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MONTREAL (CUP) - Montreal's oldest FM rock station, CHOM has decided to ignore a Canadian Radio Television-Telecommunications Commissions (CRTC) ruling which takes away its right to bilingual broadcasting.

Started in 1969, as an alternative to "hit parade" type broadcasting, the station received CRTC permission to include 25 per cent French content on an experimental basis. As its ratings began to climb and the station realized it was reaching Quebecois rock fans, CHOM began a "L'esprit de Montreal" campaign. Its mixture of French and English programming and progressive American soft-rock sound made it the number one FM station in Canada.

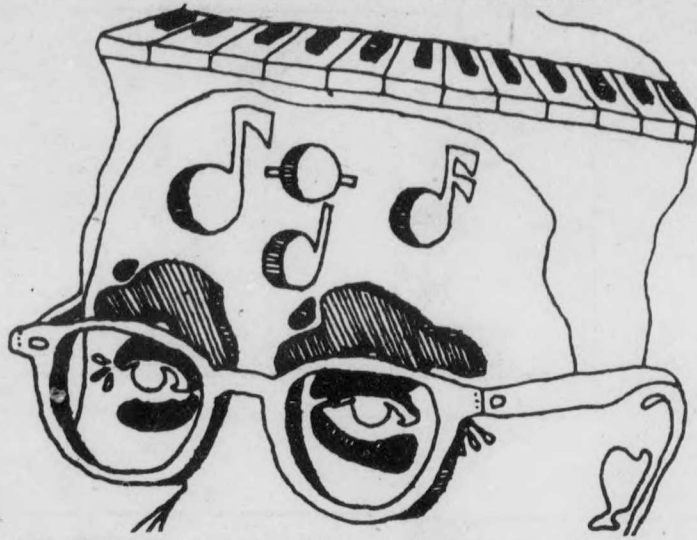
But, CRTC regulations, which required that French stations play 70 per cent French material, prevented competition with CHOM's success. CHOM was able to attract upwards of

becois groups are realizing their commercial potential for the first time.

But, on July 30, 1967, the CRTC concluded that, "the interests of both English and French populations of Montreal are best served by not renewing CHOM-FM's

programming and "on-air personalities" switching from one language to another with ease, often in mid-sentence, reflects the reality of Montreal.

Trying to understand the "why" is a problem. Is it not true that the government of Canada,



authority to broadcast in the French language over and above its use in proper names and those expressions, quotations, words and phrases that are common currency."

Reaction from the music industry, recording artists, broadcasters, the press and the

at least since 1968, has been pushing bilingualism? Is it not true that the people of Quebec, especially those who speak English as a first language, are being asked to learn French and show more respect for the French fact? Is the CRTC not an arm of the federal government?

TRUDEAU'S SUPERVISION

courses for its civil servants, advanced bilingual civil servants to positions of power and insisted on the right of all French-speaking Canadians to use their language anywhere in this country.

According to all the rules, the CHOM experiment should have failed. Being neither fish nor fowl, it should have offended both English and French, but instead prospered to become the only financially viable bilingual project in Canada.

Various protests to the CRTC and ministry of communications over its decision have resulted in no action. Obviously, the Liberals are more interested in their favored position with Montreal's broadcasting community than with serving the people of Canada well.

The CRTC should be the last group to worry about how much money a radio station is making. Rather, it should remain idealistic about what kind of programming a community gets over the air, which in effect the federal government owns.

In spite of government ruling, Montreal station remains bilingual

600,000 listeners, 75 per cent of whom were francophones.

COMBAT PHENOMENA

Incapable of combating this broadcast phenomenon on their own, Montreal's seven French-language outlets filed an intervention with the CRTC March 11, 1976.

Demanding that the CRTC and CHOM's experimental, the Montreal "seven" claimed the station was destroying French-Canadian culture by turning Quebec youth into English culture junkies. CHOM countered that it had addressed itself to the bi-cultural realities of Quebec and contributed to a greater understanding of the province by exposing English audiences to the French language and its music.

CHOM has had more influence on the emergence of progressive Quebecois music than any other radio station. The most progressive artist played by French stations before CHOM was Robert Charlebois. CHOM filled the void, waking the recording industry up to the enormous potential which existed in the Quebecois rock music industry.

The rock group Harmonium was recorded following a live CHOM broadcast and went on to sell over 100,000 of their first two albums in Quebec. As a result, French stations, FM and AM, are playing French rock and Que-

general audience was clear and immediate. David Clayton Thomas, Blood, Sweat and Tears and Murray McLaughlan, to name a few sent telegrams of shock and dismay. "Scandalous", "a step backwards for Canadian culture and unity", "fails to reflect cultural reality" were some of the expressions used.

PUBLIC HAS MORE TO LOSE

The public has more to lose than CHOM because the decision removes the one bilingual, bicultural art and communication form in Canada. CHOM's

The answer to all those is "yes". How then to explain the CRTC ruling?

The beginning featured a Quebec politician named Pierre Trudeau.

Sweeping out of French Canada with a flower in his lapel he carried the Liberal party to victory on a platform emphasizing the importance of two languages in Canada.

Neither French nor English stands alone as the official language of Canada," he said.

Under Trudeau's supervision, the government set up French

In Montreal, there are 14 FM channels; five in French, four in English and five that are unused. Recently, a Toronto-based group applied to the CRTC for one as an English all-news station. They were turned down because the CRTC said another English station could not operate unless another French one was created.

FOURTEEN FM CHANNELS

The CRTC's duty is to protect broadcasting in general and its attempts to protect francophone from being swamped with English programming is laudable. However, the CHOM decision serves neither purpose.

CHOM was to stop its bilingual format on Sept. 30, 1976 when its old license expired. It did not, nor does it intend to. General manager Les Sole has said the station will not stop bilingual programming until told to do so by the government of Canada.

"This time, the CRTC has made a mistake and we intend to contest it in court," he said. By ignoring the ruling, the station can lose its license. An appeal must go to the federal court of appeal, where decisions are usually based not on the implications of a ruling but whether the CRTC has done its job properly. In short, the station's chances of "winning" are far from good.

