsibility on the designer of large communications systems that far exceeds his training. It would seem, then, that we not only "decide for all mankind," in Jean-Paul Sartre's words, but that we decide about all mankind for ever more. James Joyce recognizes this problem and suggests that we should design technological changes, rather than have them just happen, in order to save the needless suffering that the less-planned situation causes."

He goes on to elaborate on these points by giving examples and by giving subsequent quotes by creditable authors. Subsequent chapters evolve a means of measurement for different types of communication and their effects.

One fascinating example given in his chapter "Effects Inventory" studies the effects of a mail strike on a society. Thompson took advantage of the 1968 Canadian postal strike to analyze Canadian attitudes toward it. Writing about the ratio of newspaper articles pertaining to the strike and to the labor issues involved, he states:

"The total strike-orientated editorial content, during the period, amounted to four columns in some seven editorials." (In the *Ottawa Journal*: the strike lasted for one month.)

Elaborating on these editorials, he says: "Of all the inches of news copy referring to the effects of the postal strike, seventy-four per cent was concerned with the exchange of money. . . one would suspect that in the minds of those who had been trained to place in the newspapers that which is essentially significant to the newspapers readers *the Post Office is some kind of bank.*"

On the preceding page, a photograph of mail amassed during the strike contains the caption, "It took a national strike to show that the *Post Office is some kind of bank.* . . ."

His succeeding chapters depict a measuring system of communication which involves as many vehicles of communication as mankind has yet uncovered—everything from the phonetic alphabet to electronic shopping is discussed and assessed for its value to human society.

The May 1970 issue of *THE*, entitled "Beyond Motivation" and written by Jim McCay, attempts to analyse the forces which influence and motivate people in general. McCay states the theme of his treatise in these words:

"The effective leader creates conditions that encourage self-motivation. He knows that men who can be motivated by others tend to become more dependent and imitative. The effective leader wants men around him who are responsible innovators. Men

who are beyond motivation." He treats management or leadership much more liberally and realistically than does the Royal Bank newsletter.

This issue is presented in a very understandable form interspersed heavily with simple graphs, circle diagrams and photographs illustrating his examples. McCay begins with "Man's development from hunter to nomad to farmer to early city dweller" and shows, with the help of exponential curves, man's developed capacity to change. He tells why our capacity is far behind the tools and information that we have in our present society.

He looks at improvements in communications since the beginning of man and says the yield jumps in man's performance. Looking at our society he states that information overload saps vitality.

"Over-concentration on IDEAS—on reading, talking, watching TV, planning, judging, analyzing, will drive people into a devitalized, dispirited, and alienated condition. They suffer from sensory deprivation and lose their capacity for fresh perception, spontaneity and creativity."

"When people are bombarded with more ideas that they can use in satisfying ways, they consciously or unconsciously develop defenses against further inputs."

In later chapters, McCay looks at individual development and at factors which may help to improve the individual. He not only looks at communication but attempts to get into the psyche of the human. He believes not only in a development of intellect but also in maintaining good health attitudes, sex attitudes, and vitality. He insists that we communicate not only by what we say, but by how we act and look to other people.

The last section of the issue is devoted to the ultimate development of human groups and organizations. His idea of a perfect organization is envisaged in the chapter, "Types of People", where he says:

"Potential members of synergistic groups are bright, broadly informed, curious, open, affirmative people who long for self-actualization.

"The focus of the group is on innovation and spirit, not on psychotherapy. Members should therefore be selected on the basis of their capacity for commitment and their freedom from strategic and neurotic behaviour.

"The group will gain by featuring both variety in age and sex. Women have natural talents in the energizing roles—men in the innovation roles. The old contribute patience, skills, perspective, and wisdom. The young have energy, freshness of perception, and talents for asking breakthrough-producing questions."

Although McCay's ideas are highly optimistic, they do not appear to be as shallow as those described in the bank newsletters.

There is a sharp contrast between a publication such as *THE* and the *Dofasco Illustrated News*.

Dofasco writers using the "soft sell method" are blatantly trying to control the readers' opinions about the company. They offer very little controversy (if any) in their articles. They want to ensure their concept of *family image* in the minds of their readers. Their little tidbits of "wisdom" from *Dofasco* Dan is hardly an educational attempt to inform the worker of new ideas and concepts in our society. The reader is neither stimulated to think for himself nor his environment; the company is doing everything for him.

THE, however, does not attempt to hide the effects of the telephone nor does it underestimate the value of other forms of communication such as TV, movies, books, etc. It attempts to show the relationship of the telephone to the rest of society.

Surprisingly, the telephone is not the major concern of THE. They do not try to push their product, but, instead, try to uncover truths about the individual, his society, and to evaluate methods of communication honestly.

THE WATERING HOLE

by PATRICK BROWN

Representatives from Montreal magazines, newspapers, television and radio met last Friday night in a Mountain Street bar for the latest in a continuing series of weekly symposia with the underlying theme, "Let's go and have a couple at the Bistro". To emphasize the low-key nature of the meetings, the seating arrangements are generally informal, with delegates gathered in unstructured discussion groups around marble-topped tables, but the ad hoc steering committee has now thoughtfully provided a fence for the CBC delegation to sit on.

The meeting was opened at 5 p.m. with a frank and free exchange of views on how to engage the waiter's attention, with special reference to the question of whose turn it was to pay. The conference organizers' offer of two beers for the price of one between the hours of 5 and 6 stimulated lively interest amongst delegates, and by 7 o'clock the initial plenary session had fragmented into a number of audience-participatory workshops.

At 10 p.m. the plenary session was reconvened to hear reports and proposals from the workshops, core groups and task forces:

■ The chairman of the task force on press cynicism announced that it can now be revealed that life, contrary to popular rumour, is not in fact a bowl of cherries, nor indeed any vessel containing any fruit, vegetable, or other comestible. Sub-committees have been formed, he said, to investigate other hypotheses, including the controversial excremental theory of the nature of human existence.

■ The secretary of the group elected at an earlier meeting to lobby Ottawa for an Opportunities for Drunks program in 1972 reported unsteady progress, and amid hoots of derision summed up future plans in the words of the group's motto: "If at first you don't succeed, Rye, Rye, and Rye again."

■ The core group formed to investigate clichés in journalism reported that journalism is a hotbed of clichés and mixed metaphors, which are a cancer eating out the heart of the profession, and that the time has come to take the bull by the horns, put our noses to the grindstone, and take the plunge by putting to the sword this plague which, like the jack-booted octopus of fascism, is running riot, juggernaut-style, through the sea of information which, in this modern day and age, confronts the man in the street.

■ A gentleman in a light suit representing unspecified interests declined to commit himself, or even to commit himself to non-committal, but distributed a duplicated sheet headed *For Immediate Release* announcing, "My client is a very nice man, and I don't think he would mind if I had just one more crème-de-menthe and passion-fruit juice on

By quoting ideas from men such as Marshall McLuhan, James Joyce and Lewis Mumford, the articles contain a credibility unapparent in other company publications. THE is the company publication that should serve as an example for giving company workers credit for some intelligence.

Richard Winter and Henry Turbak are journalism students at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto.

the rocks with a dash of Angostura bitters." Underground mutterings of "Good-PR is bad karma" were silenced by cries of "More beer" from the floor.

■ The delegation of typesetters and printers, which had retired to the washroom with rulers and magnifying glasses, reported that the most professional of the graffiti was a sample of "Don't take any shit from an editor, it may be his last meal" in 32 point Helvetica Bold Italic, which demonstrated "... minimum showthrough, excellent density, maximum rub, with excellent press stability and web release..."

■ The workshop on rules, regulations and matters of principle considered beverage consumption to be too informal, and recommended that an imbibing drill be instituted. The Editor-general of the Old Comrades section demonstrated the drill to the conference: "On the commend 'One!', all imbibing personnel will raise the imbibing utensil from its position at rest to the primary imbibing position, at an angle of twenty degrees to the vertical with the lower rim parallel to, and two inches from, the lower lip. . . . Wait for it, you miserable scum! . . . ONE! . . . On the command 'Two!', all imbibing personnel will insert the imbibing utensil into the buccal orifice and consume imbibing fluid for a duration of five seconds. . . . TWO! . . . On the command 'reload', all. . .". This proposal was rejected in favor of a policy of random imbibing.

■ The captain of the sports section announced April 1 as the date for the annual shouting match. Contenders should attend the regular play-offs held at the Press Club. He also called for experienced volunteers to bore for Canada in the forthcoming Olympic games. Unfortunately, he added, editorial writers and television interviewers are to be excluded this year on account of their status as full-time professional bores, but other applications would be welcomed. He said that Canada has always fielded a very strong team in international boring events, and that journalists have contributed much to past successes, owing to the daily practices held in newsrooms across the country. He hoped that the increasing public interest in Canadian tedium would add to our chances of bringing home a gold medal from Munich.

The session ended at 1.30 with the conference organizers' traditional closing remarks. "Dernier appel," they said, "last call".

Patrick Brown, now residing in Montreal, has free-lanced for newspapers in England and Africa.

THE LITTLE MARKETPLACE

FREE CLASSIFIED SERVICE

Looking for greener pastures? Newsroom empty? Trouble finding obscure material for a major feature? Want to go into the media business for yourself? Want to get out of it?

Content's Classified section offers categories for which *no basic charge* will be made—**SITUATIONS WANTED, STAFF NEEDED, RESEARCH AIDS, FOR SALE, WANTED TO BUY.** For the first 20 words (including address), no cost. For each additional word, 25 cents. Please indicate bold face words. Display heads: 14 pt., \$1 per word. 24 pt., \$3 per word. Box numbers available at 50 cents. Where a charge is apparent, cheque should accompany text. Copy must be received by the 5th of the month in which the ad is to appear.

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HELP WANTED: Senior reporter for growing daily newspaper in southeastern B.C.; experience in photography and darkroom a necessity, interest in sports a help. Contact Ron Powell, Today Publications, 45-A—9th Avenue S., Cranbrook, B.C.

EXPERIENCED journalist seeks daily newspaper work anywhere in Canada. One year news and feature writing with suburban Toronto weekly. Jeff Barnard, 547 Kennedy Road, Scarborough, Ont.

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REPORTER. Lethbridge *Herald*, Alta. needs experienced reporter. Reply, with details and references, to managing editor.

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FREELANCE IN HALIFAX. What can I tell you? Elizabeth Zimmer, 1633 Walnut St., Halifax, N.S. (902) 422-3326.

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MISCELLANY

After three unsuccessful attempts to enter the Montreal broadcasting market, CHUM Ltd. of Toronto obtained permission from the Canadian Radio-Television Commission to buy a controlling interest in CFCF-TV and other broadcast holdings of Marconi Ltd. But then CHUM president Allan Waters changed his mind, because of the rider placed on the approval by the CRTC. And so CFCF/Marconi are in limbo, once again. The \$16.6 million transaction would have given CHUM control of the Montreal CTV affiliate, CFCF-TV, and three radio stations, CFCF, CFCX shortwave, and CFQR-FM. But to complete the purchase CHUM would have had to divest itself of the three radio stations within a year and sell CKVR-TV in Barrie, Ont. CHUM would have had 80 per cent of the Montreal TV operation, with the British-owned Marconi retaining 20 per cent in accordance with CRTC rulings on foreign-ownership of broadcasting systems in Canada. Waters' withdrawal was based on his view that to sell the three radio stations and the Barrie TV operation would impair CHUM's ability to finance the purchase. Bushnell Communications of Ottawa in 1970 was to pay \$22.7 million for the CFCF system, but the deal fell through because of CRTC guidelines on Bushnell's cablecasting plans and a \$4 million deposit was forfeited. Allan Waters apparently still is negotiating to buy CKCW-TV in Moncton, which could give CHUM a controlling interest in three Maritime stations—CJCH-TV in Halifax and CJCB-TV in Sydney.... Dulcie Conrad has been appointed information officer for Saint Mary's University in Halifax. A graduate of Mount Allison University in Sackville, her previous work included the *Chronicle-Herald* and the *Mail-Star* and various TV and radio assignments. In 1967, she became the first woman elected president of the Nova Scotia Press Gallery... not all journalists who leave the active business enter the public relations field. Michael Cassidy, who taught journalism at Carleton University after being Ottawa bureau chief for the *Financial Times of Canada*, is sitting in the Ontario Legislature as a New Democrat. He won the Ottawa Centre riding in the October election by 182 votes and is the first NDP member ever elected from eastern Ontario. Cassidy had been an Ottawa city alderman for two years... the 1972 Canadian Managing Editors' Conference will be held May 24-26 in Saint John. Among agenda matters will be a discussion of the results of negotiations with the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association regarding the future role of the CMEC. A seminar on editorial quality control will be lead by Richard Harwood, national editor of

the *Washington Post* and a man who writes a tough column about the shortcomings of his own paper.... Roger Mathieu, editor-in-chief of Montreal's *La Presse* which suspended publication indefinitely in October, has been appointed a member of the Quebec Workmen's Compensation Board. He was a board member during the 1960s before being named managing editor of *La Presse* in May, 1970, and editor-in-chief a year ago. The journalists' union at the paper had demanded his resignation six days before the newspaper stopped publishing... the first issue of *Impact*, a Canadian cinema magazine has appeared. The glossy, full-color publication will print 350,000 copies monthly and is available at Famous Players, Odeon, Twentieth Century and Premier theatres in Toronto. The masthead doesn't list editorial staff, but the president is Garth Drabinsky.... Benild Pires left the *Alberni Valley Times* in Port Alberni, B.C. to become Victoria bureau staff correspondent of *The Canadian Press*.... Charles Bruce, poet and author and for 35 years a CP man, died in Toronto at the age of 65. Following his retirement in 1963, he researched and wrote *News and the Southams*, an intriguing history of the newspaper and publishing company and its family members. The book was released in 1968. In 1952, he received a Governor-General's Literary Award for *The Mulgrave Road*, judged the best book of poetry written by a Canadian in 1951.... Walter Nagel has left the *Calgary Herald* to join the staff of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology as a journalism instructor. He'll continue free-lance work in the medical-science field, too. He previously worked with CP in Edmonton and was managing editor of the *Daily Herald-Tribune* in Grande Prairie.... New Zealand journalist and author Patty Armitage has joined Rexdale's Humber College extension faculty to teach a course in writing for the magazine market... the Telegram Institute of Newspaper Research, formed in November, is to continue meetings early this year at the Toronto Men's Press Club. Members of the guidance committee are Art Cole, news director of *CFRB*; Stan Helleur; Bert Richardson, Margaret Aitken, and Bas Mason. All are former *Telegram* staffers. The association/foundation is a non-profit, volunteer group of news people interested in the role of the media, their impact on and responsibilities to the public... seven Quebec finance and insurance companies have acquired National Cablevision Ltd., whose cable TV network includes a large part of Greater Montreal, Sherbrooke, Victoriaville and Cap-de-la-Madeleine. The Canadian Radio-Television Commission had ordered the U.S. Columbia Broadcasting System to divest itself of its 75 per cent interest in National. The non-Quebec interests of National, York Cablevision Ltd. and Coquitlam Cablevision Ltd., were spun off to a Vancouver-based

company, Premier Cablevision Ltd. York serves four areas of Metro Toronto. Coquitlam offers cable service to six municipalities near Vancouver.... Walter Stewart has resigned from *Maclean's Magazine*, reportedly because of a letter written by editor Peter Newman to the office of Prime Minister Trudeau, advising the PM that Maclean's had had nothing to do with *Shrug*, Stewart's critical book on Trudeau. Stewart now is with the *Toronto Star*... whoops! In last month's Miscellany, Earle Beattie was identified as chairman of journalism at the University of Western Ontario in London. He's on the faculty, but chairman, of course, is Bud Wild. Apologies.... deadline for submission of entries for the second Michener Award for Meritorious Public Service by any section of the media — dailies, weeklies, magazines, radio and TV stations, and news agencies — is February 15. The award is administered by the Federation of Press Clubs of Canada, and entries should go to the secretary-treasurer, 151 Wellington St., Ottawa. Last year's Michener Award went jointly to the CBC and *The Financial Post*.... the Canadian Radio-Television Commission starts public hearings on CBC radio policies March 28 in Ottawa. Focus will be the new and somewhat experimental AM and FM programming of the corporation. Parties interested in commenting on the CBC's practices and intentions should write the Secretary, CRTC, 100 Metcalfe St., Ottawa, before February 1 if possible, and not later than March 13.... Joy Guild, food editor of the *Montreal Gazette*, died at the age of 45. For 18 years, she worked for the now-defunct *Family Herald*.... Jamaica has relaxed requirements for work permits and visas for visiting Canadian journalists and camera crews. If they're staying on the island for less than 14 days and are not filming a movie, there is no need for permits or visas. Requirements for bonding of all camera equipment and merchandise, such as models' fashions, remain in effect.... Manitoba Premier Ed Schreyer has received a letter from the Toronto Newspaper Guild, protesting the refusal to allow television cameras to record public hearings into Churchill Forest Industries and an inquiry by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. The guild said that the restriction constitutes "unwarranted interference with the public's right to know." (See the December issue of *Content* — Speakout — for more information).... Thunder Bay's city council has asked for federal and provincial inquiries into the publishing practices of the *News Chronicle* and the *Times Journal*, both owned by Thomson Newspapers. At issue is the fact that the papers have continued to confine their general circulation to the areas they covered before the two Lakehead cities of Fort William and Port Arthur were amalgamated two years ago to form Thunder Bay.

content

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