

Good TV would ruin society

Universities may become obsolete: McLuhan

By LORNE WASSER

"A horrible thought just hit me. Suppose our airways were charged with wonderful programmes that you wouldn't dare miss; it would just demoralize all society. You would be in front of your TV watching from the first thing in the morning," commented Marshall

McLuhan, director of the University of Toronto's centre for culture and technology, at a panel discussion last Thursday.

The panel, featuring McLuhan, Canadian Radio-Television Committee chief Pierre Juneau, Bell Canada researcher Gordon B. Thompson, Carleton Canadian Studies director Davidson Dunton, York President Ian Macdonald, and dean of fine arts Joe Green, was the crowning element of the 1975 Gerstein Lecture Series.

When asked how much the public or the individual has the right to know, McLuhan responded, "There is a huge change coming through the elected media in that direction. The old self-expression idea is no longer treated."

As the debate got going, Dunton remarked, "I feel very strongly that a lot more general information can be available and should be available without it contravening any Official Secret's Act or anything else."

The discussion then started to shift towards communications and its applications to education.

York president Ian Macdonald suggested that people should be coming to universities, and be in universities, more for the sake of obtaining an education in itself, than for the sake of getting educated so they can get a better job.

The atmosphere of the discussion was greatly enhanced when a York student got up to the microphone to ask the gentleman in the blue suit (Macdonald) to identify himself.

When the laughter subsided and general introductions were repeated,



A panel discussion capped last week's Gerstein Lecture Series. Pictured above are (left to right) Davidson Dunton, Marshall McLuhan, Ian Macdonald, Gordon B. Thompson, Pierre Juneau, and Joe Green.

Juneau predicts home computers

By the end of the twentieth century every home will have a computer, stated Pierre Juneau, chairman of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC).

Juneau made the comment during an hour-long lecture on the future of communications, delivered in Burton Auditorium on March 6.

Juneau, the final speaker in the 1975 Gerstein Lecture series, addressed a half-empty hall, which had been overflowing for Marshall McLuhan, the speaker who immediately proceeded him.

"There is absolutely no way of telling what the future holds in store for man," Juneau pointed out, but he added that "there are less than 6,000 working days to the year 2,000."

"Man is still more interested in tinkering with technology than with the purpose behind such technology. It is the resources and technology available to society which determine that society."

Juneau said the entire media personnel are poorly paid.

the president asked McLuhan what future views he saw of universities.

McLuhan informed the audience that since so much information was available outside of universities, it is a possibility that these institutions could be closed down.

He said teachers and books are also abandonable, if weekly home exams could be incorporated, perhaps into something like comic books.

The discussion then went on to consider the printed medium in relation to TV.

McLuhan surmised that the printed medium has suffered somewhat, but at the same time he pointed out that it has also changed, adapting with the times.

Dunton broadened this idea of medium change when he said, "The older media have been modified by the way new newspapers were modified by radio. I think the present newspapers are better than those of 70 years ago." he also pointed out that radio has become more specialized.

Juneau added that through the use

of computers, the TV viewer of the future will be able to get his or her own version of whatever TV programs they may want.

Thompson had a dimmer view of TV-related technological improvements. He said the only thing satellite broadcasting had done for communications and people was to bring them closer together. He illustrated this by saying it brought TV to northern Canada and allowed students there to stay up all night watching TV, which tended to make their high school teachers "mad as hell".

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