

Montie, it's a Canadian Air Farce



of use up your market. You end up coming with yourself. For my own good, I'd have to leave, to see what the rest of the country's like."

He moved to Toronto. In 1973 he opened with "Take A Beaver To Lunch", in which he partnered with Carol Robinson; and in December of that year he joined the cast of a radio comedy series on the CBC network which introduced itself in this manner: "Ladies and gentlemen: The Royal Canadian Air Farce! (ici Farce Canada!)" Among the members of the cast of six were Roger Abbott and Don Ferguson.

The show is now the number one comedy program on CBC radio, as the flood of mail each week testifies. Letters come from the full east-west expanse of Canada, and as far south as San Francisco!

Broadfoot's style of humour is similar to that of his comic teammates. Much of it is political in content, with a heavy accent on local colour. The delivery is intriguing. The material will imply something, which the audience is quick enough to catch (naturally), but at the last instant will do a complete turnaround and mean something else. "Surprise, after all, is the essence of comedy." That from Don Ferguson.

One of Broadfoot's most colorful characters, developed back in his first years with Spring Thaw, is that intrepid mountie, Corporal Renfrew of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In earlier broadcasts of the Royal Canadian Air Farce, Renfrew's rank was Sergeant, and probably would have remained so had it not been discovered that a Sergeant Renfrew actually existed. A demotion was quietly made.

An example of Broadfoot's style of humour can be examined from the segment below which comes from one of the Air Farce's earlier shows (note long pauses, indicated by dots): "The story you are about to hear... was taken from the files of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police... and, until now... has not been missed."

"This is Sergeant Renfrew. I was sitting with my trusted dog, Cuddles... in my log cabin... which is located on the 14th floor of Mountie headquarters... when suddenly the cabin door burst open... and the room filled with snow. "I knew this was unusual... it was in the middle of August. Even in Ottawa, we don't get snow that early."

"I had to move fast. Within the hour Cuddles and I were putting the finishing touches on a snowman."

"And then Cuddles did what he always does on snowmen... He stuck a pipe in his mouth."

A lot of the material in the David Broadfoot's Comedy Special revue has already appeared on the Royal Canadian Air Farce. However, hearing them and seeing them performed turn them into two different shows.

For those of you who have never heard Broadfoot's "Honorable Member", here are some highlights, which can be found on the album "Wall to Wall Broadfoot":

On American corporations: "People talk about these giant corporations who have come and raped our country, our natural resources... it's not rape, we're getting paid. We are a nation of happy hookers."

On inflation: "Well, we'd better do something about our money. It's certainly not working for us in this country. Look at the burden upon the low-income people in this country today."

"Now there have been some suggestions John Diefenbaker says, 'Let's put more taxes on the luxuries. Let's put more taxes on alcohol.' John Diefenbaker doesn't drink."

"Barry Nathan, the MP from Vancouver B.C., wants more taxes on tobacco. Barry Nathan doesn't smoke."

"Up in Quebec, Réal Caouette is talking about a tax on sex..."

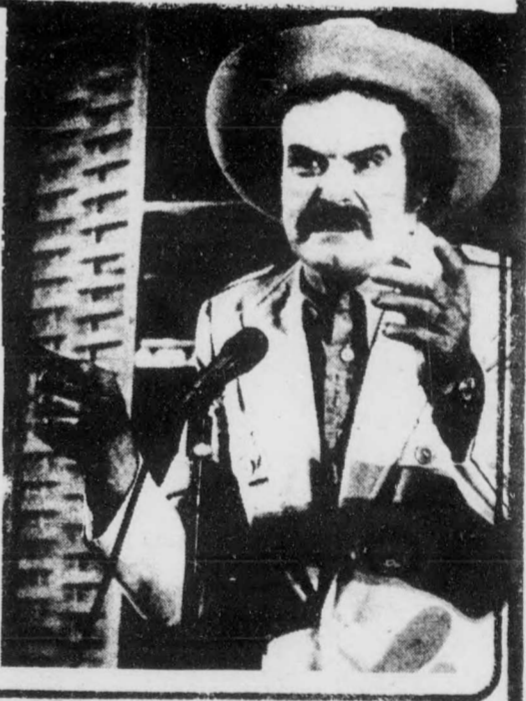
"A tax on the use of sex would work. We'd change the law, first... so it's available."

"It would work. It appeals to basic human egos. Imagine walking down the street, people pointing at you and saying, 'Hey, there goes one of the biggest taxpayers in Canada.'"

On Western Separatism: "Some Easterners think that they can go and stand up in Alberta and call the Prime Minister of Canada a horse's behind, and think that they're going to unite the country. They're forgetting something very important. Those people out there love horses."

By the conclusion of the show, which featured Broadfoot in his "Honorable Member" monologue, the audience had gone wild. They shouted; whistled; screamed; yelled; jumped on their feet and applauded loudly for a full five minutes, all calling, "Encore! Encore!", while the performers took one bow after another.

Ladies and gentlemen, if this is Canadian talent at its best, let us have more of it. Let us give Broadfoot and his fellow performers the recognition they deserve. There are few outlets



in Canada where one can make a living in the comic field, and most of the time Canada's indifference to its talent becomes a ruthless method of determining who will survive. Broadfoot is 51 years old. Touring and performing have taken their toll, and it leaves him exhausted after each performance.

Yet, should Broadfoot leave a deep impression on his audience after he has left and moved on to another city, then this same performer who cared that people should have to wait in line longer than necessary will have Canadians still talking about him long after the lights have dimmed on his last performance.

until 1969. Broadfoot joined the revue in 1952, and stayed with them for about nine seasons. In 1966, producer of Spring Thaw, sold the show to Robert Johnson, who lost \$90,000 on it before it closed forever.

Several of his revues read like a patchwork of names: "Poise 'n Ivy", "Well Rehearsed Ad-Libs", "The Canada Goose Revue", "Off Limits", "Squeeze" and "Clap Hands" are some examples. In 1964 he performed at Canada's first royal variety revue in Charlottetown, in which the guests of honor were none other than Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip.

In 1966, when Spring Thaw's management changed hands, Broadfoot left the cast and moved to Montreal to open the "Katimavik Revue", in preparation for Expo '67. He didn't know it then, but he was to spend the next six years here. Jack Kapica of the Montreal Gazette reported him discussing that move: "I came here first in 1966 to discuss the Katimavik revue with Wayne and Shuster, Gratien Gelinas and a few others... When I came, I knew nobody, and had no place to stay. A friend in Toronto suggested I look up a friend of his... who could perhaps find me a place to live. She later became my wife."

Broadfoot has appeared in movies, too. His first film was a short feature for the Ontario government in 1967. He appeared in ("Quelques Arpents de Neige" (or, A Few Acres of Snow) with Jean Duceppe for Denis Heroux's Cine Video Company; in "Tiens-toi Bien Après Les Oreilles à Papa", a film that grossed \$400,000 in its first month in the theatres; and

"J'ai Mon Voyage", also for Denis Heroux's company.

"I always thought I'd be old and gray before the chance came along."

He has also exhibited a serious side to his comic nature. This was brought to public attention in 1969 when he performed before the inmates of the Leclerc Institute.

As with any undertaking, there are bad moments as well. Broadfoot has had them. His few films have not been widely shown. "Wall to Wall Broadfoot", released by Periwinkle Records in 1974, as funny as anything he's ever done, has not sold well. Similarly so with his book, "Sex and Security", released in the same year by McGraw-Hill, which features many of his Honorable Member's more outstanding political views. Ventures into television have proven even worse. "Comedy Crackers", "Comedy Cafe", "Zut!", "Krazy House": none of them have shown Broadfoot to his best advantage.

It is little wonder that, despite his growing list of achievements, a successful career is still hard to come by. Only in recent years has there been any general awareness of the man and his talent.

As he summed it up in some sharp words regarding Canada's indifference towards its Canadian performers: "Do you know what it means to be a successful Canadian performer? exactly."

In 1973 Broadfoot bid farewell to Montreal, discovering that he could no longer continue earning a living here. The novelty had worn off. Jack Kapica reported him as saying: "You sort

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