

Question Marks

As you can well see there are some big question-marks in the future of Canadian television. So far the amount of \$15 per year per television set, together with advertising support coming through private and public facilities, has built up a vigorous and extensive system very quickly. We in the CBC estimated some years ago that the amount needed above advertising through the years would be just about that -- a bit over four cents per television family a day would be necessary to support, with the help of advertising, a reasonably adequate over-all system for Canada, meeting the national needs of wide distribution with a worthwhile Canadian effort in program production. We still think the amount looks about right for the future as the television audience grows, and also as the demand for improved and further-extended service grows. But the decision is not ours and we understand that very careful study is to be made of all the factors involved on behalf of the public.

Needs and Challenges

Looking ahead, it is easy to see several needs and challenges that face Canadian television, although at this stage it is not possible to say whether or to what extent, they can be met. I believe most Canadians would agree that it would be desirable both to have some more Canadian program production, and also to further improve the amount we have. As you know, the national service going to stations right across the country is a bit over 50 per cent Canadian-produced, representing 25 to 30 hours per week of national English-language Canadian production. The French-language national service represents another corresponding amount of original work. I am sure that Canadians will always want to see on their television screens a good number of productions from other countries, particularly, of course, from the United States. But I think, too, most would also like to see more Canadian productions and to watch Canadian work that improves from year to year.

Then there are still many areas in Canada in which the people have no television service at all. Yet these are the very people to whom television actually can make the most difference, since they often have not the many other facilities of large centres available to them. But again, desirability and economics have to be matched; and it costs just as much to establish and operate a television transmitter that may reach 30,000 people as one that may happen to reach 500,000 and just as much to get program service to it if it is in a very distant area.

Then there is the question of color television. Some people have beaten the CBC over the head because they felt we were stubbornly holding up the development of color television. Others have pounded it because they thought we were going to rush into color television when there were still so many other things needed for a good system across the country. Neither is right. Our attitude to color is positive and so is our planning. We think that it will be desirable to develop color telecasting as soon as it is practical on a large scale; that is, when sets can be available in this country at prices at which a reasonably large number of Canadians will buy them. That time will come after it has come to the United States, where it has not yet arrived. When it does come, we hope the Canadian system will have the