

that all Canadians must take on the task. They must decide to make an honest effort to promote a Canadian culture and identity with the spontaneous and enthusiastic assistance of broadcasters. But, the broadcasters themselves, I believe, cannot in future, take upon themselves alone in spite of their confidence, the creation of a Canadian culture and I believe that the contribution, as several I have indicated before me, can be decisive. I believe that Canadians can be assured that broadcasters will work with all their power to reach this objective.

We do not pretend to have solutions to all these problems; they are too great. It would be presumptuous for a station of our size—which is nevertheless a station with a medium-size market; let us say we are not at all in the same league as the person of the station which you heard before us—to try to give answers to all questions. What we thought we should do is bring you our experience—in all simplicity, and for what it is worth. We are ready to answer, and we have made some suggestions which appear to us applicable to a case such as ours and to several of our colleagues, with whom we have had discussions in the past, and we are ready to answer all questions which you would wish to ask.

[Text]

The Chairman: Thank you very much. I think the questioning will begin with Mr. Fortier.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortier: Mr. Audet, as you point out in your brief and as you have just told us, you have been a member of the special committee on Television at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and of a committee in charge of the establishment and management of the Canadian television network. According to your experience of the last 18 years, are you of the opinion that the public network, the English and French-Canadian television network, has developed in the direction wished for 18 years ago?

Mr. Audet: Your question is a big one, Mr. Fortier, and would perhaps require a book to answer it. I shall attempt to give you a very short simple answer. I believe the answer is yes, that the objectives that were determined at that time have been realized and, in fact, they have been attained much more quickly than was expected. As you know, better than I, certain goals had been set and these goals were always reached several years before the required date.

The first objectives were slightly different than those presently considered, and I think this is normal because one must always think of the present and of the future rather than the past. But, it is nevertheless good to recall that some goals, like national unity, did not have at that time the importance which they have assumed by the chain of events in Canada. Initially, the principal aim was to assure that each Canadian could at least enjoy a television service, and already this looked difficult. Since that time, community antennas have appeared and it has really been an absolutely explosive situation.

I believe that this has been due perhaps a bit to the character of Canadians. We have been used to struggling alone in the face of formidable competition, and so I believe that, yes, we have attained our goal and I think that the Canadian system has reached it. I am one of those who believe, as Mr. Giguère expressed it a moment ago, that it is a good thing that there is in Canada both the CBC system and a private system. I do not know if I've answered your question?

Mr. Fortier: Definitely. You say then that you share the opinion stated earlier this morning by Mr. Giguère, that there is a place for a government network and another network. Do you go so far as to say that there is also a place in Québec for a second private network?

Mr. Audet: Yes, and that is something I have already expressed in public—that I think there is eventually a place for a second network in the French language. As Mr. Giguère has indicated, it seems to me that it would be a step forward, that the situation cannot be forced but that one would probably have to proceed with caution.

You have probably seen lately that federal statistics were used indicating that 40 per cent of Canadian television stations have a profit margin which, let us say for all practical purposes, is nothing. Many of the stations in the Province of Québec, if stations like Télé-Métropole are excluded, are in this situation; they are marginal operations. I think that in any new development, the danger of ruining the system by trying to develop it too rapidly will have to be taken into account in an absolutely precise and intense way. I am one of those who advocate the establishment of a second French-language network in Québec while taking the necessary precautions.