

Studio 40 of CBC Montreal preparing for program 'Club d'un soir' broadcast on 6 September 1952, the first day of public television broadcasting in Canada.

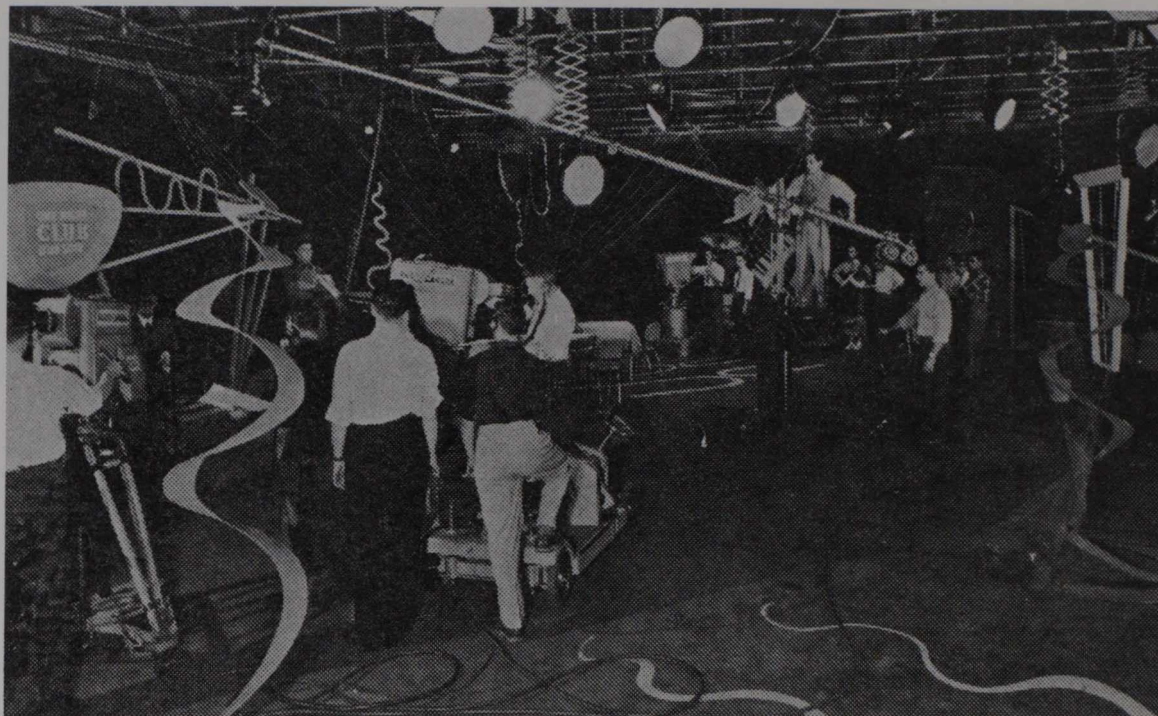


Photo: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation



Canadian Broadcasting Corporation



CTV Television Network Ltd.

decade saw the rise of news and public affairs programs, such as *Point de mire*, *Carrefour*, *Le 60*, *Close up*, *Tabloid*, *This hour has seven days*, *Les travaux et les jours*, *Country calendar*, *Eaux vives* and *Heritage*. Variety shows and children's programming also had a place in the broadcast day: *Front page challenge*, quiz shows, *Pepinot et capucine*, *Nic et pic*, *Howdy Doody*, *Maggie Muggins*, *La boîte à surprise*, *Bobino*, *Les couche-tard* and *Appelez-moi Lise*, to mention just a few.

The Fowler Commission opened the door to competition from private Canadian television stations (the CBC had always been subject to competition from US border stations). This competition became even stiffer after 1966 as a result of the private stations forming their own networks, the most important being CTV, TVA, and Global TV. The advent of cable television in the late 1970s added a whole new technical dimension to television broadcasting, the implications of which are still being worked out.

The first thirty years of Canadian television have been eventful, but what does the future hold? The Federal Culture Policy Review Committee released in November 1982 after two years of study its report on cultural policies for Canada (the Applebaum-Hébert Report). Among other things they looked at television broadcasting and saw the following as some of the likely features of the emerging broadcasting environment in Canada:

'The number of Canadian households served by cable television will probably increase by the year 2000 to nearly 85 percent of all households. The percentage of cable subscribers able to receive more than 12 basic channels, through the use of converters or cable-compatible television receivers, is likely to grow from 30 percent in 1980 to close to 100 percent in 1990.

'A variety of new cable-delivered home services – such as emergency medical alert, burglar and fire alarm, banking, catalogue shopping, information

and distance-learning programs – will soon be provided.

'At least one out of four Canadian households, it is expected, will own either a videocassette or videodisc unit capable of recording and playing television programs and films.

Telidon-type videotex terminals will be more widely used, accelerating the use of interactive services involving two-way communication. Such services will be distributed by cable, fibre optics, telephone, terrestrial transmitters and Direct Broadcast Satellites (DBS).

'Satellites will transmit more powerful signals than at present, enabling them to be received by small, low-cost earth stations or "dishes". By 1986, several satellites originating from the United States will probably be in operation, sending messages directly into homes through dishes whose cost will be no more than that of a colour television set. The signals from such Direct Broadcast Satellites will spill over into Canada, becoming available to most of our population, although some of these signals will require a decoding unit to "unscramble" them.

'A dramatic increase in user-pay services – both of the pay-per-channel and pay-per-program variety – will occur. Service will be provided through several cable "tiers", each offering a distinct package of services.

'Audio and video retrieval systems permitting the user to call up specific programs will become common. Electronic video games and music are already being sent to some cable subscribers from a centralized computer.'

These changes will have enormous consequences, which will be felt in the United Kingdom no less than in Canada. As Applebaum and Hébert point out, if they are properly taken into account they can usher in a new era of development for Canadian creative talent and for the participation and enjoyment of audiences.