

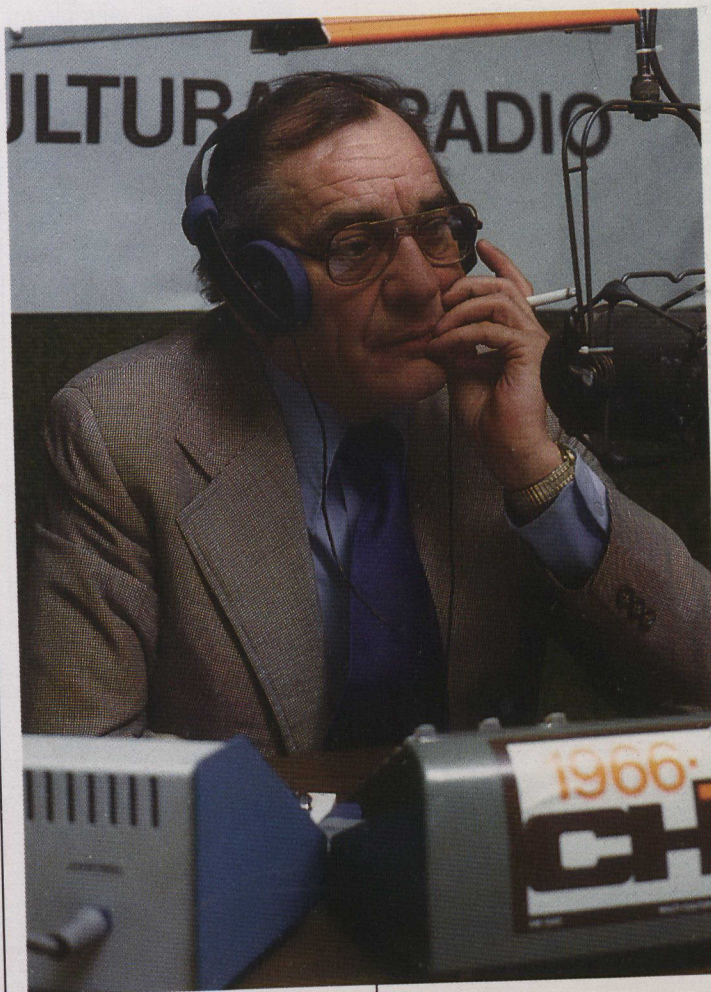
AIRING THE ETHNIC MESSAGE

Radio and television are the most powerful forces for moulding public opinion and for creating and maintaining culture and language. In Canada that means many languages, many cultures. It means multiculturalism.

More than 9 million of Canada's 25 million people speak languages other than English or French — in fact, there are more than 60 different languages spoken in total. Even those who speak English or French may come from a culture quite distinct and separate. Ethnic groups have made it clear they want their broadcasting to serve several purposes. They want programming to help new arrivals adjust to Canada. They want to hear and see programs in their own language. And they want to be seen as part of Canada and to have their point of view expressed to all Canadians.

When the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) was established in 1968, part of its mandate was to ensure that the broadcasting system reflected the largest spectrum possible of Canadian views and backgrounds.

In 1985, following Canada-wide public hearings, the CRTC announced A Broadcasting Policy Reflecting Canada's Linguistic and Cultural Diversity designed to ensure that radio and television stations provide the service viewers want. Canada's population was largely European in background, before 1967. Now 53 per



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cent of immigrants come from the West Indies, Asia or other developing countries. As the Canadian audience mix has changed, broadcasting has followed suit.

The Canadian government, in co-operation with the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement (BBM) and the broadcasting industry, now measures ethnic and racial

viewing habits to ensure that ethnic programming gets a larger share of advertising dollars and better representation in the media.

The Canadian government itself provides additional government advertising to full-time ethnic stations. In addition, it provides funds for specific projects such as the production of a television series featuring personal stories by writers from different ethnic backgrounds: Caribbean-Canadian Roger McTair, Japanese-Canadian playwright Rich Shiomi and others.

Overall, Canadian ethnic broadcasting is remarkably wide-ranging:

- Eight radio stations in five cities from Montreal to Vancouver are authorized to broadcast 100 per cent of their weekly schedules to specific ethnic groups, notably Italian, Ukrainian, German, Greek and Chinese.
- There is a full-time ethnic television station in Toronto.
- A regional ethnic pay-TV network broadcasts in Canada's most westerly province, British Columbia.
- Two ethnic satellite-to-cable network services are licensed.
- Eight television stations and 60 radio stations include some ethnic programs in their broadcast schedules.

In addition, most community cable channels include programs produced by ethnic groups. Cable systems distribute ethnic closed-circuit audio services on the cable FM band. There are special programs on cable TV in Vancouver and Montreal. The total number of broadcast hours per week exceeds 2 000.

The CRTC recently held a public hearing on the establishment of a national ethnic specialty network service to reach as wide a range of ethnic groups as possible. Toronto's multilingual and multicultural TV station thus applied to be Canada's third national television service. If accepted, this station will provide daily multicultural programming across Canada.