

Poking about in the mass media

The mass media in Canada, print and electronic, are undergoing a broad examination by a committee of the Canadian Senate.

Chaired by Senator Keith Davey, a former Liberal Party official and radio advertising executive, the committee is looking into such matters as consolidation of ownership, foreign control, chains, pay scales of journalists, quality of news reporting, monopoly situations, the problem of failing newspapers, the economic impact of advertising, the influence of American advertising, including aspects of the electronic media.

According to Sen. Davey, the committee hopes to find out "what the functions of the media really are; what they are conceived to be by their owners and the people of Canada; and . . . what their functions should in fact be."

For example, Sen. Davey hopes the special upper house committee will determine whether the press mirrors public opinion in Canada or attempts to mould it. (The Canadian Senate, unlike the U.S. Senate is an appointive body.)

The question of violence on television, its frequency and its effect on viewers, will be probed. Ninety seven per cent of Canada's population of more than 21 million is reached by the 76 television stations of the three networks. Two are operated by the publicly owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)—one in English, and one French. The second English network, CTV, is privately owned.

Radio, a medium of vital importance because of Canada's vast area and scattered population, reaches 98.9 per cent of the people. Service is provided by a mix of 312 public and private stations.

Canadians have 107 daily newspapers to read (11 in the French language) down from a high of 138 in 1913. Their combined circulation is 4,569,825. (The Government of the Province of Quebec has begun a similar examination into the state of the

French language press in that province.)


More than half the dailies are under chain ownership, and these chains, plus seven independent dailies, have extensive broadcast holdings.

Sen. Davey has stressed that the inquiry is to provide an objective, thorough and thoughtful analysis of the media in Canada today but is not to be a witch hunt.

Established last spring, the committee immediately initiated extensive surveys and the collection of data. The first of a series of hearings began in Ottawa in early December and will conclude this month.

Testimony will have been heard from representatives of all sections of Canadian media plus a number of American experts, among them Nicholas Johnson, a commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission, and Ben Bagdikian, noted critic of the press and now a Washington editor.

Newspaper publishers, broadcasting station owners and others who are submitting briefs to the committee have been invited to deal with a list of 20 questions drawn up by the committee.

The committee's report is expected in the fall. 

Successor to the snowmobile

The growing craze for go anywhere ATVs



All terrain vehicles go almost anywhere...

The roar of a hard-pressed engine accompanied by a rising spray of snow is altering the winter landscape all over North America. It's the snowmobile, which is proliferating—with mixed public reaction—wherever snow falls regularly.

On the year-round horizon, how-

ever, looms a probable successor—the soft wheeled getabouts called All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).

ATVs, like snowmobiles, are becoming an important Canadian industry that is finding a substantial export market in the United States.

These vehicles can go almost anywhere and at any time of the year. Most have six or eight low-pressure tires that give traction in a swamp, bush, muskeg or snow.

Several models are amphibious and most use two-cycle, air-cooled engines. They sell in the \$1,000-\$2,000 range.

Some 75,000 ATVs are expected to be produced in North America this year, the majority in Canada or in the U.S. by Canadian-owned companies. It is expected that by 1972 the annual output will reach 250,000. The ATVs have grabbed the outdoor pub-



...delighting sportsmen but concerning conservationists.

lic's fancy and they may replace snowmobiles as the top recreational vehicle.

The ability of the ATVs to drive into untracked territory is already giving problems to conservation authorities. Unlike snowmobiles, which leave no tracks when the snow and ice melt, the ATVs dig up the ground and mar soft roadbeds in repeated passages. They disturb wildlife, and most are just as raucous as the snowmobiles.

Ah, wilderness. 