

cultural life is relatively weak and dangerously exposed to the dominating influence of the United States, and our Canadian identity remains too vague. It is well to realize, when talking of this, that even the Americans recently have seen that complete governmental non-intervention may not be enough even for them. The late President Kennedy hired a special Consultant on the Arts, Mr. August Heckscher, who wrote for him a substantial report on "The Arts and the National Government". And clearly President Kennedy himself had what Nathan Cohen, of the Toronto Star, described as "the vision and sense of commitment to acknowledge that his duty extended to the promotion and fostering of his country's artistic resources".

Our own Canadian history shows that cultural expansion and more frequent cultural contacts will not come about by themselves. The experience of other countries, with the possible exception of the foundation-studded United States, confirms our own. This is why I am convinced that our cultural life needs both protection against impoverishment and stimulus to improvement, and that a deliberate effort to these ends, in which government must have a large role, is not only justified but is most urgently required.

Cultural Responsibility of Government

Government must ensure Canadian ownership and control over our means of communication; it must strengthen our existing national cultural institutions, like the National Gallery, and establish new ones; it must offer greater financial assistance to our private cultural sector. But while the Government must play a greater and more systematic role in these matters, its responsibility is not, and should not be, exclusive. Private interests must help.

To arrive at our desired cultural goals, however, I believe we should not seek merely more Canadian content, but better content, and especially better Canadian content - including better Canadian "escapist entertainment". Our objective should not be cultural isolation from the United States, just as it should not be English-Canadian cultural isolation from French Canada and vice versa. Rather, our goal should be the communicating of cultural values for the national benefit, in the manner described by Professor Underhill.

A New Agora

Broadcasting, especially television, with its tremendous electric ability to inform, to entertain and to educate, can do much to enrich our cultural life and to promote more internal and international cultural contacts. Along with other electric inventions, broadcasting has partly destroyed the personal isolation of the typographic society in which men lived after the invention of the printing press; broadcasting has created a new kind of common Agora or market place where we can meet, get to know each other, exchange opinions and try to arrive at common values. In short, radio and television can provide an audaciously effective means of communication, not just for our intellectuals and our artists, but for people of every kind in our society; and therefore, provide all of us a better, more exciting life.