

Canadian identity and Canadian unity. In this respect the situation in 1966 is no different from that at any other point in our history. Almost forty years ago the Royal Commission headed by Sir John Aird found unanimity in Canada on one fundamental question—Canadian radio listeners wanted *Canadian* broadcasting. This strong mandate did not arise from any narrow nationalism that sought to shut out the rest of the world or, more appropriately, the rest of our continent, but rather from a clear conviction that the destiny of Canada depended on our ability and willingness to control and utilize our own internal communications for Canadian purposes.

What policies are therefore appropriate in a Canada that shares the common lot of all technologically advanced countries in the electronic age? The speed of personal movement has been far outstripped by the speed with which ideas and information of all kinds can now be transmitted over long distances and can reach into the homes and minds of the population at large. There is no insulation from these new forces, no iron curtains of the mind to permit a comfortably slow pace of adjustment to new forces. The era of the communications satellites is upon us, still further complicating the processes of adaptation which the essential goal of Canadian unity will demand.

Any statement of policy relating to broadcasting in Canada therefore starkly poses this question. How can the people of Canada retain a degree of collective control over the new techniques of electronic communication that will be sufficient to preserve and strengthen the political, social and economic fabric of Canada, which remains the most important objective of public policy?

2. The Advisory Committee

The report of the Advisory Committee on Broadcasting was submitted to the Government and published early in September, 1965, after some fifteen months of intensive study of the complex problems peculiar to Canadian broadcasting. Its far-reaching recommendations gave rise to an extraordinary volume of public comment and debate to which the Government has given careful attention, with special regard to the expressed opinions of the Canadian public at large. The Government has also received and given careful consideration to representations from the Board of Broadcast Governors, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, the Canadian Broadcasting League, and other interested organizations.

Following these deliberations, the Government has concluded that the comments and criticisms made by the Advisory Committee within its terms of reference are in many respects soundly based and generally valid, and that many of its recommendations should be implemented as soon as possible, in effect but not necessarily in every detail. The Government accordingly proposes to introduce new legislation on the general lines set out herein.

A distinctly Canadian broadcasting system is essential to our national identity, unity and vitality in our second century. Transportation was a key factor in shaping Canada in the past. Communications will play a major role in shaping the Canada of the future. It has been said that transportation is the skeleton on which the Canadian body politic has grown during the past one hundred years. In future, broadcasting may well be regarded as the central nervous system of Canadian nationhood.

Canadian broadcasting is unique in the world—with its complex mix of public and private components, its bilingual nature, its foreign competition, its far-flung and diverse constituency. It has served Canada well. It must, however, be challenged to serve it better.

Fundamental to any consideration of broadcasting policy is the fact that the airwaves are public property, and the privilege of exclusive use of any channel or frequency must be subject to the clear responsibility of serving the public interest as expressed through national policy.

The Committee feels strongly that it is not a proper function of Parliament or Government to be involved in the programming, or the day-to-day operation or supervision of the broadcasting system. It is, however, the responsibility of Parliament to define the public interest to be served by our broadcasting