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TELEVISION IN CANADA

(Prepared by the Board of Broadcast Governors,
Ottawa)

Television programmes from Canadian broadcasting stations now reach 95 per cent or more of Canada's 20,000,000 people. Seventy per cent or more of them have an opportunity to watch two Canadian television services, one provided by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the publicly-owned system, and the other by a commercially-owned and - operated network of private stations. The 5,000-mile microwave system which links St. John's, Newfoundland, to Vancouver Island and the Pacific Northwest is one of the world's longest. Of 4,938,000 households in Canada, 4,635,000 are equipped with one or more television sets. Few other countries in the world have seen so swift a development of nationwide television services within the short period of 15 years.

Early in 1967, Canada had 72 originating stations and 194 rebroadcasting transmitters. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation owned and operated 14 stations and 48 rebroadcasting transmitters, and provided a substantial proportion of its national programming service through 43 privately-owned stations, which, with their rebroadcasting stations, were affiliated with it. Of the total of 58 originating private television stations, 11 are affiliated with the commercially-owned and - operated television network CTV, and four privately-owned stations operate without affiliation with either of the national networks.

Geography and Language Factors

From the beginning, the development of Canadian television services was complicated by both geographical and language problems. Half the people of Canada who live along its border with the United States have available to them programmes broadcast by affiliates of one or all of the major American networks -- ABC, CBS and NBC. This factor contributed materially to the determination of Canadian public authorities to develop speedily Canadian television services to serve in some way to maintain a Canadian identity and to articulate Canadian interests. One other factor of prime importance required the rapid development of French-language television services to the large proportion of the Canadian population whose maternal tongue was French.

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One result of this rapid development has been that Toronto and Montreal now rank among the world's chief television production centres in the English and French languages, while substantial contributions to the national television services are made as well by production centres in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Ottawa and Quebec.

Of the 14 stations owned and operated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, nine broadcast in English and five in French. Of the 58 privately-owned stations, 35 English-language and eight French-language stations are affiliated with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and 11 are affiliated with the second English-language chain, the Canadian Television Network; one English-language station and three French-language stations operate independently of any affiliation agreements.

Because of the widespread distribution of the English-language population, the total number of English-language stations is 56. The total number of French-language stations is 16. The majority of the French-language population lives in the Province of Quebec and the neighbouring portions of Ontario and New Brunswick. But French-language communities have been established in most of the provinces, and, as a matter of policy, the Government of Canada recently indicated its intention to make available a national programming service in both official languages throughout Canada. This policy was stated in its White Paper on Broadcasting 1966 as follows: "All Canadians are entitled, subject only to practical considerations in the expenditure of public funds, to service in the Canadian official language that they habitually use. The Government intends to give the highest possible priority to the extension of radio and television coverage on this basis..... The time has also come to consider full national services in both official languages from coast to coast."

Recent Developments

Many of the more recent developments in the field of broadcasting, and many other developments forecast for the near future, are now under active study by one or other agency of the Canadian Government and by Canadian broadcasters. Colour television was authorized and colour telecasting began in Canada in July 1966, and a large number of Canadian stations are now equipped to broadcast colour programmes. While there has been a good deal of experimentation by educational institutions or agencies, educational television has not as yet become a feature of school or university instruction. The establishment of the necessary transmission facilities, and the provision of extensive educational television programmes through the initiatives of provincial departments of education and universities and adult-education bodies, are now in an advanced planning stage.

Looking farther into the future, scientific and engineering research committees of the public service and policy committees of the Government and of private industry are studying the rapidly-developing techniques that will determine in large measure the world's communication systems of the future and Canada's relation to them.