

Canadian Radio and Television

Please Don't Turn Up The Volume

Just about everyone agrees that, because of the great waves of American influences that wash across the border, Canadian culture needs nurturing ... A large part of the report of the recent Task Force on Broadcasting Policy was concerned with deploying new facts and new arguments in support of [this] well-established proposition. "Our first priority," the task force says, "is to make the broadcasting system serve Canadian culture, broadly defined, more effectively in the future than it has done in the past." Who is going to say no to that? Canadians, it says, should be "able to choose from a substantial number of quality Canadian programs." What else? But then: "That is why we call for a significantly expanded public sector."...

Elsewhere it says, "French-language radio and television schedules have always had a high percentage of Canadian programs."...

There are important points here. One is that in Quebec a distinctive, home-grown television has been created, whereas in English-speaking Canada what we have is, in style, and still a good deal in content, another American network. The second is that French-language CBC-TV, out of money presumably proportionate to what has been available to the English side, has filled a larger part of its schedules with its own material ... There *was* a choice on the English side but the easier and more immediately popular American way was taken and never abandoned.

It's not unfair to ask, then, whether English CBC has been quite as devoted as it makes out to the Canadianization of Canadian television...

"Government cuts" are now the accepted cause of the CBC's not getting on with spreading exclusively Canadian culture-as, for example, the task force's comment "... there have also been cutbacks ... in programming and production and the plan to Canadianize prime time."

In fact, bad times or good, the circumstances seem never to have been right. The task force has looked at this record with remarkable tolerance. Has the CBC always yearned to be done with Hollywood glitz? Yes, "except, of course, when no other broadcaster provided the popular American programs Canadians wanted to watch... Weren't there opportunities to Canadianize in the fat times of the late 1960s and early 1970s? Yes, but in English-speaking Canada "the pressure of inexpensive American programming ...curbed the efforts of even the CBC to give English Canada the kind of self-expression that Quebec was enjoying... "

A CBC English-language television service exploiting its established strength in news and public affairs, with more documentaries to make more use of the skills of the National Film Board, and enough sports and quality drama to flesh out a more economical 4 to-midnight – 4 o'clock to accommodate children's programming – broadcasting day would have a lot to be said for it, beginning with its being different from what has been tried up to now.

—*Report on Business*

QUESTIONS:

- 1.) Refer to the first paragraph. Do you agree that "Canadian culture needs nurturing". Explain your answer.**
- 2.) What does the author say is the difference between television and Quebec and in English-speaking Canada?**
- 3.) The Task Force suggests two reasons why English-language CBC has *not* made much progress with the "Canadianization" of Canadian television. What are those reasons?**
- 4.) What course of action does the author suggest?**

