

Colloquium on Television Violence was held in Montreal on 28-29 April 1993. At the all-day session on the 29th, invited participants from France, the Commission of the European Communities, la Communauté française de Belgique, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia, and a wide cross-section of Canadian representatives, including those of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, shared their varied perspectives, experience and knowledge in the presence of the Minister of Communications and his officials. The discussions focussed on the factors that led to the introduction of national measures in other countries, voluntary codes of conduct and classification systems for films, videos and television programs. A comparative summary analysis of the public measures adopted by other countries to address television violence, made public by the Minister of Communications at the Montreal International Colloquium, is appended to this report for reference purposes.¹⁰¹

G. PROVINCIAL INITIATIVES — FILM AND VIDEO CLASSIFICATION

Due to time limitations, the Committee was unable to do a complete review of provincial initiatives in the classification of films and videos and in the regulation of their sale and rental. The classification and regulatory systems in place in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario have been summarized and included here because they were frequently mentioned during our hearings. This part of the report also contains an overview of a recent industry proposal made to the provinces with respect to a national classification program for film and video in Canada.

1. Province of Quebec

The Quebec “Régie du cinéma,” an administrative tribunal, operates pursuant to the provisions of the Quebec *Cinema Act*. It is mandated to classify films and videos intended to be exhibited, sold or rented to the public. Films and videos are rated on the basis of the probable effects they may have on viewers of various ages and are thus classified in one of the following categories: “General”, “13 years and over”, “16 years and over” and “18 years and over”. The “Régie” may add to this numerical rating one or more of the following content indications: “For Children”, “Vulgar Language”, “Eroticism”, “Violence”, “Horror” and “Explicit Sexuality”. The Act requires the “Régie” to hold periodic consultations on the classification of films; these consultations are intended to assess the current state of the population’s social consensus, particularly with respect to violence and explicit sex.

The rating given by the “Régie” appears on each copy of a video or film in the form of a stamp. The rating must also be shown on all public advertisements for films and videos. Video retailers are required by law to obtain an operating permit from the “Régie” and to enforce the law and relevant regulations, including the prohibition to sell or rent videos to persons under the age required by the rating. The Act provides for inspectors to oversee its application and for penalties to be levied against transgressors. In our view, the classification and regulatory system in place in the province of Quebec is a model that we would like to see other provinces emulate. It could also serve as the basis for a national film, video and television programs classification system.

In the province of Quebec, the pay television service “Super Écran,” has adopted the classification system used by the “Régie du cinéma” to rate the movies it broadcasts. While our study was still underway, “Super Écran” announced that it will superimpose on the television screen the