

sively popular. Its more vehement critics argue that this is exactly what's wrong with the CBC, that it's *too* experimental, too arty, and that its relative freedom from the taste-making pressures of advertisers enable it deeply to offend the people of Middle Canada. On the other hand, CBC programming has attracted some intensely loyal fans, not only in Canada but in the northern States as well.

Not that it is itself entirely apart from the din. In 1970-71, its most popular television series on the English network was Walt Disney which, with five million viewers, outdrew even the Saturday Night Hockey. Bill Cosby, the Interns, Red Skelton, Ed Sullivan and Bugs Bunny also drew huge Canadian audiences; and, though the biggest single audience was 5.4 million for a play-off hockey game, the 1970 Academy Awards show was close behind with 5.2 million.

The CBC has friends in organized labor, the agricultural community, the universities, the churches, the adult education movement, among myriad voluntary organizations, the press, and the millions of viewers and listeners to whom it belongs. It also has its enemies and dedicated critics and they, of course, tend to be noisier than the friends. "There is probably nothing in Canadian life that has been discussed as much as the broadcasting system," the CBC says in one of its publications. "It was set up in the first place after prolonged public debate . . . Regular review is part of the system itself . . . and many special committees and commissions (twenty-five at least, since 1932) have looked at broadcasting." One of these commissions once remarked "the dilemma between the need for public scrutiny and the need to avoid too much of it," and suggested that "You cannot expect to have a healthy tree if you perpetually dig around the roots." The advice has never taken. The committees of Parliament gather, the cries of outrage in the Commons are as sure as the return of the birds in the springtime. The threats fly, too.

"You know," said one Prime Minister of Canada, "we often complain that the CBC, especially the French network, is full of separatists, and I daresay it is probably true judging by the results of it . . . We will assume our responsibilities as a government. We will close the shop. Don't think we won't do it. If need be we can

produce programs . . ." Separatists, both underground and above-ground, are the revolutionaries of French Canada. They believe the province of Quebec must break away from the rest of Canada and form a separate state, and they are among any Canadian Prime Minister's least favourite people.

No one seriously denies that there are indeed separatists working for the French operations of the CBC and many politicians see something more serious than irony in the fact that the CBC pays out money from the taxpayers of Canada to keep on staff men who are dedicated to breaking the country in two. The fact that it continues to do so, however, means something.

The CBC can get it in the neck for listening to the politicians; that's called succumbing to political pressure. And it can get it in the neck for not listening to politicians; that's called arrogantly ignoring the wishes of the people of Canada.

There's something about the CBC that brings out not only inspired vituperation in Parliament but a kind of florid, pulpit-style oratory as well. "The thing about Eve," thundered one Member of Parliament, "was that she was faced with the same subtle temptation which is now being offered to the young people of this country from many sources, and the CBC is assisting in presenting this temptation through the medium of television." One member described the CBC as "a Trojan horse in our midst." It was also called a headless horseman and a runaway engine.

A fast survey of federal MPs' recent complaints against the CBC includes the opinions that its news and public affairs programs have glamourized the use of marijuana and LSD among young people; undermined Christianity, family life, patriotism, respect for government, and the future of generations to come; attacked the "very fabric of our Western way of life"; paid "fantastic fees" to undeserving performers; presented bearded peaceniks in a favourable light; spent ten times what a comparable organization in private industry would have spent; betrayed a glaring anti-Americanism . . ."

During one marathon diatribe, the Cabinet Minister who had the unhappy duty to answer to Parliament for the CBC made the following announcement:

"If I cannot do anything else to bring the honourable member to the point, I have taken the precaution of putting in this envelope the sum of \$5.48 which is the per capita cost of CBC radio and television for every man, woman and child in Canada. If the honourable member will undertake neither to listen to nor to watch CBC radio or television for a year from this date, and to shut up about it, I will be glad to send

Television gave politics a new immediacy. The 1968 Liberal Convention unfolds upper left. It also gave vaudeville an extension of life: Kaleidoscope, upper right, was among the first regular programs when CBLT, Toronto, began broadcasting three or four hours a night in September, 1952. Electronic equipment, center right, and sets, bottom, grew rapidly more complex.