

# by Rene Levesque

it wouldn't happen if and when the time comes. For indisputably such a partnership, carefully negotiated on the basis of equality, is bound to be in the cards. Nothing prevents one envisaging it, for instance, going immediately, or at least very quickly, as far as the kind of monetary union which the European Common Market with its original six and now nine members has been fitfully aiming at for so many years. And building on this foundation, it would lead this new "northern tier" to a future immeasurably richer and more stimulating than the 109 year-old bind in which two nations more often than not feel and act like Churchill's two scorpions in the same bottle.

Now how does the Parti Quebecois see this society begin to find its way as an independent nation? What is the general outline of the political, social and economic structure we hope to bring forth? Serious observers have been calling our program basically social-democratic, rather comparable to the Scandinavian models although certainly not a carbon copy since all people, through their own experiences, have to invent their own "mix."

The way we have been trying to rough it out democratically through half a dozen national party conventions, ours would call for a presidential regime, as much of an equal-opportunity social system as we could afford, and a decent measure, as quickly as possible but as carefully as indicated, of economic

"repatriation." This last would begin to happen immediately, and normally without any great perturbation, through the very fact of sovereignty: with the gathering in of all of our public revenues and the full legislative control which any self-respecting national state has to implement over its main financial institutions, banks, insurance companies and the like. In the latter case, this would allow us to break the stranglehold in which the old British-inspired banking system of just a handful of "majors" has always kept the people's money and financial initiative. The dominant position in our repatriated financial circuit would be handed over to Quebec's co-operative institutions, which happen to be particularly well

developed in that very field and, being strongly organized on a regional basis, would afford our population a decent chance for better-balanced, responsible, democratic development. And that, by the way, is just one fundamental aspect of the kind of evolution toward a new economic democracy, from the lowest rung in the marketplace up to boardroom levels, that all advanced societies not already doing so had better start thinking about in the very near future.

As to non-resident enterprise, apart from the universal minimums concerning incorporations and due respect for Quebec taxes, language and other classical national requirements, what we have been

fashioning over the last few years is an outline of a policy which we think is both logical and promising. It would take the form of an "investment code," giving a clear-cut picture, by sectors, of what parts of our economic life we would insist on keeping under home ownership (e.g., culturally oriented activities, basic steel and forest resources), what other parts we would like to see under mixed control (a very few selected but strategic cases) and finally, the multitude of fields (tied to markets and to technological and/or capital necessities) where foreign interests would be allowed to stay or to enter provided they do not tend to own us along with their businesses.

In brief, Quebec's most privileged links, aside from its most essential relationships with the Canadian partner, would be first with the United States — where there is no imaginable reason to frown on such a tardy but natural and healthy development (especially during a Bicentennial year). Then Quebec would look to either francophone or "Latin" countries as cultural respondents, and to France herself — who would certainly not be indifferent to the fact that this new nation would constitute the second most important French-speaking country in the world. In brief, such is the peaceful, and we confidently hope, fruitfully progressive state which may very well appear on the map of North America before the end of the decade.

## An Insider's View of the CBC

*This revealing item arrived recently on Gateway desks from a CBC worker in Toronto who, for obvious reasons, prefers to remain anonymous. On the occasion of the CBC's 25th anniversary it seems appropriate that this article should appear and help illuminate what really goes on at Mother Corporation.*

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has the tremendously difficult job of pleasing all of the people all of the time. As this is impossible, there is always someone attacking the corporation for some traction it takes. Because it takes so much tax money to run it, the criticism is usually made in the name of the taxpayers of Canada. The CBC was given a mandate or a statement of goals and purposes when it was first formed and since then they have, at various times, missed that mark or exceeded it. Why?

The CBC is not, in my mind, a very well-run corporation; that is, the management has never been noted for its dynamic, aggressive, and confident leadership. Since the CBC is tax-funded, it is very much a political animal, and like a sailboat, tends to go in the direction of the prevailing wind. Right now they are being badly intimidated by the Liberal government who are blaming the CBC for some of their own problems in a situation much akin to Nixon's persecution of the press in the U.S. At times our management has looked very weak, or sheepish, or just plain stupid. Most of them are career civil servants or outsiders with little or no real training in how to run a network. This company is operating on (or perhaps in spite of) the basis of ego, power, and political ingenuity. The empire-building is incredible. Of the twelve thousand employees of the corporation, I would say a conservative

guess at the number of people actually working in program production of some kind is about four thousand.

For example, as an administrator, I am guaranteed a job for life through the union; but when the TV series "Wojeck" was cancelled, the star, John Vernon, was simply let go. If my department were to vanish in a shuffle, I would be kept on and transferred. To get work, Vernon had to go to the United States. Therefore, the administration grows, while the talent leaves.

The corporation gets about 150 million dollars a year from parliament. It is estimated that to simply maintain present operating status, this sum will reach a billion and a half by 1985 and that raises hackles everywhere. The main facility, the Toronto plant, which is considered the headquarters of the network was built in 1952. We are still using it.

Presently the CBC in Toronto operates out of twenty different buildings with such affectionate nicknames as "The New Kremlin" (where *The National* news is produced on the 6th floor and the newsroom occupies the basement, and the single elevator in the building rarely works); "Kremlin North" (leased office space where the building owners were distressed the day the CBC moved into their chrome-and-glass building with all their old furniture, ancient, cigarette-burned school desks, broken chairs, and casting

couches with the stuffing hanging out); "The Cabbagetown Theatre" (where the roof leaked all over Peter Gzowski's *Ninety Minutes Live* and continues to leak, short-circuiting the building wiring so that all the phones ring at once); "Mac's Milk" (a facility over a jug-milk store where news documentaries are produced); and "The Place-Over-The-Dry-Cleaners" (where the losers in the power games end up).

Attendant to all this is a tremendous waste of human time and of gasoline to power blue vans which move scripts, film, memos, and production staff from offices to conference rooms to production studios to editing room to taping facilities. In the words of Gordon Donaldson, (*T.V. Guide*, August 1977) "Weep not for the staff; weep for the programs that might have been made if the programmers were not stuck in traffic jams in blue station wagons."

Montreal has a good plant the one in Vancouver is quite simply the best we have now; but the CBC executives in Toronto wouldn't let CBC Vancouver produce *Ninety Minutes Live*. The viewers were the losers. With their superior production facilities and with the fertile creative soil of the West Coast entertainment scene, *Ninety Minutes Live* might have had some real pizzazz.

The CBC is torn by regional differences and the stone walls they erect are a reflection of the country. Montreal is a world unto itself and operates thusly. There are two divisions in the company, English and French, and they simply work their own ways. Co-operation is minimal. Montreal has never found time in its studios to let *Ninety Minutes Live* originate from Quebec. This year, when dis-

cussions of the twenty-fifth anniversary came round, the French services decided they would have their own 25th "logo" and everyone else could have their own too. Westerners simply don't like Toronto and won't co-operate with them. Actually our head offices are in Ottawa, but the CBC's Ontario Region Offices do not have control over the Ottawa area where there are a total of eight various radio and T.V. outlets for CBC programming. They are their own region!

So despite CBC president, Al Johnson's, statements, I do not believe the CBC is as efficient as it could or should be. We spend a lot of money on stupid things, especially here, in my division, where the old-timers refuse to look at the calendar and realize what is happening. We spend a lot of money on parties and items that puff up the producers or publicists but that do little to improve or promote programs.

Al Johnson's *Touchstone* is to be our operating basis for the next five years but we are funded annually. No corporation of this size ever plans year-to-year, but we simply have no choice. It's not good business but that's the way the politicians like it.

A large part of the trouble is that Canadian writers, performers, etc. seem to regard the Canadian-Content-Rules as a meal ticket and feel that because they are Canadians, the CBC somehow owes them a living. Very few are prepared to "pay their dues" and develop their talents. They want instant stardom. The current controversy about imported talent is something of a test case. CBC says they use less than 3 per cent imported talent and that only a few major roles go to outsiders.

They refuse to let ACTRA tell them they can't hire that 3 per cent because they feel that would give ACTRA creative control of the network. Since the CBC is "the only game in town" ACTRA is prepared to fight. What else do they have to do with their time? There are too many people in ACTRA who are voting on policy who shouldn't be, and it becomes a forum to express beefs with the CBC.

If you read *Touchstone* you will see that the CBC is working towards a completely Canadian program schedule; but it takes a million dollars to replace each half hour of American programming and we simply don't have the money. You can buy an episode of *All in The Family* for \$1200. As a program director, which would you choose? Even a half hour of programming from a local station has an average production cost of \$4500 dollars.

Many of our best writers and performers go to the United States because there is simply more work and more money for them south of the border. There are hundreds of production companies in the U.S. and three big networks serving a population ten times as large as ours. We simply cannot generate enough work for all the Canadian talent. That's not an excuse; it's a fact. It's not that we don't want to but that we can't afford it. The difference is the money. A show in the United States that reaches twenty-five million people is cancelled (because of poor ratings); but that's our total population here!

What we are beginning to get here, and what we need more of, is production companies like "Norman Lear Ltd." or "Mary Tyler Moore Enterprises". Remember that other than news programs, the American

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