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### "THE 1960'S IN CANADIAN TELEVISION"

Talk by A.D. Dunton, Chairman, Board of Governors, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, at the Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Advertisers Luncheon, Toronto, May 7, 1958.

Six years ago, almost to the day, I came before you at your Convention that year to talk about the future of Canadian television. At that time it didn't have a "present". Canadian television at that moment in fact consisted chiefly of a few brave people jostling each other in some out of the way rooms in Montreal and Toronto, learning how to work cameras and call cuts, and how not to foul up the wires on the floor. They were Canadians starting to learn television by doing it.

Some of you may recall the vision I tried to describe then. It was that of a Canadian television system stretching from coast to coast and linking practically all Canadians; a national service with a basis of Canadian programming, but including programs from elsewhere; a system in which private stations would have a great part together with CBC stations and production centres; a system to which Canadian advertisers would contribute greatly along with the activities of the public agency and the public financial support for it, and the activities of the private television broadcasters to come; a system providing a national service daily reaching the great majority of Canadians.

I admit that in that May of 1952 there were perhaps some grounds for scepticism. I doubt if the vision took very well. Certainly I didn't think so when in that following summer I read memoranda circulating in Canadian advertising quarters about the dim, uncertain prospects of Canadian television. Perhaps some of the members of the ACA and CAAA on committees of those days remember the papers.

I suggest to you that the dreams which some people had and backed in those days have so far come true in an astounding way. Look at what Canada has six years after those first stirrings. A national system made up of 46 regular stations, 8 CBC and 38 private, reaching over 87 per cent of the Canadian population. A national service going out over all these stations to the nation. Two distinct network services, one in English and one in French (the United States with its great population and enormous wealth has only three). Over 70 per cent of all Canadian families owning television sets, and from all accounts using them on an average of nearly 4 hours a day. A microwave system, which this year will link first British Columbia and next Newfoundland, and will then span a greater sector of the globe than any other in the world. An English network service that is nearly 60 per cent produced in Canada, and a French service that is over 75 per cent purely the work of Canadians. According to outside (that is non-CBC) survey figures an average total of 10,500,000 Canadians above the age of four watch national network service some time between 6 p.m. and 12 p.m. every night of the week. (What an advertising medium!)

It is a system into which Canadian advertisers put directly some \$40,000,000 last year, apart from other money they spent in connection with television. In the six years the Canadian public have spent over a \$1,000,000,000 to equip themselves to watch television. The broadcasting side probably accounts for some \$75,000,000 of economic activity a year. To meet the demands of this public, in spite of the considerable amount of imported material, the main production centres in Toronto and Montreal have had to develop until they rank among the biggest in the world; on this continent, for instance, each come after only New York and Hollywood. And Montreal is the biggest and most active French language production centre in the world.

The achievements of the system in its short and hectic life have been made possible not by any one element but by the joint efforts of three elements: the public agency, the CBC; the private stations; and you advertisers. Its unique integration, insofar as I know, exists in no other field in Canada outside broadcasting, and nowhere in the world in broadcasting to anything like the same extent.

Since 1952 to the present, for instance, the CBC has had to increase its regular staff from 1,200 to 6,300. Probably all of you have experienced some of the pains associated with an organization which has to grow quickly. But I cannot think of any large organization in Canada, apart from the war time, that has had to build itself up so rapidly. In terms of the man and woman hours of work it now appears to rank among one of the biggest 50 corporations in Canada. If it were compared with manufacturing

companies, it would seem to be in the top 15. The total staff seems to be within a thousand of both NBC and CBS. The staff figure together with the total annual expenditure figures of the Corporation may seem large to some people, especially when they think of the fame and grandeur of the operations of the big American networks. But some people forget that with its staff the CBC has to provide two network television services - its big American brothers only one each. The CBC provides 2½ national radio network services; its private counterpart in the States only one each. As you well know the tastes and demands of Canadians in broadcasting are not too easily satisfied.

At this six year point I certainly do not claim that the CBC organization is perfect. What we can say - something like the sane man who has a mental examination - is that we have a certificate. Our certificate saying the job on the whole has been pretty well done under difficult circumstances, comes from a Royal Commission which for a year sent its investigators searching through the books and organization of the Corporation.

As you know private stations have had a vital role as integral parts in the development of the Canadian system. Those granted licenses have had big opportunities, but they have also taken on big responsibilities. They have shown initiative, enterprise and drive, and they have been truly partners in the system. The co-operation, of course, has worked both ways. The CBC has been able to do its job of getting national service to the people in 40 odd areas of the country through private stations. They on the other hand have been greatly helped by having provision of network service from their start of operations; indeed establishment of a number has probably been made possible only by the national service coming to them from the day they opened. I am afraid many outsiders do not realize the closeness of the practical working co-operation between the public and private elements of the system. Indeed from reading headlines of public statements at times anyone might be well justified in thinking that the two are at each other's throats. But all the time the effective daily integration of operations is going on in the interest of serving Canadian people - and going on pretty happily, with quite a lot of give and take on both sides.

And advertisers have a big part in the system and contribute much money and programs and ideas. We like to think that you get your full money's worth. But I also hope you understand that we sharply appreciate the contribution you make and your stake in the system.

There are, of course, some difficulties in working relationships. Indeed there are probably bound to be some differences of viewpoint when different elements work together in a combined system such as the Canadian one. But I often think the misunderstandings are greater outside broadcasting and advertising circles than inside. Some people for instance have been critical of what they like to label as the "subsidizing" of Canadian programs with which advertisers associate themselves. To us it is nonsense to talk about "subsidization" when sponsors taking up a connection with a Canadian program are usually paying much more in program costs than they would pay for the Canadian rights to an imported program. The situation, of course, arises from the fact, of which we have been told so often by advertisers, that the size of the Canadian market either English or French will simply not justify paying the full cost for Canadian produced programs in addition to all the station and network charges. On top of that is the fact that the rights to expensive and attractive imported programs can usually be had for much less than the cost of a Canadian production.

The CBC has a big responsibility for the production and nation-wide distribution of Canadian programs. If it can get from the sponsor not only station network charges but also a substantial contribution to the cost of one of the programs on the national service then the whole service and the public benefit accordingly. If we tried to stick rigidly to the idea that the sponsor could not put his message with the program unless he paid the full cost of it, obviously the advertising support for the national service would be a fraction of what it is.

There are probably bound to be some rubs and some frustrations on both sides in the relationship between a public agency charged with the responsibility for national service, and advertisers with their legitimate interests and aims. I do not think the CBC handling of these things has been perfect. Nor do I think that advertisers and agencies have been entirely immaculate. We do hope you have found the CBC understanding of your problems increasing; I also think that more and more advertisers are appreciating the problems and responsibilities of a national service in this country. We certainly have great respect for any advertisers who have spent additional money to associate their advertising with Canadian produced programs.

At the Convention six years ago I remember several people asking: "Where is the talent going to come from?", and "Where are you going to get producers?". Our answer then was we didn't know just where they would come from, but that we were confident that the talent and producing abilities were there and would turn up from somewhere, and develop, if the opportunities came from a Canadian broadcasting system.

Well, I suggest to you that that has been proven right. With the growth of the television system has come the development of all kinds of performing and writing and producing ability. There are now in this country probably several thousand people who make their livelihood, or a large part of it, performing or writing for television. Incidentally some interesting figures were taken off the CBC books the other day. They showed that last year the CBC altogether - this is radio and television - paid over \$11,000,000 to some 15,000 different Canadian performers and writers.

Organizations outside Canada are at times quicker than some Canadians to realise the abilities which have shown themselves in this country. For example while six years ago we didn't know just where the producers would come from, in the last year a grave worry of the Corporation was being the loss of producers developed here who have been lured away to television in the United States and Britain. Those who have hired them think these Canadians are not just good, but very good, by any standards in the world.

As you know in spite of technical obstacles the export of Canadian television productions has been coming along nicely in the last year, particularly to Britain, and plays which have drawn comment of the "pretty good for a Canadian show" line, have received warm praise from top critics of London newspapers. Negotiations right now are going well toward the possible carrying of a major drama production live for an American network next year. And if you want an objective criticism of the French language service, ask a visitor from Paris, familiar with what is going on in that country in television.

Just at this point I can almost hear some people at some of the tables thinking: "Dunton was supposed to talk about the future, why is he spending all this time on past and present?" I have done it deliberately. I have reminded you of some of the things that have gone on and are going on because they are of so much significance for the future; and the future must grow out of the present. I am not suggesting that development in the next ten years will go ahead at the same pace as during the last six. It simply couldn't. The joint build-up of television in Canada has probably been the fastest and most intensive in the world. And I think one of the most dramatic happenings in Canadian history. The rate of growth, of course, has to slow down, but the potential future of television in this country is still a good deal bigger than its present.

Let me say right away that it is not for me to try to anticipate any decisions by Government or Parliament, decisions which, of course, can over-ride anything else. I am not, for instance, going to try to guess what body or bodies, responsible to whom or independent from what, are going to have or to share responsibilities in connection with the Canadian broadcasting system. All I can do is to express some guesses, some hopes, based on what Canadian television has accomplished in the last six years, based on the needs and possibilities of Canada ahead. And of course with these guesses and hopes go some "ifs" - some big ones - which I shall come to later.

I had hoped and planned to talk about radio, but after I thought of a few of the things that seemed worth mentioning about television, it seemed plain that there wouldn't be enough after lunch patience left for radio too. I do wish to say very simply and definitely that we in the CBC at least think that radio has a big future and will have an extremely active life in Canada.

I would like to start first with a few fairly specific guesses about television.

First I think, and I hope, that the extent of television coverage will continue to grow. Only about 12 or 13 per cent of the whole Canadian population cannot receive television service now. But they are mostly people to whose lives television would make an enormous difference. A number of the top 10 per cent live in distant and outlying areas that would be extremely difficult to cover; indeed we shall probably never reach 100 per cent, as trickles of population keep moving out further and further. But I think that either through CBC stations or further privately owned stations carrying national service, a large part of the remainder will be covered in the coming few years. I would hope that along with this increased coverage would come an increase in the number of English speaking people who can if they wish look at French language service, or people in dominantly French speaking areas who can see English as well as French service if they wish.

The number of sets will probably increase during the next 10 years from the present 3,000,000 to about 5,000,000.

I don't think a spiritualist's medium is needed to foretell that in the 1960's there will be additional television stations in some areas where there is just one at the moment. What can be hoped in the national interest is that these new stations will contribute to Canadian life by producing or stimulating the production of a reasonably substantial amount of Canadian programs. It would seem good if in the alternate services that will be offered some areas, there will often

be a choice between two Canadian programs; or perhaps between a Canadian and an imported program, but not usually just a selection of imported programs. I hope the probable additional stations will be true parts of a Canadian television system, not mainly importers of programming.

It is a rather obvious prophecy that colour will come to Canadian television during the 1960s. I would still hesitate to call the year or years. Colour does seem definitely on the way although it is taking quite a long time. For some little time now it has been just around the corner, but the corner has seemed to be a tricky one to turn.

The 1960s should see consolidated, efficient production centres for the national service in Montreal and Toronto. The need, as many of you know from personal experience, is desperate. The long run economies and extra efficiencies will be very decided. The economic activity generated by television broadcasting will continue to grow quite considerably. A good guess is that by 1965 it will be about \$150,000,000.

I believe the larger number of television viewers in the coming decade will spend at least as much time of the year as at present watching television. But this will depend on the degree to which television can keep freshness in its programming, add new ideas, generate new interests. I think too the viewing public will become at the same time more selective in its viewing. More and more I believe people will tend to watch for the particular programs they like, and be still more definite than they are at present in their choices.

Some other trends already noticeable should continue. I imagine, for example, that more members of the Canadian public than at present will come to take Canadian productions on their merit, and lose the suspicion in the back of their minds that Canadian work in this kind of field tends to be inferior to others, that anything from across the border is congenitally better. At the same time still more Canadians than now will recognize to a fuller extent the value and abilities of some of their own performers and writers and producers.

Perhaps too with the passage of time more Canadians will come to a better understanding of the complex kind of television system they have, whatever it may be like in the 1960s -- and why they have it.

I think the strides that have been made in programming in the last 5 years can give us confidence for Canadian production in the future. Just think back if you can to shows that were on the air in Canada in the winter

of '52 and '53; or to what was on the air in the United States in '49 and '50. I think the last few years have proven that there exists in Canada lots of talent, known or potential, for performing or writing or creating or producing or expressing ideas. The development in the next 10 years can be great, if the opportunities are there.

One sign I believe will be an increasing export of Canadian programs on film or live. I do not think we have to or should rely on the opinions of others about quality. But international recognition would itself help our talent, and also provide badly needed additional financial support.

All in all we can see a picture of Canadian television in the decade ahead strengthening and intensifying its service to the Canadian people, further stimulating and enriching the lives of individuals, and also further stimulating the economic life of the nation.

But in all this there are some big ifs. Television can and will have a big and worthwhile place in the life of the nation if we as a people continue to remember the realities of our own country in relation to television. That is if we continue to remember that this is an awfully big country, that it costs a great deal of money to distribute the programs equitably to its people, to link its regions together, if we take proper account of the fact that it is a country of two languages and that Canadians of each tongue have a right to an adequate television service each in their form of expression -- and if we remember that a nation can hardly call itself a nation if in a medium like television it does not in large measure speak to itself and listen to its own people, as well as to others from the outside world; -- and if we remember the hard fact that the making of television programs by Canadians for Canadians costs lots of money.

I believe another 'if' is whether we continue to have an integrated system drawing on the strength both of public agency and support; of private station enterprise and assistance; and of advertising contribution and stimulus, - all so essential. I believe that against the challenge presented by Canada each of these elements has to be kept strong in the system, and that the three have to work closely together in a sensible way for the national good.

I think there are challenges ahead for each of the elements in the system. Advertising can have a big part in television. And with that part must go responsibility. Advertisers have a natural and perfectly proper concern with getting their messages across, and with suitable costs per thousand. I think you will agree too that they have a share in the responsibility for how well the whole television system serves the Canadian nation.

So I would urge you in the years ahead not to put on too much pressure coming from straight commercial considerations. Help leave some room and some opportunity, as I am sure most of you will be glad to do, for the trying of new ideas, and for honest attempts (and for thundering mistakes), for programs that will throw the lie in the face of those who try to say that the whole influence of television is deadening and tending to force the minds of people into one mold of conformity. If you at times cannot support some such efforts, do help leave them some elbow room, and do show some confidence, as so many of you have done, in what Canadians can do in programming.

I believe myself that Canadian television will be able to accomplish very big things in the 10 years ahead if private and public broadcasters continue to work together. For pure economic reasons I do not think that private operations alone can produce much significant television work by Canadians for Canadians on a national scale without the help of the public agency and the public funds that support it. Nor can the CBC do its national job of serving all possible Canadians without the private stations, or at least without the expenditure of an enormous additional amount of public money. The public part of the system seems essential because of the economic and geographic facts of Canada. It is needed as a mechanism through which the Canadian public can apply resources toward ensuring a very substantial production of Canadian programs and nationwide distribution of national service.

The public organization needs to be efficient and I believe its efficiency will continue to improve. Apart from that, the extent to which there will be Canadian programming will depend to a very large extent on the amount which the Canadian public decides to devote to this end.

Some say already the national service costs too much. The present rate is about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cents per day per television family. That is roughly the cost of ensuring that if there is a Canadian purpose to the television system, that the system is capable of being actually substantially Canadian and not mean almost entirely bringing the products of others to the minds of Canadians. It is often said these days that Canadians want to determine their own economic future. Surely if we are to be a nation we also want to determine our own mental future. That is to at least provide always a fair part of what goes into the minds of Canadians through the television screen every day of the year.

I am sure Canadians will always be interested in and wish to see many things coming from the United States - and other countries. But we seem to want to be a nation of our own, and to express ourselves as such. Television can, and I believe will, be vital in the realization of our destiny as a nation in the years ahead if we as Canadians make it possible for it to do so - if advertisers, private stations, the public and its public agency work together to make it so.

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