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**The Advent of Television: A Study of the Perceptions and Expectations of  
the First Television Viewers in Metropolitan Halifax in the Early 1950s**

**Barbara L. Davies**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Arts,  
Atlantic Canada Studies at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia**

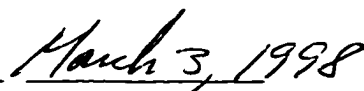
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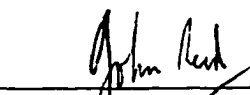


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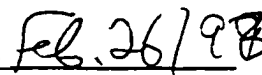
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## **Abstract**

**Barbara Davies**

### **The Advent of Television: A Study of the Perceptions and Expectations of the First Television Viewers in Metropolitan Halifax in the Early 1950s**

**7 January 1998**

On Monday, December 20th, 1954 at 5:45 PM, Haligonians tuned their television sets to the inaugural broadcast of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. CBC-CBHT, channel 8, welcomed Halifax-Dartmouth viewers to the newest channel on their network, another step towards predominately Canadian programming in Maritime Canada.

Few people at that time understood the changes that would take place in this new visual, technical world. In anticipation of a television broadcasting station being established in the Halifax-Dartmouth area, the CBC Bureau of Audience Research commissioned a study of radio listening patterns in order to obtain some background information on the likes and dislikes of the existing radio audience. This information was to be used to create programs and program schedules which would attract people to television. The survey consisted of diaries written by the members of the selected households as well as personal interview questionnaires. One year after television had arrived, the interviewers returned to talk to the original respondents to discover just how popular television was and how radio listening patterns had changed, if at all. Further research was done on how leisure activities were altered once television arrived in the community.

The course of television's beginnings has been an exploration of contradictions; it inspires while it incites, stimulates while it sells, provokes while it persuades, preaches while it pretends, educates while it elects. A pacifier to the lonely, the aged, the young, television enhances general knowledge while providing escapism for the masses. This paper focuses on the Halifax experience of this new medium.

## **Dedication**

**This thesis is dedicated to the people in my life who believed in the magic of television and the power of dreams -- to my parents, Eric and Laura Davies, and to my friends, Linda Allen, Glenda D'Arcy and Heather White.**

## *Acknowledgements*

This thesis would never have been successfully completed without the guidance, encouragement and support of the faculty and staff of:

Saint Mary's University,  
the Halifax City Regional Library,  
the Public Archives of Nova Scotia,  
the National Archives of Canada,  
the National Library of Canada,  
the Archives of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and  
Dr. Paul Rutherford, University of Toronto.

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## Preface

"It was on television, that most potent force of twentieth-century modernity, that many Nova Scotians first encountered the truth of their pre-modern essence."<sup>1</sup> So begins a discussion by Ian McKay, concerning the manufacture of a cultural heritage that would become synonymous with Nova Scotia. Creating the images of rugged coastline and sturdy folk, fishing villages and lobster traps, Nova Scotia culture became an industry of its own, a commodity that would become marketable world wide. This representation had little to do with the inhabited reality of harsh coastal life, but was created by a few enterprising individuals who decided that Nova Scotia's "folk" heritage should be recast, creating the illusory, modest, hardworking, folk people; these were visions that tourists expected to see and were willing to pay for. This pure essence to which Mr. McKay refers was based on the notion that true culture was confined to that which was untouched by technology and kept pristine from man's intervention. However, it would be television, that most intrusive of mediums, that would propel Helen Creighton, for example, into many Nova Scotian homes, and by her own admission, advance her search for ghost stories, folk songs and lyrics. She used television to promote her songs, her stories, her province and herself. And it worked. Her vision of the past became the province's official history, giving a picture of their heritage to the people, those poor and struggling, proud simple folk, untouched by science, industry and the mass media.<sup>2</sup>

A visual representation of culture of a different sort began with the first glow of television's arrival into local living rooms. Some historians might suggest that this infusion of a new world view was indeed an intrusion into a cherished past,

changing the very heart rhythm of an idyllic existence. Chroniclers, Margaret Conrad and Neil Rosenberg might argue that this encroaching outside influence would be the death knell of the Golden Age, the last days of honest folk and simpler times.<sup>3</sup> But a local rural artist, Maude Lewis, for example, might wonder what all the excitement was about. Throughout her lifetime she painted "pretty things" to beautify her home and had little concern for philosophical argument or scientific debate.<sup>4</sup> Was this alleged innocence a mirror by which Haligonians viewed themselves, making their first encounters with television a very positive, personal experience? Perhaps it was a fantasy, with consenting viewers suspending their reality in order to be able to better emulate what was seen and heard. A wide range of effects would surround television in the technological age.

With each generation, the number of viewing hours increases as do the dire warnings and predictions for the new 500-channel future. Some basic questions were raised as soon as the first switch was turned on, and it is not surprising that these concerns exist today. Does television reflect the culture that exists or does it produce its own culture? Does television portray the lives of one's neighbours and by implication one's own, or does it merely explain in moving pictures, a view of the world limited by the film editor's whim? As a mass medium, does it unify families or divide communities within its broadcast radius? Such weighty questions have consumed and will continue to consume research time and book space on library shelves. Answers in one area lead to questions in another. One definitive theory is presented only to be cast aside when a new one arrives.

For this study, a narrower focus was required. That does not mean that the issue became simpler, perhaps the very opposite. But it was hoped that clearly defined parameters for such an inquiry might achieve some measure of successful

investigation. How then should the area be defined? The first problem was to understand "communication."<sup>5</sup> If one was willing to concede that communication was a two-way exchange of ideas, was television a communicator? Many would argue that sitting in front of a small screen, watching a moving image was hardly a dialogue. And what about mass communication? Was this term merely the movement of many bits of information from an anonymous sender to an equally unknown receiver? If the sender and the receiver never met, what was communicated? Or, could one state that mass communication was simply a method "to reinforce the already existing values, attitudes and fears," rather than an instrument of change, and that the important piece of the equation was the instrument used to communicate this information?<sup>6</sup> Already, a re-evaluation of terminology was necessary.

This re-evaluation leads to other questions, the primary one being, what is television? Alistair Cooke dubbed it, "photographed radio" and suggested that "it is a mirror reflecting life - life while it is happening."<sup>7</sup> The London Times, however, disdainfully referred to television as merely "moving and talking wallpaper."<sup>8</sup> From radios with mirrors to walls that talked, television was all this? How would one ever understand it? Somewhere between these two extremes, however, was the story of a technology that changed everything.

Technology has changed television since television began. A faster paced, highly technical world has uprooted those assumed truths of yesterday, such as, if I saw it, it must have happened that way, or if I read it, it must have been true. In our quest for what is real, we have stumbled willingly into the fantasy of television while at the same time proclaiming our desire for more reality. Enter this electronic eye, a piece of technology that blurs the fine line between the two. As Helen Creighton began the search for the songs of Nova Scotia, she sought pure sources:

those inhabitants, sturdy, self-reliant, untouched by modern day events, conveniences and technology. When she recorded her songs, using up-to-date recording machines, the very technology that she feared enabled her to record the past. From those selections, she chose only those that were, for her truly representative of Nova Scotia. Her standards were imposed on the songs presented by virtue of her culling process, and it was that material that she then presented to the audience as the definitive Nova Scotia identity. But Creighton's own view of Halifax was one "that glittered with receptions and engagements, weddings and bridge parties: a provincial world, to be sure, but one enlivened by visitors from elsewhere."<sup>9</sup> Helen Creighton wanted a cultural view of refinement to be the portrayed image of her province but she also knew what would sell, the world of the non-mechanized, the traditional, the simple lifestyle. In effect, she was one of a long line of variety show producers who posed such questions as: what songs will I include in my collections? What photos will I print? What stories will I edit for clarity? Is this material suitable for this audience? It was assumed that Creighton's body of work was truly representative of Nova Scotia culture and that she was merely the gatherer of this material. In the broader context, one must admire her for without Helen Creighton's dedication and diligence there would be little remaining of the oral tradition in the province. But what she chose to skip over or leave out of her publications returns to haunt us, becoming a cultural vacuum now seeking a voice. The poet and song-maker, the balladeer and the storyteller re-edited, re-packaged for mass consumption, these are the ones that have been forgotten. As an editor's view can slant what is printed, so too did Helen Creighton attempt to protect the "folk" from themselves and outside influences. So another fantasy was created, just as edited as any television production seen on the small screen.

The third problem one must consider is, what is culture? In 1949, the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, (hereafter referred to as The Massey Commission), defined this intangible attribute as "that part of education which enriches the mind and refines the taste."<sup>10</sup> But nearly thirty years later Bernard Ostry would consider culture much more than a matter of taste. He would suggest that culture was,

"central to what we do and think, what we do and the reason why we do it, what we wish for and why we imagine it, what we perceive and how we express it, how we live and in what manner we approach death."<sup>11</sup>

The exact meaning of the term appears to depend upon the person asking. Some might emphasize the symbolic nature of culture, others might argue that culture functions as a mechanism of adaptation rather than as a group of common symbols that remains fixed throughout time. Others would claim that culture structures one's perception of the world and it is this shared approach that patterns behaviour. The development of culture appears central to the human existence and is not inherited but learned. People acquire their culture through interaction with other members of the group(s) into which they are born. Therefore, it could be said that culture is a group phenomenon that touches every aspect of human behaviour.

If "genuine culture honours the past, not as a relic but as an expression of human spirit akin to its own," then what was the nurturer of the human spirit in times past and what nourishes it today?<sup>12</sup> if culture was an essential element of everyone's environment, where were the origins of Canadian culture? Once again, television enters the discussion as a conveyor and purveyor of culture. Could one say television created this thing called Canadian culture? Definitely not. But could it be argued that without television, there would have been little left to distinctly identify that which is Canadian in nature? What then would distinguish us from our southern neighbour?

That raises the next issue, how is culture communicated and what was television's role in that process?

In his book, The Bias of Communication, Harold Innis comments that:

A medium of communication has an important influence on the dissemination of knowledge over space and over time and it becomes necessary to study its characteristics in order to appraise its influence in its cultural setting.<sup>13</sup>

A hundred years ago, however, to study electronic gadgetry as part of a community's cultural history would seem absurd. In the nineties, to watch television images and consider them a window on the global community might be more commonly accepted. To believe this view to be the only true picture of the people living in those communities however, is equally suspect. The wider range of issues that surround the presentation and production of television and its role in everyday life has become a common target for newspaper editorials, magazine features, even books. However, in the world of the 90s – a world of produced images, perhaps even distorted ones – it is this reality that most impresses and is remembered. It remains to some as the only true representation, for what is seen is so powerful that it erases any other perception of an event, a person, a community. So how does one distinguish between reality and images of reality? To whom does this vision of reality belong? And how are these images in themselves a factor in shaping how individuals view their community, the members within that community, and themselves?

One of the first observations realized as this study evolved was how closely television, culture and post modernism theories are connected. It became difficult to isolate what exactly was culture, culture in relation to television; culture, television and its definition of the Canadian identity. Finally, difficulties arose in an attempt to establish how the theories of post modernism take into account the

increased use of television, and television's portrayal of our culture and our past. At face value, a more distinguished scholar would exclaim in horror. Who would dare to lump such subjects together? However, it became apparent that most Canadians, from television's inception and despite government attempts otherwise, saw their lifestyles and their country through the eyes of others. Programs such as: The Ed Sullivan Show, Four Star Playhouse, I Love Lucy and Robin Hood attracted large audiences right from the beginning (over 90%).<sup>14</sup> All were American productions.<sup>15</sup> Culture, whatever that meant to the pioneers of the new medium, became an imported commodity. The images of Canada for Canadians came from a Canadian television network, but with a predominately American slant, depicting a way of life that resembled our Canadian towns but was conceived, written, produced and filmed in America. Could Canadian viewers tell the difference? In fact, most viewers cared little that their home town view was created and produced elsewhere. Had history, specifically Canadian history, been lost in the rush to fill air-time? Perhaps television is the main culprit of the post-modernism craze, encouraging viewers to escape their pasts by creating and perpetuating another reality, the reality of the sitcom family and the usual blend of dysfunctional neighbours. What better medium than television is there for creating illusions? Has history simply been forgotten? Post modern theorists appear to have a special interest in what some might term low culture, television and movies, and they eagerly point out the connections between what is viewed by a society and how those morals, values, or beliefs are mirrored back into the mainstream. While scrutinizing these areas, however, seldom is an alternative offered.

It could be further suggested that cultural theory with neo-Marxist leanings concerns itself with the examination of social class, social power and how



these relationships manipulate messages regardless of the medium used to convey that message. It seeks to understand the messages that are created, by whom, and the consequences of having both ownership and editorial control in the same hands. These messages can be divided into four distinct types: economic, social, political and cultural. The first, an economic relationship, suggests that those who own the media control what is shown on it. This action simplifies the process for organizations that want only their product sold or their version of the truth to be the predominant, official version. Then there is the social relationship with the media, those who control it in order to encode their social values on society and to strengthen and maintain the existing order. That relationship protects the status quo and leaves little room for differing opinions or deviant behaviour. Next, is the political relationship, with the power of the media in the hands of those with the political clout to defend it. By using the media their way, they can eliminate the competition and ensure that a "just" society solidifies their power base with no detractors. Finally, there is the cultural relationship, usually controlled by society's elite who use this avenue to display and promote their culture, thereby silencing ethnic groups and minorities. New programming or cultural clues will reinforce a new set of power relationships but the objective of each is to solidify their authoritative position.

So what establishes these relationships and makes the individual vulnerable to such manipulation? The basics are stated simply by the pyramid of needs, Maslow's laws, biological and physiological needs: protection, then safety, love, satisfaction of the ego, and finally fulfilment of self. One makes decisions as an individual, decisions modified by one's cultural environment and modified by the groups to which one belongs: for example, gender, income, occupation, education, age, organization or clubs. These decisions are modified by the mass media and

cultural industries. All of these relationships have the capability to produce a variety of behavioural modifications, for example, the stamp of approval so that the individual knows that others feel as he or she does. Even more convenient, if an individual has no belief or opinion, the media will provide one. Then, the media may be so persuasive that it completely change one's beliefs. And lastly, the media may effect absolutely no change whatsoever in one's behaviour or opinions.

The audience chooses the media, finding the message that best meets an individual's needs. The media brings about changes in society, gains in knowledge, formation of attitudes, and in many cases makes a decision, implements the decision, confirms the decision. The media can even be used as an excuse for non-action. All of this change occurs as the media bombards the individual with a calliope of voices, attempting to be the one voice that will be heard and remembered. The needs and wants of the individual versus the demands of each of the cultural relationships all are shareholders in the production of this quality we call culture.

So if an organization, such as a government produces a "culture" that it deems appropriate for the general population, to whom does this culture belong? This culture may be the official voice, the one centrally controlled but it may not truly reflect the locally lived culture. This organized culture becomes an institution of its own, not a true identity but a narrower view tied to the bureaucratic hierarchy. In this scenario, a local lived culture would be silenced or greatly reduced.<sup>16</sup> If one puts television in the centre of such a cultural debate, it becomes clear why television's pioneers believed that a national culture would serve the country well, considering their fears of being overwhelmed by their mighty neighbour to the South. However, the issue is not that clear-cut when one realizes just how many players are involved in protecting this omnipotent view. Television and its reporters, those new gatekeepers of the

information highway have a tricky relationship, each one with his or her own bias. For example, a person might see an item he or she thinks is newsworthy on the streets of London, England. That individual reports it to a CBC reporter who talks extensively to the one who saw the event. This news item, with text and video, is transmitted to a Canadian feeder station via satellite to the main CBC news-room in Toronto. The CBC film editor in Toronto edits the piece to what he considers a suitable length, attaches appropriate pictures and transmits the item to the news editor in Halifax. At news-time, the Halifax audience views the edited clip. Five people had their hand in the gathering and presentation of this story. It certainly raises the question, just how accurate is the finished product?<sup>17</sup>

Does the viewer understand the power and force of the images portrayed? Does he realize that someone selected those images? Does the viewer ever wonder if those images are reflective of the society as a whole or only an editor's bias? Is there another side of the story which he did not get to hear and see? With so many ways of accessing the effects of television, the messages that it carries, the cultural bias interwoven within those messages and the fact that a great majority of the programming seen in this region is created elsewhere; cultural ownership became an important factor to be considered in the study of early viewers of television. Using survey data compiled by the CBC and reviewing the results of the diaries compiled by members of randomly selected households, it is possible to sketch a picture of what those first viewers were expecting from this new medium. Television would be an instrument of change, of that they were convinced. The fact that it became so popular, so quickly, was quite a shock. Depending on one's point of view, whether rushing progress or a source of peril, this modern world entered the living rooms of Canada, accelerating the country's modernization. Canada was growing up,

becoming a business, as hockey was transformed from a backyard ice rink into a bureaucracy. The individualistic spirit that carved out a country was no longer the ideal; the team approach to nation building was a better goal. What was heralded as the modern way had a flip side – the increasing affluence of Canadians was transforming people into objects.

Frederic Jameson explains post modern theory as the representation of the cultural logic of late capitalism, pointing out that the production of goods had become more important than the use of those goods.<sup>18</sup> What better vehicle to sell those endless lists of consumer items than on an electronic billboard that entered millions of homes. Enter the culture of consumption, capitalism with flair, with colour, stereophonic sound and movie theatre picture clarity and size. Not only was a product big business, but the development, marketing and advertising of that product was an even bigger plum. Television would push the limits of selling and buying, creating spin-off industries to measure market saturation and target populations. Jameson said this resulting consumption travelled uncharted waters, encircling all within its grip, for he believed television intensified the crush of images that an individual had to overcome in order to maintain his own vision.

Another post-modernist, Michel Foucault, French philosopher and historian, (1926-1984), believed that with self knowledge and the power to control one's own destiny, the meaning of culture could be simplified to the basics, that what was self-evident was probably not that way at all.<sup>19</sup> Foucault tried to show that the basic ideas which people normally take to be permanent truths about human nature and society have been in a continual state of change throughout the course of history. He challenged Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud and their assumptions about institutions and people's reaction to them. He studied how everyday practices enabled people to

define their identities and formulate their knowledge. Foucault argued that each way of understanding things had its advantages and its dangers. He observed how television could change the minds of voters, alter purchasing preferences, modify the patterns of youth and what it meant to be a child. The rugged individual became the deviant personality, the outcast, a role constantly replayed in made-for-television movies. Punishment was meted out for being different and only after some retribution was paid could the redeemed person return to their community, the tragedy play updated for modern times. Foucault saw the possibilities of a medium that would accelerate this change but warned of the limitation of sameness over the unique.

Today, many scholars would endorse the theories of Jameson and Foucault for those ideas have the benefit of nearly fifty years of study, measurement and comparison. There can be no doubt that television has changed the way people view themselves and their communities. It became a mirror of modernity, challenging viewers to re-assess their values, their living standards and their relationships. This paper is the story of those early viewers, their excitement, their apprehensions, their fears about this electronic marvel that they willingly brought into their homes. It makes no claim to sociological, political or philosophical analysis. It merely brings together the thoughts and feelings, the texture of a period of history.

<sup>1</sup> Ian McKay, The Quest of The Folk, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), p.93

<sup>2</sup> McKay, pp. 93-137.

<sup>3</sup> McKay, p. 216. He references an article written by Margaret Conrad entitled "The 1950s: The Decade of Development." She observed that progress, to some at least, was defined by the number of projects that were on-going in the area. It is not clear, however, whether she would have considered television and its intrusion into Halifax homes part of this prosperity or an infringement on the simple life. The Atlantic Provinces In Confederation, Editors E. Forbes and L. Muise, pp. 382-420.

Neil Rosenberg, "Folklore In Atlantic Canada: The Enigmatic Symbol," The Marco Polo Papers, vol. 1, (Atlantic Provinces Literature Colloquium), edited by Kenneth MacKinnon, (Saint John: Atlantic Canada Institute, 1977).

Ernest Forbes, Challenging the Regional Stereotype: Essays on the 20th Century Maritimes, (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> Born in 1903, Mrs. Lewis was 51 when television arrived in Halifax. She needed no electrical appliance to entertain herself. Taught by her mother to paint, she created Christmas cards for friends and family. As she grew more confident, she completed up to two paintings a day until her later years. Mrs. Lewis died in 1970.

Lance Woolaver, The Illuminated Life of Maude Lewis, (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Company, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 1996), pp. 2, 4, 72.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Soderlund and Walter Romanow, "Theoretical Approaches to Communication," Mass Media: An Introductory Analysis, (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1992), pp. 66-89.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Rutherford, Prime Time Canada: When TV Was Young – 1952-1967, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p.469. The chapter in his book entitled, "How Television Began" explains the political manoeuvrings and problems of the initial broadcasts. (pp. 141-177).

<sup>7</sup> Peter Stursberg, Mister Broadcasting: The Ernie Bushnell Story, (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1971), p. 145.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, p. 488.

<sup>9</sup> McKay, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> Royal Commission on National Development In the Arts, Letters, Sciences, Massey Commission, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), p. 7.

Mr. Massey wanted people to understand how important culture was to the development of a nation. He wrote an article, published just before he chaired the Royal Commission on National Development In the Arts, Letters, Sciences that further explained his position. On Being Canadian specifically pointed to the Canadian government as the monetary guardian of the new crusade – to bring culture to every town and village of Canada.

Vincent Massey, On Being Canadian, (Toronto: Dent and Sons, 1948), chapter 3 and 4, pp 29-65.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Ostry, The Cultural Connection: An Essay on Culture and Government Policy in Canada, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), p.1.

<sup>12</sup> as said by Edward Sapir, in an article by Irvin Goldman, "The Meaning of Religion," James Winter, "Mass Media and Canadian Identity," Communications In Canadian Society, Editor, Benjamin D. Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson Canada and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1981), pp. 146-162.

<sup>13</sup> Harold Innis, The Bias of Communication, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951), p. 33.

<sup>14</sup> Canadian productions that attracted 80% of new viewers included CBC News Magazine and Cross Canada Hit Parade.

Radio After One Year of TV in Metropolitan Halifax, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, (Ottawa: Audience Research Bureau, January 1957), p.7.

<sup>15</sup> The diaries revealed that 23 programs had a popular viewing rate of 80% within one year of television's arrival to Halifax. What was not surprising, however, was that 2 out of 3 of these programs were American in origin.

Radio After One Year of TV in Metropolitan Halifax, p.7.

<sup>16</sup> John Jackson, "Broadcasting: Centralization, Regionalization and Canadian Identity," Communications In Canadian Society, Editor, Benjamin D. Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson Canada and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1981), p. 197.

<sup>17</sup> W. Soderlund, W. Romanow, E. Briggs, R. Wagenberg, Media and Elections In Canada, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Limited, 1984), pp. 32-35.

Another article of interest explaining the role reporters play in the assimilation of facts was William Schramm, "The Gatekeeper, A Memorandum," Mass Communications, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), p. 175.

<sup>18</sup> Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." New Left Review, July-August 1984, pp. 53-92.

<sup>19</sup> Barry Smart, "The Politics of Truth and the Problems of Hegemony, " Foucault: A Critical Reader. Editor David Cozzens Hoy, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 162-168.

Television? The word is half Latin and half Greek. No good can come of it.  
- C.P.Scott 1846-1932<sup>1</sup>

## **Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION**

On Monday, December 20th, 1954 at 5:45 PM, many Haligonians tuned their television sets to the inaugural broadcast of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). In an article written for The Halifax Mail-Star's Special Television Edition welcoming Halifax to the CBC-Network, Mr. Alphonse Ouimet, then General Manager of the Corporation, estimated that 4,000,000 Canadians already had television sets and that Halifax viewers would enthusiastically swell those ranks even higher.<sup>2</sup> CBC-CBHT, channel 8, welcomed Halifax-Dartmouth viewers to their new channel, a channel that forged another link in the national network and moved Maritime Canada into the realm of predominately central Canadian programming.<sup>3</sup>

This engineering marvel would fascinate and dominate the airwaves, far surpassing the influence of radio and the print media. An invention of sight and sound, television would change the way of life for many Maritime families. A large square box, made of various wood-types, emitting shadowy pictures and loud noises, this invention would dominate the household. It would change the centre of the home of history's past, the kitchen with glowing fireside, to the futuristic view of the living room, an electronic viewing room with sectional sofas, revolving tables and viewing lamps.<sup>4</sup> Family entertainment would take on a whole new meaning: no more noisy games of scrabble, gin rummy or heated political debates. Now, there would be an awed silence as Mother, Father, children and their neighbours sat with hands folded,



eyes focused only on the screen, entranced with the images shown there.<sup>5</sup> Even cartoonists in the local paper picked up the trend, showing television personified, a wide swagger and an even wider grin with the caption, "I'm taking over."<sup>6</sup>

Conversations would soon begin with the words, "Do you have a set yet?" or "Did you see the NHL games last night?" Reception difficulties and a rehash of last night's comedy skit would replace fiery debate about school taxes and location of traffic lights. Socialization within the community would be altered; attendance at sporting events would decline.<sup>7</sup> A considerate neighbour would never visit while one's favourite program was being broadcast. Children's bedtimes would require negotiation not only around homework and outdoor games but around television program schedules. With the CBHT connection to the main network that Monday evening, life in Halifax would never be the same.

To explore the impact of television on the Halifax-Dartmouth area, a large portion of this research centered around the many articles written in the local papers. The increasing amount of column space dedicated to television showed the growing concern that many people had about the anticipated influence of television on everyone, especially the youth. It soon became fashionable for all print media to include a television page; a commentary on the programs and a viewing guide of upcoming events. The television critic was born out of the needs of other media sources to solidify their own position in people's day-to-day lives. To keep up with this new technology and to retain readership was the prime objective of the editors. It had nothing to do with embracing their new competitor in the spirit of friendly competition.

As well as newspapers, in the early 1950s, program reviews and individual commentary were found in numerous magazines, Macleans Magazine and Saturday Night, to name two. Some magazines in the general interest reading

category had been created just before television came on the scene. Popular publications were the New World Illustrated begun in 1948 and the National Home Monthly first issued in 1950. Later, the Canadian Home Journal established in 1958, would enjoy considerable popularity. (All publications would eventually have a "television page" of commentary and discussion.)<sup>8</sup> Since the 1920s, Canadian magazines had flourished due to tax and postal concessions and by tariffs imposed on American imports. The Canadian Press was subsidized also. Even politicians, D'Arcy McGee, for example, claimed that tariffs were fair in order to "protect literature as an essential element in the formation of a national character."<sup>9</sup> Nor could the national legislators and rule makers ignore television. This new medium had to be controlled and regulated, and what better protector than Parliament. The many shelves of documents and working papers found in the National Archives are a silent testimony to the discussion and political controversy sparked by television's early days. These issues and their attempted solutions by various Royal Commissions, committees, politicians and their parties helped develop and initiate Canada's five Broadcasting Acts, numerous submissions by concerned citizens made to the many Royal Commissions as well as various Parliamentary memos and speeches. Glimpses of the post-war world are reflected in radio listening studies, early television viewing habits and statistical reports acquired from the CBC Audience Research Bureau. Letters from and discussions with some of the pioneers of local broadcasting offer impressions of their world, a broadcasting history in the making. That world held a divided populace. On the one hand there was a group fiercely determined to build a pre-war world, a world as it had been before global conflict, a world where there was a correctness to things. But things had changed. On the other hand there was a group ready to move forward, eager to face new challenges and encourage rejuvenation

through co-operation, creativity and technology, especially with an enthusiasm for a fledgling industry - television.<sup>10</sup>

Distress was loudly voiced by sociological soothsayers concerned with the impact of television and the eventual disintegration of family life. How to handle this explosion of knowledge and image was the subject of hot debate at many school meetings and gatherings of concerned parents.<sup>11</sup> In March 1955, parents complained that television "interferes with junior's studies, rest hours and sometimes meals," and this complaint a mere three months after CBHT's hook-up.<sup>12</sup> As much as the new technology was to be applauded for offering a new perspective on old subjects (geography, science, mathematics, for example), there was mounting concern that television would become the baby-sitter of the future, destroying the feeling of community and isolating the lives of each person within that structural framework. Even before television arrived in Halifax, articles were appearing to proclaim that the worst and best of television would have an impact on one's life even if one did not want it to. Perhaps even more important was that individuals would have to become much more selective in their leisure activities.<sup>13</sup> Few people at that time understood the changes that would take place in this new visual, technical world. It would not be until major events were transmitted around the globe that people would begin to see and comprehend the vistas now open to them.

One of the first of these "media events" was Queen Elizabeth II's coronation (1953) which was broadcast world-wide only hours after the actual ceremony took place. CBC was the first broadcasting system in North America to show complete film coverage of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth on television, within hours of the end of the ceremony in London. The time was 4:13 PM, on June 2, 1953, and with a lot of hard work and considerable luck, CBC film crews had beaten

the NBC, CBS networks while ABC joined CBC and showed pictures of the coronation stateside.<sup>14</sup> It was Britain's newest Queen who quickly realized that television would be the way that Royalty, for the first time in history, would be seen by the man in the street, truly by everyone.

In search of viewing expectations of this first generation of Halifax television viewers, one must keep in mind the environments within which this communication/entertainment instrument was born. In such early development stages, scientists and broadcasters in Canada closely watched the international electronic scene and did not want to be left behind. In November 1936, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) became the world's first regular television service, but World War II ceased their development until October 1946. The United States had had commercial television since July 1941 but receiver production was slowed during their war effort. By the mid-1940s, the Canadian television industry was being encouraged by C. D. Howe, then Minister of Trade and Commerce. He believed that the electronics industry would provide employment for returning servicemen at war's end and the government would profit from increased license fees. New construction of production centres would get Canada's economy booming.<sup>15</sup> Electronic assembly lines freed from production of electronic war materials would soon be ready to turn out picture tubes and television sets instead of aeroplane parts. Those involved in radio and the printed media believed that this newest technological marvel was a gimmick that would have its limited place in the transmission of news and entertainment. Once the novelty had passed, so the staunch radio backers maintained, radio listeners would return to the reliability and familiarity of the solid performer. In a report prepared for the Massey Commission, Charles A. Siepmann had characterized Canadian radio as mostly a medium for playing music. He categorized this music as

"light," or "serious," interspersed with serial dramas, comedies, plays, talk shows, and various newscasts. He determined this breakdown from information that had been gathered from questionnaires returned to him from 118 of Canada's radio stations. Twenty-two of the surveys were deemed incomplete and unusable but the data contained in the remaining ninety-six was used to determine all manner of results, from percentage of local programming by hours broadcast to differences in programming schedules between private and independent stations. No one could predict that another medium for entertainment, television, would have an even greater impact than radio.<sup>16</sup>

Newspapers, it was believed, would remain the prime influence on public opinion. Of course, the Halifax newspapers heartily endorsed this view and sought articles from other writers to support it. One editorial written in London by the Archbishop of York and reprinted in The Halifax Mail-Star suggested that the written word was stronger than what was seen or heard. As proof of this claim, he maintained that most people were not trained in the art of listening. Too much television, he proposed, "would leave only superficial, fleeting impressions."<sup>17</sup> Within the first broadcast year, however, statistics would show that television had a larger audience than originally anticipated and that some if not most of the increase would come from radio listeners. In fact, total radio listening would drop by one-third after television arrived in greater Halifax.<sup>18</sup> What was interesting, however, was that within months of Halifax joining the CBC network, the newspapers began running articles reprinted from the American News Service suggesting that the opposite was true. As some of the novelty of television wore off, "night time radio listening was on the increase, movie attendance was up, magazine reading was again gaining popularity." The articles went on to suggest that television was not a fad but that a wiser public was

over their initial infatuation and was resuming their pre-television activities.<sup>19</sup> However, that was just the beginning of the debate. Magazines were filled with articles claiming that the intellectual development of children would suffer and that scholastic achievement would decline within ten years of television's full implementation with the additional networks. Advertisers, parents, teachers and the clergy believed that a powerful tool had been developed and unleashed on an unsuspecting public.<sup>20</sup> Fergus Mutrie in 1950, then CBC's Director of television for Toronto remarked that "the topics most talked about today are the atom bomb and television -- the difference between the two being that we know how to use the bomb."<sup>21</sup>

What would this new technology offer and how would it change the world? He offered several answers: a source of entertainment, especially for live "events," an educator, but most of all, a super-salesman. He hoped that television would become an "outstanding contributor to human understanding, welfare and enjoyment."<sup>22</sup> But would the viewers and the program directors come to an agreement on what television would be? Wisdom to use television well was Mutrie's vision of the future. The power of the printed word was going to be surpassed by the power of the visual image. That worry reflected the dark side of the homage to technology, a worry about the effects of this new invention now descending upon mankind. No one would be able to escape television's influence. Nearly everyone who wrote on the subject repeated in some form or another that television must be an agent of change, and indeed of revolution, that it had a social momentum all its own.<sup>23</sup>

The history of Canadian television began as a combination of factors occurring very quickly: the grand test of electrical know-how, a search for a glorious past, and the personal relationship of the viewer.<sup>24</sup> The great technical experiment is the story of the struggle of innovative achievement against the odds. The first

commercial station license had been issued in 1932, and a mere twenty years later technology was such that there were high hopes for Canadian television transmissions despite geography, remote locations and a small population. Since Canadian radio had surpassed any other country in the world in the production of radio dramas, it was hoped that programs produced for this new visual technology would be of the same calibre.

These electrical pioneers felt that Canadian television would far surpass that of their Southern neighbour.<sup>25</sup> Their challenge was to create an unique made-in-Canada television service. Indeed, there were many obstacles to be overcome if there was ever to be a truly national television network. The immense east-to-west distances required an engineering feat; over water, plains and mountainous; to build a series of relay network stations and production centres for live and taped material, something engineers had only dreamed about. How would they construct something that united over 4,000 miles of cities, villages and farms?

Other drawbacks included the expense of maintaining this brand new network and developing a parallel transmission in French. And once a French network was established where would the material come from? Would the import of European works be necessary in order to fill air-time? Viewers near the US border were now experienced consumers of television. They had certain expectations about Canadian content and television's pioneers realized that the calibre of programming had to be professional, creative, and above reproach.

The principles, however, seemed clear: to be a complete service; to link all parts of the country with shows of national and regional interest; to use local, physical resources where possible; to be predominately Canadian in content and character and finally, to serve equally in two languages. Canada's colourful history

credited the railroads with unifying the country in the first half century for they had opened up new regions, pushing towns and farms outward into new territories. This historical transformation was a parallel for broadcasting. Television would show and tell people in one part of the country what was happening in another part of their land.<sup>26</sup> The Massey Commission would further explain that the majority of Canadians shared their mother tongue with their "neighbour to the South," that our population was thinly scattered along "the rim of another country of great economic strength," and that our cultivation of resources and self-reliance "would inspire greater national unity." Citizens had to understand "the cost of isolation," that it was "a condition of our life that affects the work that governments do."<sup>27</sup> Despite formidable geographical, technical, political, financial and linguistic obstacles, by the 1960s, Canada would have a sophisticated delivery system to be proud of, francophone and anglophone, public and private.<sup>28</sup>

The glorious past happened as television evolved. No sooner had television begun than further technological enhancements appeared – the arrival of colour and cable. By 1961, intellectuals and journalists dubbed this prior decade, the "Golden Age," and a myth was born. Once the novelty of experimentation was over, creativity, imagination and innovation would begin a collision course with the financial balance sheet. The production process would develop the formula show, one of pre-determined structure but one of guaranteed profit, and therefore a pre-determined hit. Critics would later argue that the higher the profit margin the more mediocre the program.

The third part of television's history is the study of the personal relationship between television and the first generation of viewers. How would individuals, groups and institutions respond to the arrival of television? What new



rituals of life would emerge? What rituals would disappear? Would Canadians discover their national identity? Would television promote social and moral decay? Would Canada raise a generation that could neither read nor write?<sup>29</sup> And what about radio, would television take its place as the preferred entertainment medium? It is these questions that this paper investigates with a Canadian perspective but specifically focusing on the fears and expectations of Halifax-Dartmouth viewers.

<sup>1</sup> Editor, R. Fitzhenry, "About Television," The Fitzhenry and Whiteside Book of Quotations. 3rd edition, (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1993), pp. 436-438.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest figures from CBC Audience Research Bureau began with their station sign-on date. A year after CBHT was on the air, television had infiltrated 54,000 Nova Scotia homes, a remarkable 33% of the total population.

Source: Distribution of TV Homes In Canada, CBC Bureau of Audience Research, Statistics Department, Bulletin No. 8, Table #5: Percentage of Home With TV by Province - January 1, 1956

In another article, Ouimet reported revenues of over \$16 million gathered from excise taxes on radios, television sets and parts.

The Halifax Mail-Star, Special Television Edition, December 6, 1954.

The Halifax Mail-Star, December 7, 1954, front page and p.6.

The politics of broadcasting was beginning. By March 1955, only three months after Halifax sign-on, Don Fleming, a Conservative Member from Toronto claimed that CBC had more money than it could use. He claimed that a regulatory body was necessary to oversee CBC and private broadcasters for their advertising revenues would give them more power than was safe. The Liberals said another board or agency would not improve the situation while the Social Credit said that not all sides of the argument had been heard. In January however, Guy Rouleau, a Liberal for Montreal had raised the question of fair treatment for all stations since CBC had a licensing monopoly.

The Halifax Mail-Star, January 29, 1955, front page, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Yarmouth was linked by satellite to American stations as early as October 1949.

The Halifax-Chronicle Herald, October 21, 1949, p.9.

Halifax television owners were receiving American programs (from Iowa and Kentucky) for two years prior to the CBC-Halifax hook up.

The Halifax Mail-Star, June 30, 1954, p.4.

Later still, the South Shore had three channels by October 1958, via American satellite.

The Halifax-Chronicle Herald, October 11, 1958, p.21.

<sup>4</sup> Because families anticipated more home entertaining, more coffee tables would be necessary as well as folding chairs. The three-pillow sofa was out and sectional or elongated sofas were in, the better to seat three or more neighbours. The worst etiquette faux pas was for a hostess to have seats so poorly arranged that guests had to walk in front of the screen.

The Halifax Mail-Star, Special Edition, December 6, 1954.

<sup>5</sup> A Chamber's cartoon entitled "How to Win Friends" showed the line up of new 'neighbours' outside a home where a brand new television aerial was being installed.

The Halifax Mail-Star, July 17, 1954, p.4.

<sup>6</sup> Chamber's cartoon entitled, "I'm Taking Over!," The Halifax Mail Star, December 21, 1954, p.4.

<sup>7</sup> Television policy for the broadcasting of professional sports leagues was already ruining attendance to many minor baseball league games. Why would one go to a baseball field when one could watch the major leagues from one's armchair? Quebec Hockey League receipts were down from the previous fall and promoter, Thomas Gorman claimed that CBC should pay damages for his losses. CBC said no.

The Halifax Mail-Star, December 22, 1954, p.4.

<sup>8</sup> Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, pp. 20-21.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Desbarats, "The Special Role of Magazines In The History of Canadian Mass Media and National Development," Communications in Canadian Society, Editor, Benjamin Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1991), pp. 50-66.

Desbarats would credit the French with inventing the "magazine" format, in 1665. (p. 53).

Helen Holmes and David Taras, editors, Report of The Task Force on Broadcasting Policy, Seeing Ourselves: Media Power and Policy, (University of Calgary: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada Inc., 1992), pp. 40-57.

Desbarats, pp. 60-61.

<sup>10</sup> Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, p.21.

- <sup>11</sup> Groups of parents from the Woodlawn Home and School Association studied separate phases of television under such headings as Pupil, Home, Health, Quality of Programs, and Effect on Radio.  
The Halifax Mail-Star, February 5, 1955, p.3.
- <sup>12</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, March 16, 1955, p.4.
- <sup>13</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, March 22, 1955, front page.  
Max Rosenfeld, "How TV Is Changing Your Life," Maclean's Magazine, December 1, 1954, pp. 34-35, 87-88.
- <sup>14</sup> CBC: A Brief History of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Public Relations CBC Head Office, Ottawa, July 1976, p.31.  
For the story of the "Great Coronation Sweepstakes," read Strusberg's account told to him by Ernie Bushnell.  
Strusberg, Mister Broadcasting: The Ernie Bushnell Story, p. 152-164.
- <sup>15</sup> By the figures accumulating in the early 50s, Mr. Howe was correct - by December 1954, there were nine television stations and 1,200,000 sets sold. In six months, those figures would jump to twenty-six stations and 1,400,000 sets. The future seemed bright for the 'electronic skyway' planned for July 1958 - Vancouver to Halifax. In June 1959, Newfoundland would be included.  
Austin Weir, The Struggle for National Broadcasting In Canada, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1965), pp. 255-261.  
Consumers had spent a long four years confronted by wartime shortages and rationing. They had accumulated savings and were ready to buy. Manufacturers of many kinds were ready to use the new medium to advertise their newly produced consumer goods. The recently created, wax records were already becoming popular, the 33 1/3 RPM long-playing record, developed by CBS and the 45 RPM by RCA Victor - the year, 1948. 1949 would mark the first year that a television was advertised in the Sears, Roebuck catalogue.  
Erik Barnouw, Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.99 and p.113.
- <sup>16</sup> Charles A. Siepmann, "Aspects of Broadcasting in Canada," Royal Commission on National Development In the Arts, Letters, Sciences, Massey Commission, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), pp. 443-485. (The findings and the questionnaires are Appendix VI of the Massey Report.)
- <sup>17</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, October 9, 1954, front page and p.6.
- <sup>18</sup> "Radio After One Year of TV In Metropolitan Halifax," Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, (Ottawa, January 1957), p.3.
- <sup>19</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, January 6, 1955, p.5.
- <sup>20</sup> Scientists joined the debate for they believed that watching television would prove hazardous to the eyes, especially if the viewer drove at night immediately after watching a program of any length. The flickering lights would decrease eye focus and cause accidents.  
The Halifax Mail-Star, October 14, 1954, p.4.
- <sup>21</sup> Fergus Mutrie, "What Future For Television?," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, March 1950, pp. 28-29.
- <sup>22</sup> Mutrie, "What Future For TV?," pp. 28-29.
- <sup>23</sup> Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, pp. 21-23.
- <sup>24</sup> Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, pp. 5-7.
- <sup>25</sup> J. E. Belliveau, "CBC: Radio's Finest Hour," The Star Weekly, 1950. National Archives, File: File: File: RG: 41, Volume 401, File 23-1-3.  
Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, pp. 5-6.
- <sup>26</sup> Les Reed, "Canadian Broadcasting Corporation From 1952 to 1962," Canadian Geographic Journal, Volume LXV, No. 3, pp. 76-89.
- <sup>27</sup> "The Forces of Geography," Royal Commission on National Development In the Arts, Letters, Sciences, Massey Commission, (Ottawa, King's Printer, 1951), pp.11-17.
- <sup>28</sup> Alex Barris, The Pierce Arrow Showroom Is Leaking: An Insider's View of The CBC, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969), pp. 180-190..
- <sup>29</sup> Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, pp. 8-10.

Of all the dramatic media, radio is the most vital.  
- John Reeves<sup>1</sup>

## Chapter 2: BEGINNINGS

Before 1867 there were only two conditions for a newspaper -- enough people to read it and the materials with which to print it. Copies of The Halifax Gazette, first printed in 1752, contain articles on government matters, reprints of items from foreign papers, local merchants' advertisements, but very little local news. Some thirty-five years later, in 1789, there was a magazine published for the "cultural elite" called The Nova Scotian -- circulation, only 200 subscribers! With increased immigration, towns sprang up out of the wilderness and with them, the demand for a local paper. These newspapers became the equivalent of the town crier, with articles on local celebrities, notices for pot luck suppers and parish events and, of course, the birth, wedding and death announcements. What had been the traditional King's Printer with royal sponsorship and associated censorship became the printer-editor of the 18th century.<sup>2</sup> This editor evolved into the personal commentator of the 19th century; and as Joseph Howe would later proclaim in the mid-1830s, these editors would have the right to print the truth. From the humble beginnings of early settlement, Canadians expected print, the first mass medium, to distribute information and to do so quickly, virtually eliminating space and time. More importantly, this medium would be required to contribute something to the development of a distinct national identity.<sup>3</sup>

Next came the telegraph, the first invention that separated a mode of transportation from a method of communication.<sup>4</sup> Information that had once travelled at the speed of stage coach or horse and messenger, now could run on "lightning lines."<sup>5</sup> "Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?" (Job 38:35). This Biblical quotation expressed the sense of wonder that people felt when they crowded into the newly built telegraph offices to watch words "fly." Electrical current transmitting messages great distances held promise for some but alarm for others.<sup>6</sup> Already some sensed the quickening pace of life and were frightened by a changing world. Samuel Morse's development of the encoding process in the late 1830s led him to speculate on the "global village ... a place of unity of interest, men linked by a single mind, and the world wide view of Christianity."<sup>7</sup> With the successful completion of the Atlantic cable in 1858, Morse's vision was almost a reality. As Daniel Czitrom pointed out, "although its presence was not directly felt in everyday life, the telegraph eventually touched most people indirectly through the mass press it helped create."<sup>8</sup>

At the peak of its popularity, the telegraph appeared able to boost business by extending business markets. It had the ability to communicate political decisions across the land instantaneously and be used as an instrument of universal peace to inspire pride in technical achievement. The telegraph would prove to be very advantageous for Robert W. Sears for it enabled him to open the doors of commerce for the in-home shopping industry. The telegraph worked its magic on the press, transferring it from the diary keepers of old news to the gatherers of current events.<sup>9</sup> It changed the concept of what was news and the process of news gathering, bringing characteristics of timeliness, location and speed of reporting to the foreground. With the telegraph came a reporter's reliance on the wires to bring the story quickly to the

editor and to readers. As the press had joined forces to collect and share their material among the American papers (mostly New York), these alliances grew increasingly dependent on the telegraph. By 1852 the Associated Press had been established "for the purpose of collecting and receiving telegraphic and other intelligence."<sup>10</sup> This system expanded into two systems, one domestic and one foreign. Foreign news came in through a harbour patrol in New York that received and forwarded dispatches at Boston and Halifax. By 1859 the American Telegraph Company had key lines between Nova Scotia and New York.<sup>11</sup>

Books, it was believed, would be perennial, always around, forever popular. Books would ride out and survive any new player in the game of learning and communicating knowledge. Books gave permanence to a society, chronicling records of accomplishment, milestones of progress. The Book of The Month Club had begun back in the late 1920s and had been a great success. Penguin Books publishers had opened their London office in 1930 and had negotiated a lucrative contract with the Woolworth chain to produce the classics in paperback form. "To be a classroom without walls" was their motto. These penny books were a favourite among young and old, and Harlequin Books of Winnipeg soon followed, producing romantic fiction from England, mostly stories about nurses.<sup>12</sup>

Early film presentations, on the other hand, told stories, not with words or the dots and dashes of coded messages but with the more familiar language of photography and narrative.<sup>13</sup> People gathered to marvel at these exhibitions of technology, of commercial entertainment, of art, and of spectacle. By the early 1900s, the refinement of the story film changed from the two minute shock exhibitionism and vaudeville act to entertainment that would stand on its own. Films inhabited the physical and psychic space of the average person and played out battles "between

appetite and will, impulse and reason, inclination and ideal."<sup>14</sup> Even the darkened theatres had an attraction, the glamour of the stolen kiss in the balcony. Nickelodeons were popular with immigrants and those from the poorer parts of town. The working class made up the bulk of those early audiences and provided the basic working capital for the new medium. But nickelodeon owners now wanted respectability and the money of the newly emerging middle class.<sup>15</sup> The act of movie going became the initiation rite of the young, a place for them to socialize outside the home. Young people attended shows in groups; what they saw and heard became their uniforms, their dress code and their conversation. Film became a social ritual, defining shared values of peers and family, touching every day life, altering patterns of leisure time.<sup>16</sup> With the coming of new municipal rules regulating theatre interiors, censorship committees to monitor the vaudeville acts making them more acceptable to the middle class, the time was right for the theatres to take on a new respectability.

Critics, however, felt that talking pictures cheapened those who dared to attend these performances. They believed that celluloid would never give people "that deep emotional glow of understanding or that invigorating intellectual zest" which came from witty speech and live action drama on the stage.<sup>17</sup> With the start of World War I, however, full-time film reviewers began writing their pieces for newspapers and magazines. Film was no longer silent, no longer confined to the sound stage. Film was liberated from the constraints of time and space. Film became an educator, allowing dreamers of all ages to escape, if only for a little while, life's harsh reality.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps it is George Bernard Shaw who said all that needed saying about film: "The cinema is a much more momentous invention than printing was ... the film tells its story to the illiterate as well as the literate, and it keeps its victims not only awake, but fascinated, as if by a serpent's eye ... ." <sup>19</sup>

From the early 1920s, however, the "new" favourite medium was radio.<sup>20</sup> It seemed possessed with the capability of attracting listeners and becoming part of their daily lives. Sir Henry Thornton, President of the Canadian National Railway (CNR) and generally considered to be the originator of Public Broadcasting, was determined to give his travelling customers the best entertainment by developing radio for his trains. The CNR had the advantage of having easy access to telegraph lines which could be used to transmit radio signals. The programs included concerts and plays which were very popular.<sup>21</sup> Subsequent radio programming would follow where he began.

The most notable experimentation in radio transmission was conducted by the innovator, Guglielmo Marconi, in 1901 receiving the first transatlantic spoken signal at St. John's, Newfoundland.<sup>22</sup> With an \$80,000 grant from the federal government, the Marconi Company of Canada was awarded Canada's first broadcasting license in Montreal in 1919.<sup>23</sup> Before the decade was complete, Canada boasted its own domestic radio broadcasting industry consisting of both public and private sectors. By 1927, in every province, radio had arrived, in all some seventy-five licenses had been granted.<sup>24</sup> But the focus during this early period was on growth and rapid development for it was soon discovered that radio could sell a multitude of goods: food, beverages, drugs, tobacco, automobile products. Little attention was paid to what sort of broadcasting service Canadians preferred.<sup>25</sup> In 1929, seven years after the introduction of commercial radio, the first Royal Commission on Broadcasting began.

The Aird Commission, (1928-1929), named after its Chairman, stressed that "the destiny of Canada depended upon the ability and willingness to control and utilize internal communication for Canadian purposes."<sup>26</sup> With the passing of the



Wireless Telegraph Act (1905), the Telegraphs Act (1906) and the Radiotelegraph Act of 1913, voice transmissions and anticipated sound transmission licenses were required in order to participate in these activities. The full authority for the administration of these licenses was given to the Ministry of Department of Marine and Fisheries which would prove to be one of the difficulties when television arrived. Established by Prime Minister MacKenzie King, the Commission set out the patterns of later inquiries: meetings across the country, consultations with key parties, receipt of written submissions by interested citizens, consideration of alternative broadcasting models, and a submitted report. This one was brief, however, only nine pages of text, presented to Parliament in September 1929. Sir John Aird, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, was greatly influenced by the German Radio System and based on his review, Aird maintained that the physical plant and organization should be a federal responsibility. Content, on the other hand, should be controlled by provincial jurisdiction.<sup>27</sup> The Committee sought input from various broadcasting officials and representatives from the nine provincial governments. Seven were willing to negotiate with Ottawa for a system that would be a public service while the other two wanted complete control over their radio system. One of the Aird recommendations was that all stations should be consolidated into public collective ownership. He believed that a central agency would be better able to control both production and distribution with the main objective being that of appropriate use of the medium rather than profit. That policy was never implemented.

The Commission studied several broadcasting systems, but the system established by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) seemed to be the model that the Committee members felt could best be implemented in Canada. They believed that the BBC's principles were well suited for Canadians: "fostering a public

spirit, interpreting national citizenship, promoting national unity, moulding the minds of young people, informing the public on questions of national interest."<sup>28</sup> There was no provision, however, for the broadcasting interests of French Canada.

The first Broadcasting Act of 1932 was the result of this Commission and was the first formal statement about where Canada was headed with respect to broadcasting. The Act stated that the main goals were: "to promote national unity and to regulate and control broadcasting in Canada."<sup>29</sup> The Act envisioned the eventual expropriation of all private stations and the establishment of a total government monopoly.<sup>30</sup> There was no immediate action on the report and its recommendations, however, the Depression was on and an election due. The government changed in 1930, and for three years the matter lay dormant but public concern would soon rise again.

Around the same time (1929-1932), the Canadian Radio League was formed by Graham Spry and Alan Plait. The League had a nationalistic flavour and garnered strong public support because it was perceived as being good for the nation. It recommended that privately owned stations be created nation-wide, subsidized by the public purse. Spry believed that "radio is a majestic instrument of national unity and of national culture. Its potentialities are too great, its influence and significance are too vast to be left to the petty purpose of selling soap."<sup>31</sup> In response to this public interest, the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC) was established by the Bennett Conservative government in 1932. Functioning primarily as a regulatory body, the CRBC established standards of performance and defined the role that broadcasting was to play in Canadian society. Bennett argued that strong state control was necessary in order to avoid being swamped by American broadcasting and what better instrument than the CRBC. He emphasized that the Commission

must regulate, control and determine the overall shape and direction of radio in Canada. Even a change in political parties with the Liberals being voted back into power in 1935 did not change this view of broadcasting and the role that politicians felt radio would play in the creation of a Canadian identity. MacKenzie King believed that the changing political and economic forces between the two countries would be harmful to Canada unless a strong sense of national unity was nurtured and maintained.

As political fortunes changed (from 1936 to 1949), the CRBC fell out of favour and another agency was created, this time, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). The CBC had the dual responsibility of regulating the entire industry as well as developing and operating a strong national broadcasting network. CBC's role was further defined to include controlling the character of all broadcasts and to review all activities of private stations before their licenses were renewed.<sup>32</sup> The first annual report of the CBC (1938) drew attention to three more pressing matters: "to improve relations between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians; to watch carefully the development of television in Canada so that this new medium might be controlled in the public interest; to determine the extent and character of Canadian resources."<sup>33</sup>

In the early days, the CBC had many sources of revenue. It collected licence fees from listeners, transmitter fees from broadcasters and money from the government. It also profited on the wholesale cost of network lines. The CBC had a powerful monopoly, a political force that perpetuated the government-of-the-day policies. The Corporation's creation was unfortunately marred, however, by the internal political manoeuvring which weakened the victory of that monopoly over

broadcasting. Instead the door was to be left open for private station licenses to continue to be issued.<sup>34</sup>

Private broadcasters had more freedom in deciding what would go on the air and they made no effort to shape "culture." They broadcast from county fairs, Rotary Club luncheons and hockey games. They drew many more listeners than did the CBC for private radio captured the interest, imagination, and listening attention of the public.<sup>35</sup>

Radio's potential was again raised at yet another parliamentary committee in the late 1930s. This time, radio was to be used as a patriotic instrument to determine whether Canada should go to war. As a propaganda machine, radio began spreading views that cast serious doubts about just how democratic the relationship was between government and those opposed to Canada's involvement in the conflict.<sup>36</sup> Just whose voice was on the radio? With the creation of the War Measures Act (1914) and later the Department of National War Services (1940), it became clear that the electronic instrument had the power to become more than just a home accompaniment of light music and commercials. The Canadian Radio League had long since gone. But the views of the League were now expressed and promoted by such organizations as the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Congress of Labour and the Canadian Association for Adult Education.

CBC continued its internal woes into the late 1940s. Under a newly appointed chairman, Davidson Dunton, the CBC appeared reliable and able to act in the best interests of the nation with no direct government control. Dunton had many hurdles to overcome: determining appropriate programming for a nation with acceptable Canadian content, appeasing advertisers who wanted their products advertised in certain time slots in particular programs to give their product maximum

exposure, as well as political considerations when it came to funding and expenses of producing material in the Toronto studios.<sup>37</sup> The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) had been established in the early 1940s and their growing membership of privately owned radio stations wanted recognition of their status. In their eyes, their independently owned stations should be on an equal footing with the CBC. To maintain their control over the high frequency channels and be a truly national network, the CBC and the CAB realized that a confrontation was brewing. It would take Parliament to eventually resolve the dispute, in the CBC's favour. It was no great surprise, therefore, that broadcasters felt that the rules governing the transmission of television would be decided in the same way and with the same results as radio's airwaves had been.<sup>38</sup>

A national survey of radio programs was carried out shortly after these pronouncements, to determine the appropriate balance between program content and audience preferences. Grave concern had been voiced during the pre-Broadcasting Act hearings regarding the use of Canadian resources for the production of programs that revealed the Canadian character and consciousness. As early as the late 1940s, the dual pressures in Canadian broadcasting could be felt – the vying for prominence between creating and maintaining a public and private broadcasting sector and the mandate to protect and enhance the national identity preventing foreign acculturation. With Canada's two "official" languages, five time zones, and sparse settlement it would be a considerable achievement.<sup>39</sup>

The first Fowler Commission (1955) would take this duality even further, proving how important these issues would be in the implementation and development of policy for Canadian television. Robert Fowler, Chairman of the Commission, saw the future of broadcasting as a combination of private and public

ownership regulated and controlled by an agency representing the public interest and responsible to Parliament. The Commission would suggest that the basics of Canadian broadcasting – to inform, to educate, to entertain – would have to include the opportunity to sell goods. Funding would remain a contentious issue even after television had been introduced in the country in 1952. They would maintain that television would be a great force, but they asked, how much was a nation willing to pay for fostering national heritage and developing Canadian spirit, in two languages?

As the national focus shifted from radio channels to television transmission, Halifax maintained its healthy relationship with radio. In the early 1950s there were three radio stations serving Metropolitan Halifax.<sup>40</sup> CHNS was the oldest station broadcasting for thirteen years without competition. Privately owned, CHNS carried a high proportion of CBC Dominion network programs. CJCH, also privately owned, was established in 1944, almost twenty years after radio had been first introduced in the area. The regional transmitter, CBA-Sackville, established in 1939, was heard in the outlying areas and was originally created to serve the entire Maritime area. However, CBH was the Trans-Canada network station in the city and opened in 1947. It tried to cover the parts of Metro Halifax that CBA missed but had a low signal strength.

Private radio broadcasters were extremely competitive and represented a wide variety of ownership interest. They were aggressive and in competition with CBC stations almost from the beginning and invariably came out on top, with large shares of listening audiences. They were insecure in their tenure, denied network privileges, heavily taxed and rigidly controlled as to their program content. Their prime purpose was to entertain and inform rather than to instruct. They reflected the culture of Canada, but did not try to shape it. They sold radio time to any political party as

long as there was no talk of overturning the government by force. They gave of their time and effort to community and national projects and claimed that they did a better job of "nation building" by uniting one community at a time around a common goal.<sup>41</sup> Many believed that the "television technology" would be a mere extension of that philosophy.

Radio began as family entertainment, everyone gathering around the electronic voicebox to share the experience. But it quickly became an individualistic activity. Most folks were content with radio, something they had grown used to and were now familiar with. Reports from the war fronts had solidified Canada's news broadcasts into a rallying cry for everyone and had proved a unifying instrument. However, radio programming quickly geared down to the lowest common denominator, the LCD of listening stations reports and statistics. Popular records were repeated every hour, brief snippets of news were heralded with bells and sirens, sports flashes were brief thirty second spots, and various community service announcements were interspersed with the light patter of the disc jockey. There was no set taste, at least not for any length of time, for adapting programming at a moment's notice was what kept radio current. From a novelty, radio became an appliance sitting on top of another appliance – the refrigerator in the kitchen or, on the night table beside the alarm clock. Radio became a habit, sound that filled the periphery of the mind, a comfortable undemanding companion. To bring a new electronic marvel into the home filled some with trepidation not to mention the justification of all the expense in a post-war time. What did those first purchasers of television think that television would do? History shows that television would change their routines, their leisure time, their conversations, their very lives: these concepts were something not even contemplated.

<sup>1</sup> Editor, R. Fitzhenry, "About Television," The Fitzhenry and Whiteside Book of Quotations. 3rd edition, (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1993) pp. 436-438.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Edinborough, "The Press," Mass Media In Canada, Editor, John Irving, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962) pp. 15-28.

<sup>3</sup> Wilfred Kesterton and Roger Bird, "The Press in Canada: An Historical Overview," Communications in Canadian Society, Edited by Benjamin Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1991), pp. 29-49.

By 1951, daily newspapers had circulation figures of 3,556,000 serving more than 3,409,000 households. Even as television was entering Canadian homes, the figures remained high. In 1953, circulation of 3,656,000 – 3,641,000 households and in 1955, circulation of 3,876,000 for 3,872,000 homes.

Historical Statistics of Canada, Canada Year Book 1956, (pp. 904-906) Canada Year Book, 1957-58, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1959), pp. 917-920.

Walter C. Soderlund, Walter I. Romanow, E. Donald Briggs, Ronald H. Wagenberg, Media and Elections In Canada, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Limited, 1984), pp. 2-5.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel J. Czitrom, Media and The American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p.xii, preface.

<sup>5</sup> Czitrom's story of the telegraph, the chapter called "Lightening Lines" explains the changes that the telegraph brought.

<sup>6</sup> John Irving, "The Development of Communications In Canada," Mass Media In Canada, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), pp. 3-11.

<sup>7</sup> Czitrom, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Czitrom, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> John Irving, pp. 3-11 and Czitrom, p.11-13.

<sup>10</sup> Czitrom, p.17.

<sup>11</sup> Czitrom, p. 24.

Mr. Czitrom also suggested that the telegraph equalized the newspapers - putting the provincial newspaper on a par with the metropolitan journal. Standardization of large-scale news gathering and modern news concepts began with the telegraph.

Equally interesting was that the first complaint of an illness caused by an invention arose at this time. The telegraph was blamed for the decline of culture due to nervousness. Specifically it was "brain workers" who were most affected. There were five principal causes of this ailment: steam power, the periodical press, the telegraph, the sciences and the mental activity of women. (Czitrom, pp. 20-21)

Alexander Graham Bell's telephone also provoked diverse and extravagant visions – the terrors of the telephone - an orator at a microphone heard by groups of people around the world. The world would never know a quiet moment again.

Erik Barnouw, Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television, p.3.

The Wireless Act of 1905 was the first piece of radio legislation passed by the Canadian Parliament. The wireless Act became Part IV of the Telegraphs Act of 1906.

Royal Commission on Broadcasting, Fowler I, Queen's Printer, Toronto, 1957, Appendix II, p. 297.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Weaver, "Books," Mass Media In Canada, editor, John Irving, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), pp. 31-49.

Later, Marshall McLuhan would lament that books had lost their pivotal place in our culture. Then, he was criticized, but that attitude is now part of modern thought.

Robert Fulford, Best Seat In The House: Memoirs of a Happy Man, (Don Mills: Collins Publishers, 1988), p.162.

The earliest libraries originated in the seventeenth century in Nova Scotia. Marc Lescarbot, Parisian scholar and advocate decided to share his important private collection of books with his fellow Acadians after his arrival in 1606.

Ostry, The Cultural Connection, p.36.

<sup>13</sup> J. R. Kidd, "Films," Mass Media In Canada, editor, John Irving, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), pp. 53-86 and Czitrom, pp. 10-12.



- <sup>14</sup> Czitrom, p. 43. (For his discussion on the development of American motion pictures, from 1893-1918, see pages 30-60.)
- <sup>15</sup> Czitrom, pp. 41-43.
- <sup>16</sup> Czitrom, pp. 30-45, and p. 52.  
For an interesting discussion on early film censorship in Canada, see Kidd's article on films, (pp. 73-75).  
Kidd, pp. 56.
- <sup>17</sup> Czitrom, p. 55.
- <sup>18</sup> Kidd, pp. 53-56.
- <sup>19</sup> He would also pose the question: do films degrade characters or ennoble them?  
This same fascination would be said of television, nearly forty years later.  
Kidd, p. 57.
- <sup>20</sup> Lillian Wylie, Montreal Gazette, September 24, 1968, RG: 41, Vol. 401, 23-1-3, pt.9..
- <sup>21</sup> Lillian Wylie, Montreal Gazette, September 24, 1968.  
Pierre Berton, "Everybody Boos the CBC," Maclean's Magazine, December 1, 1950, p.7.
- <sup>22</sup> The Nova Scotia connection to experimentation was not just the contribution made by Alexander Graham Bell and his telephone. In 1902, Marconi established a wireless telegraphy station at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, to further develop and enhance his transatlantic signal.  
CBC: A Brief History of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, p.1.  
Later on, in October 1931, television equipment was acquired for experimental purposes. A copy of a bid from Western Television Corporation of Chicago to LaPresse Publishing Company of Montreal shows expenses of \$5,008.67 for scanners, photo-electric cells, amplifiers, receiving sets and experienced engineers. To protect themselves against patent litigation, an indemnity declaration was also included for Mr. Spencer's signature. He was Chief Engineer of Station CKAC-Montreal at the time. The one hitch was the Canada Customs Office. The value on the machinery was questioned and the shipment was delayed at the border.  
Correspondence files Spencer/Western Television Corporation, National Archives, RG: 41, Volume 401, File 23-1-3.
- <sup>23</sup> (The development of this invention, radio, to have the ability to transmit the human voice was established by a Canadian, Reginald A. Fessenden and an American, Dr. Lee de Forest.)  
G. Jewett and D. Hall, "The Growth of Mass Media In Canada," Communications in Canadian Society, Edited by Benjamin Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1991), pp. 14-16.
- <sup>24</sup> Manitoba already operated two radio stations and the University of Alberta ran an educational station.
- <sup>25</sup> Frank Peers, The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting: 1920-1951. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p.394.
- <sup>26</sup> The other members were: Augustin Frigon, a radio expert and Charles Bowman, editor of the Ottawa Citizen.  
Report of the Royal Commission of Radio Broadcasting. p.6.  
Walter Soderlund, Walter Romanow, "Historical Overview," Media Canada: An Introductory Analysis, (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1992), 128-155.
- <sup>27</sup> Report of the Royal Commission of Radio Broadcasting. pp. 6-9.
- <sup>28</sup> Peers, The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting: 1920-1951. pp. 4, 123.  
Report of the Royal Commission of Radio Broadcasting. Canada Report of the Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1929), p.6.
- <sup>29</sup> A. F. Wrenshall, "Radio and Freedom", (Toronto: A. F. Wrenshall, 1951(c)), RG: 41, Vol. 401, File 23-1-3, pt.8., pp.2-4.  
Peers, The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting: 1920-1951. pp. 135-136, pp. 394-397.
- <sup>30</sup> Wrenshall, pp. 5 and 8.
- <sup>31</sup> Graham Spry, "A Case for Nationalized Broadcasting," Queen's Quarterly, Vol. 38, Winter: 1931, p.169.  
Frank Peers, The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting, pp. 413-439.

See also, David Taras, "Defending The Cultural Frontier: Canadian Television and Continental Integration," Seeing Ourselves: Media Power and Policy, Editors: Helen Holmes and David Taras, (University of Calgary: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich Canadian Inc., 1992), pp. 174-187.

<sup>32</sup> Canada Broadcasting Act of 1936, Articles 22(1)(c); 24(1).

See also the article written by Graham Spry, "The Canadian Broadcasting Issue," Canadian Forum, April 1931.

<sup>33</sup> Canada, CBC: Report of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the period November 2, 1936 to March 31, 1937. Ottawa: J. O. Patenaude, 1938, pp. 8-9.

<sup>34</sup> King's Liberal government in 1936 enshrined the CBC as a public broadcaster and established guidelines and principles for Canada's airwaves: to be owned by the public, Canadian in ownership, extended to all Canadians, paid by public and private sources and of high quality Canadian programming. However they did concede that some programs could be obtained from other sources.

Wrenshall, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Wrenshall, "Private Broadcasters," Radio and Freedom, pp. 8-13.

Not everyone agreed that the state should control the broadcaster. Quebec, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan challenged this ruling. The Courts upheld the government's position.

<sup>36</sup> Bruce Raymond, "Radio," Mass Media In Canada, Editor, John Irving, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), pp. 80-95.

<sup>37</sup> Dunton's battles are detailed in an article written by Alan Philips, "They All Throw Rocks at Davey Dunton," Maclean's Magazine, April 2, 1955, pp. 24-25, 37-38, and 40.

<sup>38</sup> Marc Raboy, Missed Opportunities: The Story of Canadian Broadcasting Policy, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), pp. 87-88.

<sup>39</sup> Canada's Official Languages Act would come into force until 1969.

G. Jewett and D. Hall, "The Development of Radio," Communications in Canadian Society, Edited by Benjamin Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1991), pp. 14-17.

<sup>40</sup> "Metropolitan Halifax" as defined by the 1951 Census of Canada includes: "...groups of urban communities in Canada which are in close geographic and social relationship.

Included in "Metropolitan Halifax" are the following communities: Halifax City, the Town of Dartmouth, Herring Cove and Spryfield, Armdale and the Dutch Settlement area, Rockingham and Bedford, the Dartmouth Lakes area, Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage, Woodside and Imperoyal.

It was estimated that there were 32,000 households in this metropolitan area at the time of the survey. (December 1954).

C.B.C. Halifax -Dartmouth Study: Part One - Radio Listening Patterns in a Canadian Community..."Before" Television. C.B.C. Bureau of Audience Research, Ottawa, December 9-15, 1954, p.5.

<sup>41</sup> Wrenshall, pp. 8-13.

See also, Irwin Goldman and James Winter, "Mass Media and Canadian Identity," Communications in Canadian Society, Edited by Benjamin Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1991), pp. 146-162.

For an interesting commentary on radio and its survival as a mass medium, see Don Jamieson, "The Nature of Radio," The Troubled Air, (Fredericton: Brunswick Press, 1966), pp. 73-93.

Television is the first truly democratic culture – the first culture available to everybody and entirely governed by what the people want.  
The most terrifying thing is what people do want.  
- Clive Barnes<sup>1</sup>

### **Chapter 3: TELEVISION WILL DO WHAT?**

Before television became the main home entertainment fixture, there were many questions about what exactly this new electronic gadget was, how it would work, what harm it would cause and what people would do with it. Would they like it? Would it replace radio, newspapers, movies? Would it incite wars or become a peacemaker? Would it be a home wrecker or a home maker? Some thought that television would usher in the greatest educational explosion since the printing press. Others believed that it would be an intrusion into the peace and quiet of the home. Still others suggested that it would show children a view of their world while others argued that its use would be the first sign of a civilization's decline into idiocy. Reviews were mixed at best and for many it seemed easier just to ignore the whole thing and hope that television would just go away. Round and round the question was asked, how would television be used?

And what about the existing media, how would television compete with them? There were those that felt that the press was and would continue to be the main Canadian agency of mass information and to worry over television's arrival was unnecessary. Professor Wilfred Eggleston believed that what "most Canadians know about Canada, and much of what they feel, must have come from the Press."<sup>2</sup> He felt that only the Press could best serve those people living far from the centres of

population, calling it "the department store of literature."<sup>3</sup> However this department store was very expensive to maintain and he went on to explain that advertisers needed the newspaper and the newspaper needed advertisers. As much as the talk of the day was that television would be a nation builder, Professor Eggleston maintained that it was really the press that functioned as a public utility as well as a public trust. The press he claimed, "can render to the cause of nationhood by dissemination of constructive news or by sponsoring the right kind of opinion."<sup>4</sup> He went on, however, to express his growing distress over the increasing dependency of the Canadian Press on American news services to fill their pages.<sup>5</sup>

Before television, Maritime Canada had already been involved in world wide communications with the building of the beaming station for CBC's Radio International Service near Sackville, New Brunswick. Sackville's salt-soaked marshes offered ground conductivity unrivalled in Canada. Transmission began December 25, 1944 and carried programs such as "News From Home" to Canadian soldiers abroad. Later post-war broadcasts included documentaries on the life and times of citizens in this country so foreign to Europeans. In an article for Macleans Magazine, Leslie Roberts wrote that this station "leads the audience to regard us as people with no propaganda razor to hone, CBC's Tower of Babel."<sup>6</sup> At war's end, it was hoped that familiarity with the people and customs of Canada would encourage those recovering from the ravages of war to buy Canadian goods. Personal messages were also transmitted to Europe as survivors sought family members. As a good-will ambassador, the Sackville-based international service also helped to cultivate ties abroad and encouraged new settlers from war-torn countries to settle in Canada.<sup>7</sup>

History shows that television did not disappear as some had hoped but became a force of its own, making and breaking political careers, reporting wars as

they happened, and yes, even entertaining. One may not agree with all the properties that were attributed to television. In fact, some of them may seem outlandish when viewed through today's eyes. But one must remember the times when television began when a post-war Canada was looking for prosperity, struggling with the remains of Victorian morality. Canada of the 1950s had a strong religious core; the clergy's opinion was important and was a strong voice in the day-to-day lives of Canadians. Many a Sunday sermon was focusing on this new machine. Was television the tool of the devil? Or could it be an instrument for national salvation? People were tired of hard times, of rationing, scrimping and saving. They wanted new homes, new cars and all the new gadgets that money could buy. Into this scene came television, an experience to be shared by millions, sometimes in groups but largely alone. This section details pre-television life in Halifax and captures some of the excitement and concerns that were part of this adventure.

In 1943, Creighton Peet wrote an article in Maclean's Magazine that painted a picture of the future, the world of 1955.<sup>8</sup> The accuracy of Mr. Peet's vision was amazing but for some readers, his speculations were very frightening. Many of the items are commonplace today but in pre-war Canada this magazine article was as far-fetched to readers as a science fiction story. He began by explaining that housing would take on a new look. This new world consisted of prefabricated homes, with movable walls as well as low-cost apartment developments. These homes would be sold by department stores on the instalment plan at cost of \$2 to \$8 weekly depending on the number of rooms and the terms of the agreement.

These homes were filled with modern conveniences. Hot water pipes under the home would permanently heat flower beds and allow for home gardening of many vegetables at any time of the year. Some of the windows would be constructed

of heavy sheets of transparent plastic with dead air space between them, allowing for more efficient insulation in both winter and summer. This would permit ultraviolet and infrared rays to penetrate and heat the home on sunny days. Kitchens and bathrooms would be constructed in one piece units with no seams or leaks for the annoying accumulation of mould and mildew. New kitchen tools would be made from stainless steel, incorporated right into the cupboard units while all the plumbing requirements would use pliable brass, copper and plastics, easier to handle and requiring less maintenance. Dusting would become a chore of the past, replaced by a central filter suction system within the home, trapping foreign particles and controlling humidity. The house would maintain a constant 70 degrees Fahrenheit, always comfortable, always the correct temperature regardless of the season.<sup>9</sup>

The community infrastructure would also reflect the innovations of technology as well. Groceries would be purchased from a "chain" grocery store, a new concept that would maximize space and allow for shared services by many users. The chain store would have a greater buying capacity than the individually-owned family businesses and would offer customers lower prices on many goods. Various other types of business could be accommodated in the one location. Housed in the upper floors of this facility, for example, would be lawyers' and doctors' offices and department stores. The lower floor would house a bus depot and post office.<sup>10</sup> By amalgamating many facilities, considerable savings in maintenance, heating and security costs would be achieved. Municipal agencies would group together to share centrally located heating, water and ventilation systems. The Public Library, town administration offices, as well as schools and an auditorium would combine to reduce overhead, ease parking problems, and serve as a modern focus for this model community.

And what about news and entertainment? Mr. Peet explained that for information in this new world, every family would have a personalized facsimile newspaper printer, installed in "a cabinet resembling the old 1943 radio."<sup>11</sup> Approximately sixteen pages long and ten inches wide, this newspaper would begin its print set-up around 2 AM, last page first. By 6 AM the paper would be ready to be folded with the most recent breaking news and headline on the front page. As for television, the viewers of this new age marvel would be treated to the best technological advances of the coming post war age. Sound and picture reproduction would take one to new worlds. If opera was the entertainment of choice for the evening, the family will simply turn on their large, full colour screened television set — a screen two feet by three feet, and be transported to Shakespeare's England, Venice or Prospero's island. If hockey was the evening's choice, a mere flick of the dial guaranteed fast action in living colour with lively commentary. The controls for this theatre-type viewing machine would reside in the arm of the davenport for easy access. As well, viewers could adjust the sound for full fidelity, fine tune the focus for close up reproduction and cleaner picture resolution. An outside aerial increased capability for multiple channels, increased coverage and premium reception. "Much better than the old radio set" was the highest accolade for this new invention.

In the second part of the article written a month later, Mr. Peet gave the reader a thumbnail sketch of television's world of 1955.<sup>12</sup> Increasing advertising revenue would turn the television industry into both a profitable and powerful force.<sup>13</sup> Movie stars, working twice as hard as before, would be very busy creating new programs for the ever increasing small-screen audiences. Instead of a movie shooting schedule of several months, the made-for-television material required memorizing, rehearsing, and taping all within the space of a few weeks. Television would create an

insatiable appetite for drama, but production costs for a two-hour program would increase, from a meagre \$100,000 for simple shows to \$500,000 for a rousing, fully-casted musical piece. These high production costs would generate considerable worry among network executives because the television cameras, electrical equipment installations with additional crew were expensive enough but with the added salaries, on-location site shooting and production expenses, it would be difficult to make any profit on a piece that could be shown only once. Stiff competition and intense bidding for one-year old films was one alternative, cheaper and with less wear and tear on an already fragile market of ready scripts and actors. For Mr. and Mrs. Average Canadian, however, "television gives them front-row seats for the theatre, movies, sports and news events."<sup>14</sup> This was the anticipated world that Haligonians read about and wondered how soon they would be able to enjoy.

A year later, Maclean's Magazine featured an article highlighting the by-line "Television is NOT around the next corner but what will it do when it gets here?"<sup>15</sup> Merrill Denison asked the reader many questions about the business of television. Would it be a "saviour of post-war enterprise, providing new jobs for millions, creating billions of dollars of new wealth? Will it repeat the Cinderella stories of movies and radio?"<sup>16</sup> The answers to these questions rested with the "gentle reader", and that particular individual's family members and neighbours. If the readers were convinced that television was worth spending money on, it could become the most potent medium of entertainment with revolutionary social, cultural and industrial potentialities. Or it could just as easily become another novelty item with limited appeal.

After a lengthy discussion on the technological aspects of television – cables, tubes, channel spectrums and conductors – Mr. Denison predicted that



enhancements around the corner would improve picture quality and produce reasonably priced sets, new "televisors" from \$200 to \$300, "with little distortion on an image large enough to be viewed without pronounced concentration and consequent eyestrain."<sup>17</sup> But the big concern was who would be paying for television. He predicted that the consumer would be the one footing the bill. And what would they receive in return? Television would be controlled by those who handled radio, the broadcasters, advertisers and local celebrities. His judgement was gloomy: "programs well below radio's standard, ancient travel films, antiquated movie shorts interlaced with third-rate vaudeville acts, radio skits, cookery demonstrations and radio news commentaries."<sup>18</sup> He maintained that a large cumbersome television camera would not be conducive to serious thought and reflection.

Denison claimed that the two adjectives that would become the buzzwords in relation to television were "instantaneously" and "immediately."<sup>19</sup> Millions of dollars would be spent convincing people that the sooner one saw and heard anything, the greater the feeling of participation and community involvement. It would be much more exciting to watch a game and see a team score that last winning play than to be told about it after the fact during a radio broadcast. But he warned that that was the only advantage that television had over radio, stage or screen. His logic was: "except for the quality of immediacy, television can bring you nothing more than a change in the locale in which you seek your entertainment. Hence the importance of the word "immediacy."<sup>20</sup> The great radio broadcasting networks had been sustained largely by convincing the listening public that "live" broadcasts were greatly superior to recorded transcriptions of programs. If this same illusion was carried over into television, broadcasters could maintain their important position in the world of advertising and entertainment.

Denison's last point concerned the nature of humans in general, that television would not be able to compete with our "gregarious natures." Most folks preferred to be out and about, visiting friends and family, going places. Would television keep everyone home? Rather than using radio as a background enhancement to other social activities, Denison claimed that television would demand "concentrated attention with lights out and baby stilled." His vision of television was Janus-like; either it would be a medium for selling soap and showing second rate movies, or television would be an apparatus to be governed with great forethought. With the necessary establishment of checks and balances, television could become "a great instrument for education, enlightenment and entertainment that man had ever known."<sup>21</sup>

As early as 1949 the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) became concerned with television's use. The CAAE had developed two major radio programs to encourage and promote better communication among Canadians and to facilitate participatory democracy. Farm Forum, a program reaching 30,000 listeners at its peak, dealt with the economic, social, educational problems faced by those living in farming communities and their attempts to develop such organizations as co-operatives and credit unions. Citizen's Forum was a program designed to rekindle a spirit of active participation in public life, to overcome the bitterness between English and French Canadians engendered by World War II.<sup>22</sup> Audiences had reached as high as half a million and the CAAE was not in any hurry to get into another format that might not be as successful. An editorial, written by Harriet Rouillard for the CAAE sponsored magazine, Food For Thought, thanked the CBC for prohibiting television transmission for at least two more years. She said it would give everyone more time to figure out how to use it. She observed that Canadians knew of television only by

reading about it and its claims were either a glamorous package at best or a considerable nuisance.<sup>23</sup>

The first problem for Rouillard was the cost of the sets themselves. In Britain, a television country since 1936, a model with a screen ten by twelve inches was selling for one hundred and fifteen pounds.<sup>24</sup> With a screen that size Rouillard suggested, it was not to be used to "lull the breadwinner to his after dinner nap or feed the mind of the housewife when she engaged in household chores."<sup>25</sup> Television would demand a viewer's complete attention. Besides the price of the sets themselves, costs of production were a major factor in the resistance to television. She estimated that a television show and a radio show of the same length would require five times as many people to create the visual and audio production -- seventeen people in fact.<sup>26</sup> Although some productions might be of a cultural flavour, such as King Lear, Rouillard felt that its power would be lost on an "at home" audience. In fact, she complained that one of the disadvantages of television entertainment was that "it did not provide escape from the distractions and disturbances of the domestic environment."<sup>27</sup> Telephones would ring, babies would cry and people would drop in for a visit just at the climactic point of the drama. All enjoyment would be lost.

Rouillard's personal experience with television had been that of watching a big league baseball game on a set hooked up in the lobby of a motion picture theatre in the United States. She felt it was a limiting experience because the ball was lost to the viewer whenever it left the bat or when the runner ran off the screen when he left the base. She saw no reason for the radio broadcasters and sport commentators to be worried over losing their jobs.

The intrusion of the television camera into the middle of an event was another objection. Ms. Rouillard's example was that of the Democratic and Republican conventions. For her, it had been something to suffer through – the harsh lights, the movie cameras and flash bulbs, not to mention the garish make-up of the main speakers. She asked if the suffering had been really necessary either for the viewers or the participants.

The language of technology offended Ms. Rouillard. "Video-scanners" or "video-genics," "tele-lookers" or "tele-genics;" another wave of new words was being created to explain to the viewers just what they were doing.<sup>28</sup> But she reasoned, this same experience had been lived through for radio and films. So too with television. As for education and the role television would play, Ms. Rouillard hoped that CBC would maintain its tough stance on propriety, economic caution and good taste. Intellectual, ethical programs would be very important "in the development of this new social force."<sup>29</sup>

It was to Mr. Walter Stone that Ms. Rouillard looked to provide specific details on the role television would play in education. In the same issue of Food For Thought, Mr. Stone expressed concerns about the results of several studies that had been completed in the United States.<sup>30</sup> The results pointed to many direct effects attributed to television, effects felt by the radio and motion picture industries as well as on family life in general. Reduction in attendance for a variety of outside-the-home activities had been noted and radio listening patterns had changed in those homes that had televisions. The net result, Mr. Stone indicated, was that television was "going to disturb deeply the American systems of communication and may profoundly change certain long established American habits of entertainment and education."<sup>31</sup> He predicted that by 1950, transmissions from coast-to-coast would be routine and

that by 1953 some sixty million people could be watching television. A New York poll of owners, done in late 1948, showed that "the majority of home receivers are owned by families in the lower middle class."<sup>32</sup> Mr. Stone found this trend upsetting and Ms. Rouillard was even more convinced that television was not in everyone's best interest.

Public or private funding was an issue of large debate south of the border, and Mr. Stone felt that the Canadian system of co-existence between government operated and private operators would considerably eliminate advertising competition at the expense of public service programs. Technical difficulties would be the most serious problem in Canada owing to the geography of such a diverse land. Trying to connect the whole country, particularly those rural areas of Canada not near a major centre, would be a major, expensive undertaking. He cautioned that television would grow quickly and if educators used it wisely, adult education would take on a new lease on life, if it was included in the classroom, for he believed that "television stimulates while it teaches."<sup>33</sup> Television would "supply the imagination when the student was unsure" and would be able to reach large audiences simultaneously.<sup>34</sup> However, he was quick to point out that these theories were yet to be tested.<sup>35</sup> Television, he believed, would give the teacher a new method of demonstration and allow for more graphic illustration of material, charts and maps, for example. As well, television "heightens interest, clarifies thinking, improves judgement and promotes fuller discussion."<sup>36</sup>

Mr. Stone suggested that in Canada, the National Farm Radio Forum (originally established in 1941 and later the Citizen's Forum in 1943) could be further developed to become the pioneer in the field of educational television. A televised "field-trip" was an inexpensive and safe method of transporting many city school children to the field, forest and pasture as well as museums and art galleries. He drew

attention to the vast array of subjects that could utilize this new medium to its advantage. One program already started and gaining popularity in the United States was "The Nature of Things," a commercially-sponsored science program originally produced at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, presenting popularized lectures and demonstrations in the physical sciences."<sup>37</sup> Topics included: child care, agriculture, art, literature, world affairs, history, music, health, dancing, sports, handicrafts, practical skills, home economics and drama. Even though Mr. Stone saw the reality of the daunting task of connecting Canada's coasts, he believed that the possibilities offered would be worth the effort. He believed that "television would become the most vital communications link between isolated farm families and their urban supply, social and governmental centres."<sup>38</sup> As a final comment, Mr. Stone suggested that the National Film Board would have to take on even broader roles – planning, supervising and distributing films for television as well as creating the documentary type of film for both Canadian and world wide distribution.

Established in 1939, to show Canada to Canadians, the National Film Board (NFB) created by John Grierson was an advocate of film stories of "real" people, and diligently fostered his vision of awareness of the present as well as respect for the past. He believed that to see and hear real people and their situations was to educate and widen horizons for all. The master of the best wartime documentaries ever produced, he provided the base and reputation for other productions to establish themselves in Canada. He also believed that the NFB should co-ordinate film services for the Federal government. Creating training films for the Armed Services and news reels for theatre allowed new film makers to practice and gain experience. This created a screen journalism of considerable impact. Over three hundred films were created during this period on such varied subjects as industry, the

arts, government, world problems, mental health, science and safety. The NFB associated themselves with universities, departments of education, Junior Chambers of Commerce, service clubs and national organizations.<sup>39</sup>

Pierre Berton was introduced to television in 1949 on a visit to New York. At that time, New York had five stations and more than half a million televisions. He viewed the prospect of television with awe but was confused by the lingo of those that were initiated into the finer points of viewing. Already, he had been told that "television will undoubtedly have a profound effect on our social mores."<sup>40</sup> But what effect exactly?

Seasoned "tele-viewers" told him that the "tele-virus" crept across the city, finding a home in bars, indoor swimming pools and apartment blocks. Aerials sprung up overnight.<sup>41</sup> Small talk around town now included references to a puppet named Howdy Doody, a wrestler named Golden Superman, and a radio comedian named Milton Berle.<sup>42</sup> Children were mesmerized by "the Monster," for Berton described television as a one-eyed monster with a "flat cranium, protruding two great beetle-like feelers, knobbed at the end."<sup>43</sup> His first television evening was spent in a friend's apartment, the set the focal point of the room. Berton observed that the set "performed the same function as a fireplace in a pre-tv room."<sup>44</sup> The chairs were arranged in theatre fashion, lights were dimmed. Newsreels, comedy skits, songs and jokes filled two hours of entertainment. When the show was over, the host and the Bertons discussed the merits of the programs, the advantages of having a television when there were small children in the family and the differences between radio and television shows. Berton's friend felt a great majority of television programming was geared towards children. Throughout the remainder of the evening, the set-up of the room remained in theatre fashion, making it difficult and awkward to continue the

conversation. The Bertons left for home the next day, and on their return to Toronto viewed their two-radio-apartment a little differently. After having "experienced" the latest electronic marvel it would not be long before another family succumbed to the electronic eye.

Another journalist, Jean McKinley brought the television issue even closer to home by raising the question of how would one ever get the dishes washed on Tuesday nights. This author felt that even with one channel, Canadians would have quite a dilemma for a "good evening (of television) completely takes over your household."<sup>45</sup> Although sceptical about this new fad, Ms. McKinley agreed to install this gadget in her living room. To investigate television before writing an article for Canadian Homes, Ms. McKinley tuned into an American channel one evening, beginning at 7:00 PM with the evening news. Several hours later, after interviews, entertainment, movies, the American anthem played and still no dishes had been done. At first, every program was exciting, even the commercials but soon the novelty wore off and a more casual approach took over. Newspaper listings in the evening papers were scanned and gave advance notice of "favourite" shows. From then on, McKinley's social calendar changed, for once again, another person had succumbed to "tv-itis."

Dishwashing chores aside, McKinley's horizons were broadened as New York, Washington, London came into her living room. Seeing was believing as the Reds captured Shanghai and Princess Elizabeth returned from the Continent. News items became identified with real events, not just ideas. Famous names became people with smiling faces. McKinley predicted that there would soon be a television in every home, but the problem was where to put it? Television could not go in front of the fireplace for it took up a lot of space and certainly was not pleasing to a



designer's eye. Television would need its own space. McKinley predicted that television would become a "viewing event" of its own, a great medium for variety entertainment that would "add warmth to one's home and steal the hearts and time of the viewer."<sup>46</sup> The chores would have to wait.

Household chores left undone was the warning cry of other articles written during television's infancy. Television had writer Mrs. R. D. Sunley worried. Owning a radio had had little effect on the daily running of the home, but owning a television was another matter. She foresaw difficulties ahead. Ironing, dusting, scrubbing and cooking routines ran smoothly along with radio accompaniment, but how could one peel potatoes and watch the Happy Gang without an accident? Children were already a generation that struggled with homework. How would they be able to comprehend algebra with sore eyes and weary minds from too much Dick Tracy? How would Father read his evening paper in a darkened living-room while the little ones were involved in the daily adventures of Maggie Muggins? Mrs. Sunley warned that one's home would no longer offer the sanctuary of quiet contemplation, seated in an over-stuffed chair by the warm fireplace, in the living room. Instead, the old-fashioned "parlour" would resemble a movie theatre; cozy chairs out, folding chairs in, coffee tables shoved up against the walls and lamps dimmed. Wall colours would be toned down, bland tones being better able to off-set television's glare. Perhaps floors would be sloped to "avoid discrimination against the second row."<sup>47</sup> She warned that anyone who suggested that television might bring the wandering family back home to spend time together was mistaken. "Unless television does a better job than radio has ever done, the family unit will be wasting time staring in front of it."<sup>48</sup> They might as well do their staring outside of the home. However, there was a bright side, there were those within the community that would benefit. Grocery stores would

increase their sales of crackers and other packaged snacks for all that unexpected company would frustrate the unprepared hostess. Mrs. Sunley maintained that optometrists would increase their business because of the additional eye strain. After exciting boxing matches, family doctors might have an increase in heart attack victims. Although soap and food commercials were "opening new vistas of horror" that the radio admen had never even imagined, Mrs. Sunley recommended Tuesday as the "best night on your new television set."<sup>49</sup> So much for the chores.

And then there was the story of the housewife who realized that something odd was happening to her family when her evening meal was delayed. Father unpacked the television set and assorted parts. With the outside aerial firmly secured on the roof, Grace Secord's neighbours quickly arrived, turning her cozy living room seating arrangement into theatre rows, using every available chair to accommodate her uninvited quests.<sup>50</sup> Of course, everyone had a taste of the pie she had made for the family's dessert. But when the set was ready and the lights were dimmed, television waved its "magic wand and time ceased to exist."<sup>51</sup>

Spell-binding plays and dramas enticed one to sit and watch. In her article for Saturday Night, Ms. Secord warned that if neglecting chores caused the reader a guilt-ridden conscience, then it was best not to purchase a set. Even commercials were entertainment, "products in actual use portrayed in animated skits such as cigarettes coming forth from their package and doing a sort of rhythmic Changing of The Guard."<sup>52</sup> For charming ease in front of the camera she recommended the Arthur Godfrey show with interesting guests and music. But she had decided that she would not watch the wrestling matches. "Ladies don't go in for such things."<sup>53</sup> However, once the program started, there she was, routing for one opponent, then the other, while time slipped away. After a very entertaining evening,

Ms. Secord went off to bed to the sounds of a low moaning sound overhead. The new aerial produced additional entertainment, organ chords in the wind. As the new sounds lulled her to sleep, she wondered how she would find a way to do the evening dishes in the living room?

Leading television promoters continued to make claims about television's uses – an educational force particularly for rural schools, a teacher of doctors and new operating techniques, a broker for the international exchange of ideas – television could do this and more. Television was not to be viewed as a wonder drug that would cure all the ills of the education system however. It was merely a technical device to be used to assist the instructors in doing their jobs, for television should not change the aim of education. Concern was being raised about what kind of educational instrument television would be. Would it be considered an advocate of public service? Could it indeed "deepen our individual experience, communicate human personality, illustrate the infinite variety of the human condition, and examine the lives of others, making us examine ourselves, making us more contemplative and developing our critical perception?"<sup>54</sup> There were others that felt that clearer objectives were necessary to determine just what use of television would be in the field of education. Suggestions were that television must have organized subject matter, effective presentation tools, have convenient times for viewing with adequate schedule for program lengths. Television could become the school, the library, the art gallery, the museum, the university. Television, if used wisely, would make education universal.<sup>55</sup>

By 1954, educational programs were becoming very popular in those areas already serviced by television and linked to the American networks. One column in Saturday Night magazine, written by Hugh Garner, enthusiastically

endorsed a science program called "John Hopkins Science Review," hosted by Lynn Poole. Sunday afternoons were definitely "educational" in Mr. Garner's view.<sup>56</sup>

"Educational" television programming was already the topic of conversation as a program from London, England concerning graphic details and open discussion on pregnancy was denounced as inappropriate for viewers. The program offered how-to tips on beauty both during and after pregnancy as well as tips on regaining one's figure afterwards. Real women were used, not actors. What was curious was that the show became a hit and was even favourably reviewed in the Halifax papers.<sup>57</sup>

Within five years after the Halifax hook-up, the future of educational television held such promise. Seven countries along with Canada would be experimenting with educational television: the United States, Britain, France, Australia, Belgium, Italy and Japan.<sup>58</sup> In Halifax, the experiment combining television and education would consist of three lessons on electricity (grade IV), three lessons on Nova Scotia geography (grade V), and three lessons on math (grade VIII). Twenty schools would eventually participate. This trial period would prove that television would not become a substitute for the competent classroom teacher but merely be another aid for their use. However, it was suggested that Halifax teachers could improve their techniques by watching the professionals on the film. The CAAE maintained that television would be most effective if they limited the television lessons to 15-20 minute periods. Otherwise, the students would lose interest.<sup>59</sup>

Another voice, Jean Tweed had concerns about who would control television and why. Writing for Maclean's Magazine, Tweed was not convinced that the impact of television in Canada would mirror that of the United States. With radio, Canadian broadcasters had used American programs, with "as much originality as a mimeograph machine," preventing the growth of a Canadian industry and the

employment that such inventiveness could generate.<sup>60</sup> Distribution of films and other material would pose a problem to Canadian producers if the United States was allowed to dump their films in Canada. Tweed worried that the same fate would occur with television programming as had with radio. Since American films had already been created and sold to the American networks at a profit, they could be sold cheaply in Canada thereby discouraging any new productions by Canadian artists. It appeared that the technology was being built to allow such "dumping." Even J. Alphonse Ouimet, Chief Engineer and co-ordinator of television for the CBC, in a speech to the Engineering Institute of Canada, maintained that Canada would "use the same broadcasting standards as the United States to enable Canadians to tune in directly to American stations." Similarly, it would enable Americans "to enjoy Canadian television programs."<sup>61</sup>

However, that was the other part of the problem. Just who was governing the industry in Canada? If not the artists, was the power being assumed by politicians both for policy making and the economics of production? Continual parliamentary committees kept the fight in the public eye, but this drawn out discussion only wasted time and did not solve the broadcasting dilemma. The compromise between public and private broadcasting was an election issue in the 1950s. The Conservatives felt that privately held interests would be in the best interests of the public, while the Liberals maintained that a strong CBC was the only real instrument of national unity. It was hoped that a clear mandate from the recently established Royal Commission would eliminate this confusion. The Royal Commission on the Arts and Sciences, and its Chairman Mr. Vincent Massey, emphasized, however, that the Royal Commission "would not lay down standards of taste, nor would it make recommendations on the way television facilities and

opportunities will be made available."<sup>62</sup> Tweed was willing to take a wait-and-see attitude about television and leave the hypothetical "wise audience" to their posturing.

An article written in Saturday Night by Lorne Greene, a Canadian radio celebrity at the time, suggested the many different roles that television could fill. He also noted that people tended to believe in the magic of television in whatever way they believed in any other media currently in vogue. "For movie makers, another branch of motion pictures, for theatre people, an extension of Broadway, for advertisers, a better way to sell soap" or for educators, another University of the Air; but all of these parts did not contain television. This "new medium of mass communication" was capable of anything, with a voice and body attached: news, drama, sports, education, music and advertising.<sup>63</sup> Its capacity for versatility was contained only by the limits of the imagination and the expense budget. The general belief was that television "could bring to the home almost everything that radio, the cinema, the stage, the arena, the billboard, the display window had brought to people in times past."<sup>64</sup> What captured everyone's imagination was the miracle of television itself, linking cities, a whole country, eventually the globe into one community, Marshall McLuhan's "global village" of the 1960s.<sup>65</sup>

The medical profession was beginning to view television with alarm. Its impact was "arresting, authoritative and personally intimate"; its psychological effect could be described as "bordering on hypnotic." In a special edition of The Halifax Mail-Star, published three weeks before television arrived, readers were offered the "rules of TV viewing" by Margaret Corbett.<sup>66</sup> Based on research done by a British physician, William Bates, Corbett maintained that the viewing room, or living room in most cases, had to have plenty of fresh air for the eyes needed oxygen. Viewers had to sit a comfortable distance from the set and watch the program seated straight in

front of the screen, not at an angle. Good posture was important, for the head must be balanced over the spinal column. Finally the room had to be illuminated correctly and during a lull in the TV action, the closed eyes were covered with warm palms. Following these rules would increase the enjoyment and improve vision. In fact, Corbett claimed, people with short vision would find as the weeks passed that they might be able to sit farther and farther back from the screen, while farsighted viewers might find themselves edging closer. The article closed with the CBC having no opinion on these claims. Public opinion seemed more accepting of these suggestions, however, for living room furniture was re-aligned theatre fashion, televisions were moved near open windows and hostesses purchased extra folding chairs and small lamps which were more easily moved. Other rules for viewing recommended keeping a light on in the room to protect one's eyes from damage and ensuring that the set was unplugged at night so it would not sizzle, explode and incinerate the house.<sup>67</sup> The last warning was that after watching television for several hours, one should not drive, especially at night. It was believed that the eye would not focus correctly after having been subjected to flickering lights for prolonged periods so waiting at least an hour before getting behind the wheel was recommended.<sup>68</sup>

The hypnotic eye was a big danger to television viewers. People persisted in watching every program, staring at the screen, as if paid by the hour. Then they would complain about the programs the next day.<sup>69</sup> An article in the local paper claimed that people should spend at least as much time selecting what goes into their minds via television as they did in selecting the tomatoes that went into their stomachs. The author went on to point out that the quality of programming was low, that television was becoming more than entertainment. It was a kind of opiate from which one could escape reality, a slavery of the mind; and Aristotle had warned "that

the worst thing about slavery is that eventually slaves get used to it."<sup>70</sup> CBC Halifax had been on the air only three months.

As the reality of television drew nearer, criticism mounted concerning the costs involved in its development. The CBC became "Public Whipping Boy Number One." It was as if viewers projected their "individual social frustrations upon some specific trait in our culture," this viewing habit, and made it "a whipping boy for our inability to control the apparent social breakdown which accompanied very rapid social change."<sup>71</sup> Opposition was fierce over the original license fee for radio receivers, \$2.50 per year, but the proposed fee for television receivers was \$25, causing even more comment.<sup>72</sup> This sparked debate not only about the new medium and its subsequent development country-wide but it raised issues about communications in general.



<sup>1</sup> Editor, R. Fitzhenry, "About Television," The Fitzhenry and Whiteside Book of Quotations. 3rd edition, (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1993), pp. 436-438.

<sup>2</sup> Wilfred Eggleston, "The Press of Canada," Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, Sciences, Massey Commission, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), p.42.

Eggleston defined what a newspaper was supposed to do. "It offers a great and assorted volume of news, entertainment in several varieties, education, opinion, interpretation and a very extensive and important market service." (Massey Commission, p. 47)

<sup>3</sup> Eggleston, "The Press of Canada," p.43.

<sup>4</sup> Eggleston, "The Press of Canada," p.46.

<sup>5</sup> Eggleston, "The Press of Canada," pp. 47-49.

See also "The Press In Canada: An Historical Overview," Communications in Canadian Society, Editor, Benjamin D. Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson Canada and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1981), pp. 12-45.

Television would quickly become an 'intrusion' into politics. In Winnipeg, a cameraman was considered rude and was reprimanded for recording the Legislative Assembly during their silent period of prayers. The Members found the glaring bright lights an irritation. The author of the piece was reconciled to the fact that the camera would focus on many institutions but it was hoped that good taste and polite manners were prevail.

The Halifax Mail-Star, February 8, 1955, p.4.

<sup>6</sup> Leslie Roberts, "The CBC's Tower of Babel," Maclean's Magazine, February 15, 1948, p. 21.

The tallest television tower had yet to be built, in Belgium. Housing two television stations, one French, one Flemish, the tower would be constructed with a base of 300 feet in diameter and a height over 1,700 feet. To help defray the costs, visitors would be charged a fee for a tour of the structure.

The Halifax Mail-Star, March 1, 1955, p4.

<sup>7</sup> Roberts, pp. 30-32.

<sup>8</sup> Creighton Peet, "Your House of Tomorrow," Maclean's Magazine, September 15, 1943, pp. 12-13, 43-45.

<sup>9</sup> Creighton Peet, "Your House of Tomorrow," pp. 12-13, 43-45.

Ten different types of plastics, some brittle, some opaque, would be used in construction drastically reducing overall costs and virtually eliminating the need for skilled craftsmen such as carpenters and plasterers. Houses would be constructed of pressure-treated wood to ensure that it was fireproof and decay-proof. Factory construction would also reduce tedious, labour intensive, brush-by-individual-brush stroke painting and repairs. What painting that was required would be done in the factory, spray painting complete surfaces, cupboards, shelves, before the house arrived at the site for assembly. Furniture such as davenport and tables would be built into sections of non-movable walls. The whole unit would be portable -- across the street or across the country.

In the kitchen, refrigerators would have a "quick-freeze" unit to preserve game, fruits, or fish. Special electric lamps would be installed in a room just off the kitchen for drying clothes in inclement weather. As for home security, an electric eye beam would notify the local police when an intruder crossed its path.

Exotic fruits and vegetables would be easily available at the local supermarket, their freshness and variety guaranteed by daily "air express" delivery.

Mr. Peet defined 'apartments' as units in apartment buildings, five and six story houses, surrounded by wide expanses of park and play areas for children. Inside they would have all the luxuries and improvements of any private home.

<sup>10</sup> Halifax Shopping Centre and Bayers Road Shopping Centre are examples of this type of architectural design.

<sup>11</sup> Creighton Peet, "Tomorrow's Television," Maclean's Magazine, October 15, 1943, pp. 19-20, 30.

<sup>12</sup> Creighton Peet, "Tomorrow's Television," pp. 20 + 30.

<sup>13</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, March 9, 1955, front page.

<sup>14</sup> Within two years of CBC's sign-on in Toronto, there was some doubt as to what news would be presented to the viewer. News and the delivery of the items became an issue when Hugh Garner asked why the CBC had been late with a bulletin announcing Marilyn Bell's successful swim across Lake Ontario. (She had completed her feat at 8:06 and CBC did not report the results until 8:30.) Garner asked why no mobile unit had been at the waterfront. He also objected to the sensational approach taken with the other subjects of the broadcast – the interviews and discussions with various US Senators in Washington and a report on segregation in West Virginia. Items were treated as a news reel with voice over affects and Garner grumbled that there was "no news in the news".

Hugh Garner, "All The News Unfit To Print," Saturday Night, October 9, 1954, p.18.

<sup>15</sup> Merrill Denison, "What About Television?," Maclean's Magazine, December 15, 1944, pp. 17, 38-41.

<sup>16</sup> Denison, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> The height of the picture was one problem, the frequency for sound reproduction was another. For an explanation of how the television transmitter was created, see the articles by Len Spencer, "The Early Evolution of Television," Broadcast Engineering, July 1964, (pp. 14-16 and pp. 18-20), and "Birth of the TV Miracle – 1925," The Canadian Broadcaster, May 1968, (pp. 58, 60-61).

<sup>18</sup> Denison, p.40.

<sup>19</sup> Denison, p.40.

<sup>20</sup> Denison, pp. 40.

<sup>21</sup> Denison, p. 41.

<sup>22</sup> However, the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada claimed they were receiving no representation from these forums.

Marc Raboy, Missed Opportunities: The Story of Canadian Broadcasting Policy, pp. 65-74.

<sup>23</sup> Harriet Rouillard, "In Our Opinion," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, January 1949, pp. 1-3.

<sup>24</sup> Approximately \$4 per British Sterling was equal to \$460 (Cdn), in the 1950s.

<sup>25</sup> Within months of television sign-on, an article in Saturday Night would claim that housewives no longer had time to iron shirts because they were too busy copying recipes, watching soap operas and Arthur Godfrey. The claim went on, "Daytime TV is the best thing invented to keep the housewife happy since the wooden baby cradle passed away."

Hugh Garner, "Women's Work is Never Done," Saturday Night, November 21, 1953, pp 9,10.

<sup>26</sup> How that figure was arrived at was not explained.

<sup>27</sup> Rouillard, pp. 1-3.

<sup>28</sup> It began with 'Video' from the Latin 'to see', UHF - Ultra High Frequency, VHF - Very High Frequency. Then there was: the bowtie, the dipole, the double vee, the helical, the corner reflector, and the yagi. What does this last group have in common? They are all aeriels!

The Halifax Mail-Star, Special Television Edition, December 6, 1954.

<sup>29</sup> Rouillard, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Walter Stone, "Plan Now for Television," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, January 1949, pp. 5-8.

<sup>31</sup> Stone, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Stone, p.6.

<sup>33</sup> Stone, pp. 7-8.

<sup>34</sup> Stone, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> Stone, pp. 7-8.

Preliminary experiments were being carried out with the co-operation of the US Navy, Columbia University and New York's Citizen's Unity Council. Television had been used to train some 200,000 New York City Air Raid wardens and assistants in various areas of the city with minimal effort and a consistent level of demonstration. The American Medical Association had used television at their recent conference in order to explain new information and techniques to physicians and surgeons in attendance.

<sup>36</sup> Stone, p. 7.

- <sup>37</sup> Stone, p. 8.
- <sup>38</sup> Stone, p. 8.
- <sup>39</sup> The NFB films were viewed all across the country. In 1952 they had an audience of 11,600,000. In 1956, a record number of 50,000 showings would handle 14,600,000 people. Ostry, The Cultural Connection, p. 46.
- Between 1902-1952 some 2,500 theatres including drive-ins generated \$100 million in revenue. In 1952, the 2,500 theatres were still busy with over 260 million admissions. After television's arrival on the scene, in the space of only a few years, this would decrease to 1,900 theatres, 150 million admissions and a mere \$81 million in revenue.
- Stone, p.8.
- Morris Wolfe, Jolts: The TV Wasteland and The Canadian Oasis, (Toronto: James Lorimer and Co., 1985), pp. 80-84.
- <sup>40</sup> Pierre Berton, "Make Way For the One-Eyed Monster," Maclean's Magazine, June 1, 1949, pp. 8, 56-57.
- <sup>41</sup> Aerials were causing problems with migratory birds. They were victims of the steel structures that interfered with their natural radar. A representative from the Audubon Society commented that "modern living conditions create problems for "feathered folk," and suggested that there be sufficient space around the aerials and that the birds be discouraged from nesting in the poles.
- The Halifax Mail-Star, October 13, 1954, p.2.
- <sup>42</sup> Berton, p. 56.
- <sup>43</sup> Berton, p. 8.
- <sup>44</sup> Berton, p. 56.
- <sup>45</sup> Jean McKinley, "Seeing is Believing," Canadian Homes, August 1949, pp. 11-13.
- <sup>46</sup> McKinley, p. 35.
- <sup>47</sup> R. D. Sunley, "Housewife Looks At Television," Canadian Homes, April 1950, p.98.
- <sup>48</sup> Sunley, p.98.
- <sup>49</sup> Sunley, p. 98
- <sup>50</sup> Chamber's cartoon, entitled "The Morning After," showed exactly what Mrs. Sunley was describing. The woman of the house had quite a mess to tidy up, living room floor to vacuum, rows of chairs to put away, coffee cups and ashtrays to wash.
- The Halifax Mail-Star, January 8, 1955, p.4.
- <sup>51</sup> Grace E. Secord, "Television Tonight," Saturday Night, October 4, 1949, p.10.
- <sup>52</sup> Secord, p.10.
- Politicians were already raising concerns about the format of commercials, expressing distaste over 'squalling babies and moaning people" selling goods. Angus McLean (Queens) complained that regulations regarding content, and the guidelines of good taste must prevail.
- The Halifax Mail-Star, June 11, 1954, p.6.
- As well, the frequency of advertisements was causing concern as television spread across the country. For a 30-minute program, sponsors were limited to four minutes and 15 seconds of commercials. This was the limit for those programs shown before 6:00 PM. After 6:00 PM, the limit was 3 minutes. Ways were found around these limitations. Sponsors left their billboard on the air for the complete program.
- Hugh Garner, "Commercials," Saturday Night, May 12, 1956, p.14.
- <sup>53</sup> Secord, p.10.
- <sup>54</sup> Bernard Trotter, "Educational Television," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, April 1960, pp. 305-308.
- <sup>55</sup> Arthur Knowles, "The Sight and Sound of Learning," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, May/June 1960, pp. 353-359.
- <sup>56</sup> Hugh Garner, "Education On the Picture Tube," Saturday Night, November 13, 1954, p.17.
- <sup>57</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, March 3, 1955, p.19.
- <sup>58</sup> R. A. Morton, "Educational Television," Food for Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, Volume 14, No. 2, March 1959, pp. 36-48.
- <sup>59</sup> Morton, discusses the Halifax experiment, (pp. 42-43).

Educational broadcasting would be further promoted and become very successful with Newfoundland's station, CJON. In 1960, thirteen half-hour programs were arranged by teachers, interested citizens under the guidance of Don Jamieson. Mr. Kidd wondered if this high performance standard could not be duplicated country-wide.

J. R. Kidd, "Responsible Broadcasting," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, April 1960, pp. 314-317.

<sup>60</sup> Jean Tweed, "American Dumped Films Can Kill Canadian Television Industry," Saturday Night, May 17, 1949, pp. 6-7.

However, local programs, talent shows, news, talk shows would put the Sydney, Nova Scotia station on a firm financial footing. The television studio, built in 1954, at a cost of \$200,000, was able to promote and gain support from local suppliers from the beginning.

Canadian Business, (Montreal: Canadian Chamber of Commerce, October 1959), pp. 21-22.

<sup>61</sup> J. Alphonse Ouimet, "Report on Television," Paper presented at the joint meeting of the Engineering Institute and of the Institute of Radio Engineers in Montreal, (File: RG: 41, Vol 40, File 23-1-4), November 10, 1949, pp. 3-8.

<sup>62</sup> "Introduction," Royal Commission on National Development In The Arts, Letters and Sciences, Massey Commission, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), pp. i-xxi and chapter one, "The Nature of The Task," pp. 3-10.

<sup>63</sup> As the strength of the medium increased, it touched every product imaginable. Mr. Greene gave this example: "A restaurant specializing in steaks spends \$250 for time and talent for a weekly 5-minute interview program, as a vehicle for presenting an actual sizzling steak. In six months, while other restaurant business was down 10 %, this steak house business was up 20 %."

Lorne Greene, "Television – Medium or Tedium?," Saturday Night, May 23, 1950, pp. 42-45.

<sup>64</sup> Rutherford, p.20.

<sup>65</sup> Fowler Commission I, Ottawa: King's Printer, April 13, 1956, pp 13-14.

A. Ouimet, "Television and It's Impact on Our Way of Life," Address to the Alumnae Society of McGill University, National Archives of Canada, File: 23-1-4, February 16, 1953.

G. Bond, The McLuhan Explosion: A Casebook on Marshall McLuhan, (New York: American Book Co., 1968), pp. 9-27.

For another view of Canadian television, see Joshua Meyrowitz, "Television: The Shared Arena," Editors Helen Holmes and David Taras, Seeing Ourselves: Media Power and Policy, (University of Calgary: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada Inc., 1992), pp. 218-231, and Eugene Hallman, "Television," Mass Media In Canada, Editor, John Irving, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), pp. 121-149.

<sup>66</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, November 26, 1954, p.15.

<sup>67</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, November 26, 1954, p.15.

The Halifax Mail-Star, March 8, 1955, p.4.

Peter Conrad, "Furniture," Television: The Medium and Its Manners, (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 1-17.

<sup>68</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, January 6, 1955, p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Alan Thomas, "Television," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, November 1957, pp. 92-93.

<sup>70</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, December 6, 1954, Special TV Edition.

<sup>71</sup> Already beginning was the counter charges in defence of television. Some educators were laying all the blame on television, while Mr. Attridge claimed that the newer studies were showing that television did not displace reading, did not induce anxiety patterns, did not interfere with the formation of normal group or social relations. Nor did television produce eye strain or fatigue, result in poor achievement school or result in violent behaviour.

Bruce Attridge, (Producer at CBC at the time), "Television," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, April 1959, pp. 330-333.

<sup>72</sup> Pierre Berton, "Everybody Boo's The CBC," Macleans Magazine, December 1, 1950, p. 7-9, 30, 32-33.

See also "The Development of Television In Canada," speech delivered March 1, 1953, (author and audience unknown), File: RG: 41, Vol 401, File: 23-1-4.

With Alphonse Ouimet's passion for organization charts but not for the people they represented and his enthusiasm for the hardware of television but little regard for the delicate balancing act required of programming, it was difficult for him to be the best pitch man for the selling of television to politicians, broadcasters and the general public. Although articulate in both languages, he was not very sophisticated and did not make friends easily. In the political world in which CBC television had to survive, it was difficult for Ouimet to realize that Canadians would not accept interference with US broadcasts which they had now become familiar. His belief was that if the parliamentarians and the general public would just leave him and the CBC staff alone, all problems could be solved. He did predict however, that the age of the satellite would provide finally the sweep coverage across the nation.

Judy LeMarsh, Memoirs of a Bird In A Gilded Cage, (Toronto: McClelland and Steward Ltd, 1968), pp. 229-277.

Television is the literature of the illiterate, the culture of the low-brow, the wealth of the poor, the privilege of the underprivileged, the exclusive club of the excluded masses.

- Lee Loevinger<sup>1</sup>

#### **Chapter 4: CRITICISM, COMMISSIONS AND THE CBC**

In an attempt to explain the purpose and functions of the CBC and its mandate, Pierre Berton wrote a piece in Maclean's Magazine beginning with the various claims already laid against the organization. The adjectives used to describe the company ran full circle: "bull-headed, autocratic, dictatorial, spineless, weak, pathetic, extravagant, cheap, high-handed, bumbling, non-sensical, dishonest, power crazy, idiotic, and absurd."<sup>2</sup> Quite a list, indeed. The deepest blow of all was that the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) claimed that "hardly anyone listened to the CBC (radio) anyway," so why waste time and money creating a television network?<sup>3</sup>

In CBC's defence, Berton suggested that the Corporation fulfilled the role of patron of the arts, the largest single contributor to symphonies in the country. This placed the CBC philosophy at opposite sides from the American networks whose primary interest was in making a profit. Berton saw the CBC as having loftier goals than profits with more complex operational problems. A Canadian network had to operate in six time zones, two languages and attempt to please everyone, including sparsely populated districts, of which there were more tiny hamlets than large cities as in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Before the first Royal Commission into radio programming, Canadian stations were largely northern extension of US networks. As late as 1932,

only two-fifths of the country outside Toronto and Montreal could get regular programs. "The occasional Canadian network show was handled by the Canadian National Railway and on occasion listeners to a musical program were treated to a fine display of profanity by a CNR dispatcher who hooked into the network by mistake."<sup>5</sup>

In another critical review of the CBC, Scott Young claimed that too many promises had been made for one broadcasting network to fulfil. Serving all tastes was nearly impossible when one considered the diverse nature of the country. Keeping programming of primarily Canadian content was equally impossible to provide given the quantity of material required to fill eight to ten hours of daily programming. Maintaining good taste was a slippery slope of subjectivity dependent on the whims of the program director. Avoiding commercial influence was the stuff of good intentions but Mr. Young claimed that this was highly unlikely given the rising costs of production. He estimated that to maintain our "nationalism," it would cost each taxpayer \$1,000 an hour.<sup>6</sup>

The radio set-up currently in vogue had been the result of recommendations of the Royal Commission under banker Sir John Aird, created by a Liberal government in 1929 and implemented with some modifications by a Conservative government in 1932. The CAB wanted a separate regulatory body supplanting the CBC Board of Governors to control all broadcasting in Canada. This would pave the way for commercial radio networks and the withdrawal of CBC from commercial enterprises. But others felt that this policy would badly cripple Canadian style broadcasting. Many stations would simply revert to being copies of US networks and those private stations that carried CBC programs would drop them in favour of cheaper US shows.<sup>7</sup> These two points of view were the main threads of the arguments and presentations submitted to Vincent Massey, the Chairman of the next

Royal Commission. His report would be to television what the Aird Report had been to radio. Unfortunately, the main focus of the final document would revolve around funding for cultural activities and financing for the CBC rather than establishing a clear direction for the new medium.

Meetings for the Royal Commission began April 8, 1949, and observers hoped that many issues would finally be resolved. The most pressing one, of course, was what Canadian television was to become. The answer to that was hidden within the confines of what the Commission considered "appropriate entertainment for the Canadian people."<sup>8</sup> For the members, Vincent Massey and the others: the Rev. Georges-Henri Levesque, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Laval University; Hilda Neatby, Professor of History, University of Saskatchewan; Arthur Surveyer, Civil Engineer, Montreal; and Norman A. M. MacKenzie, President of the University of British Columbia, the task was great.<sup>9</sup> They began by taking a measure of the cultural life of Canadians by evaluating our "human assets, with what might be called in a broad sense, our spiritual resources."<sup>10</sup> As mentioned previously, the Commission established their definition of culture as "that part of education which enriches the mind and refines the taste."<sup>11</sup> They observed that major changes in lifestyle had occurred in the past twenty years; the increase in leisure time, compulsory education for the youth and the development of modern communication systems.

The Massey Report was regarded as the cornerstone for the development of Canadian culture, policy and institutions. The Commission gathered extensive material from which to formulate their recommendations. There were 462 briefs from: 13 federal agencies, 7 provincial governments (excluding Quebec), 87 National organizations, 262 local bodies (including those of Quebec), 32 commercial radio stations, and many briefs submitted by private individuals. Special studies were



also commissioned on 40 specific topics. Altogether some 1,200 witnesses addressed the members in 224 meetings. The Committee travelled over 10,000 miles gathering this data.<sup>12</sup> The presentations before the Commission and the more than a thousand witnesses suggested that the "body had outgrown the mind and spirit of Canada," that as a nation, we were dependent upon the charity of our neighbours, namely the United States. The report was not anti-American but simply acknowledged the large contributions made by American talent and the increasing Canadian dependency. It suggested that the disproportionate amount of material from a single source regularly crossing our borders stifled rather than stimulated the country's creative effort. Where Lord Durham had thought "that a confederation of the Canadian Provinces might counterbalance the preponderant and increasing influence of the United States on the American continent," Mr. Massey pointed out that such a strong influence was still a threat to national unity and that "it does not follow that they [the United States] have always been good for Canadians."<sup>13</sup> However, he cited several examples of American generosity. Since 1911, the Carnegie Corporation had spent \$7,346,188 on the building of libraries and endowments to various educational institutions. The Rockefeller Foundation had spent \$11,817,707 (including the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund) since 1914 for other buildings for study and specialized scholarships. Other organizations that had been very generous included the Guggenheim Foundation and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The Massey Commission maintained that Canada had paid a high price for this dependence on charity.<sup>14</sup>

The official version of the Report was tabled June 1, 1951, and presented to Prime Minister, Louis St. Laurent. Wary of the public's concern for what might be construed as interference with the recommendations of the report, St.

Laurent was careful to say at the outset that no one in the government had read the paper beforehand. Nor did St. Laurent leave the government open to criticism concerning the apparent lack of concern for university and library funding levels which might have caused such dependence on American philanthropy to begin with. Within 18 days of the report's submission, he had taken the necessary steps to present legislation recommending grants to universities. It was hoped that this investment would help offset the large American contributions. Usually reluctant to accept anything from Ottawa, even Quebec's Maurice Duplessis accepted funds. But in a purely political manoeuvre, he later rejected them. In the end almost all recommendations of the Report were implemented in one form or another.<sup>15</sup>

As the Report was released, however, the criticism in other areas raged. There were some who believed that Royal Commissions were only a way to postpone government action on difficult questions. A Commission was created, its members produced a report which if the government agreed with the findings would be applauded and even implemented. But if the findings were not to the Government's liking, the results were simply filed and forgotten. The other problem was the mandate of a Commission, usually dealing with a problem or issue from the past or in defining a policy for the future. What real impact did a Commission have, was it a true instrument of change? In Joseph's Sedgwick's discussion of the Massey Report, his only positive comments centered around the outer bindings of the report - a dominant red, white and blue cover, rather than the usual blue, and the "appendix completed in black and gold with a quotation from St. Augustine in Latin, for the learned and translated for the vulgar."<sup>16</sup> His biggest complaint was that the authors had received insightful suggestions and comments from those people working in the media but that the Committee members themselves knew little about the subject. The

final report disposed of the issue of television in five of the four hundred and eight pages, making the remainder of the Report a dissertation on art.<sup>17</sup>

Criticism aside, the Massey Commission recommended to Parliament that opportunities be created for satisfying the hunger of most Canadians for what the writer, the artist and the musician could give them, their own identity. Each art form had its unique function in the building of a Canadian personality. The Commission explained that "painting in Canada is not yet fully recognized as a necessary part of the general culture of the country to the detriment both of the painters and of Canadians."<sup>18</sup> According to the Report, the Canadian public was in need of more painters and more Canadian paintings.<sup>19</sup> Part of this process of appreciation and encouragement would begin by housing Canada's art collection in a National Gallery, constructed as soon as possible, in the Nation's capital. To facilitate travelling exhibits of Canada's artworks and the performance of Canadian musical compositions, community centres should be built in towns across the country. Mr. Massey disagreed with those who felt that the artistic holdings of Canada be decentralised to affiliated galleries throughout the country. The biggest concern was that in the smaller areas there was little expertise in the handling of such priceless articles. Experienced staff that knew how to handle and care for the art work was an additional requirement and would eventually necessitate a national training program. Other construction, essential for the building of Canada's nationhood, were the building of the National Library and a National Botanical and Zoological Garden. The Massey Commission felt that a government department such as a Ministry of Fine Arts and Cultural Affairs was not a good idea but preferred a more shared effort among all levels of government to greatly advance Canadian cultural and intellectual life. The Massey Commission applauded the efforts of the voluntary organizations that had worked tirelessly within

their communities for the betterment of all but emphasized that more needed to be done. Poorly funded and entirely dependent on the goodwill of the communities within which they lived, it had been these representatives who had presented brief after brief to draw attention to the question of funding, acquisition and maintenance of art works. It was hoped that these new buildings and the subsequent new opportunities they would generate would become the catalyst for Canadian creativity and talent.

Funding, however, was the key issue. The creation of The Canada Council was the Commission's idea of a regulatory body, created for "the encouragement of the Arts, Letters, Humanities and Social Sciences to stimulate the advancement of the fine arts, to inspire, to encourage, to provide opportunity" for local artists to flourish.<sup>20</sup> This new Canada Council would also have the authority to underwrite the costs of tours and exhibits to be displayed in co-operation with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board. It was in this way that Massey believed that the arts and television could best serve the country. Public money paired with the new technology would extend the reach of a cultural event. To inspire and encourage this new creativity, the Canada Council would establish awards for young people of promise, for training and experience in other countries, and to promote knowledge of Canada abroad.

As soon as the report was made public, there was considerable opposition to the idea of the Government subsidizing culture. It was felt that this was not the time for Canadians to be spending money on their mind and spirit when there was continued unrest in the international world. "Are bombs more important than Bach?"<sup>21</sup> echoed the sentiment of the day. Massey argued that the very thought of defending a civilization was basically defending its character, its meaning, its culture, just exactly what he was interested in strengthening and enriching. Some felt that the

report had gone too far, that spending money on art and culture was irresponsible while others suggested the report had not gone far enough in guaranteeing a climate for the creation and continuation of a truly Canadian culture. A disproportionate amount of material coming from a single source, the US, would choke rather than stimulate creative effort, weakening critical faculties of Canada's artistic community. The Commission warned of a "very present danger of permanent dependence."<sup>22</sup> The Report also suggested that after three years of telecasting, there should be a review done to assess the accomplishments of Canadian television. It was hoped that, in that three year period, both private and public stations would have established their identities, gauged the real potential of television in Canada and would allow Canadians to truly communicate with themselves about themselves.<sup>23</sup>

One of the contributing authors to the Royal Commission was Bernard K. Sandwell, a professor at McGill University. He believed that the issues covered within the review had more to do with the "mechanisms by which ideas and ideals are communicated or diffused among individuals rather than the economic, social and political structures which are required to support them."<sup>24</sup> It was his belief that the importance of outside communication could not be ignored for there were factors that changed how communications were received in smaller communities as opposed to the larger picture. Canada's extreme youth as a nation, still self-conscious, small in population and wealth, was a considerable drawback.<sup>25</sup> The thin distribution of that population along its borders in comparison to other nations as well as the mixed racial character suggested that any communication throughout the country would not operate in an uniform way. He went on to suggest that "there are two Canadian cultures, almost wholly separate, each from the other."<sup>26</sup>

It has the unity of a walnut – it has a single shell, but within that shell are two quite distinct formations of meat flimsily joined in the centre. The shell is the political structure of the nation, still preserving some of the softness

of its unripe stage as a colony, but being gradually hardened by exposure to the sun, wind and rain of a variable international climate. The meat is the two cultures as yet very lightly joined together, of French-speaking and English speaking Canada.<sup>27</sup>

Sandwell's explanation of how culture was created and diffused among neighbourhoods, however, had little resemblance to the vision that Vincent Massey presented. Sandwell maintained that machines absorbed the ideas that originated from human beings and transmitted them to a much larger audience than what could ever be accomplished by person-to-person contact. From the printing press to devices for the "recording and reproduction of sound and pictured movement," these mechanical tools made prompt, cheap and easily accessible to millions, an opera or a hour-and-a-half condensation of Hamlet. Mr Sandwell suggested that a heavy price would be paid for such convenience. The human mind would have to learn to differentiate between "valuable" messages and those that can be discarded. He predicted that television would eliminate the transmission of culture from older to younger generations and from older to younger members in the same generation.

Would the school system be the only place where person-to-person contact remained? With the influx of radio and cinema, Mr. Sandwell believed even that influence would be eroded. To Mr. Sandwell, "culture is no longer mainly transmitted in the youth by the little red schoolhouse; it is transmitted by Hollywood and Radio City and by books and magazines."<sup>28</sup> The creators of this culture are far removed from those that are receiving the messages and the recipients have no input or influence on what matters will be transmitted.<sup>29</sup> Large-scale distribution would make "culture" a costly main stream commodity. This differed from the cinema, which Sandwell considered a personal-contact media. By that he meant that movie houses obtained their revenue directly from the individual who deliberately chose to view the film. It differed from radio, which Sandwell considered a mechanical-media, whereby

the producer paid for the privilege of advertising their product and having that message transmitted to prospective buyers as soon as the radio was turned on. Whether the message was actually listened to was another question.

From the personal contact with a limited audience, such as the classroom, lecture hall, church or the theatre, to a more mechanical media using the cinema or radio, where the audience is limitless; this was the essential difference in the transmission of culture in Mr. Sandwell's view and where he felt the Commission had missed the point. He pointed out that a new science, the psychology of mass communication, would study the effects of this new progress. The goal of mass communication was to cater to the widest audience, from a few thousand people who attended a presentation of a successful stage play in a week's run to a successful film or radio performance that can reach millions. Going to the theatre or cinema were activities that demanded a conscious decision on the part of the individual. Going to the movies or dialling in a broadcast were activities often performed "with little forethought and without consideration or even knowledge of the programme which will result or at any rate of any factor in it except the name of a well known and favourite performer."<sup>30</sup>

"Radio, cinema and television will compete directly for the time of the potential audience" for Sandwell believed that "little discrimination on the part of the consumer" will be encouraged for most program development will be offered for mass consumption. The impressions of Canada that would be received from a distance, in someone else's voice, had the potential to be greater than those impressions received by personal contact. With each successive generation, personal contact would decline and the impressions received from a distance would take on a much different quality, filtered through a different selective process from the impressions received by

personal contact. Sandwell maintained that the Canadian attitude reflected the one south of the border so closely that (unless it was a strictly political issue), Canadians identified with the assumptions that were presented. He maintained that "Canadians tend to live in a rather watertight compartment state of knowledge about the public affairs of provinces other than their own."<sup>31</sup> Lack of French language material was the only drawback to complete absorption by American media. Receiving American broadcasts and cinema productions was considered acceptable by most Canadians. In fact, Canadian readers seemed unconcerned that the majority of the periodicals they were reading were American in origin. "Since that country (US) adjoins ours along a three-thousand-mile boundary and contains twelve times as much population and probably fifteen times as much wealth, it is equally inevitable that such communication should take place."<sup>32</sup>

At the time he wrote this article, Mr. Sandwell was Editor-In-Chief of Saturday Night. He had definite opinions about the use of news services for newspapers, articles used in Canadian papers written with an American slant, and the number of periodicals that were American in origin. He felt that the only way that a truly Canadian side of the story would be told was to have Canadians tell it. It frustrated him however, that Canadians did not seem to notice that they were reading "foreign" accounts of events. However, Sandwell agreed with the Massey Commission that it was the government's duty to maintain and foster Canadian talent. He concluded that it was very difficult to cultivate genius if genius had to "pursue some occupation which would distract or even prevent him from following the proper bent of that genius."<sup>33</sup> What would be exceedingly difficult was choosing those recipients worthy of aid. But he argued that even if judging proved incorrect at times, the material produced would more than compensate for the use of funds.



In Quebec, the Massey Report was known as the Massey-Levesque Report after the French representative, the Most Reverent George-Henri Levesque, a force in Quebec's cultural revolution and a committed federalist. He possessed political acumen as well as tact and used his skills to promote a movement of ideas that would take advantage of a mutual enrichment. Levesque symbolized the bi-cultural character of Canada and believed that culture was a "living, receptive thing, nourished from universal sources, and an integral part of a man's life." His idea of cultural nationalism was different from the stirrings of a small but growing group that believed that the only way to preserve Quebec culture was to separate it from Canadian nationalism. The Quiet Revolution of the early 60s was yet to come.<sup>34</sup>

The warnings grew and targeted another area of the population; this time the cultural decline of Canada's youth was at risk. The alarmist was Nancy Cleaver and in 1951 she warned that parents should "give careful thought to its (television's) effect on younger members of the family" as well as on the teenagers.<sup>35</sup> She cautioned that parents should assess carefully the current radio listening patterns in the home and should prepare themselves for the impending changes. The placement of the television set would be the first problem. In the dining room, its presence would inhibit conversation and destroy the family gathering place at day's end. Watching programs would drastically reduce the amount of time spent on household chores, "instead of tending the furnace, the son will be watching a wrestling bout; in place of washing dishes, daughter is glued" to another program. Mother would miss the compliments on her meatloaf or pie and father would no longer hear about the events of his family's day. Families would have to create a defence against television as Nancy Cleaver suggested ways other families were beginning to cope with television. Concerned parents, through their Home and School Associations,

sought support and worked out a policy that would be used in one community. By unanimous vote, television viewing would be permitted on the weekend but was restricted to one hour per night for two school nights.<sup>36</sup> Rules for viewing should be established even before the set came into the home: no exciting stories before bedtime, no programs that interfered with a school assignment, no one person monopolizing the set, no blaring volume. Time was to be allotted for quiet reading and reflection. Although it was agreed that television would broaden horizons and generate new ideas, television as well as radio, required wise handling. Above all, Ms. Cleaver maintained that the dangers of neglecting other activities such as hobbies and sports for television watching should be fully explained to children and their usage carefully monitored. The article ended with the prophecy: "You are a pioneer home with TV - be sure that you blaze a trail of use and not abuse."<sup>37</sup>

Advertisers were beginning to catch the television fever and played on the family uncertainty concerning television. Some considered television to be the dawn of a social revolution and warned that if Canada went the way of the United States, there would be sudden and violent changes in Canadian ways. Advertisers, searching for new ways to market their goods, realized that in television, the impact of seeing and hearing about a product could have great potential.<sup>38</sup> There was mounting criticism though that a continual commercial was not acceptable. This was the situation where a billboard display or recognizable logo was prominent throughout the entire program. Even the hosts of shows were doing extra "plugs" during the program and receiving merchandise in return. Magazines were willing to promote television shows as long as the magazine was promoted during the telecast. The standard three minutes per 30 minutes of program was being closely monitored.

In a brief history of various media in the United States and television's impact on their market share, Don McGill, pointed out that all markets dipped whenever a new player entered the scene.<sup>39</sup> However, the "advertising revenue pool" seemed limited only by advertising agencies and their collective imaginations. He gave various examples. Radio, in the US, had experienced a drop in revenue during the initial introduction of television but appeared to be rallying. Book reading and magazines had experienced little, if any, effect at first, but was showing a slow steady decline beginning with the loss of such publications as Liberty and the glossy weekend newspaper supplements, The Star Weekly Magazine. (In 1954, American magazines accounted for 80% of Canadian market.) Meanwhile, the purchase of the daily newspaper had increased. The big loser seemed to be the movie houses, for many had to close their doors due to poor ticket sales.<sup>40</sup> The large movie making companies were also feeling the pinch and scaled back their production areas. Mr. McGill reminded the reader that although the phonograph had seemed doomed when radio came on the scene, the record business was getting better and better. The new challenge for family entertainment dollars would be colour production soon to begin in the United States and no doubt, arriving in Canada before too long.

Mr. McGill's greatest concern echoed that of Ogden Nash, that there would soon be a nation of "televidiots." The private home would be the arena of the greatest struggle for television's supremacy over the living patterns and relationships within a family. McGill cited comments taken from a survey done by the University of Southern California stating that "husbands no longer took wives out for an evening, but preferred to stay at home and watch the set." The plus side was that at least the family was all at home. Other worries were children "chronically tired and jaded from too much watching. They have no sense of values, no feeling of wonder, no sustained

interest." Mothers were turning to television to entertain their children when they wanted some peace and quiet. But what was the cost of such convenience? The network executives, however, painted another picture: "acquaint children with the people who govern us, show them those books and plays that have formed our literary heritage, manners, habits and speech of our generation. In short, it will make them better citizens."<sup>41</sup>

Mavor Moore, Chief Producer of CBC Television Division, felt equally optimistic about the role television would play in the lives of Canadians.<sup>42</sup> Moore maintained that change was inevitable and if handled properly could be a positive experience.<sup>43</sup> Family life would be indeed be altered. Father would attend fewer meetings and participate less in community organizations. Sister would bring home her date. Brother would "clutter up the house" with his friends. Mother would no longer sew while listening to the radio but would become a wrestling fan.<sup>44</sup> As well, room arrangements and home furniture would be determined by television placement throughout the home. Television, so Moore claimed, would be accused of killing conversation and would be directly responsible for the reduction in books read, for keeping children indoors rather than playing street hockey. He was equally concerned with the perceptions that were beginning to be widely promulgated by television, "confusing violence with strength, low necklines with the feminine ideal, sadism with sex and criminals with police".<sup>45</sup>

But even more important, television combined and applied man's most important of the communicating senses, sight and hearing, to the act of understanding the world around him. Historically, other media, newspapers for example, told the story of the event after the event occurred. Television would change that. It would show the viewer the event while the event was happening, right in the viewer's own

home. What was even more appealing was that the media could accomplish this in a matter of minutes and simultaneously to a greater number of people than any other media. Denouncing television as ridiculous or dangerous was giving it more credit than it deserved. "It is by itself neither depraved nor divine; it depends on the use we make of it," claimed Moore.<sup>46</sup> Because of this duality, he firmly believed in the institution of television, and that it be entrusted to the CBC and that the CBC itself become a highly valued public trust.

Moore's objective as Chief Producer was to foster and create "good" programs. By that, he meant that, besides new talent and ideas, there had to be an acceptance of responsibility for what went on the air. Will television be filled with "entertainment" or "education"?<sup>47</sup> The debate raged over the categories and calibre of programming that CBC would create, produce and deliver to the public. Moore believed that a program that caught one's attention could be both entertaining and educational, for if a program was considered educational but no one watched it, no knowledge had been delivered. What he would fight very hard against was the dull program, which he described as "a clothes line with one end lying on the ground - that didn't work for anyone!"<sup>48</sup>

As a final point, Moore cautioned parents and children that television watching would undoubtedly cut into other activities. But he believed that rather than eliminating book reading, it would encourage it by bringing the book to life on the small screen. He proposed that all viewers would become choosier in selecting their leisure time activities. He firmly believed that television "would enrich everyone's life instead of diminishing it and do the best job yet of giving us a fuller glimpse into the life around us, of taking us into ourselves, and out of ourselves."<sup>49</sup> To create something freshly Canadian was a difficult but exhilarating task.

As the CBC Toronto broadcasting station prepared feverishly for their September 1952 sign-on, more and more predictions came to light.<sup>50</sup> One such forecast came from a speech delivered to CBC by Gilbert Seldes in July. First, he applauded Canadians and the CBC staff for taking the time to think about what would be aired across the country. "The future audience of television is the entire nation whether one owns a set, or never sees or hears a broadcast. There is no place to hide," he claimed, from good or bad television, "no one is immune" from its growing influence.<sup>51</sup>

To explain television's weaknesses, Seldes gave several examples. One dealt with the possibility of such media manoeuvring a candidate into the highest office of the United States, that of President. This "great TV-personality" might be short on skills of statesmanship but fully versed in the delivery and presentation skills that television demanded. Either respected statesman or tv-personality would affect the lives of many people for the voters would vote for what they saw. Would this be a mis-use of the medium? The second example of viewer's democracy of a sort, was the increasing awareness of television's effects on children and the violence in the programs that this sector of the population watches. The networks claimed that parents screen the programs children view and turn off what is not acceptable. But the fact was that if the program was popular with enough of the population, the program would remain on the air regardless of those who do not view it. "It is not what one person can turn off," Seldes pointed out, but what the "others accept that really counts."<sup>52</sup> Seldes also cautioned the CBC not to feel too smug about their public funding status, that the effects of television would be completely independent of their subsidization." The effects are inherent in television itself." It would be the viewer in control of the change, according to Seldes.

As more and more time became absorbed by this marvel, other interests would definitely be challenged. Other media such as radio and movies would have to fight to survive as well as traditional entertainment like theatre, music, reading. Unlike other critics, however, Seldes claimed that television would not destroy "the art of conversation," for television would become the topic of conversation and thereby altering both the time and location. He asked that Canadians carefully analyze just exactly what job they wanted television to do.<sup>53</sup> That being said, Seldes hoped that it would "serve the genuine ends of democracy." Seldes closed with advice for Canadian television programmers: to remember that television "must serve the population wisely and even while making one laugh, it must also make one think."<sup>54</sup>

While numerous articles spread the message that television was coming soon, government approval and the actual production of television sets took a considerable effort. Finally, after an expenditure of over \$8 million, CBC-TV arrived in September 1952.<sup>55</sup> The money had been allocated for the construction of the studio, hiring and training of staff, purchasing necessary technical facilities, paying for test productions and to provide operating funds for the first few months of service. Both production centres were equipped with two studios, scenery shops, film equipment and three TV-camera set up in a mobile unit. However, it quickly became necessary for the government to contribute an additional \$16.25 million in the form of special loans to the CBC for the construction of new stations and facilities.<sup>56</sup> The continual struggle for sufficient funding for the venture would haunt the media pioneers. Soon the CBC would open its promised stations in Halifax, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Vancouver plus second stations, one (English language) in Montreal, and another (French language) in Ottawa. But only two months after Toronto's on-air opening a new wave of warnings and predictions were aired about television usage.<sup>57</sup>

A new technique to study television's effects appeared, that of an informal study of a small community in southern Ontario. This typical town was "slow yet stable in its adoption of innovation, neither jungle nor barren of television aerals."<sup>58</sup> Mary Jolliffe explained that this town of 2,000, its surrounding rural area of another 2,000 (including five churches, a theatre, a public library, one restaurant, two schools) was representative of other communities newly exposed to television's influence. There were those that were readily accepting of television while others were not. She complained that men were willing to sit for hours absorbed in this new diversion. Women turned the television on during the day and forgot about darning socks. But women's groups would prove to be the first vocal lobby for ensuring programming suitable for children. As early as October 1954, three months before television began in Halifax, women were uniting to monitor content. The Catholic Women's League organized "watchers" across the country and initiated letter writing campaigns to Members of Parliament to remind them of their responsibility for the country's morals. Their other objective was to have the CBC network carry the Monsignor Fulton Sheen's program that was only available on the American stations.<sup>59</sup> Children, ages six to twelve, spent the most time in front of the set, while high school students still preferred the school basketball games, Friday dances, Saturday movies and the juke-box and coke drink dates. What was disturbing was that the sixteen to twenty hours of viewing time that the public school students spent with television was just a few hours less than what was being spent in school per week. Home study time was in peril and Jolliffe called on parental control to ensure that limits were placed on just how much leisure time was eaten up with television.

Jolliffe was quick to point out that the lives of adults appeared most affected by television's arrival. Viewing competed with bridge nights, town gatherings



and general conversation within the family. Viewing patterns in the town appeared greater than in rural areas, and Jolliffe warned that the improvements in reception and increased channels would cause even greater disruption of the social fabric of homelife. In closing, she wondered if the agent of "constructive living might become a domineering monster and fearful Juggernaut demanding full attention and blind worship."<sup>60</sup>

As the first network station lost some of its novelty, it was noted that Canadians, if given a choice, did not necessarily watch Canadian fare. An informal survey taken five months after the Toronto sign-on (September 1952), revealed that when first operating, CBC-TV Toronto had 36% of the viewing audience with the remaining 64% going to Buffalo. Since there was such close proximity to the American signal prior to the Toronto station, viewers already had preconceived notions about what they wanted to watch. Improvements were expected by October as viewers became used to the new Canadian signal but the statistics would show otherwise. CBLT Toronto had 22.2% of the anticipated audience in October, in November, 25.9%, December, 22.9% and in January 1953, 21.5%.<sup>61</sup> Canadians had chosen American television by a ratio of about four to one.<sup>62</sup> The man in the street was looking forward to more channels from the US and felt that CBC programs were only "for those college professors."<sup>63</sup>

Maclean's Magazine performed its own unofficial survey and arrived at similar results.<sup>64</sup> Purchasing a television for one of their writers, Maclean's Magazine assigned him to a week of television viewing. In the course of seven days, he watched twenty-five hours of Canadian programs, thirty-one hours of American programs, nine hours of British programs.<sup>65</sup> The thirty-one hours of American television proved to be the most popular. Two years later, another writer for

Maclean's, Beverley Baxter, took his holidays and had his first view of television. His "window on the world" fascinated him, claiming that Canadian and American relations were now a thing of the past for that frontier had disappeared. However, he cautioned that television was a powerful drug that would prove difficult to leave alone. An era of the Americans-are-just-like-us attitude had arrived and it would prove very difficult for Canadians to maintain their style of living, their mode of dress, philosophy, even cooking. The battle between mass production, mass entertainment and individualism had begun.

It could be suggested, then, that the beginnings of mass entertainment rose from too fine a definition of culture and Canadians' reaction to CBC's approach. Early figures showed that commercial radio and television was what the majority wanted and expected. If the taxpayer wanted television, and could receive it free of charge from the signal over the border, then they were little inclined to pay a license fee, taxes and other charges when the slight inconvenience of a commercial would give them what they wanted.<sup>66</sup> How television affected an individual's pocket book was just the beginning. The purchase of the set was the first step that advertisers would monitor and track. There were grave concerns about how the other media would be affected. In a speech delivered to the Canadian Retail Association, Mavor Moore pointed out that as quickly as television was increasing its share of the advertising market, it was doing so at the expense of other established media. National advertisers, in 1952, were reducing their newspaper advertising by 17% and their radio advertising by 13%. However, the use of magazine ads increased by 6%. The biggest winner was television with an astounding 87%.<sup>67</sup> But television was more than an advertising medium. Television was becoming an entertainer, an instrument

for attracting Canadian talent and keeping them home; but was there any social significance involved here?

Mrs. Molly Yorke, a writer for the magazine Food For Thought, sponsored by the Canadian Association for Adult Education, attended one of the first Television Workshops.<sup>68</sup> Her main field of interest was the use of visual aids in adult education, and she could see television as part of the solution for teaching large groups that were impossible to reach through normal channels. Television could become the school, the university, everyone's "classroom." This training could be accomplished through transmissions into the individual's homes, moving the classroom to the student and allowing for greater access for all. She suggested that emphasis should be placed on the responsibilities of the community in regards to television. The communication of ideas, education and information should conform to the general interests of Canadians.<sup>69</sup> As a cautionary warning, however, Mrs. Yorke emphasized that further experimentation was required before classrooms could be replaced with television screens.

"Entertainer" and "television" were two words that Molly Yorke did not like used together especially since it was her view that entertainment was a matter of taste. She objected to the small picture that restricted movement, unlike the wider view that one could obtain from live theatre. However, the contradiction was that constant movement was necessary to hold the audience's attention. Perceptions of depth and distance were difficult to obtain while the pictures had a 'snowy' quality, unclear and sometimes hard to follow. Once these limitations had been taken into account, Mrs. Yorke was also concerned about the quality of programming for younger children. She cautioned that speech, clarity, and personality was very important when considering material for such an audience.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, considerable more

experimentation and adjustment was necessary before she would use television in her classroom.

Marshall McLuhan, a self-appointed media guru, felt that television's experimentation phase was long since past. The damage was already infiltrating homes and classrooms. McLuhan's views, essentially catholic and somewhat medieval, were based on an idealized vision of communal life in an unified pre-Gutenberg Christian Europe. Having no professional credentials as an expert on mass media, McLuhan drew his insights from the writings of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot and in the world of mass culture those names were mere distant figures. McLuhan suggested that the amount of attention constantly placed on the CBC was misleading and unfair, for throughout history there had always been a mover of people and where people gathered, people communicated. CBC was the conduit in this century as the CPR had been in the 19th century. The railroad had carried new settlers and opened up the west; now the CBC carried sound and pictures across the land, creating new images.<sup>71</sup>

McLuhan believed that television had an inner logic that would defeat all attempts to impose order or purpose on it. He pointed out that no matter how badly a story was written, a crime against good journalism in his words, this could be excused as "good television." But what value was good television? Was it something separate from information and analysis or merely words to fill air-time? What mattered in television was the visual impression made rather than the information conveyed. The central premise of McLuhan's belief was that television left one with feelings and impressions rather than facts and arguments.

No one disagrees with McLuhan much anymore, because he is a historical artefact, not so much a man but a "climate of opinion."<sup>72</sup> Upon closer

examination, it appears that he was opposed to innovation but was determined to understand what was happening around him. He was interested not in elaborate theories but in the patterns of media.<sup>73</sup> He observed that the art of conversation was already changing. He believed that a technological society, a society that depended on machines for basic functions, would find it more and more difficult to talk, for the very inventions that improved life, impaired the quality of family life and the free human expression of thought and feelings. An example he used often was that of a fire burning. One did not have to worry about what to say next, just watching the flames, a sharing or a communication of sorts was taking place. In a highly visual culture, this form of expression would have been very comforting for fire was a kind of dialogue. McLuhan posed the question, was television becoming that fire? Pierre Berton and others had already suggested that television was the modern fire place around which family members gathered to share entertainment. McLuhan merely extended this analogy to include all manner of social interactions. In the past, family members had gathered around the fire for warmth, to share conversation and human companionship and to reinforce feelings of security. Now, families gathered around an electronic fire, their television set. Gazing straight ahead, they saw pictures of their street, their neighbours, their town and searched for clues, the code that would decipher their new world.<sup>74</sup>

To McLuhan, media would distort human perception because they favoured one sense over the other. He maintained that any medium of communication radically altered the experience being communicated. Therefore, a new civilization based on electricity was organic in character and opposed to the civilization that preceded it. His concept of space was visual, his example was that one could hear but could not see around a corner. Television, to McLuhan, was

dangerous, fascinating those who used it, turning the viewers into addicts. Such gadgets would become idols, a frightening prospect to McLuhan.<sup>75</sup>

Television included interplay of all the senses, making them more sharply defined, intense, colourful, creating emotional personalities with which people could identify. As one example of this, McLuhan claimed that Hitler had been made for radio but would have never had so much power if television had been popular at that time. Hitler's voice intonations, his jerky body posturing would not have been received well on television, thereby reducing his influence into everyday lives as listeners grew tired and switched channels. Hitler would not have played well to a "studio audience." McLuhan suggested that the media were capable of imposing their own assumptions on the people who use them. His now famous, "medium is the message," line was based on a belief that unless people understood the nature of media, they were in danger of losing all traditional values of literacy and western civilization. With the new technologies, the very movement of information corresponded to the movements of the human mind, as fast as a thought or idea occurred, the faster the invention was created and so would grow the ever increasing demand for the "new and improved."<sup>76</sup> Further trouble was ahead with the increased use of television for McLuhan believed that television immobilized the eye muscles, greatly reducing the impact and discriminatory power of one of mankind's most important senses. To resist television one had to have an antidote of related media, print, for example.<sup>77</sup> At the very least, one had to be on one's guard against the excessive use of this "extension of man."<sup>78</sup>

Halifax, in 1954, was blissfully unaware of the conjecturing to come. This was a year of excitement, centered around the opening of the CBC's television. Halifax's initial transmission of five hours daily was to cover a radius of 60-80 miles,

the fringe areas requiring outside aerials while sets closer to the station needing only indoor aerials or "rabbit ears."<sup>79</sup> At first, City Council wanted ordinances approved so that an inspection charge could be levied on each commercial and residential structure, \$2.00 for the permit and an additional \$1.00 for each yearly inspection. However, they soon discovered that the yearly inspection was unreasonable, that there was insufficient staff to monitor the erection of so many structures.<sup>80</sup> The city fathers attempted to write new bylaws, intended to prevent improper erection of television antennae, to prevent death and fire destruction. Insurance companies were concerned about the potential fire hazards from the incorrect construction as well as the possibility of the aerial falling off the roof.<sup>81</sup> However, the members of the City Council threw out the laws as being too technical, what they really wanted was a simple guide to assist people in erecting their own aerials.<sup>82</sup> No one came forward with a solution.

Other technical details, however, were more successfully accomplished. The CBC had set up the Halifax station so that it would be served first with film-type, kinescope recordings of programs developed in Toronto. Then when fully operational, live broadcasts were to be produced from the local site. A microwave relay link with Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal would eventually be hooked up with Buffalo in order to pipe US telecasts throughout the CBC affiliate stations and to allow for simultaneous program coverage.<sup>83</sup> As the station fine-tuned their equipment, Haligonians even watched the test pattern, a series of circles, squares and graphs. The pattern assisted the technicians in measuring clarity, the circles for height and width of objects in a picture, converging lines to check focus, vertical and horizontal wedges to verify resolution and reproduction of the image for the "horizontal and vertical hold." Black and white contrast was checked by used the image of an

Indian head. Sound, electrical and mechanical disturbance called "snow" was also monitored.<sup>84</sup> Now that the technical side of things was nearing completion, the main objectives for broadcasters was to fill up the broadcast time with Canadian offerings and attract viewers to the Canadian Broadcasting system. Sometimes, however, their program choices was not received with such enthusiasm.

An article in The Halifax Mail-Star, which exemplifies this type of evangelistic fervour, was one written in October 1954 concerning a program CBC-Toronto aired. John Blackmore, a politician from Lethbridge, Alberta, rose in the House of Commons and claimed that the CBC was promoting Communist propaganda. Blackmore's accusations stemmed from a program he had viewed on the evolutionary process of termites. "TV if left unchecked," he declared, "will infiltrate our hearts and homes. Television has the power of the Prince of Darkness and all his cunning." After criticizing the Corporation for promoting the evolutionary theory and for not strengthening the faith of the Christian, God-fearing Canadian people, he demanded legislation that would ensure parliamentary control of screening over both the types of programs aired and the hiring practices of CBC personnel. "No Pinkos in the CBC," he cried. Replies in the papers a week later had split views. Some applauded Blackmore's strong stand, others thought him narrow-minded and a crackpot.<sup>85</sup>

What was becoming especially worrying was the habit of viewing, especially the increasing usage that affected the rhythm of the family unit. T. S. Eliot feared that watching television was in itself a threat to the mental, moral and physical health of a nation.<sup>86</sup> He was not alone in his concern. The Halifax Mail-Star printed an editorial from the Archbishop of Canterbury who was also fearful of the consequences of television viewing. He was alarmed over the results of initial British surveys that



calculated that adults were watching four to five hours per day. He felt that TV was "an influential educational instrument but one which could make people increasingly unable to be educated by anything at all." Already television was having an influence on children because it distracted them from homework, reading books or playing games outside. People were becoming "troglodytes," he claimed, cave dwellers enslaved to their new electronic marvel. Letters to the editor in subsequent papers agreed that the Archbishop's alarm was justified. The article went on to point out, however, that anything new always attracted negative attention. Perhaps in seventeenth century London, mothers had worried about their children "spending time at the Globe Theatre watching questionable plays written by that young playwright, Will Shakespeare." Perhaps the only crime was the frailty of human nature rather than a new bad habit. Family discipline and exertion of parental authority was all that was required to stem the tide of idleness.<sup>87</sup>

Even before television arrived, Haligonians wondered if they were going to raise a race of fat children when CBC signed on in December. The article claimed that in the US, research evidence was mounting that "extreme inactivity" in youth was one of the by-products of television watching. Dr. Jean Mayer of Harvard, said that in his research there appeared to be a definite relationship between the hours spent watching television and overweight children. In some cases, he claimed these obese children spent more time in a week watching television than they did in school. Parents were concerned that the youth of their city would be the next to succumb to the "coach potato" syndrome.<sup>88</sup> If physical inactivity was the first symptom of domination, was mental inactivity the next? Post-war Canada was suspicious of anything that even remotely resembled mind control, and a viewer imprisoned by his own acquiescence would be an easy target for suggestion, especially if this message

was encoded within his favourite program. Was the youth of Halifax to be the next victim of hypnotic suggestion?

Television, everyone wanted it; government, industry, advertisers and the general public. Each group had very different reasons, however. But who was getting what in return? Government reassurances continued to pour forth; television would be educator, unifier, nation builder, entertainer. Television's first role would be one of communicator, between family members, young and old alike, using television as a re-grouping place. Family gatherings around the hearth of the flickering screen, (for fireplaces were out of style and no one had time to play the piano anymore) would strengthen family ties and heal old wounds. As the group enjoyed a Canadian drama, opera, or a variety show, a concert or lecture, such communal activity would rejuvenate family life and cultivate family values in the young. It was not a big stretch to suggest then that if television could knit the family together then it could also unify the country. Learning about Canada and Canadians would promote a sense of Canadianism and help define cultural sovereignty. Nation building was high on the list of objectives for Canadian television and the programming that was developed for Canadians.

Then there was the cultural issue, raised first by Vincent Massey; he maintained that Canadians' understanding of the arts was sadly lacking. What better way to educate and transport culture throughout a country than by presenting material on the national network? If radio listening numbers were any indication, the potential audience was impressive. Large audiences would be drawn to the pictures as well as the sound of a ballet, a concert, or a play. Television would inspire great works to be written, improve the cultural and spiritual life of a nation, create a national identity. It,

would "make us masters of our own house," so Massey claimed.<sup>89</sup> What lofty aspirations!

What did television really become? First, it became familiar, a habit, a nightly ritual that Canadians took to in ever increasing numbers. To satisfy that hunger television borrowed from all avenues – radio, stage, screen. It transformed the novel, the short story, the play into small screen, two-hour, at home, on-the-sofa performances. It made a game of hockey, baseball, or basketball an afternoon diversion in one's cosiest armchair. News became immediate without the effort of having to read it as one might a newspaper. Instead, moving pictures took the viewer to the action zone, and all with a flick of a switch. No one taste in Canada prevailed. As diversified an audience as a country, each viewer had particular preferences which made the development of programs very difficult.<sup>90</sup> The choice of program might be different, however, their main objective was to sell goods. Advertisers soon realized their new potential audience and rejoiced in their good fortune. To entertain the viewer became the value of a program's popularity for the longer that the viewer remained with a particular program, the more frequent the replay of the sponsor's message. To maintain point ratings (the higher the rating, the more popular the program) and improve profit margins became the yardstick of an advertiser's success.

To inform, to enlighten, to entertain, to sell – television was catching on quickly. Within four years (1958), a CBC study of how leisure time was spent in Halifax would discover that out of 422 adults, 34% would be considered light viewers (one to two hours a weekday), 44% would be medium viewers (two and one half to four hours a day), and 22% would be heavy viewers (four and one half hours or more, a day). Canadian government studies after the Halifax survey would conclude that by 1972, roughly 13% of the population would be true fans of television, watching over

thirty hours per week. No other leisure activity, except listening to the radio, would even approach this figure.<sup>91</sup>

Notice of the impending pre-television survey was published in the local papers. The article explained that the survey's purpose was to probe the listening habits of a randomly chosen sample population in order to determine potential program preference patterns for television. Twenty-five interviewers were hired to conduct Phase One of the survey. It was hoped that the following summer, Phase Two, or the post-television portion, would be completed. The interviewers hoped to evaluate the impact of television on education, family and community life as a whole. They had specific areas of interest in mind such as whether Haligonians were interested in local news or whether there was a stronger preference for national and international news. Researchers were also interested in the amount of support for sports and religious programs. Like the rest of the country, Halifax was beginning its expansion into the "suburbs," so interviewers would be searching for answers about commuting distances, altered meal times, as well as home ownership and entertainment patterns. The results of the survey would reflect the new reality, the reality of a society with television.

- <sup>1</sup> Editor, R. Fitzhenry, "About Television," The Fitzhenry and Whiteside Book of Quotations. 3rd edition, (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1993), pp. 436-438.
- <sup>2</sup> Berton, "Everybody Boo's The CBC," pp. 7-9, 32-33.
- <sup>3</sup> Berton, p. 8.
- <sup>4</sup> Berton, p. 30.
- <sup>5</sup> Berton, p. 33.
- <sup>6</sup> Scott Young, "Let's Stop Monopoly Television," Maclean's Magazine, May 1, 1954, p.75.  
For a severe commentary on the CBC and its operations, see the article in Maclean's Magazine, dated April 14, 1956. Thirteen television personalities gathered with a tape recorder and argued for hours about various broadcasting issues that they felt the CBC was not addressing and that no commission could solve.  
"If I Ran the CBC..." Maclean's Magazine, April 14, 1956, pp. 13-15, 108-110, 112-119.
- <sup>7</sup> Berton was disappointed to note that few radio programs translated themselves to television. One exception was the Wayne and Shuster Comedy Show.  
Berton, p.30.
- <sup>8</sup> "Terms of Reference", Massey Commission, p. xxi.
- <sup>9</sup> What brought Hilda Neatby to prominence, she had just recently published a critical study of Canadian education entitled, "So Little For The Mind."
- <sup>10</sup> "The Nature of The Task," Massey Commission, p. 2.
- <sup>11</sup> Massey Commission, pp. ii-xxiv and p. 7.
- <sup>12</sup> The Cultural Connection, p. 56-67.  
"The Nature of The Task," pp. 8-10.
- <sup>13</sup> Robert Ayre, "Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences," Canadian Art, Volume VIII, No. 4, Summer 1951, pp. 145-149, 177-180.  
Mr. Ayre believed that the Massey Report was "every bit as important as Lord Durham's famous document." Lord Durham looked forward to the building of a nation, Mr. Massey and his colleagues were looking forward to the fabric of a nation.
- <sup>14</sup> "The Forces of Geography," Massey Commission, pp. 13-14.
- <sup>15</sup> Ostry, pp. 62-77.
- <sup>16</sup> Joseph Sedgwick, "The Massey Report and Television," Saturday Night, February 28, 1953, pp. 10, 30.
- <sup>17</sup> Sedgwick, p.10.
- <sup>18</sup> Ayre, p.177.
- <sup>19</sup> Sculpture was also singled out. There were few works recording a historical event or dealing simply with some subject. Most pieces were designed around a structure, a public building, for example. Government buildings were not excluded from this review. The Commission felt that the Capital region would be overrun with buildings reminiscent of Roman and Greek romanticism, monumental in character but not functional. It was recommended that future designs be done in open competition to allow for new concepts and encourage young architects.  
Ayre, p.177.
- <sup>20</sup> Ayre, pp. 178-180.
- <sup>21</sup> Canadian Forum, July 1951, editorial, p. 1.
- <sup>22</sup> "The Forces of Geography," p. 12-14.
- <sup>23</sup> "The Forces of Geography," p.18-22.  
"Mass Media," Massey Commission, pp. 19-22.  
Nathan Cohen, "TV Will Creep In On Soft-Soled Shoes," Saturday Night, June 26, 1961, p. 11, 36.
- A. Sangster, "On The Air: The Massey Commission - 1," Canadian Forum, Volume XXXI, No. 366, July 1951, pp. 81-82.  
Sangster questioned whether the proposed expansion of the number of members on the Board of Governors, those that would administer CBC's new role, was truly representative of Canadians. He asked where were the actors, the radio producers and writers, even radio critics? Those that had considerable experience in the field might better serve the goals of better broadcasting that the Report set out.

A. Sangster, "On The Air: The Massey Commission - 2," Canadian Forum, Volume XXX1, No. 367, August 1951, pp. 109-111.

<sup>24</sup> B. K. Sandwell, "Present Day Influences on Canadian Society," Royal Commission on National Development In The Arts, Letters and Sciences, Massey Commission, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), pp. 1-11.

<sup>25</sup> In Peter Gzowski's book, The Private Voice, written over thirty years later, he unintentionally agrees with Sandwell. Gzowski suggests that this "scattered people, thinly spread across a forbidding landscape" remains as the unsolved problem to maintaining a broadcasting system that reaches all three seas. He suggests that there is insufficient population to encourage private enterprise when it comes to broadcasting so the government is the only solution to uniting a "country of regions."

Peter Gzowski, The Private Voice: A Journal of Reflections, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), p.232-234.

<sup>26</sup> Sandwell, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> B. K. Sandwell, "Present Day Influences on Canadian Society," p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> B. K. Sandwell, "The Minority Culture Report," Saturday Night, June 26, 1951, p. 7. and Sandwell, "Present Day Influences," p.4.

However, Frank Underhill suggested that further investigation was necessary over the Commission's claims of "alien" influences, that is, American culture. Canada and the United States, because of their close proximity, "are going to be affected by the same influences as long as we live here. It is too late now for a Canadian cultural nationalism to develop in the kind of medieval isolation in which English or French nationalism was nurtured. These so-called alien American influences are not alien at all; they are just the natural forces that operate in the conditions of twentieth-century civilization." It was Mr. Underhill's belief that whatever we produced for our own consumption would mirror the American version anyway and that an attempt for singular presentations was a waste of valuable resources. What was needed was the ability to use the available resources effectively and not as a conduit of mass cultural production.

Frank Underhill, "Notes on the Massey Report," Canadian Forum, Volume XXX1, No. 367, August 1951, pp. 100-102.

<sup>29</sup> Sandwell, "Present Day Influences," pp. 4-6.

<sup>30</sup> Sandwell, pp. 3-4.

<sup>31</sup> Sandwell, p.6.

<sup>32</sup> Sandwell, "The Minority Culture Report," p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Sandwell, "The Minority Culture Report," pp. 7-10.

<sup>34</sup> B. Ostry, The Cultural Connection, pp. 97-110.

<sup>35</sup> Nancy Cleaver, "TV...HomeBreaker or HomeMaker," Saturday Night, January 16, 1951, pp. 22-23.

In fact, it was only a month after the Halifax sign-on that parents were asking the CBC to exercise more supervision over the programs they presented for teenagers.

The Halifax Mail-Star, January 20, 1955, front page.

<sup>36</sup> There were some articles however that claimed that the child viewing problem was greatly overstated. Richard Lewis suggested that television took up to ten hours per week on average and that was only a small portion of the 35-40 leisure hours available. He said, "If there are problems, it is the fault of the parents for not exercising judgement in choosing programs for their children. No one can gainsay that it keeps families together."

R. Lewis, "Miracle Medium," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, February 1951, pp. 34-35, 42.

<sup>37</sup> Cleaver, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, January 6, 1955, p.5.

<sup>39</sup> Don Magill, "What TV Will Do To You," Maclean's Magazine, March 1, 1951, pp. 22-23.

<sup>40</sup> At their peak, in the early 1950s, before television, nearly 250 million movie tickets were sold annually, representing 17 movie ticket purchases, per person, per year.

Walter Romanow and Walter C. Soderlund, Media and Elections In Canada: An Introductory Analysis, (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1992), p.94.

<sup>41</sup> Don Magill, p.23. The speaker was Leon Levine, CBS Network Director.

<sup>42</sup> Mavor Moore, "Chance To Do Something Freshly Canadian," Transcript of Trans-Canada Broadcast, January 27, 1951, National Archives of Canada: File: RG: 41, Volume 401, File: 23-1-4.

<sup>43</sup> Mavor Moore, "What We'll Do With TV," Saturday Night, May 24, 1952, pp. 9, 19, 20. Mavor Moore, "Chance To Do Something Freshly Canadian."

<sup>44</sup> An article written by H. Baker described more worrying scenarios in Britain where televisions would "replace billiard tables" as a means of keeping "your boys at home." As well, children who had television would never get homework completed. Television would become the greatest eater of time for the youth and would affect their mental abilities. In smaller homes television viewing would even affect the heating bill, for if someone wanted to remain in the sitting room watching a program, heat would be required in that part of the house. The debate remained whether television should be strictly a university-of-the-air for those who could not get out to regular classes. Or should this instrument be a means for cheap entertainment? The article ended with a plea for more "reasonable" discussion.

H. G. Baker, "A British View of Television," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, February 1952, pp. 36-38.

<sup>45</sup> Mavor Moore, "What We'll Do With TV," Saturday Night, p. 9.

For an interesting summary of how the television industry was affecting Canadians, see Moore's speech, "The Impact of Television On Our National Life," 25th Annual Couchiching Conference, Canadian Institute on Public Affairs, August 4-11, 1956, National Archives of Canada, RG: 41, Volume 401, File 23-1-4.

<sup>46</sup> Mavor Moore, "What We'll Do With TV," p.9.

"The Impact of Television On Our National Life".

<sup>47</sup> Mavor Moore, "The Impact of Television On Our National Life".

Even into the late 70s, there was no official policy governing educational broadcasting in Canada. Schooling was a provincial jurisdiction and the provinces, in co-operation with the CBC presented programs, mainly as enrichment. Ontario, Quebec, Alberta operated their own systems. The guidelines about the definition of "educational" were broad, however, encompassing feature films, satirical reviews of current affairs, interviews with public figures and instructional, how-to films.

E. S. Hallman with H. Hindley, Broadcasting In Canada: Case Studies on Broadcasting Systems, (Don Mills: General Publishing Co. Ltd., 1977), p.12.

<sup>48</sup> However, Marshall McLuhan would claim that the CBC had to be dull because that was the way that power was disguised. Since the medium was owned by the government, McLuhan claimed that dullness "was the only form which makes power acceptable or tolerable."

Marshall McLuhan, "Why The CBC Must Be Dull," Saturday Night, February 16, 1957, pp. 13-14.

<sup>49</sup> Mavor Moore, "Where Canadian Television Is Headed," Saturday Night, May 26, 1956, pp. 10-12.

<sup>50</sup> Everything went off without a hitch said the producer, except the call letters CBLT had been put in upside down! But the initial broadcast was badly panned by the Canadian critics who claimed that it was not really good either from a technical standpoint or on the basis of the material itself and certainly not worth sitting through, calling it "television that had bowed in backside foremost." However, the US critics called it "three hours of unusual, interesting and highly professional entertainment."

Mavor Moore, "Where Canadian Television Is Headed," pp. 10-12.

Peter Stursberg, Mister Broadcasting: The Ernie Bushnell Story, p. 147.

<sup>51</sup> Gilbert Seldes, Speech presented to CBC Toronto staff, July 1952, National Archives of Canada: RG: 41, Volume 401, File: 23-1-4.

<sup>52</sup> Gilbert Seldes, Speech presented to CBC Toronto staff, RG: 41, Volume 401, File: 23-1-4.

<sup>53</sup> According to Seldes, US goals for television were to widen the interests of men, to make them more aware of their world, to create better citizens, and more highly developed human beings. Speech presented to CBC Toronto staff, July 1952.

However, within two years, Seldes would question whether the television camera was an instrument of advancement or a peeping tom into the nation's business. In an article written

for Saturday Night, he raised the issue of the politician playing to the camera and what effect this would have on the voting public. He suggested that the reporting standards of television was higher than that of newspapers and programs explaining the workings of government was a public service. His example was the televised Army-McCarthy hearings.

Gilbert Seldes, "Reporter, Peeping Tom? The TV Camera," Saturday Night, December 4, 1954, pp. 7-8.

<sup>54</sup> Gilbert Seldes, "Reporter, Peeping Tom? The TV Camera," pp. 7-8.

Gilbert Seldes, "Television Will Get You," CBC TIMES, July 1952 (c).

<sup>55</sup> Speech delivered by J. Alphonse Ouimet, General Manager of the CBC, March 1, 1953. National Archives, RG: 41, Vol. 401, File 23-1-4.

<sup>56</sup> The Canadian Marconi Company of Montreal went on the air in 1919. From that year onward, Canadian governments had to formulate national policies to accommodate new means of communications and to try to ensure that radio and later television, would serve the public interest. Frank Peers explained that to enact these policies was a juggling act between the public demand, the market economy, the broadcasters and the policy makers.

Frank Peers. The Public Eye: Television and The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting: 1952-1968. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 413-439.

<sup>57</sup> Toronto had the greatest concentration of television sets at the time, some 130,000. At first, the programming was for three hours each night, in English. Montreal's station which began at the same time split their broadcasting time between both languages.

<sup>58</sup> Mary Jolliffe, "How TV Affects a Canadian Community," Saturday Night, November 8, 1952, pp. 9, 19-20.

<sup>59</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, October 19, 1954, front page and p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> Jolliffe, pp. 19-20.

<sup>61</sup> Joseph Sedgwick, "The Massey Report and Television," p.30.

<sup>62</sup> But Alphonse Ouimet claimed that "Canadians need Canadian television". Because of the distances and scattered population, strong regionalisms, "Canada must use this medium to bring Canadians together." He believed that a Canadian network was the only vehicle to exhibit Canadian talent and allow it to flourish.

Speech delivered by J. Alphonse Ouimet, General Manager of the CBC, April 28, 1953, pp. 5-6, National Archives, RG: 41, Vol. 401, File 23-1-4.

Neil Compton, "Climate," Canadian Art, September/October, 1962, pp. 339-340.

<sup>63</sup> Joseph Sedgwick, "The Massey Report and Television," p.30.

<sup>64</sup> T. Allen, "My First Seven Days of TV," Maclean's Magazine, January 15, 1954, p.8.

<sup>65</sup> After the experiment was over, Mr. Allen and his family missed the television so much that they purchased one!

T. Allen, pp. 6-7, 9, 51-54, 57.

Beverly Baxter, "My Holiday at The TV Set," Maclean's Magazine, February 18, 1956, pp. 4-8.

In an article in the Halifax Mail-Star, the problem of when to turn off the television had already been raised – an additional problem of modern life. The example cited was that Papa rushed home from work to see a ball game, thirty minutes later he would be asleep in his chair. The voices lulled him to sleep but if the set was turned off, he would awake. The article warned that this did not bode well for family togetherness.

The Halifax Mail-Star, November 26, 1954, p.15.

<sup>66</sup> By February 1953, the government had abolished listener-license fees.

Speech delivered by J. Alphonse Ouimet, General Manager of the CBC, March 1, 1953, p.1. National Archives, RG: 41, Vol. 401, File 23-1-4.

In April he made another speech, this time to the Advertising and Sales Club of Toronto where he predicted that television was to become Canada's fastest growing post-war industry. He claimed that the estimated 10,000 workers in forty-eight plants currently employed in the manufacture of television set would increase substantially. An optimistic estimate "put 1953 sales at 300,000 sets with a dollar value of \$100,000,000." 1952 sales had already exceeded the projections. After network sign-on in Montreal, Toronto, sales were: September 20,000 sets; October 23,000 sets; November 25,000 sets; December 27,000 sets. 1953 sales looked good as well: January, February, March - 25,000, 25,000 and 26,000. This was even more



astounding when one considered that Canadian television sets were some 50% to 60% more expensive than the corresponding American models.

Speech delivered by J. Alphonse Ouimet, "Television's Future In Canada," General Manager of the CBC, April 28, 1953, pp. 3-4, National Archives, File: RG: 41, Vol. 401, File 23-1-4, pp. 3-5.

A. Davidson Dunton was even more pointed in his speech to the Canadian Public Relations Society. He suggested that all Canadians wanted industries in Canada and were willing to pay more for their shirts, (a textile industry), more for their motor cars, (a car industry), and more for their television sets, (an electronic industry) in order "to produce at least a part of what is going to be coming into our homes and the homes of other Canadians."

Speech delivered by A. D. Dunton, "Television and Our Way of Life," Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, to the Canadian Public Relations Society, May 14, 1953, p. 4, National Archives, RG: 41, Vol. 401, File 23-1-4, part 2, page 2-7.

<sup>67</sup> Speech delivered by Mavor Moore, "Canada and Television," Chief Producer, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to the annual meeting of the Canadian Retail Federation, May 13, 1953, p. 2, National Archives, RG: 41, Vol. 401, File 23-1-4.

<sup>68</sup> Molly Yorke, "Television Today and Tomorrow, Part 1," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, November 1953, pp. 17-20.

<sup>69</sup> Molly Yorke, "Television Today and Tomorrow, Part 2," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, November 1953, pp. 11-15.

<sup>70</sup> Molly Yorke, "Television Today and Tomorrow, Part 1," pp. 17-20.

<sup>71</sup> Tom Naim, "McLuhanism: The Myth of Our Time," Editor, R. Rosenthal, McLuhan: Pro and Con, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Funk and Wagnalls, 1969), pp. 140-152.

<sup>72</sup> Robert Fulford, Best Seat In the House: Memories of a Happy Man, p. 162.

<sup>73</sup> But what of the print media? McLuhan felt that the work of Harold Innis went from examining trade routes of the external world to trade routes of the mind. For McLuhan, Innis had discovered the sequence of events that explained our fascination with words and ideas. From Canada's vast forests came the raw materials for the pulp and paper industry. This production of newsprint was to McLuhan our connection to the outside world. Our export of newsprint was a link between nations, of the thoughts, the beliefs and ideas of the world stage, "the circulation of opinion."

To McLuhan, Innis's book The Bias of Communication explained the division in media between those that favoured extension in space and those that favoured continuity in time, for example, stone and clay tablets. Timelessness was not easily transported. Papyrus and paper, lightweight and portable – spread messages, imparted immediacy. Clay tablets, on the other hand, were limited in area and preoccupied with religious and moral themes. Papyrus development encouraged and promoted the growth of empires, law, administration, politics, the love of speech, folklore, poetry, proverbs. The time and space dilemma was solved by portable writing, but writing eliminated magic, those incantations of the past, with sage elders and respected traditions.

Philip Marchand, Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and The Messenger, pp. 142-148.

Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, (New York: New America Library, 1964).

James Carey, "Harold Adams Innis and Marshall McLuhan," Editor, R. Rosenthal, McLuhan: Pro and Con, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Funk and Wagnalls, 1969), pp. 270-308.

<sup>74</sup> Hugh Kenner, "Understanding McLuhan," Editor, R. Rosenthal, McLuhan: Pro and Con, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Funk and Wagnalls, 1969), pp. 23-28.

<sup>75</sup> Michael Arlen, "Marshall McLuhan and The Technological Embrace," Editor, R. Rosenthal, McLuhan: Pro and Con, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Funk and Wagnalls, 1969), pp. 82-92.

<sup>76</sup> In his book The Mechanical Bride, a critique of an entire culture, McLuhan took the reader on an exhilarating tour of the illusions behind John Wayne westerns, deodorants and Buick advertisements. It was a commentary on North American culture in the late 40s – amusing, high spirited, with many themes: the Dagwood male, origins of the contemporary

sleuth, desiccated rationalism of Great Books program, the delinquent adult behind the comic strip and his cynicism behind Dale Carnegie type of self-improvement books.

Philip Marchand, Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and The Messenger, pp. 164-170.

<sup>77</sup> G. Bond and H. Crosby, The McLuhan Explosion: A Casebook on Marshall McLuhan and Understanding Media, (New York: American Book Company, 1969).

Robert Fulford, Best Seat In the House: Memories of a Happy Man, pp. 162-183.

Editor, Raymond Rosenthal, McLuhan: Pro and Con, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969).

Daniel Czitrom, Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan, (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1982).

Harold Innis, The Bias of Communication, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951).

<sup>78</sup> Philip Marchand, Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and The Messenger, pp. 142-148.

<sup>79</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, March 16, 1955, front page and p.6.

<sup>80</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, July 13, 1954, p.11.

<sup>81</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, June 11, 1954, p.1 and p.6.

<sup>82</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, June 11, 1954, p.6.

<sup>83</sup> Completing the microwave relay system on Dominion Day, July 1st, 1958, the CBC broadcast live from coast to coast a "Memo To Champlain" marking the achievement of the world's longest network.

CBC: A Brief History of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, pp. 31-33.

<sup>84</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, Special Television Edition, December 6, 1954.

<sup>85</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, June 5, 1954, p.13.

<sup>86</sup> Massey Commission Report – endnotes, p.413. On a visit to the United States Mr. Eliot was alarmed to see what an impact television was having on everyone and everything. His letters were published at the back of the Massey Commission's Report.

<sup>87</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, October 9, 1954, p.3.

By 1957, families were becoming concerned over their "addiction" to television. An article written by Vivien Kimber explained how they had "to work up the courage" to experiment without television in the family for a whole month. Her conclusion was that one must remember that television was an entertaining servant, not the demanding boss.

Vivien Kimber, "What Happened When We Threw Out Our TV Set," Maclean's Magazine, March 30, 1957, pp. 17, 58-62.

<sup>88</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, June 9, 1954, p.3.

<sup>89</sup> Neil Morrison, "Public Affairs," Canadian Art, September/October 1962, pp. 341-343.

<sup>90</sup> Public tastes and politics - the question was asked – does Canada make their own television programs or import them? The biggest surprise was how popular the old movies were.

Eric Hutton, "What Kind of TV Will We Get This Fall?," Maclean's Magazine, August 3, 1957, pp. 11-13, 42-45..

<sup>91</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, December 1, 1954, front and p.6.

CBC, Audience Research Division, The 1959 Halifax Study of Leisure Time Activities in the Television Age, (Neil Morrison, Director), Ottawa: October 26, 1959, Tables 7 and 13.

Neil Morrison wrote extensively on the purpose of the Audience Research Bureau for Canadians. One article he wrote, explained the different methods research data was collected. He mentions the Halifax survey as "one of the most exhaustive community studies of its kind ever done in Canada."

Neil Morrison, "CBC Audience Research Bureau," Food For Thought, Canadian Association for Adult Education, January 1958, pp. 162-170.

Rutherford quotes a survey entitled "A Leisure Study – Canada 1972" that examined (Spring 1972) the activities of nearly 50,000 people aged fourteen or over. Department of Secretary of State, Arts and Cultural Branch, Ottawa, 1973, p.121 and p.225.

Paul Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, p.445.

Figures confirmed by: CBC Audience Research, Halifax, 1958 Survey, Table 13.

As Halifax prepared for CBHT sign-on, other areas of broadcasting would again come under review. On December 2, 1955, the Fowler Commission was convened. For an explanation of the new terms of reference that would change the regulations and content of

broadcasting, see the article by Austin Weir, "Television Arrives In Canada," The Struggle for National Broadcasting In Canada, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), pp. 289-314.

Also, "Noble Documents," Herschel Hardin, Closed Circuits: The Sellout of Canadian Television, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985), pp. 11-26.

All television is educational television. The question is:  
what is it teaching?

Nicholas Johnson<sup>1</sup>

## **Chapter 5: THE SURVEYS**

In anticipation of a television broadcasting station being established in the Halifax-Dartmouth area, the CBC Bureau of Audience Research commissioned a study of radio listening patterns in order to obtain background data on the likes and dislikes of the existing radio audience. Halifax was the site chosen because the interviewers felt they could complete Phase One of their analysis, patterns before television, before CBC began their television transmission. As well, it was felt that Halifax was far enough away from the centre of Canada where many of the new programs were produced that this city would not be easily influenced by central Canadian thinking. The information was to be used for developing programs and program schedules which would attract Haligonians to television. The survey, to be conducted between December 1st and 15th, 1954, would consist of both questionnaires and diaries. The questionnaire was to be completed with an interviewer during in-home meetings. The diaries were to be completed on a daily basis by members of the household. Data was to be obtained both on the individual and household characteristics of the family, their prior acquaintance with and expectations regarding television, their present radio listening habits and preferences, their leisure time activities and their general attitudes relevant to CBC operations and objectives.<sup>2</sup>

The research group, with assistance from the staff from International Surveys Limited, calculated that 640 households were equivalent to 2% of the population, an estimated 32,000 households. Various blocks and addresses were picked at random from household listings of 102 city blocks with no advance knowledge of who or how many people were living at a particular address. For this first stage, 600 households were targeted to receive the diaries and these were to be individually delivered by the interviewers. However, only 450 diaries were distributed by hand owing to time constraints (the last minute approval of the survey and the early sign-on of the television station.) The remainder were mailed to the householders. Only 280 households returned useful diaries, but it was felt that even with this small sample, the results would still be representative of the total population and could serve as a base from which changes in radio listening habits could be measured. As an added incentive, free subscriptions to the publication CBC TIMES were offered to those returning the diaries.<sup>3</sup>

The authors of the survey had to consider many factors when evaluating the responses written in the diaries. Ratings of shows had to be viewed within the context of a particular program's transmission signal, the amount of promotion a program had received as well as the kind of broadcast which proceeded or followed it. The time of day and the season of the year were other contributing factors along with a familiarity with the other programs that were being run in the same time slot on the other stations. Three radio stations were emphasized throughout the survey material: CHNS and CJCH, both privately owned, and CBC, owned and operated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Transmissions from the CBA-Sackville site were being picked up in some of the outlying areas and were included as part of CBC totals.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to this study, the only available data regarding radio listening patterns had been telephone surveys conducted immediately after a particular program, specifically for time periods 09:00 AM to 10:00 PM, excluding Sundays. So one of the first surprises learned from assessing the diaries was just how popular radio was, over 6.1 hours of listening per household on an average day. This average day ran from 07:00 AM to midnight for all days of the week. By reading the notes and comments next to the daily entries, it was determined that even this figure may have been considerably lower than normal because households during the survey period were caught up in the many preparations for the Christmas celebration, entertaining and visiting, parties, shopping, travelling. As well, students were preparing for examinations before the end of the school term so their listening time was curtailed during the fifteen day survey period.<sup>5</sup>

The diaries revealed that weekday audiences were larger between 07:00 AM and midnight than were weekend audiences during the same hours. Saturday audiences were smaller still, about 80% of weekday audiences. It was found that even though family members were home between 08:00 PM and 11:30 PM on a Saturday night, they were not listening to the radio. Sunday audiences were smaller than weekday audiences by only 10%. So the average listening hours per week were pulled down by Saturday's weak showing, not Sunday's reduced listening. This fact would require further investigation by the interviewers during the interview stage of the survey.<sup>6</sup>

After mapping the data to find the favourite listening patterns, peak listening hours could now be defined. These times included meal periods and proved to be the most popular with an estimated 50% of all households listening: 08:00 AM to 08:15 on week mornings, 12 noon to 1:15 PM and 06:00 PM to 06:45 PM every day.

Popular evening hours were from 09:00 to 09:30 PM on week nights and 07:00 to 08:30 PM on Sunday. From results such as these, it was determined that CBC's television news placed during the supper hour period would gain wide viewer acceptance. In fact, Halifax's first evening news show, GAZETTE was slotted in at 06:00 PM during weekdays. Later, the program MID-DAY would fill in the noon time slot.<sup>7</sup>

The survey revealed that CHNS, the oldest radio station, was also the most listened to, with half of all the listening audience tuning in. CJCH was second with a particularly large audience on Sundays, some 47%, while only averaging 29% during regular weekday programming. The main reason for this was that CJCH carried popular American entertainment such as the variety show Hit Parade and a weekly news shows called Information Hour. CBC network stations consistently had about a fifth of the listening audience, only 20%, if one considered the overall week's average. This was difficult to divide into particular segments, however, because diary keepers would list "listen to CBC" as a category which could have meant CBH, the Trans Canada network - CBC or the CBA-Sackville transmitter.<sup>8</sup> It was suggested that CBC's poor showing was because Maritime regional network stations carried "serious music" over roughly a third of the weekend broadcast period as opposed to less than 10% throughout weekday programming. The survey pointed out that "serious music does not draw mass audiences" and with popular music reduced to 2% of Sunday's programming, it was easy to understand why the general listening audience was considerably lower than weekday listeners. The other drawback for CBC was the lack of drama on the weekend, only 13% of total broadcast hours on Sundays as opposed to 21% on weekdays. This encouraged weekend CBC listeners to put their radio dials elsewhere on the weekends.<sup>9</sup>

At this time the surveys revealed that there was very little listening to American radio stations. The results suggested that only 2% of the total week's listening was tuned to American based stations and none of this listening was done in the daytime. However, 29% of homes listened to at least one program on an American station during the survey period. (This program, Amos n' Andy, was broadcast Sundays nights on WCBS, New York. This comedy routine begun in the late 1920s, was a direct descendent of the pre-Civil war minstrel show characters. Andy was pompous, domineering and a pseudo-intellectual. Amos was the brunt of all Andy's jokes, mostly one liners.) Those that did list American stations in their diaries, some 30 different stations, were mostly of New York and New England origin; stations WCBS, WOR and WNBC, all of New York, accounted for 60% of the stations for those who did tune into American stations. The virtual lack of drama on the Canadian stations was the main reason why American radio was sought. Comments from the diaries suggested that more plays and comedy shows would be well received during Saturday afternoons and evenings, especially for shut-ins and during the winter months.<sup>10</sup>

The listening patterns established by the survey material show a similarity in the types of programs offered on all three stations. During weekday afternoons, soap operas, cooking shows and light entertainment shows helped the homemaker complete the household chores. Evening programming from 07:30 PM to midnight included contests, western music, mystery dramas and disc jockey type programs attracting a more mixed audience. Local live programs were very popular. On weekends, especially Saturday afternoons, people tuned into music - old time, popular and western varieties. CBC offered the serious music lover operas through the week and the sports fan the national hockey broadcasts on Saturday evenings.



The survey concluded that for Saturday night radio listening in Halifax-Dartmouth, whichever station carried western music, news or hockey, was the one that led all the others.<sup>11</sup>

Information was gathered on the methods people used to select their programs. Reading newspaper advertisements was the preferred way of gaining personal knowledge about programs being offered, over 40% of those surveyed. Others said that they found their programs of interest completely by chance, by turning the dial throughout the day or evening to find something of interest. What was a disappointing showing for the CBC TIMES editors, however, was that only one listener of those surveyed used the program preview publication to determine how he or she would spend a portion of listening time, while 4% of those surveyed did no reading or research whatsoever. They turned the radio on and listened to whatever was on the radio channel where the dial was set.<sup>12</sup> (*See Table 1.*)

One of the most notable patterns that emerged was that the biggest listening audience in Halifax-Dartmouth regardless of hour or day was probably tuned into, in order of preference, a comedy, a contest, a drama (all kinds), a hockey game, local live shows, news and finally western music. The survey predicted that the coming of television would change this pattern and that the biggest loss in radio audiences would be in the field of popular light entertainment. It also pointed out that the number of people who habitually listened to only one particular station was relatively small. There seemed to be an overlay of audiences from one station to another, particularly CHNS and CJCH, suggesting a small "core" audience for the private stations and the programs they carried. The researchers tried to define this core audience.<sup>13</sup>

Taking thirty diaries and assigning two other members of the Bureau Research staff, categories and classifications were created to determine if there was a tendency to listen to one radio station to the exclusion of the other two. The researchers discovered CHNS had only a 12% single station audience loyalty but when coupled with CJCH, the percentage rose to 30%. On its own, CJCH had only 9% share of the households. CBC had a 6% share of listeners but when coupled with CHNS, the rate rose to 10%. What was most revealing, however, was that the strongest listening trend was for the category of listener who had no particular station loyalty, over 33%, or a third of the diaries reviewed. The reviewers called these listeners "floaters." This variable core audience showed a large amount of selectivity, choosing a particular program type over a particular station.<sup>14</sup>

The type of radio programs that the diary keepers listened to revealed listening patterns influenced by education level, socio-economic status, occupation and even by the number of people in a household. Just how were these characteristics broken down? Evaluation by education level divided the respondents into five categories – those with only four years of education (almost 4% of respondents), those with five to eight years of schooling (25%), those with nearly twelve years (the largest sector, almost 60%), and finally, those with over twelve years of education (10% of the survey group). Only two of the respondents had no formal schooling. (See Table 2A, 2B and 2C.) Next, the socio-economic status was considered. The researchers kept the categories straight forward, either low and low middle class or high middle and high class. The majority of population keeping the diaries fell within the low and low middle class category, nearly 75%. (See Table 3.) Occupations of those surveyed included unskilled and semi-skilled labour workers, some 22%. The largest category, 73%, included skilled craftsmen as well as those in

retail sales, clerical workers, small business owners, supervisory and sales representatives. Finally, there were independent professionals and political office holders, a mere 5% of the survey population. (See Table 4.) These findings were further divided into categories by the number of individuals in the household and their ages. This result was compared against the 1951 Census and was found to be within an acceptable range for age breakdown of family members, adults 89%, teenagers, 8%, and children, 23% compared with Census results of 74%, 8% and 18% respectively.<sup>15</sup>

Another consideration was the "background noise" factor. This meant that the radio might have been turned on but few were listening. To point out this slippage of 7% just in one program, the compilers of the survey reviewed the figures for audiences of the popular program Our Miss Brooks and found that:

Throughout this program it is estimated that the radio was ON in 61 per cent of all homes in the area. And in these homes, probably 54 per cent of all adults in greater Halifax were listening to the program, 52 per cent of all teenagers and 49 per cent of all children in this area.<sup>16</sup>

This raised the question of perhaps other occurrences of this nature that had not been specifically identified.

Twenty-six out of the 42 most listened to programs were carried on CHNS and they included (a) Our Miss Brooks, (b) Boston Blackie, (c) Fibber McGee and Molly, (d) Great Gildersleeve and (e) The News - Supper Club from 06:00 PM to 6:15 PM. Three of these shows (a), (c), (d) reached an estimated 40% of the households and were American in origin, provided through the CBC Dominion network service. These shows were popular with all age groups. Other popular shows included Guiding Light, Lux Radio Theatre, Bing Crosby, Wayne and Shuster and Voice of the Army. Soap operas, local live shows, both informational and children's participation, contests and live music certainly proved to be the types of programs

most regularly listened to. As for teenagers, the survey indicated that their tastes were similar to adults but they listened to more situation comedies and hit parade music. Children, those aged 4 to 12, tended to listen to story-based programs: Cuckoo Clock House, Santa Claus and Fairyland to name a few.<sup>17</sup>

Public Affairs broadcasts and news related programs such as Nation's Business were listened to by almost half of the respondents. Those that mentioned these programs listened regularly to at least one, if not more. The most popular were In Search of Ourselves, Press Conference and Trans Canada Matinee. The CBC tended to get bigger audiences for some of its serious and semi-serious programs than CJCH did for comparable kinds of programs. But CHNS had much larger audiences than either the CBC or CJCH when it came to popular drama and music. Some households did switch from one station to another to listen to serious broadcasts. But the switching was usually between CBC and CHNS. In households where news and public affairs programming was listened to with some regularity (4 or more different programs), the educational background of the respondents was higher than the average educational level of completed years of schooling although no university graduates were included in the survey group.<sup>18</sup>

During Part One of the research on radio listening patterns, researchers could classify radio users into three groups, light, medium and heavy. Of the 258 diaries returned, those that listened for ten hours or less per day were the "light" users and included 60 respondents. 93 respondents were classed as "medium" users listening ten to twenty hours daily. The largest sector, 105 respondents, were "heavy" users logging in twenty hours or more of radio listening. Part Two of the study allowed for a closer breakdown of these categories. It was found that the more people in the household the fewer hours of radio listening occurred. The make-up of the

household also affected the total listening time. Unmarried adults listened less frequently than members of a nuclear family suggesting to the researchers that parties and other get-togethers were still the more popular forms of entertainment for that group. Radio listening was most popular within the nuclear family, and researchers felt that this segment would be targeted for television purchase and program development.<sup>19</sup> (See Table 5a and 5b.)

Other interesting survey patterns suggested some listener loyalty for special areas of programming, a considerable amount of dial switching between different kinds of programs and the possible gains resulting from one show following a very popular show. Light entertainment (comedy) was featured on CHNS and CJCH every Sunday evening from 07:00 PM to 8:30 PM. CJCH began first with People Are Funny at 07:00 PM. 40% of all households were tuned in. At 07:30 PM, 85% of the CJCH audience switched to CHNS for the program Our Miss Brooks. This was approximately 34% of all households switching their radio dials. One could suggest that the probable cause was the listener's search for comedy. What was even more remarkable was that 78% of those households stayed with CHNS for the mystery show Boston Blackie. These households comprised 95% of the audience who listened to this popular mystery show. These three programs drew and held the light entertainment audience for 90 minutes.<sup>20</sup> A similar audience flow pattern was noted for week night news programs between CHNS and CBC. As well, CHNS music programming on Saturday night (09:45 to 10:45 PM) competed with CBC's continuous hockey coverage. On Thursday nights, the dial switching was between all three stations. First, CHNS and The Great Gildersleeve kept 43% of the listening audience. Then many from this audience switched to CJCH for Hours of Stars. Only CJCH carried local hockey. Finally, the CBC had the audience with Wayne and Shuster

drawing about 17% of the listeners. Observing these examples suggested a great amount of dial switching, audience flow, considerable selectivity on the part of radio listeners as well as a loyalty to a particular type of programming rather than to a particular station.<sup>21</sup>

A number of factors contributed to holding a listener for the entire program. Components were the length of the program (preferably a half hour), the intensity of listener's interest and the continuity of subject matter. One point that seemed particularly crucial was whether programs were in complete units like an opera or a play. A program, complete in itself, proved very popular entertainment and tended to hold an audience better than programs which were broken into different segments and run a week apart. It was also noted that if a program began with a good sized audience for the first episode, the greater the number of people there would be who would lose interest and not tune in again. The listeners would forget about the program. Or, the program would not generate sufficient listener interest to encourage them to return in subsequent weeks.<sup>22</sup>

Voluntary comments entered in 116 of the returned diaries (inside back covers) were used to determine strong likes and dislikes of certain programs. The analysis of the voluntary comments focused on twelve CBC programs in order to determine the reasons for audience behaviour, such as, what they "liked" about a program, were they regular listeners, and if so, why. The results differed somewhat from just tabulating audience size per program because they suggested strong listener preferences. The results confirmed that news and information programs were most popular with music and comedy selections a close second. This listener profile was to be studied again when the interviewers visited the homes and conducted interviews

with the individual household members that participated in completion of the diaries and asked specific questions about listener preferences.<sup>23</sup> (See Table 6.)

Several observations were to be drawn from the results of this study of pre-television radio listeners. First, this data was to be used to provide a workable and hopefully popular television program schedule. But the tools of the study were questioned. The diary method reflected the listening pattern of the household rather than the individual. So was the survey really gathering information about family listening patterns or individuals? All except one of the sample homes owned two or more "in home" radio sets and just under one half of the households owned car radios at the time the survey was completed.<sup>24</sup> About half of these second sets were located in the bedrooms, so it was very probable that more than one station could have been listened to by one family at the same time. The surveys did not reflect this fact although the households had been asked to note these details. As well, if both sets were tuned to the same program this fact was not to be entered as two radios, just as family listening. Because of misunderstood instructions at the beginning of the assignment, many families incorrectly listed "supplementary listening" as those programs that were being listened to on the main set and what was on the secondary sets as opposed to two different programs being tuned in, on different stations, at the same time. Either condition could change the values of the number of sets and the percentage of listeners tuned to a particular program.<sup>25</sup>

Another problem with the diaries was that aside from the station call letters, the diaries were blank, allowing space for the respondents to record their comments regarding programs, timeliness, interests. An example showing how to complete the diary was given on the inside cover. But as mentioned earlier, only the call letters of two of the local stations, CHNS and CBH were in the sample. Although

the Bureau of Audience Research claimed that there was no evidence to suggest that this affected the outcome, it raises the question that there might have been some bias in the reporting. Some level of writing skill was required in maintaining the diaries if comment was necessary for clarity. Expressing one's views may have been difficult if the diary keeper was not comfortable with writing.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it might be concluded that these diaries were not a complete and accurate response to the exact nature of the householder's feelings towards particular programs because what was not written down was not included in the final conclusions. Also, it should be kept in mind that these diaries were kept during the two week period just before Christmas. Because families had extra tasks, the radio surveys may not have been as complete as they could have been if they had been done in January or February.<sup>27</sup>

The radio listening surveys showed the concerns that would have to be addressed when working in the new medium, television. It was determined that programs would require additional promotional material in order to catch the interest of the listener. Extra promotion of their programming had increased CHNS's listener base so it followed that television viewing would require further encouragement. Now that it was known that meal hours were peak listening hours, further investigation was necessary to determine just where the programs could be best placed in order to attract the targeted population. Added to that was the strength of the new television signal, an important consideration because surrounding areas were currently better served by picking up American stations. Moreover, television viewing patterns, for those who already had receivers, suggested a strong preference for U.S. programs, a trend not to be encouraged.<sup>28</sup>

A great deal of dial switching from one radio station to another was the unexpected discovery. For a large number of homes, two or more stations were



popular, not just one. Fan loyalty was maintained for special interests rather than for particular station loyalty. If listeners were interested in dramas, they tuned the dial to the latest play. When that one ended they tuned the dial to another play, regardless of the station. Music lovers switched dials until they found the western, popular, or ballroom music they were in the mood for. Core audiences were those that remained with one station regardless of what was on the air. This group was very small. The "floaters," those who went through each station according to the hour or day of the week, listened to the program that caught their fancy for the moment. Once the song, play, etc., was over, they floated along to the next station. Floater audiences had no station loyalty, sometimes creating a temporary larger core audience as they moved from station to station. Core audiences differed from those with special interests. Special interest audiences stayed for a particular program and then switched to another station or switched the radio off. Their listening was much more selective than the core audience. Another audience characteristic was the "carry over" audience. This audience would tune into their favourite program and when completed, leave the radio on. The next program might capture their attention and they would listen to that as well. This was especially noticeable when a less popular program was sandwiched between two popular programs. The "carry over" audience would leave their radio dial where it was, waiting for their program rather than switching off or switching stations and returning to the original station for their next program choice.<sup>29</sup>

As for the shows themselves, light entertainment was the big winner, particularly comedy shows that were American in origin. CBC attracted smaller audiences over the weekends when the comedy programs run by the other stations competed against them but they had better luck with their public affairs and news commentary material included in weekday listening schedules. These programs

appealed to most educational levels. The final conclusion from the data reviewed in the first survey was that approximately 90% of all radio listening in the Halifax-Dartmouth area was centered on the three local stations.<sup>30</sup> Reasons cited most frequently were the clear reception and the community related issues that were easily identifiable. The next step in rounding out the viewer profile was the interview process. Would the strong preferences revealed in the first survey be substantiated with the one-on-one interviews? And with the approach of television, what expectations about program fare had already been established?

The second half of the CBC Halifax-Dartmouth study was published in November 1956 and dealt with radio listening patterns and leisure activities in the community as well as specific details about the sample population. These respondents, 497 of them and representing 2,019 individuals, were asked direct questions by the interviewers about their "intentions about television purchase, expectations about television program fare, radio habits and preferences, leisure time activities, news interest and participation in community organizations."<sup>31</sup> From the answers to these questions it was possible to get a sense of what patterns would emerge for television viewing and the audience's expectations of that programming. Some suggested comparisons were drawn about the audience shift to television (mainly from radio) although they were merely conjecture at that point. However, the report writers were aware that television had already begun in the area. In fact, the authors worked closely with the network staff and thanked Captain Briggs, the new Director of CBC Maritime, and his staff for co-operating with the survey members and helping them with the completion of the report. They also suggested that an "after" television study be commissioned as soon as possible.

Halifax in 1954 was larger than the reviewers would have liked for their study, some 70,000 inhabitants, with another 15,000 in Dartmouth (1951 Census). Then there were also smaller communities scattered along the harbour entrance and basin. At the time of the survey there was no bridge across the harbour but a ferry ran regularly. Suburban development was different from the sprawling outskirts of a city such as Montreal or Toronto while city blocks maintained their distinct character. The military presence had helped Halifax to prosper in the last decade but with the war over, the pace of life, growth and development was slower than that of other areas of Canada. The report writers pointed out that the December survey time, the winter season in Halifax, was not a time for visiting theatre companies and concerts but rather a socializing time around the family or the local hockey games at the arena or a movie. Although a well organized library and museum were in place, a visitor might see Halifax as isolated from other centres and quite happy to remain so, interested only in the affairs that affected their particular neighbourhood. Even out-of-town papers were hard to buy and late when available, so the reviewers felt that communication links to the rest of Canada and the world via radio and television would be in Halifax's best interests.<sup>32</sup>

Some guidelines had been set regarding the survey sample and how the information would be gathered. The 497 respondents represented a total population of 2,019 with an average of four people per household. There was to be no substitution of households within the survey area. The role of respondent for the interviews was assigned to the principal breadwinner, the male head of the household. However, if inconvenient (after three contact attempts had been made), the male head could designate his wife to speak on behalf of the family. The interviewers noted that "such substitution could not be avoided."<sup>33</sup> Children under 18 were excluded from

interviews as well as adults who were not heads of households or married to heads of households. There were no non-radio homes in the survey population even though the 1951 Census maintained that 7.5% of homes in the area did not own radios. (However, an Elliott-Hayes survey in the summer of 1955, would place radio saturation at 99% in Halifax County.) Compared with the national breakdown of family composition the sample population was well within the actual percentages. There were fifteen single person families in the survey population, some 3% of the total. The most common family unit was four to five persons, 41.9% of the total survey population. The 1951 Census calculated these family structures at 5.1% for single and 35.0% for four to five people. So the reviewers felt that their figures were close enough to the national Census to accurately tabulate general characteristics.<sup>34</sup> (See *Table 7.*)

The authors of the report were quick to point out that people spent their leisure time in different ways within and outside the community. A study of the organized social life of Greater Halifax revealed that this socialization was usually determined by the church to which one belonged.<sup>35</sup> (See *Table 8.*) The surrounding neighbourhood was an important centre of leisure activity because of the contacts that were built around it. Besides radio and television usage, the investigators looked at regular attendance figures at organization meetings and their membership. Some 32% of the sample population belonged to at least one organization. Participation in church related matters was even higher at 34%, while participation in Home and School Associations and their common activities was only 23%. Those interested in civic and political organizations accounted for only 18% of the total population. During the survey, however, when respondents were asked if they regularly voted in elections, whether it be municipal, provincial or federal, over three quarters of them

said they did vote but had no time or inclination to run for office themselves. Two observations were noted. For those who did belong to an organization, the researchers discovered that those individuals usually belonged to more than one organization, such as holding a office on a church committee as well as being a representative on the Home and School Board Association and a member of a volunteer organization. The second point was that even though the figures looked high for community participation, there was still a large number of respondents who had no affiliation to any organization or church whatsoever, nearly half of the 497 respondents.<sup>36</sup> (See Table 9.)

The investigators also asked questions about attendance at movies and spectator sport events, reading habits of items such as news materials, magazines, and full length books.<sup>37</sup> The respondents saw radio as their primary source of news with newspaper reading a supplement activity that gave the details of the story that radio missed. Over 98% of the respondents, regardless of age, read a daily paper and of those surveyed, 74% read either The Halifax Chronicle-Herald or the afternoon edition, The Halifax Mail-Star. Magazines, although popular, were not considered serious reading but rather reading for entertainment. The most widely read magazines of the surveyed group covered a variety of interests from beautifying the ladies, their home and hearth, with articles from the Ladies Home Journal and Esquire, to keeping the children entertained with stories and puzzles from the Children's Digest. True Romance was popular as was the Atlantic Monthly. The Watchtower, a religious publication, was mentioned by some of the respondents as well as the favourite do-it-yourself magazine, Popular Mechanics.<sup>38</sup> (See Table 10.)

Movie attendance was not as popular as had been expected. Out of five people, only two attended two movies monthly, one went once a week or more

and the other two rarely attended. This translated into over 200 of the survey group having little interest in films. However, the age of the respondents might have been a factor. They were not in the 18 to 25 year age group, usually the highest attending sector of the population. Statistics in other countries supported the notion that as people aged, movie attendance declined. The research group earmarked this area for further investigation because full length movies had been promised as early television fare. Regular attendance at sporting events was mentioned more frequently than movie-going as a favourite leisure activity. It appeared that the same Haligonians that participated in organizational memberships also found time for sports attendance, magazine and book reading. This concentration of activities among the most active members of the survey group showed that the use of mass media was not a form of escapism but for the most part had to provide the users with information about their community and their country. High participation in various activities appeared to suggest that "high exposure in one medium was directly related to high exposure in most others."<sup>39</sup> (*See Table 11A and 11B.*)

Another point for investigation was determining the level of acceptance for television.<sup>40</sup> This did not mean necessarily that the respondents already owned televisions but rather questions were asked to see if they were open to the purchase and subsequent viewing of a set in their home. It was discovered that the concerns raised about set ownership were related to social and economic practices within the community and in some ways measured the respondent's overall willingness to accept television. It was hoped these answers would also provide some clarification about the way in which television sets would be operated within the family unit after purchase.<sup>41</sup>

It was found that many of the respondents had never seen a television and "for some of them it was nothing but a flicker on the screen." When asked how much television they had seen, almost one half or 210 respondents said none.<sup>42</sup> Others had varying degrees of exposure to the new medium such as watching a weekly show at a neighbour's home, only 106; watching a couple of shows when the neighbour had first purchased the set, only 85. Then there was the group who had watched a month or more of television, 95 respondents, a rare group indeed considering that CBC had not yet begun transmitting at the time the questions were asked. Overall, over three-quarters of the sample had limited access to television while nearly half of the sample had never seen television at all.<sup>43</sup>

Respondents had not really thought about what they were going to watch on their sets. The responses from the majority of participants, over 70% of them, centered around familiar categories of programming currently available on radio, such as variety and information programs, children shows and stories. Other responses were for the most part generalizations, comments such as "lots of variety and light entertainment" programs. When asked what they expected from television, some respondents mentioned a show by name, or the type of program they most often listened to on radio. The exceptions to those answers were from those who were anticipating the opportunity of watching regularly scheduled live sports broadcasts as well as special performances like a concert or an opera. Movies and stories were popular because a large number of respondents were looking forward to watching their movies at home rather than attending a movie theatre. The notion that movies would soon be available through their television screens was extremely popular not only for those who were considered invalid or "shut-ins" but for those who worked all week and just wanted to relax at home with their family.

Although some of the categories were broad in scope, when asked to clarify their choices, most respondents were in favour of television but mainly as an educational tool. It was felt that news and information, documentaries and reports from around the world would broaden all Haligonians' viewpoints, not just students'. Presentation of "special performances" would allow everyone the opportunity to enjoy cultural activities for the ticket cost would not longer be a prohibiting factor. Television would also eliminate the perceived advantage of the larger centers over the smaller towns by bringing the material into everyone's living room anywhere in the country. Respondents felt that showing local events "live" would be immensely entertaining and convenient as well as giving them a glimpse of another part of the town, the country and the world. Television was considered a time and space mover, allowing viewers access to otherwise inaccessible areas. To some, this new invention was an eye opener to the world, others were not so sure that such easy access was a good thing.<sup>44</sup> (See Table 12.)

Some respondents were quick to tell the interviewer when they were making their set purchase, others were more cautious. Of course there is no way to confirm whether those that said they planned to buy a set within six months (16.3%) or afterwards really did so. However, the large percentage of respondents (60.3%) were willing to wait and see what kind of programs would be shown and whether the cost of the set would come down. (It was this segment that the CBC was most interested in.) Finally, there was the group that was totally resistant to this new phenomenon (15.9%), about one-sixth of all respondents who claimed no interest whatsoever in televisions.<sup>45</sup>

One of the biggest problems with television was the cost of the set itself. As early as the end of April 1952, around 13,500 Canadians, mostly in southern



Ontario and the Vancouver area had bought television sets. The arrival of CBC-TV sparked a sales boom in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. Initially, the television set may have been better suited to the pocket books of the well-to-do; the average cost of a set in December 1952 was \$425.20. In Halifax by 1954, however, a 17-inch, Panoramic-vision Fleetwood set "with wrought iron legs and beautifully constructed cabinet" was only \$264.95.<sup>46</sup> Middle-and-low-income Canadians flocked to the stores. Accounts in the local papers relate the tale of "Operation Airlift," a special DC-3 that brought in three hundred sets for Christmas. The aircraft had been chartered by Admiral, a television manufacturer and a local retailer.<sup>47</sup> It was all a matter of sacrifice for the lower and middle income groups, and it appeared this was one that most families were willing to make. Considering that the average annual income in 1952 of a male wage earner in the building trade, a carpenter in Halifax, for example, was only \$3,078, this purchase represented a sizeable investment.<sup>48</sup> By 1957, statistics would show that Nova Scotians had more televisions than cars and almost as many televisions as telephones.<sup>49</sup> (See Table 13.)

Other problems to be considered were the quality of reception and program content. Halifax viewers would gain some advantage by being a late starter on the network. Instead of having to suffer through the experimental periods and frequent picture testing that had been the steady fare of their Ontario neighbours, the new technology would have some of its technical difficulties resolved. What had been learned from the other installations would be put to good use when CBHT set up in December. Newly hired technicians had been sent to Toronto for training on transmitter hook-up and reception troubleshooting, picture clarity and lighting requirements. Another two-week course was required once the new equipment arrived at the site. A crew of engineers and television installation experts had arrived

from Montreal to complete the wiring and adjusting. A temporary studio had been set up in an abandoned school on College Street and a 75-foot antenna had been erected beside it to transmit microwave signals to Geizer's Hill.<sup>50</sup> Most respondents did not understand how this electronic magic worked but expected that the "picture viewing would be of the highest quality."<sup>51</sup>

Content, however, was another issue. Concern over the anticipated programming regardless of its source, raised the issue of television's "social effects" both on family members and the community as a whole. Although many respondents were in favour of television, some 23%, there were also those who were ambivalent about the prospect of a local channel in the area and gave multiple reasons for their resistance. The largest percentage of negativity was over the expensive initial outlay. Forty-five percent of all respondents felt that the receiver sets were just too expensive. Many in this group were also horrified that this "luxury" was now being advertised as an affordable furniture addition to the living room and "only \$2.50 per week for three years with no down payment." This smacked of an apparent "lack of responsibility" according to some respondents, especially those of the most resistant group, those age 55. They believed that television was in direct conflict with "old-fashioned virtues and decent morality." Age differences among adults and differences in the number of children in the family reflected the conflict between the generations. On the younger side was a style of life that would be compatible with television, while on the other a set of habits that appeared resistant to change and innovation. Lack of interest in either radio or television was another reason; news and current events were read about in magazines or local newspapers and the respondents were satisfied with information obtained in this manner. The final stumbling block to television ownership was simple logistics; some said that they had no permanent address and to have

acquired a television and then have to move it around was very inconvenient.<sup>52</sup> (See Table 14.)

The demographic composition of the respondent families shed some light on what would become major contributing factors to television's popularity. General categories included family size, age of individual members, a predominant urban or rural background. Interviewers found a strong connection between the home building phase and the raising of a young family phase of the family's life career and television's acceptance. This pattern further showed that many unmarried adults resisted television. The survey concluded that the "fewer people in the household the less likely that a television would be purchased."<sup>53</sup> Respondent answers to interviewers suggested a more favourable tendency towards television purchase depending on larger families and the presence of children in the home. But there was a sharp decline in acceptance once the family reached four or more children suggesting that financial concerns played a large role in the decision.<sup>54</sup> (See Table 15.) Families with children compared with adults without children were much more concerned about the social effects of television on their families. Young children in the home might have been one of the deciding factors in the purchase of a set, but it was the parents who felt that the benefits of having a set in their home far outweighed any harm that it might cause. "Social effects" were actually mentioned five times more often by parents as opposed to those respondents without children.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the attitudes of these parents remained favourable towards what they believed to be television's benefits for their children and they felt confident that they could handle any problem that television would create. Parents who had children under 18 were willing to include television in their lifestyle. (However, the interviewers did note that a third of the respondents, 169 families, had no children under eighteen, which could have had

a significant effect on the overall results of the question.)<sup>56</sup> The survey also found that concerns over the "social effects" of television were voiced more frequently by respondents with above average schooling (9 years or more), (15.2%), and by those in higher socio-economic brackets, (23.2%).<sup>57</sup> But this difference appeared to decline the more exposure the person had to television programming.

Was previous experience with television an influence and a contributing factor in the purchase of a set and of the anticipated quality of television programming? Interviews with the respondents suggested that the more previous exposure one had to the medium, the more likely the person would be to purchase a set. But the relationship between previous viewing experiences and the growing concerns about upcoming programming appeared to reverse this favourable view. Respondents who had not seen television programs had fewer reservations about the whole experience than those who had viewed programs elsewhere. Those who had already watched programs expressed concern about content, were more critical about the views expressed by the participants and expected a certain quality of picture and sound. Having a higher socio-economic status (thereby travelling was affordable), and more schooling than most, this sector was better able to articulate their complaints.

This group of respondents was also more aware of the public criticisms that were already being levelled against Canadian television. The 244 respondents, (49% of the total population), who had watched television outside of the Halifax-Dartmouth area could be divided into three groups according to where they had viewed the programs: those that were familiar with only Canadian fare, perhaps while visiting Ontario or Quebec, (12.4%), those who had their viewing experiences limited to the American networks television programming only, (17.1%), and those who had had an opportunity to compare American and Canadian programs and were in a

better position to determine the merits of both (9.8%).<sup>58</sup> The survey's conclusion was that those viewing US-only programming had the most reservations while those who had seen television on both sides of the border were more optimistic about the material that would be presented by the new network.

However, the survey results were unable to demonstrate any link between concern with program quality and a particular set of television expectations or radio preferences. Broad categories produced generalized comments and a lack of sustained exposure to television did not really encourage comparisons or suggestions. Indiscriminate radio listeners were less critical of the anticipated television program fare. But deliberate or discriminating listeners, those that checked a program guide before listening to a particular program, were not unduly critical either. Reservations about the quality of television were more typical of respondents who were generally suspicious of innovations, characteristic of respondents from "upper class" homes with education, (9 years of schooling or more), a much less important variable.<sup>59</sup> Socio-economic status and education levels appeared to be determinants in whether televisions are purchased. Economic considerations were only important in the early purchase.

Another area investigated was how the social outlook and style of living of adults might lead to an acceptance of television in their daily lives. Life in the suburbs of the early 1950s was a life of building and maintaining homes, raising young families, daily commutes to the office. All these factors tended to isolate adults from the downtown entertainment scene.<sup>60</sup> The survey suggested that suburban living with its relative isolation and segregation would open up a very large market for television to flourish.<sup>61</sup> "Television acceptance was more favourable in the peripheral areas than in the older built-up sections of Halifax."<sup>62</sup> Finally, however, the survey noted that

because a Halifax-Dartmouth round trip for commuters did not compare with the similar journey in a city like Montreal or Toronto, the time that the head of the household returned home had no bearing on whether radio or television would be favoured in that household. However, the travelling distance certainly had a bearing on how the family entertained themselves.

It was this promise of family entertainment that was the biggest draw to television. Parents had particular views on time slots and content suitable for their children.<sup>63</sup> They wanted children's viewing between the 06:00 and 07:00 PM period but were quick to add that it should not interfere with bedtime or studies. The programs should keep them quiet during busy hours, not interfere with mealtimes, outdoor activities, or adult viewing. Stories, cartoons, quizzes, were the most popular requests for the younger children. The older the children, ages 9-12, for example, the more concerned parents appeared to be about the bedtime hour, some 17.1% of the respondents. For younger children, the percentage dropped to only 1% of the respondents. Opportunity to study was a major concern for those parents of 9-12 year olds. But for households with children in more than one age group the differences were hardly noticeable. The interviewers also noted that in homes where the head of the household was home by 06:00 PM, nearly two-thirds of the survey population, it was those families that felt that a story on the air would give the family a bit of quiet time before bed.<sup>64</sup> (See Table 16.) The changing patterns of family routine were already noted by one cartoonist in the local paper. Mother rushing through the bedtime story, children watching the clock and doing their homework, CBC was going to rewrite family time for Haligonians and the household would never be the same.<sup>65</sup>

Rounding out the interview, the survey team asked the respondents how they felt about regional versus national programming and the amount of

commercial advertising within a program that was acceptable, if any. The question was asked: "Do you think the television station here should devote a lot of time to programs of particular interest to Maritime people?" Not surprisingly, five out of eight people endorsed a Maritime view, while a third of the group thought that there was a need for both kinds of programming. Some respondents said that they felt slighted in relation to the rest of Canada and suggested that Maritime programming should become part of CBC's local daily schedule. This included such topics as Maritime history, festivals, stories, music, tourist attractions, regional economic problems, as well as up-to-date commentary on farming, the fishery and mining.<sup>66</sup> Many surveyed also felt strongly that the production centre for these programs should be in the region rather than Toronto. After reviewing the data, the interviewers suggested that this strong "local interest" attitude was related to three factors – a person's roots, the general education and social background of the respondent and a family's general preference among radio programs.

The strongest regional attitude seemed closely related to an individual's place of birth with the strongest loyalty among those born in Newfoundland and Labrador, some 77.8% of those households surveyed. (*See Table 17.*) Those born in the Maritimes seemed more inclined to favour regional broadcasts than those people born in other regions.<sup>67</sup> They were more interested in where the program was produced than what it was, and the interviewers noted that many respondents said they wanted Maritime programming but their listening patterns tended towards radio broadcasts of national and American material. Community roots played a part in the regional versus national content debate as well as the age of respondent, whether they owned their homes and if they were active participants in the community. The more urban the background of the individual with more years of formal schooling and

a higher socio-economic bracket, the more open they were to national productions. Ageing, settled citizens, with roots in their community, concerned about neighbourhood issues, and in many cases with a rural background felt that Maritime issues were the main topics to be covered. They also believed that there should be opportunities for local talent to gain experience and exposure. Career opportunities would keep local talent from emigrating and encourage youth to become more interested in the arts.

Asked about commercial content for television, respondents did not like the idea of commercials and believed that Sundays should be commercial-free days used for continuous coverage of sporting events. (Over half of respondents believed that there should be no restrictions on broadcasts of sporting events, especially on Sunday.) They believed that the sponsor had the right to advertise products but that there should be restrictions on the amount of time allotted and the frequency of the ads. They maintained that it was the government's responsibility to control the number of commercials, their length and content, such as no beer or liquor ads. Commercials should be interesting, truthful, informative and entertaining. These views were based on radio listening experiences, and many respondents felt that television should be governed by the same regulations. One hundred respondents felt strongly that there should be no commercials on the new network, but nearly three hundred respondents expressed tolerance for commercials.<sup>68</sup> (See *Table 18*.) The interviewers were surprised that some of the respondents, only 40, said they liked commercials but even they believed that some restraint was necessary for the sake of good taste and decency.<sup>69</sup>

From the results of the survey data, it soon became apparent that many respondents were anxiously awaiting television's arrival. Nearly a quarter of the



respondents had already purchased sets or were in the process of doing do.<sup>70</sup>

However, the undecided ones, over two hundred of them, were of the greatest interest to all involved in the CBC Halifax hook-up. These were the people who, once convinced of television's place in their homes, would be next to make their purchase or at the very least, strongly encouraged by family and friends to do so. Despite the negativity surrounding the initial outlay, it was found that that attitude dissipated once the equipment was in the home and operating. Families would soon have their favourite shows, similar to radio, and the creators of the programming schedules were keenly aware of what the public wanted. Soap and serial dramas, news shows, sports presentations, religious programs, informational and educational documentaries; these selections were to be allocated specific time spots in the initial broadcast day of five hours, Monday to Friday. Weekend broadcasting time was longer and allowed for more sports events. Although radio had been the reliable resource for news and on-the-spot reports, it was soon realized that once television had established itself, television would become the primary medium for information. The greatest appeal would be one of immediacy and the feeling of "being there." The first local "excitement" shown on Halifax supper-hour news was a fire at the West End Building Supplies site. The piece of film was shown over the news the next day.<sup>71</sup> Radio's successful war coverage had created a reliance on radio for quick on-the-spot coverage, something the cumbersome television equipment had not been able to compete with yet. But with enhancements to equipment, television would soon show its ability to draw a mass audience for almost any public spectacle, and, because of its very nature, make something news worthy just by covering it. This would forever change the consumption of news, consumer viewing habits, and in fact, the family structure itself.

<sup>1</sup> Editor, R. Fitzhenry, "About Television," The Fitzhenry and Whiteside Book of Quotations. 3rd edition, (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1993), pp. 436-438.

<sup>2</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, December 1, 1954, front page and p. 6.

C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One - Radio Listening Patterns in a Canadian Community..."Before" Television. C.B.C. Bureau of Audience Research, Ottawa, December 9-15, 1954, chapter 1 - Introduction, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One - Introduction, p. 1.

Even though less than half of the diaries returned were usable, the researchers felt that this was a fairly reliable sampling, in line with other mail-in surveys and that the results would be a true reflection of what they were trying to measure.

Publications from the British Broadcasting Corporation and the A. C. Nielsen Company were also reviewed and used in the preparation of the diary and questionnaire. When surveys were completed by these companies, return results were similar.

Even a 1951 Canada Census suggested that the number of diaries was a reasonable return and that even with sampling errors, data manipulation and forecasting could be made.

Five hundred questionnaires were completed and were used for a separate report by the Bureau, to be discussed later.

C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 1, p.1-3, Appendix A, p.59-60.

<sup>4</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 1, pp. 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 1, Introduction, pp. 1-7.

<sup>6</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 1, Introduction, pp. 1-7, Preface, pp. ii-iv, Conclusion, pp. v-vii.

<sup>7</sup> For the two week period of the survey, 140,000 diary entries were evaluated.

C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, Preface, p. ii, and chapter 1, pp. 1-7.

In 1954, there were 3,734,000 Canadian households of which 3,598,000 had radios.

Historical Statistics of Canada, Tables: Household Facilities and Equipment Survey, Bulletin 64-202, Table 25-28

C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 2, pp. 8-9.

The categories used for the survey, news, entertainment, popular music, etc., were developed by Mr. Charles A. Siepmann.

Charles Siepmann, "Aspect of Broadcasting In Canada," Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, Massey Commission, King's Printer, Ottawa, 1951, Appendix vi.

C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 3, p. 10-23.

The chosen format for "supper" news was with Max Ferguson, a familiar voice to radio listeners, and Rube Hornstein. For CBC Halifax, GAZETTE was a weather and interview program featuring guests from the community. One was a Bill Thompson, a driver of a fire truck, the first mechanized fire engine in the city. His particular story was about the Halifax Explosion. Then there was a Captain Norman Smith, a wartime sailor who told tales of the Boston to Halifax merchant navy shipping route. Even though both guests sprinkled their talk with the "language of the street," the audiences enjoyed them.

The Halifax Mail-Star, December 10, 1954, (headlines), p.3.

Max Ferguson, And Now ... Here's Max, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1967), pp. 124-153.

Haligonians could get a preview of television. A musical revue was presented for two nights in the Dalhousie University gym. Dancing interlaced with television-type skits and simulated 'live' broadcasts of the test pattern were quite a hit.

The Halifax Mail-Star, November 17, 1954, p.3.

<sup>8</sup> In a study done by the CBC for their own use in August 1956, the effectiveness of the CBA Sackville transmitter was measured. It was the second ranking station in Nova Scotia in terms of audience size with CHNS Halifax the leading station and CFCY Charlottetown being third. CBA held about 25% of the listening audience 16 years of age and over and in the areas that it was meant to cover, it reached 40% of its target audience. Most effective penetration was over those counties of Nova Scotia south and south west of the transmitter reaching its biggest daily audiences with predominately rural interest programs such as the Maritime Farm

Broadcast and Neighbourly News. The most popular evening program was Don Messer and His Islanders.

Some New Evidence on CBA's Effectiveness In Nova Scotia, CBC, Analysis and Reports Department, Audience Research Division, (Ottawa: Audience Research Division, August 1956), pp. 1-21.

<sup>9</sup> On weekdays, serious music was run 8.5% of the total broadcast hours while light music ran 22% of the week day hours. Drama was 21% of weekday broadcast hours, none on Saturdays. News and commentary was higher on Sundays, 17%, than on weekdays, only 8%.

C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 3, Table 2: Breakdown of CBC - TC (Maritime Region) Program Schedule, p.12.

<sup>10</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 3, pp. 10-23.

<sup>11</sup> Many of these patterns would be closely duplicated for the future television planning.

<sup>12</sup> "Summary of Findings," Part One, (pp. viii-ix), Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Canada Broadcasting Corporation, (Ottawa: Audience Research Division, November 1956), Part 3, pp. 1-15.

<sup>13</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter, 3, p. 23 , Appendix C, pp. 63-65.

<sup>14</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter, 3, p. 23, Appendix C, pp. 63-65.

<sup>15</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 4, p.29.

The Canadian population was 14,009,429, broken down as urban 62.9% and rural 37.1%.

Historical Statistics of Canada, Series D408, D410, Toronto, MacMillan, 1965, p.105.

C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part 10, Tables X-1, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter, 4, p. 24.

Man and woman of the year for 1955 were television personalities: Jackie Gleason and Lucille Ball. In radio, Jack Benny and Eve Arden were most popular.

The Halifax Mail-Star, January 13, 1955, p.26.

The Halifax Mail-Star, January 10, 1955, p.6

<sup>17</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 4, pp. 24-26.

<sup>18</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter, 5, p. 37 and Table 11 - A, p.35.

Comparison of the Years of Schooling Level of the Public Affairs Audience.

"Years of schooling level" was based on the years of schooling of one adult in the household or the survey questionnaire respondent.

<sup>19</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 3, Table III-4, pp. 7-9.

<sup>20</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 6, pp. 38-39, and Table A.: Loyalty to Special Areas of Programming, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 6, pp. 38-45.

<sup>22</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter, 7, pp. 46-49.

<sup>23</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 8, pp. 50-58.

<sup>24</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, Appendix A, pp. 59-61.

<sup>25</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, Appendix B, pp. 62, chapter 3, p.13.

<sup>26</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, Preface, p. iii.

<sup>27</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, Chapter 2, (Average Amounts of Listening), pp. 8-9.

<sup>28</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, Appendix B, p.62, chapter 3, p.13.

<sup>29</sup> C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, Appendix C, pp. 63-65, chapter 6, pp.

38-45.

<sup>30</sup> It would soon become apparent that to survive, radio would reinvent itself, targeting an audience sub-group within the larger population, defining them in terms of their particular tastes. Radio surveys would measure the number of people listening but not how they felt about the programs. This would evolve into the business of 'narrow casting', radio's survival technique for the future.

Edward Withers and Robert S. Brown, "The Broadcast Audience: A Sociological Perspective," Communications In Canadian Society, Editor, Benjamin Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1991), pp. 67-92.

Ian Lee and Conrad Winn, "The Policy Elite Audience: Its Significance and Some Findings," Communications In Canadian Society, Editor, Benjamin Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1991), pp. 93-113.

<sup>31</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, (Ottawa: Audience Research Division, 1956), Part 10, p. 2, Appendix 2, p. 7, Appendix I, p. 2 and Preface, p. ii.

<sup>32</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 1, pp. 2-5.

<sup>33</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 10 and Part 6, pp. 1-19.

<sup>34</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 10, Table X-1, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 10, Table X-9, pp. 5-6.

<sup>36</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 2, pp. 2-21.

<sup>37</sup> For this part of the interview, the investigator's questions were:

"In general would you say that your work or your responsibilities in the home leave you enough time to do the things you want to do?" (question #36)

"For example, how many books did you read this past month?" (question #37)

"How many movies did you attend last month?" (question #38)

"About how often a year do you go to see such games and sports as football, hockey, boxing, etc.?" (question #39)

"Are you a regular participant in any sport or belong to a sports club?" (question #40)

"Do you regularly attend meetings in any of the following groups or organizations: educational; social or fraternal; political, civic or welfare; business or labour, veterans, church, other?" (question 41)

"Which of the above activities do you think you would cut down on if you spent a few hours each day watching television?" (question #42)

Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Appendix 2, pp. 8-10.

<sup>38</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 1, chapter 2, p.9, Part 2, pp. 2-31.

<sup>39</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 1, Summary, pp. 6-8, Part 2, pp. 16-20.

<sup>40</sup> Questions asked to determine this data:

1. One of the things we are trying to find out is how many families in the Halifax area own TV sets. Have you already purchased a TV set? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. If "yes" - how long have you had a TV set?

3. If "no" - when do you intend purchasing one?

4. If "not at all" - why not?

Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 10, Table X-2, p.4.

The interviewers also asked if the home was owner occupied (54.5%) or tenant-occupied (44.9%). This was close to the national 1951 Census of 54.8% and 45.2% respectively.

Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, p.2.

<sup>41</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 10, Appendix I, p. 2 and Part 6, p.1-19.

<sup>42</sup> For this part of the interview, the investigator's questions were:

"Have you purchased a set yet?" (question #1)

"How long have you had a set?" (question #2)

"When do you intend purchasing one?" (question #3)

"Why not?" (question #4)

"Have you ever had an opportunity to watch television programs?" (question #5)

"Where was that?" (question #6)

"Did you like the programs you saw?" (question #9)

- Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Appendix 2, pp. 8-10.
- <sup>43</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, p. 3, Table VI-1.
- To prepare their new audience, CBC had a test pattern in place the week leading up to the sign-on. This became a community 'event' as folks made sure they were around a set at the prescribed times: 11 am, 2:30 PM, 5 PM, and between 6 and 7 PM.
- The Halifax Mail-Star, December 16, 1954, p. 3.
- The introductory broadcast was at 6:45 PM, December 20th and consisted of a welcome speech from Captain W. E. S. Briggs, CBC Maritime Director. Regular programming followed.
- The Halifax Mail-Star, December 20, 1954, p.3.
- Statistics Canada began tracking the ownership of television sets as early as 1953. For 3,641,000 Canadian households, 373,000 had televisions, approximately 10%. In 1955, the number of households increased to 3,872,000 and 1,496,000 of these had sets, an amazing 39% of the total. Ten years later, with 5,000,000 households available, 4,631,000 had televisions or 93%. Statistics Canada now added another category – those households with more than one television set. In 1965, 10% of the 4,631,000 fell into that category.
- Statistics Canada, Bulletin 64-202.
- <sup>44</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, pp. 1-19.
- <sup>45</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, p. 5, Chart VI-1 - Date of Intended Purchase.
- "The television saturation predicted for Halifax six months after CBHT went into operation was about 25%. The validity of this assessment was confirmed with later survey calculations."
- Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, p.
- 4.
- <sup>46</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, November 25, 1954, p.22.
- <sup>47</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, December 20, 1954, p.3.
- <sup>48</sup> Historical Statistics of Canada. Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1965, p.86.
- <sup>49</sup> 1957 - in Nova Scotia there were 167,000 households; 106,000 telephones, 158,000 radios (did not include car radios), 101,000 televisions, 82,000 cars.
- Source: Canada: Dominion Bureau of Statistics "Household Facilities and Equipment", Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1959, Bulletin: 64-202.
- <sup>50</sup> Questions the interviewers asked were:
- "Do you know who (Persons or organizations) is going to own and operate the television station here? Most respondents did not know the specific organization, some suggested "the government" or a "private company."
- Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Appendix 2, pp. 8.
- <sup>51</sup> It seemed ironic to some that College Street school, built in the late 1850s in an era of candles, was now becoming the site of the most modern electronic television equipment to hit the metro area. What was the world coming to, asked the locals?
- The Halifax Mail-Star, November 4, 1954, p.3
- A new building for the permanent CBC station would be constructed on Bell Road with reinforced concrete walls and roof. It would accept microwave signals from the College Street location, beamed to Geizer's Hill on Dutch Village Road.
- The Halifax Mail-Star, September 4, 1954, p.3
- The Halifax Mail-Star, November 4, 1943, p.3.
- <sup>52</sup> Percentages were based on 431 respondents. The authors deleted those who had already purchased televisions at the time of the interviews.
- Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, p. 7.
- <sup>53</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, pp. 9-11.
- <sup>54</sup> If more than one wage earner in a large family, a television purchase was probable.
- Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, Table p. 6.
- Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 8, pp. 2-3.

- <sup>55</sup> Many felt that television was great for shut-ins and the elderly but worried about the physical effects on children: rounded shoulders, strained eyes, fatigue.  
The Halifax Mail-Star, October 13, 1954, p.2.
- <sup>56</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 8, p.2, Table VIII-1.
- <sup>57</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, p.11.
- <sup>58</sup> The survey went on to suggest that no real conclusions could be drawn between resistance to television and criticism of programming. A comment was made by a few respondents that "as long as the CBC controlled programming the fare was likely to be poor".  
 Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, p. 16-17.
- <sup>59</sup> Socio-Economic status used: High (18.4%) and High Middle (17.5%) as opposed to Low Middle (8.0)% and Low (5.0%)  
 Years of Schooling used: 13 years and over (11.8%), 9 to 12 years of schooling, (10.8%) and 8 year and under, (5.5%).  
 Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, p.16 and Table VI-6.
- <sup>60</sup> An informal survey was completed in the spring of 1955. The sociology class at McGill University undertook a study of a representative sample of 100 families of Hampstead, a suburb of Montreal. Many of Jolliffe's fears were confirmed.  
 Frederick Elkin, "Television in Suburbia," Canadian Association for Adult Education, Food For Thought, May-June 1957, pp. 379-382.
- <sup>61</sup> Some considered television as an employment opportunity. The appointment of Glen Sarty, a local musician, who joined the CBC staff showed that local talent would be showcased in this new medium.  
The Halifax Mail-Star, June 24, 1954, p.3.  
 Even national magazines explained how to best get an audition and what particular talents were best suited for the medium.  
 Barbara Moon, "How To Get On Television," Maclean's Magazine, December 19, 1959, pp. 13-17, 48-49.  
 Not only that the suburbs would be a fertile ground for television but that programs themselves would reflect these family relationships. One of the most popular shows, after only two performances, was The Plouffe Family. The author, Roger Lemelin broke new ground by using the same cast for the English and French versions, creating nine leading characters and twenty-five supporting characters. For its time, the show was ground breaking, portraying working class gritty reality, their ideas, beliefs, prejudices, feelings, loves, sorrows.  
The Halifax Mail-Star, October 30, 1954, p.2.
- <sup>62</sup> However, home ownership reverses that attitude somewhat. Homeowners were less inclined toward television than those who did not own homes. The heaviest users of radio were most often found among the home owners.  
 Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 6, p. 12-13, and Part 10, Table X-1, X-2, pp. 3-4.
- <sup>63</sup> Questions the interviewers asked were:  
 "What about the children – would it be a good idea for television to set aside a particular period for children's programs, some sort of children's hour or children's period?" (question #21-#22)  
 "At what times should children's programs be presented?" (question #23)  
 "What sort of programs do you have in mind for children?" (questions #24)  
 Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Appendix 2, p. 9.
- <sup>64</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 8, pp. 1-7, Tables VIII-1 to VIII-5.
- <sup>65</sup> Chamber's cartoon entitled, "C.B.C. Rewrites A Classic," The Halifax Mail-Star, November 25, 1954, p.2.
- <sup>66</sup> Subjects were broken down by traditions and folk lore, economic activity, local and regional events, local and regional sports, locally produced programs and general interest programs.

- Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 7, pp. 1-15,  
Table VII-2, p.3.
- <sup>67</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 7, pp. 1-15,  
Table VII-3, p.4.
- <sup>68</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 9, pp. 1-5.
- <sup>69</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 9, Table IX-2,  
IX-3, IX-4, and IX-5, pp. 1-5.
- <sup>70</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 5, pp. 1-17  
and Table V-8.
- <sup>71</sup> The Halifax Mail-Star, January 4, 1955, p.1.

Television's compelling power is its immediacy. This immediacy feeds the politics of emotions, gut reactions and impressions rather than the politics of logic, facts and reason; it emphasizes personality rather than issues.  
- Hedrick Smith<sup>1</sup>

## **Chapter 6: IN MY LIVING ROOM**

Television arrived in Halifax with great fanfare and anticipation. But even as it was hailed as an important invention of mass entertainment, there were those who realized that television had begun its invasion into the living rooms of Greater Halifax. That first station, set up hastily in the little school on College Street, was the beginning of an entertainment revolution allowing Haligonians to see and hear wondrous things and demand ever increasingly the new, the different and the extravagant. The future seemed bright with possibilities.

New technological advancements within a few short years would bring colour television into many living rooms and would become the people's choice, quickly surpassing what television's creators had originally anticipated.<sup>2</sup> Within a decade, 98% of homes would have at least one television set, 35.5% would have more than one. Average hours of watching television would climb to 24 hours per week proving that television was becoming purely an entertainment medium.<sup>3</sup> That same decade would expand a viewer's channel selection via cable television networks becoming the newest twist to television's claim for our time. Cable television systems would allow viewers the option of paying for additional channels, more and different programs, but sometimes the same fare that they could get for free, only through a different transmitting signal. Canada would become the fastest growing cable



subscriber country in the world. Cable television in Canada, by 1970, would have over five million subscribers with revenues of over \$54 million.<sup>4</sup>

A new process called time-shifting would evolve, giving individuals the ability of taping their favourite programs on their own Videotape Recorders and playing them back at their convenience. VCRs would become common place as families began spending their time and money on home entertainment equipment. Once again, families would be viewing presentations as a family unit, watching what they wanted to see, when they wanted to see it, comfortably seated in their own living rooms.<sup>5</sup> Some believed that the coming of the VCR would make every viewer "a collector, a critic and a connoisseur of television programming."<sup>6</sup> A remote control device would become standard equipment, allowing viewers to remain seated in their chairs and switch television channels with a flick of a button. It was believed that the electronic border between Canada and the US would eventually disappear in the struggle by all networks to create sufficient material to satisfy a daily broadcast schedule and an ever increasing consumer demand for varied programming. Television, for good or ill, was becoming the most important mass medium of this age. From the sparse beginnings of the fledgling Canadian Marconi Company to the digital technology of individual satellite dishes for home use, television was to open new vistas, unimaginable to the first CBHT viewers that December evening.<sup>7</sup>

All who viewed the material presented on the small screen sought something; to gain knowledge of famous people and far-off places or to acquire a sense of self. Mainly, they sought to be entertained. It was in the fiction rather than the facts, in the songs, the plays and the sit-coms rather than the historical commentary and news releases that viewers found their new view of the world.<sup>8</sup>

From CBHT's sign-on and over the next few years, television would be constantly scrutinized. From 1955 to 1958, numerous scientific and sociological assessments would be conducted in an attempt to explain television's impact, on the individual, on families and in communities. The study of the effects of mass media soon filled columns in newspapers, became feature articles in magazines and even attracted the attention of the medical community. Study of this phenomenon would be demanded by politicians, teachers and parents alike. The topic became an issue country-wide and a subject everyone had an opinion about, especially the residents in metropolitan Halifax. As the national papers began asking if Canadians had changed; closer to home, Haligonians wondered how life in their own community was being altered by television's arrival. Did they now spend most of their leisure time watching television? Did television teach anything to children? Was television affecting reading skills? Did it affect a viewer's creative thinking processes? Did television viewing in the home affect family participation in community events? Did they read fewer books, magazines or newspapers? What was television teaching people, about sex-roles, gender bias? Did it encourage aggressive behaviour? Was it beginning to have an effect on how adults problem solve? And if one believed that the community was changing, were these permanent changes or merely a temporary lapse while television was still new?<sup>9</sup> Exactly what have we willingly brought into our homes, people asked. The initial enthusiasm had been overwhelming but now the questions began, and so did a feeling, a sense of uneasiness.<sup>10</sup>

Using data gathered from the original pre-television survey and the post-television second report, both completed by CBC's Audience Research Bureau, researchers attempted to evaluate the areas of lifestyle that were the first to be permanently altered by television's arrival. Within two years after television had

arrived in Halifax, the number of households with television sets had risen from 2,000 in December 1954 to an amazing 20,000 in 1956.<sup>11</sup> Considering that the sets sold for around \$265 each, a conservative estimate suggested that in two years, those 18,000 sets had generated nearly \$5 million in manufacturing productivity. The local and national post-war economies were improving largely because of the many jobs in the electronics industry that the demand for televisions had created. Using television as a marketing tool opened up new markets for consumer goods. Items such as cars, clothing, and appliances, were now being offered for sale to a captive audience. Once the television was purchased, other essentials were needed. In the living room, new sectional sofas, low coffee tables and viewing lamps were necessities as well as heavier draperies and lighter colour paint for the walls. On the kitchen counter, room was being made for electronic mixers, electronic can-openers and various other gadgets. Entertaining one's neighbours required a new, more modern approach and it was the furniture, electrical and hardware stores that benefited greatly from the changes that television had generated.<sup>12</sup>

The CBC researchers discovered that total radio listening time had already dropped by one-third and radio listening during the hours that television was transmitting had dropped by two-thirds. Evening viewing, from 07:30 to 11:00 PM, was television's most popular time slot. What had been a radio favourite, Our Miss Brooks, now had an audience only 15% of its former level. That Sunday evening time period from 07:30 to 08:00 PM, was reserved for television. The afternoon radio hours from 04:00 to 05:00 PM, continued to do well; the soap-sponsored dramas on the radio still held 88% of their listening audience. Changes in viewer-listener levels were happening very quickly, so it was felt that additional investigation was necessary in order to monitor the new viewer trends. CBC Audience Research hired two new

agencies to gather data on television viewing. One company, International Surveys Limited, produced their first report in January 1956, and the other, Elliott-Haynes Limited, published results of their survey in April of the same year. There were no surprises, however, the results were similar, showing that for the evening time period, 06:00 to 09:00 PM, the percentage of viewing in the television households was already 70% or almost 14,000 households.<sup>13</sup> (*See Table 19.*)

In a follow-up research project, conducted between November 20 and December 4, 1958, more than 700 personal interviews were completed in Halifax. These homes had been previously surveyed in Phases One and Two, in 1954 and 1956, and the researchers felt that a re-assessment of the same families would illustrate the changing lifestyle of viewers as television evolved. The main objective of the re-evaluation was to determine how leisure time was being spent in Halifax and how much of an impact television was having on these activities. One of the categories examined was the frequency of visiting with friends or enjoying an evening out. Even more revealing would be the answers to questions concerning the main topic of conversation at these get-togethers. Other areas of interest included frequency of book reading, attendance at sporting events and participation in various hobbies. The questions of greatest interest, however, were directly related to television itself. Since the post-television interviews in 1956, how many families now had sets and how much time was being spent watching them? Since local programming had begun and was increasing its hours of operation, the researchers also wanted some insight into how these locally produced programs were being received.<sup>14</sup>

It was becoming evident that there were certain activities that could be shared with television viewing, for example, eating a meal, reading a newspaper,

playing card or board games, leaving the room and returning, talking, drawing and housework. But there were other activities that could not be shared with television, outdoor activities, club meetings, dances, playing sports, memorization, problem solving, or practising the piano. It would also be shown that there were other factors that might affect these activities such as age of the viewer, intelligence, experience and perhaps most important, television literacy of the individual. The researchers hoped to discover just how much influence the content of television might have on the viewer as well as how quickly television would replace certain activities. How long, they wondered, would it take for television to saturate the community.<sup>15</sup>

The survey began with simple questions concerning the social habits of the respondents. How often did they socialize with friends and family and in what kinds of activities did they participate? The results indicated that weekly visits were most common; nearly half of the survey population had friends over for a visit or to attend a party. Movie attendance was in second place followed by playing cards, dancing and dining out. Less than half of the participants had attended a play or concert in the month prior to the interview. As the survey answers were tabulated, television viewing came in as a distant tenth on the twelve-point list of popular things to do with one's leisure time.<sup>16</sup> However, the order of priority changed once the researchers began asking questions about how that time was spent once the respondents arrived at the homes of their friends.<sup>17</sup> Along with the usual gossip and playing cards, television viewing now appeared in third place. Watching programs as a group was very popular with over a quarter of the respondents surveyed mentioning this as an enjoyable evening activity. When probed further to describe what was talked about when the groups did chat together, the second most popular topic of conversation, over family interests and local political issues, was television and

television programs. This subject was the favourite over work and business details, national and international affairs, sports events, books, music, religion, hobbies and the economy.<sup>18</sup> With the first few answers tabulated, the researchers noticed that television was influencing how and on what families spent their money, how and what activities were considered entertainment, and finally, how television was affecting what the respondents talked about when they were with other family members or their friends.

Further clarification was needed concerning some of the activities that were losing their audiences to television. Movie attendance was dropping. Of the sample population of 497 respondents, 354 of them said that they had not attended one movie in the past month. Only 59 had attended one movie and an even smaller number, a mere 40, had attended two movies in the previous month, October-November 1958. (Thirty-nine respondents took in three or more movies per month while five of the 497 refused comment.) Television was definitely making inroads into the movie habit. When one compares the figures from the first survey of 1955 to the follow up questions in 1958, for example, 267 respondents had attended at least one movie (in 1956) while only 138 attended in 1958. That was a reduction of 26.7% in only two years.<sup>19</sup> Watching movies on television in one's own home was the "new" preferred pastime.

Television was becoming the enemy of the large movie houses for the small screen was successfully showing the films of cinema's past. In retaliation, these movie houses would install larger and larger screens with stereophonic sound systems. These enhancements would be capable of reproducing any director's epic vision, with panoramic views of magic kingdoms, breath taking mountain streams and water falls, all with symphonic sound tracks. To regain their hold over limited

entertainment dollars, however, would be an uphill battle. (Monday night, half-price theatre seats, would soon be offered.) Television producers would fight back by creating special-interest movie nights. Soon, used-to-be-movie-house goers would become "at home" movie viewers, waiting in front of their sets for the Tuesday Night Mystery movie.

Not only responsible for declining movie attendance, local restaurants and small diners also noticed television's arrival. Movies, variety acts and special sporting events shown on the small screen kept people home, or made them go home early. The increase in the demand for take-out orders was another spin-off industry for which television could take credit. Not wanting to miss their favourite program, family dining orders would be picked up from the restaurant and taken home to be eaten in front of the set. Who had the time or the inclination to sit through a formally served meal when the first quarter of the football game or Milton Berle was waiting at home? Taxi car and juke box receipts dropped as the rhythm of daily life changed. Instead of stopping off for dinner downtown and taking a cab home later in the evening, office workers and labourers alike were hurrying home so that they could be ready for their favourite programs.<sup>20</sup> What was this attraction? Home entertainment. Television filled the home with variety acts, comedy, movies, sports, music, information and plays. For the first generation of television viewers, these moving pictures opened a window to display an exciting world, a world previously only imagined. What other horizons could be so easily discovered, just by sitting in one's living room?<sup>21</sup>

The researchers probed another area, this time asking questions about the number of books the respondents had read in the past month. Almost two-thirds of the sample population said they had not read a single book while 55 people had

read only one. Could television be affecting reading skills? Since the survey only considered the answers of adult respondents it was unknown whether television could tempt a child to view a story rather than read the book. However, circulation figures gathered from the Halifax Memorial Library, showed an increase in children's circulation, from a total of 81,448 in 1955, to 87,308 in 1956, and a circulation of 93,271 in 1957.<sup>22</sup> These figures suggested that going to the library was still a popular activity among the younger set.

However, when one examined the statistics for the children's category of registered active borrowers, a different picture appeared. In 1953, the year before television came to Halifax, 5,024 children had been registered borrowers, that is, the library was able to track those children who borrowed books on a regular basis. In 1954, that figure rose to 6,486, an sizeable increase of 1,462 borrowers. December 1954, television arrived in Halifax and the figures for the following year, 1955, showed that even though there was an increase, it did not reflect the growth that had taken place in previous years. For that year, the active borrowers registered were 7,436, only an increase of 950. By 1956, the registered active borrowers had declined by 203 to 7,233 and rallied only slightly in 1957 to 7,379.<sup>23</sup> (*See Tables 20A and 20B .*) This trend suggested that fewer children were borrowing more books and that any new memberships taken out were not being used as frequently as had been the practice in the past. At the very least, television viewing as a leisure time activity was having an impact on the number of books borrowed from the library. The actual amount of time spent reading those books was more difficult to track. Statistics for the years 1958 to 1960 would show a slight increase in the borrowing levels for younger children but the material being borrowed would be directly related to television. There would be a waiting list for such topics as The Lone Ranger, Davy Crockett , Roy



Rogers and his horse, Trigger. Television had created new heroes for the children to dream about leaving the old classics, Black Beauty, Robinson Crusoe and David Copperfield on the library shelves.

The circulation figures and the numbers of registered adult borrowers suggested an even more definitive pattern for the adult population, pointing to the popularity of television as it infiltrated throughout metro Halifax. At first glance, the adult circulation figures did not appear to be affected. In 1953, adult circulation was tallied at 218,579 and increased by a healthy 47,048 in 1954 to 265,627. Circulation did increase in the year that television was introduced in 1954, but at a slower rate, only 39,599 for a yearly total of 305,226. 1956 and 1957 saw increases in circulation but at rates nearly half of previous years, for example, an increase of only 19,202 for a total of 324,428 in 1956 and an increase of 12,953 for a 1957 total of 337,381.<sup>24</sup>

It was the declining numbers of registered active adult borrowers that showed television's gaining influence. In 1953, there had been 13,046 adult borrowers registered at the library. In 1954, 16,316 were registered, a substantial increase of 3,270. By 1955, the figures rose again, 19,496 adults were registered and considered active borrowers. But in 1956 this figure dropped to 14,748, a reduction of 4,748 active borrowers in one year alone. 1957 would see some improvement in the adult borrowing trend, up 392 borrowers for a total of 15,140 but this total would not be close to pre-television levels.<sup>25</sup> (See *Tables 20A and 20B.*) As more leisure time was devoted to television, it appeared that library usage would dramatically decline.

When one reviews the three surveys, the library's figures and the statistics gathered by CBC Audience Research Bureau, it could be speculated that the Halifax Memorial Library would soon become a silent, dusty place full of cobwebs and old books. But both the Library's figures and CBC's totals are suspect. Between the

survey completed in 1956 and the survey on leisure time compiled in 1958, there were several discrepancies in the manner in which "reading" was defined. For one report, "light" and "serious" reading categories were decided by counting the number of hard cover versus paperback books read while in the other survey no such distinction was noted. Magazines, both quantity and type, were tracked in 1954, 1956 and 1958, but under different categories, creating a different cause and effect scenario. In the case of the earlier surveys, there was some question as to whether reading a magazine was considered "light" reading and a book "serious" reading. If so, it was suggested that television viewing could affect book reading but not necessarily magazine reading. Someone could be glancing at a magazine during the commercials but continue to watch the remaining program segments. Reading a book would require more concentration and the viewer would have to decide on which topic he or she wished to focus.<sup>26</sup>

The researchers found though, that 406 of the 497 respondents had considerable interest in magazines.<sup>27</sup> These large numbers, convinced the interviewers that for the later studies they should develop an informal classification system, in order to determine just how much of an impact the subject matter of the magazines should play in the determination of reading levels. The interviewers were able to track several trends, those who preferred digest and picture types, (such as, Life), popular general interest, (Omnibook), and magazines they defined as "quality", (Atlantic Monthly). The interviewers went further and proposed that in those homes, where digest and picture-type magazines were read to the exclusion of other kinds, these would be the homes where television would dominate. This type of categorization, however, made magazines purely an entertainment vehicle. In those houses where Omnibook was popular, the researchers felt that there would be more

discrimination used over the amount of time spent with television. And the final category, those who read "quality" magazines, researchers believed this group would continue to spend more time reading than watching television.<sup>28</sup>

What made the comparisons even more difficult was that by the time the statistics from the 1958 survey of leisure time was compiled, magazines were classed as a news source and no longer just a source of entertainment. What had been merely something with which to pass the time now was considered a reliable news source for 52 respondents of the sample population. There was another problem with the magazine reading activity.<sup>29</sup> Other researchers were suggesting that Canadians were indeed reading more; it was the subject matter that had changed. The favourite topic was television and the articles were everywhere – columns in magazines and editorials in the daily newspapers.<sup>30</sup>

It is impossible to measure exactly how much of the reading activity was displaced by television. When one looks at the amount of leisure time at one's disposal and the various types of reading material that were available at the time; hard cover and paperback books, weekly and monthly magazines, trade papers, newspapers, and so on, there is little doubt that juggling leisure activities would become necessary. There were some who would soon question the viability of purchasing a glossy magazine with pictures of famous people, deciding that the purchase was a waste of time and money when one could merely turn on the set and see and hear the same stories. Television seemed destined with potential; as a teacher, travel guide, preacher and musician. Some even saw the instrument as a visual tool capable of teaching the basics of language, such as the alphabet, but it would fall far short of facilitating the reading practice necessary for ease of comprehension.

Reading a newspaper, however, was still considered to be the most reliable news source by half of the respondents surveyed. In 1956, for example, yearly paid subscriptions had totalled 106,504 issues; 63,652 for The Halifax Chronicle-Herald and 42,852 for The Halifax Mail-Star.<sup>31</sup> From the most recent figures, those of the 1951 Census, the populations of metropolitan Halifax and Dartmouth had been determined to be 70,000 and 15,000. The adjacent areas, those small communities along the harbour entrance and basin, added another 50,000 for a total population of 135,000. From these details, plus the fact that many subscribers took both papers, the paper circulation was considered reasonable, 48% of the total.<sup>32</sup> Circulation was somewhat lower than 1954, however, the year that television began in Halifax. For that year, The Halifax Chronicle-Herald and The Halifax Mail-Star had a total circulation of 107,581. 1955 saw a small increase in circulation, bringing the total of subscriptions to 107,700. These small increases suggested that television news was beginning to have an impact on the printed format.<sup>33</sup> Television was definitely having some influence for over 200 respondents mentioned television as their primary news source and of them over 140 believed that television was the most reliable, over newspapers and radio.<sup>34</sup> Would there come a day when the community would not bother with a newspaper? Would one's only source of news and current events be what one acquired from television? Perhaps. But why the replacement? Because of this sense of immediacy, seeing the event unfold as one watched, television news was bringing the world into one's very own living room. What was even more beguiling was that it appeared to be doing all of this for that particular viewer alone, one's own personal envoy of interpretation.

The original pre-television study had shown respondents, over 300 of them, selecting radio as their primary news source, putting newspapers in second

place. Now, newspapers had taken over first place, radio was in second, and television was a close third.<sup>35</sup> So for this community, at least for a little longer, newspapers were still a viable source of local, national and international news. If reading skills was an issue, however, the statistics did not differentiate between the confident reader and the one who was not as comfortable with reading. The confident reader was one who preferred to read a book or a newspaper regardless of television and therefore would not replace all leisure time with TV viewing. They would supplement their understanding of the story by using more than one medium to explain it. The reader who was not as comfortable with reading might be more easily persuaded to find alternate ways of acquiring information. Reading competency and grade levels appeared to be closely linked. The more formal schooling the respondent had, the more comfortable with reading they were and the less likely to give up all their leisure time to television.<sup>36</sup>

It was not the researchers that advanced the read-versus-watch argument. Many a commentary in the local paper raised this and related issues. Were reading skills declining and if so, how? Would school work be replaced by television viewing? Would the set remain on while homework was being done? Would these changing habits affect the student's overall academic average? Or, for those children who did not have television in their early years prior to kindergarten, would their reading skills be quicker to develop than those that had regular access to television? Newspaper editorials, snippets in the back pages, and letters to the editor began appearing, questioning the educational value of this new appliance. Television, it was argued, might function as a teacher of words but it certainly could not stimulate the imagination or the creativity to use them.

The interviewers were becoming aware that there were changes in the patterns of reading development among the younger children.<sup>37</sup> It was suggested that a slower rate of progress in reading comprehension could be a direct result of television viewing. The younger viewers would replace the constant reading practice and the repetition of the favourite story for the new adventures shown on the small screen. The stories that had been read to the children in the past; Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, The Little Engine That Could, were not the stories they wanted to hear. Now, they were more interested in tales involving their new television heroes. In homes that had television, the language of the children's' favourite characters was becoming part of their vocabulary. Soon, all little boys and girls in the neighbourhood were Dale Evans or Roy Rogers want-to-be's, carrying gun holsters, wearing wide-brimmed hats with chin straps and yelling around the yard on their broom-stick horses. No longer was there as much time spent reading with a parent or sibling to a younger child. Word games and story times were now replaced with television's cartoons, Minnie and Mickey Mouse and Nancy.

In a short time, even the language of television viewing was revealing, for respondents were saying that they were "watching television," not one particular program by name.<sup>38</sup> This was the same pattern that had been noticed when compiling data for radio listening surveys. Now, though, the habit of watching was replacing the habit of listening. Once the television was turned on, it drew the person to the screen, encouraging him or her to sit awhile and be entertained. Radio's role in the household was changing. From the main source of news, views, and entertainment, radio was becoming merely background noise for a main activity such as washing dishes. Radio was now a timekeeper, a "musical" clock counting the hours until the family's favourite television program.

The next item on the researcher's list, attendance at sports events, resulted in considerably different answers depending on the sex and age of the respondent. First, interviewers asked how many times a year a respondent attended a game. More than half the men surveyed never went to a sports event, although some said they might make a special effort to attend if the home team was playing. In some instances, the age of the male respondent influenced the answers to the questions on sports attendance and participation. The older the respondent the less likely they were to attend or participate in sports, but answers from males ages 20 to 24 showed that they participated frequently in sports, more than once a week, and that they attended games as often. The four favourite spectator sports were hockey, baseball, football and wrestling.<sup>39</sup> The type of sports engaged in also changed as the male respondent aged; a fast-paced ice hockey or baseball game was replaced by such activities as fishing, hunting, bowling, yachting and curling.

Viewing the faster-paced games was becoming very popular with males of all ages and this fact was not lost on television's producers. As the CBC's television network began to take shape, the radio favourite, Hockey Night in Canada would change venue and make its debut on CBC television.<sup>40</sup> To see and hear the game was exciting and as this audience grew, more time would be devoted to such events. Championship games, series play-offs and world-wide Olympic competitions would soon take their place as regularly scheduled viewing. Attendance at live sporting events for women, on the other hand, remained at about the same level as before television; some 78.4% of the survey population had little interest in these sports.<sup>41</sup> It was too soon to tell whether a television broadcast into the home would make hockey fans out of this segment of the population.

Near the end of the survey, questions were asked about the respondent's hobbies and their participation in organizations within the community. Over half of the sample population said that they had favourite hobbies to which they devoted considerable time. These included needlework, woodwork and repairs, art and music, gardening, reading and photography. Many respondents gave multiple answers but did not include watching television among their choices. As for organizations such as social clubs, lodges and church groups, 261 respondents (52.5%), said that they did not participate in any organization. 113 of those interviewed (22.7%), were involved with one group and 65 respondents (13.1%), were members of two or more groups. The church choir, church auxiliary, Elks, Lions, Rotary and the Masons were the most popular choices. From the early survey results of 1956 to the 1958 interviews, the researchers found that club membership had declined by nearly 13%.<sup>42</sup> The implication was that with television in the home, no one wanted to leave the house and miss their favourite program. With more leisure time on their hands, residents appeared more than willing to give this time to television.<sup>43</sup>

After reviewing the participation figures for memberships in organizations and attendance at sports events, the first few years of television in Halifax saw no set pattern attributable to television's arrival. From attendance figures at hockey games, there was little impact; most games drew an average audience of 3,000 to 4,000 spectators. As for baseball, these figures remained steady with the Halifax and District leagues drawing crowds of 2,000 to 3,000 per game.<sup>44</sup> There appeared to be little, if any, change to the number of activities available in the community. However, the responses were pointing to a decrease in the adult participation of these activities. By influencing how people play, the researchers proposed, television was influencing how people think and work. The greatest



negative impact was in the area of active participation. For sports, participation particularly by the youth was slipping and new memberships in community organizations were negligible. It was only by the continued support of the established, older citizens that the organizations survived.

Television's appeal, as one network's slogan chimed, "we are here to entertain you," – was changing community life and the way individuals interacted within that structure. Television viewing displaced attendance at religious services for a church Mass, for example, could be viewed, rather than attended, thereby curtailing active support for the community congregation. The elderly became increasingly separated from community activities. Television became a factor in this age segregation encouraging, albeit indirectly, non-attendance of community events, church services and celebrations, community dances, potluck suppers, parties.<sup>45</sup> The more time the elderly stayed in their homes, the less frequently they were thought of or included in planned activities. Viewing television began as a shared activity, including family and friends. But it quickly became a solitary pursuit. Time with television was reducing time with books, magazines, newspapers; visiting one's neighbours, attending church services and even time just being alone with one's thoughts.

Television was proving to be the cause of a major restructuring of activities in daily life. Easy access to television meant that children would soon not even recognize the choices and trade-offs involved in watching an image as opposed to participating in a game with their friends. The more one watched television, the less likely one was to choose other activities. Televised sports became games for the professionals, not the junior boys of the community. The more one saw, the more one watched and the less likely one was to leave home and join in community activities.<sup>46</sup>

In the 1956 study of pre-television respondents, 42.3% had never even seen a television set but by the 1958 study of leisure time, respondents were much more aware of television. Asked how they would spend an extra hour of free time, 33% said they would rest, relax, do nothing, while 15% would go shopping and another 15% would pursue artistic activities. Creeping up the list though, in seventh place, was television viewing with 5.2% of the survey population.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, question eleven of the survey asked if the respondents had a television set. An amazing 423 of the 497 said they had sets in their living rooms. The remaining 74, however, were not immune to television's lure. Of them, 17 saw television frequently at the homes of friends and relatives. Twenty-one members of the group watched occasionally, 18 rarely viewed and only 13 never saw a set. (Five gave no information.)<sup>48</sup> The researchers asked questions about the actual hours of viewing done in the home and were surprised that there was little difference in the answers given between male and female respondents. Out of 236 of the 282 women in the survey, one and a half to two hours per day was the minimum time watched while the maximum was as high as four hours. For 186 of the 215 men who answered the question, they peaked at four hours per day of watching. The researchers were astounded that the viewing hours had increased so dramatically and in just four years. In fact, already forty-one respondents admitted to watching 5 hours per day!<sup>49</sup>

In subsequent questions, respondents were asked if they still had radios in their homes. Half said that they had one, while a quarter of the survey population had two. The location of the radio had changed, however. The main set that had been previously well-placed in the living room was now relegated to the kitchen with a second, smaller set now fixed on a shelf or table in the living room. Other sets, portable and smaller, were in other rooms of the house, particularly the

den and the bedrooms. Researchers noted that from the original survey, the average time spent listening to radio had been from one to six hours. Now, nearly five of those hours were being taken up with television. They calculated that viewing hours for the entire family were increasing while radio listening hours were decreasing dramatically. From the initial study, the radio had been on in half the households (248) for more than six hours, especially on weekdays.<sup>50</sup> Now, in just under half of those same households (223), the average listening time was two hours or less.<sup>51</sup> Even this two-hour time frame was suspect. When questioned further, narrowing down specific times listened to and program names, it was determined that 59.1% of men listened to an hour or less while the percentage for women was even lower, some 34.1%.<sup>52</sup>

If nothing else, television was definitely a time user, taking children away from make-believe games and fun, especially outdoor activities, and adults away from reading and socializing. Television appeared to have a negative impact on creative thinking. By compressing a mystery novel into a hour-long program, (with two-minute breaks every twelve minutes), complete with decorated set, fully costumed characters and resolution of the plot, the viewer had little to do but follow the moving image. So much for trying to deduce the murderer's identity before turning the final page, no thinking was necessary. During the survey, one new mother asked the interviewer what would the child be doing if they were not watching television? Some of the researchers were asking the same question about the adults. Already the displacement of time was infiltrating the family rhythm and changing routines. Coming home from work on a Saturday afternoon, folks had turned on the radio and listened to music and humorous sketches, now it was the television that played well into the evening hours. Neither Mother nor Father read the favourite bedtime story to the little

ones anymore. A favourite television program was the way to end the children's day and their own.

It appeared that television was teaching viewers to process information differently, as small ten to fifteen minute chunks of data with two minute breaks. The pace and format of television discouraged thought and reflection. Between commercials there was little time to reflect on what had been seen and heard before the next part appeared. Viewers were also losing the ability to tolerate solitude, to use the aloneness with one's thoughts to meditate and generate new ideas, to daydream. The television set was on for longer and longer periods, showering the family with a constant bombardment of noise and sound, discouraging internal and external experiences, displacing the problem solving process. Television was intruding on other habits, for instance, the persistence in exploring a new activity or practising a favourite one, such a musical instrument. The habit of television was what was becoming so disturbing. Television was very entertaining and required absolutely no input from the viewer in return. It was beginning to eliminate the choice for other activities, for the child and the adult would soon not think of doing anything else.<sup>53</sup>

What about television's effect on other media? Once the television was turned on, the television stayed on. Researchers found that people kept watching, looking for the most attractive show. Children were becoming a captive audience, watching whatever was available. This habit was growing and the impact once again, was the displacement of other activities by the absorbing images shown on the screen. Magazines and newspapers could be read while viewing a television program, so it was possible to time-share with those two types of media. But watching television while at the same time listening to a radio program or playing records was difficult. The researchers suggested that further study was required to determine the

effects of multiple activities and simultaneous television viewing. Was a new skill developing, the ability to absorb the messages from more than one type of media at a time? Or was television becoming background noise?<sup>54</sup> Was the ability of watching and doing something else linked to skills at a particular age, for a particular activity, requiring a certain level of intelligence? Research would be required regarding the use of media by pre-school age children. Would the continued use of this medium affect their later academic achievement?<sup>55</sup>

As the popularity of television increased, researchers began to question television's effects on adult thinking, personality and attitudes.<sup>56</sup> The initial observation was that for those individuals who were watching television frequently, over four hours daily, a short attention span and low frustration tolerance was becoming a noticeable pattern. Television was providing viewers with high levels of stimulation. By the use of exaggerated posturing and even violence, the heroes of television drama promoted a singular response to a particular situation. Once viewed, however, was this also the attitude that the viewer would emulate in his or her private life? Already, researchers were hearing comments such as: "Why can't the police solve crimes like they do on tv?" Or, "I wish I could tell my boss off like Lucy yells at Dezi." And "I wish I could punch that guy out when he takes my parking spot – just like Jackie Gleason." What was portrayed on the screen had the potential of becoming the accepted standard of behaviour in a situation, a well learned response and a familiar attitude. Future researchers would also question the effects television would have on the cognitive task performance of adults. Those who spent considerable time watching television, and therefore less "real time" in actual socializing situations, might have fewer alternative problem solving techniques because they would have less exposure to other solutions. As television's soap opera characters solved their family problems, for

example, would their solutions displace the desire for the viewer to learn more creative but realistic ways to approach their own troubles? How would this play out within the family, the school and the community? Was it possible for the viewer to learn constructive behaviour from an "electronic" teacher?<sup>57</sup> These and other questions were being asked about television's role in society. Was television becoming the main agent of socialization? Or, once again, was this merely the issue of the content of television versus the time spent with television? There were already those who believed that the temporary loss of TV entertainment would be beneficial to the mental and emotional stability of the average television viewer!<sup>58</sup> The research projects of the late 1950s had demonstrated the impact that television was having on an individual's leisure time. As the 1960s arrived, however, it was the content of the television programs that would come increasingly under scrutiny.

The viewing public as well as the researchers of this new area, called mass communication, were awakening to the realization that program content was of great significance. Not only was McLuhan's "medium was the message" a foreteller of the power of television but an even greater power was in the messages that television was sending us about ourselves. Sex roles portrayed, family roles, race roles, job roles, age roles, guidelines for behaviour, dress, attitude, aspirations, achievement — all were being seen by growing numbers of people and with great regularity. Some traits were approaching a stereotypical formula.<sup>59</sup> The dominant figure was the youthful, white male while in the minority were women, the elderly, children and blacks. Men outnumbered women on television programs. Most major characters in shows were men. The only exception to this was the soap opera genre where men and women were about equal. From radio in the 1930s to television in the 1950s, programs such as Ma Perkins, Just Plain Bill, The Romance of Helen Trent, women

listened to the characters to solve their own problems.<sup>60</sup> But men always held the positions of authority. Women were portrayed younger than men, attractive, employed less frequently than men and unmarried.<sup>61</sup>

There were stereotypes of female employment. Programs such as Our Miss Brooks and I Love Lucy showed story lines where women performed tasks in the clerical or nursing fields, in the entertainment and services sector.<sup>62</sup> Men, on the other hand, were depicted as professionals, physicians, lawyers, law enforcement officers, managers, less likely to be supervised, more likely to give orders. Shows like Medic, Dragnet, Father Knows Best and The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet are examples of this type of characterization.<sup>63</sup> Family and personal relationships appeared more important for women for their television conversations tended to focus on subjects such as family, romance, health, domestic issues, whereas men discussed professional and business concerns. Men were most often portrayed without family connections but rarely without a career, whereas women were rarely without personal ties but often without a career.<sup>64</sup>

These cultural stereotypes further showed men as the aggressors and women most often as the victims of this aggression. The ideal woman was portrayed as emotional, clean, predictable, good, non-violent, sexually attractive, interesting, warm, entertaining others, preparing and serving food, performing housework. Men, on the other hand, were shown as unemotional, dishonest, immoral, bad, violent, competent. They did the driving, participating in sports, conducting business on the phone. They drank, smoked, fought and used guns.<sup>65</sup>

There began an almost symbolic function of violence as a demonstration of social power for even the re-run of movie westerns showed men taming the land and the opposite sex. As networks prepared more material for the air,

aggression and violence appeared to be a winning combination. Could violence be justified, a means to an end, or was it to be added to the storyline to increase the ratings? There appeared to be more victims on television than in real life. By the mid-1960s, research would suggest that viewers who watched high amounts of violence reported greater involvement in serious violent behaviour. Would domestic violence be associated with long term exposure to programming featuring this kind of action? The more violence watched, the more unreal the situation and the solution, the more removed the viewer would be from reality. Physical violence on the small screen was confined to slaps, hits, punches, strikes with a body part, kicks, bites, spits, threatening gestures, chasing another, growling, grimacing, damaging property of another. Verbal violence, on the other hand, was comprised of disparaging remarks, rejection and threats. Commands, demands, arguments, shifting blame onto someone else, causing injury to another, these violent acts were played out on television in many family situations. Would this type of viewing increase aggressive behaviour within the family? Was television the teacher of aggression or could it contribute to a greater acceptance of this type of behaviour in the general population?<sup>66</sup> Was the media setting the social agenda, what one wore, what one bought, how one associated with one's family members?<sup>67</sup>

The arrival of the one-minute and two-minute television commercials further emphasized the "formula for success" and reinforced the roles and guidelines. Seldom were women portrayed as authority figures. Instead, women were displayed, "at home", in their new "electronic" kitchens, rooms full of mixers, pop-up toasters, wall ovens and the very latest in refrigerators. Women were draped over vacuum cleaners that "floated on a cloud," making cleaning so simple that life would be certainly better if one had a "Hoover" brand vacuum. Young, pretty ladies were also perched on the



bonnets of automobiles, showing off the "fins" and the stain resistant upholstery, not to mention a perfect manicure. They waved to the audience from the window of a new home, just built in the suburbs and ready for a new family. And they preened in front of the bathroom mirror, ready for the Saturday night date that would be great because they had "that winning Pepsodent smile." Commercials for cosmetics and clothes aimed specifically at girls used pastel lighting, soft music, slow camera changes, lack of aggression or activity. The voice-over commentary stressed how popular and pretty the girls would be, just by using the products. Commercials aimed at boys, on the other hand, were action-packed, full of loud noise and even louder music with bright lights and colours.<sup>68</sup> Television was inadvertently sending a powerful message. Were children influenced by these portrayals? Researchers said yes. Television was teaching children "acceptable behaviours for the sexes." The recurring question remained, however, was the behaviour appropriate?

Not only would the content of programs and commercials be cause for raising objections by concerned citizens, questions would soon be asked about the intended audience. How would the delivery be shaped to target a particular segment of the population? Would the watching of so many ads for material goods, be the cause of violent behaviour? Would people resort to violent means in the pursuit of this idealized "good life"? Could a rise in crime and theft be attributable to the constant barrage of commercials for the products that one must have?<sup>69</sup> If someone could not afford these items, would the television make it look easy to acquire them? Would the fantasy be played out in the real world of confused values? Television was the Janus-like instrument, on the one hand, perpetuating the established stereotypical roles within the family, sending out Vincent Massey's vision – the idealized family, young and old brought together for the spectacle and entertainment of a cultural

event. But on the other hand, television was to become the divider of families, the instrument of isolation and the creator of the "educated" consumer, a consumer who wanted every item shown on the small screen. That was another side of television's character, a negative quality that was persuasive, manipulative, judgmental; an instrument that could be used to shift public opinion, change beliefs and cause feelings of mistrust. The debate about television's power and the use of that influence had just begun.<sup>70</sup>

The television screen was becoming our retina, changing what we saw, how we saw it and at the same time limiting our vision. Everything was now offered up to us for our immediate consumption with effort removed. Television viewing was watching the dance, but it dulled the desire to participate. Camera angles split the movement and the action from the effort involved in creating it. Seen live, the dancer would have expression. One could feel the heat of movement as they flew through the air. Body posture would be something felt and seen. Television put distance between the act and the viewing of the act.<sup>71</sup> This was becoming true for sports as well, the evolution from life's active participant to the passive viewer, watching someone else participate in the event.<sup>72</sup>

Television was creating an optical illusion that depended on the eye's willingness to be deceived. Early television apologized for this intrusion but that would soon end. Television would begin to manufacture people in its own technological image. Its creatures would become residents of the box, whose familiar faces became screens. The identities would become accessorized with familiar props, "Kojak's lolly-pop, Colombo's raincoat, the Flying Nun's cape, Rockford's beat up trailer, Bionic Man and Woman body parts."<sup>73</sup>

The television would be granted permission by the viewer to spy on everyone, ensuring a plentiful supply of images for the small screen, an endless parade of the accused, the victim, the con-artist, the saint.<sup>74</sup> Suddenly, or so it seemed, we consented to this invasion of privacy and with that consent, our objections were silenced. We became part of the constant parade of entertainment. Television would appear more "instant." Story pieces, sound bites would become shorter for no one would have the time to sit, listen and watch a full length production. Television, it would be suggested, would be the mirror by which we viewed ourselves, Narcissus gazing into that televised reflection.<sup>75</sup>

The very attention that politicians, business and labour leaders, and churchmen began paying to the media suggested their recognition of the budding power of mass communication.<sup>76</sup> Radio by its very nature spanned the distances and altered people's relationship to their environment. "Media became a filter, exposing moods and attitudes in one part of the country to another. It would mould, perhaps even reinforce, legitimise, glorify, enshrine, or alter social reality."<sup>77</sup> The media would come to exercise a definite power on the ways, the rituals, the assumptions, the concerns of the public. Would the media set itself as a flawed mirror or as a purifier? Would television become a multi-cultural influence, "allowing many ideas to play an important part in Canadian opinion or would it finally become the much anticipated agent of nation building?"<sup>78</sup>

Canadian television would change the way Canadians viewed the political process, from a positive portrayal of political parties, their unifying platforms and their benevolent leaders to a more critical perspective. Television would make political figures public property. A reporter could, in effect, help mold the political agenda. By frequency of mention, perhaps a particular placement of a story, for

example, or its length, the news gatherers could make a story important. Depending on where that item was placed within a news cast, television news coverage could create an opinion of a candidate. The longer the issue remained as the evening's top story, the more exposure that candidate received. Candidates "no longer ran for office, they posed for it."<sup>79</sup> Heavy government involvement in the electronic media ensured that their message would be promulgated, but at the same time government wanted assurances that the media would behave responsibly.<sup>80</sup> In the past, it had been the politicians who had explained to reporters what and how a story should unfold. Television would change that balance of power, for the reporters now had the capability of changing people's perceptions. Their non-coverage of an event on the campaign trail would be just as damaging to a political career as a mis-quote.

Looking back, then, it was Marshall McLuhan who first claimed that television would alter our attitudes towards time and space. He suggested that true mass media had arrived with the telegraph. "Mass refers not to size but to time, they are vast from the point of view of speed."<sup>81</sup> McLuhan believed that television's appeal was to all our senses, especially our sight, with the arrival of colour television. Television would also influence speech and help to coin popular phrases. To McLuhan, there was a parallel between electronic media of all kinds and our own central nervous system. Both were the highways of multiple impulses that altered whatever it touched. He believed that as the world changed, the source and purpose of our daily life no longer revolved around the production of food as it had for the pre-Industrial era. The new source of man's food, his wealth and daily life was now information, information being transformed into usable products. Television, he predicted, would create wealth by moving this information, at remarkable speed and uniformity. Fast forward to the early 1990s, and a millionaire Ted Turner who will

gamble on an all-news network, CNN, just what McLuhan had in mind? McLuhan also went on to predict that money would become obsolete because it stored work and work would be taken over by the next electronic automation, the credit card.<sup>82</sup> Thirty-five years later, sitting on one's easy chair and ordering merchandise from television's Shopping Channel, one wonders what would Mr. McLuhan would think of our progress.

Like all other technological advances, television modified and changed the culture into which it was introduced. The confusion that began soon after television's inception only helped to augment the many claims made about television's impact on society. Janus-like, television helped created its own turmoil. This new authority was both a window on and a refuge from the world. The cause of immoralities and a means of incitement for people of all ages; the television debate ranged from fears of radiation emissions to guilt over watching such a time-waster. Television would be a healthy mental stimulant or a mind-numbing drug. Television, the educator would enhance the learning process. It would revolutionize the disciplines of science and bring history to life. But would it also teach actions and behaviours alien to the family? Television would be the family timekeeper scheduling meal times, sleeping times, homework and housework times. However, would this electronic baby-sitter also produce anxiety among children and stress among parents? This technological marvel would become the newest instrument of punishment and reward. Television would boast family togetherness. It had the power to heal family rifts, smooth over petty arguments and create a climate of warmth and connectedness. But would it also show excessive violence and exploitation of the sexes to a mass audience? Television was the buttress of authority, the defender of morality and the agent of identity. Television would generate a sense of national unity

and pride. On the other hand, television would lower IQ, desensitize the mass audience, contribute to individual isolation and be the destroyer of faith, fostering cynicism and disbelief. A pacifier to the lonely, the aged, the young, television would favour conformity and reinforcement. But would television promote originality? Television enhanced general knowledge while providing escapism for the masses.<sup>83</sup> Besides the four natural seasons, television would create another for its viewers, Super Bowl Sunday, marking the beginning of the New Year with excesses only television could parade.<sup>84</sup>

The debate over television that began in the 1950s continues unabated. The journey that has been television's evolution has been an exploration of contradictions; for it inspires while it incites, stimulates while it sells, provokes while it persuades, preaches while it pretends, educates while it elects. Whether that places television, as an advocate of destruction or an agent of divine inspiration; that subject will be the topic of many more commentaries well into the next century.

So what is left to say about television? After all the commissions, reports, theories and a great many words, the issue seems hidden, a sound and picture creation buried under paper. In the end, a few facts are evident. First, television did change the community of Halifax. Whether or not a good decision, Haligonians embraced the small screen with overwhelming enthusiasm. They laughed over the slap-stick antics of Milton Berle, they cried over Lassie, Come Home and they cheered when "their" hockey team won. Occasionally, they even tuned in to a CBC production of Swan Lake or King Lear. As television matured, it tried to mirror the many communities that it served. What pride there must have been in the metro area when Don Messer became a household name? How interesting that after Saturday's Hockey Night In Canada, the Don Messer Show entertained all Canadians – a

program originating from Halifax. One might argue that the homespun humour and fiddle playing did little to "dress up" Eastern Canada's image. On the other side of that argument, one could say that television did portray the lives of those that lived in this community and it sent that picture across the land. Did television unify the country? Perhaps not the way that a politician looks at unity, but on Saturday nights? When Gordie Howe or "the Rocket" Richard scored a goal, how many fathers in how many living rooms cheered? And on Monday morning, across the land, what was the main topic of conversation around the water cooler?

The second fact is still a question, is there a Canadian culture? Well, that depends. If one assumed that to be "cultured," one was required to get out the long black dress, or a formal suit and tie, not to mention a large financial outlay for tickets to the opera then there would be some that would answer no, there was little culture in Eastern Canada. However, if one could have looked into the kitchens and living room of metro Halifax in the 1950s, and spied through the windows at the family gatherings, it would become apparent that the only problem with "culture" was its narrow definition. The traditions that sustained Halifax from the beginning were still evident in those pre-television days – story telling – sea tales, those "characters" that lived down the block, and of course, those family ghosts. Then there were the all night card games, many hands of cribbage, gin rummy and 45's, that helped the evenings slip away. And music – joyous music was everywhere, lifting the soul, telling stories, punctuating life. That "culture" took a back seat to the "culture" that Vincent Massey attempted to bring to Halifax. But not for long.

The other half of that question could be, did television help clarify for Haligonians what Canadian culture was? Maybe. Television entertained Haligonians, changing their ways of spending their leisure time. Yes, they did desire some of the

items they saw advertised on the small screen. When they chose to watch a "Canadian" program, perhaps that did give them an insight into their distant neighbours – a live telecast of a Dominion Day celebration or the wagon races of the Calgary Stampede. But did it give them a sense of Canadianism? Not necessarily. There ran a deep, strong sense of loyalty to their own province and television programming developed in Central Canada would do little to erase regional differences. If anything, it deepened the ties to the eastern seaboard, Bangor, for example. Trading partners for centuries, it would seem only natural that when MPBN cable arrived, Haligonians would embrace the station and Bostonians as neighbours and friends.

Finally, what of those children that were part of the first generation of television viewers? Did they learn to read and write? Did they grow up with the ability to articulate their thoughts and channel their imaginations? They not only read books but wrote them. Did they become couch potatoes? Or did they become enthusiastic athletes, enjoying sports and the thrill of competition? There are some who found stretching on the sofa to be their only challenge. But the growing numbers of contenders at the Olympic games proved that the dream to compete with the world, to be the best that they could be, was still very much alive. Did they eliminate radio stations and stop printing newspapers? Hardly. That generation became powerful enough to demand that radio stations play only the music of their youth. Newspapers did not disappear into some time capsule, either. Purchased on the way to work in the morning or delivered to their front doors in the evening, newspapers were still an alternate media source. The presses still run in Halifax.<sup>85</sup>

What of other forms of entertainment – movies, dances, at-home parties? They too, survived television's onslaught. Movie houses revamped their



seating plans to accommodate a generation that demanded more choices. Now, there were smaller screening areas, grouped together, in order to accommodate so many new releases and to cater to such eclectic tastes. Dances were still popular. Television's infants "jived" and "twisted" their way to "Frank's Bandstand." The disco scene would be the next craze they embraced. And yes, there were and still are card parties, dart meets and sing-a-longs. Haligonians learned to be more discriminating with their leisure time. Television became one more option for entertainment, along with the VCR.

Did those early "tele-vidiots" lose the drive to conquer new worlds, especially in the fields of science, medicine, technology? Apparently not. Canada's space program was established with imagination and determination and made vast contributions to the world that was once just beyond one's reach. As Canada's first astronauts circled the globe, they challenged the next generation to do even better. In medicine, research into many of the catastrophic diseases of children inspired a deep commitment and a belief that cancer and Aids could eventually be eliminated. They pass the torch to their children to shoulder on with the task. As for technology, there has been an explosion of sorts. From watching moving pictures on a television screen, it seemed a very short leap to creating images on a computer monitor. Enter the television generation, the creators of computer hardware and software – an entire industry. The first children of television re-created their world with a technology that will encompass everything in that world. For the next generation, Microsoft's advertisements say it best, "Where do you want to go today?" The answer has limitless possibilities.

And what about the realms of law, finance and government? Could television's children be entrusted with these established pillars of power? History says

so. The first television generation would call for a greater accountability from their leaders than their parents ever imagined. These "boob-tubers" would ask that cameras be installed in the House of Commons, the Senate and the Supreme Court. Those requests would ruffle the feathers of the establishment and take time to put into position. But the demand came not from a wish to instigate a revolution but from a desire to understand the laws being debated, the financial programmes being supported and the policies being enacted both internally and in support of Canada's foreign agenda. Television changed the political arena, some might say to the detriment of a smooth operation of a democracy. But to television's children, removing the cloak of secrecy and allowing the process to be seen in its true light was a way to eliminate excess and abuse. An informed electorate could be the instrument of change. And change opened the door to new ideas.

I am part of television's first generation. And because of television, the world enters my living room with great regularity. From the pomp and ceremony of the Queen's coronation to the funerals of John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Winston Churchill, I have shared both joy and grief. 750 million people watched and cheered as a young lady married a Prince. An estimated 2.5 billion people stopped to catch their breath and weep for the passing of Diana, Princess of Wales. I have witnessed the effects of natural disasters, earthquakes, volcanoes and have been touched by man-made tragedies, the Oklahoma bombing and the Westray mine explosion. Twelve hundred miles away, I sat in an Ottawa hotel room and kept vigil with Jim Nunn, waiting at the mine's mouth, hoping for a miracle. I have listened as then President Reagan comforted a nation, telling all who mourned that those that perished in the Challenger fire, "now touched the face of God." I have watched the rise and fall of political figures, from a banana-eating Robert Stanfield, a singing Brian Mulroney to a

dancing-behind-the-Queen Pierre Trudeau. I have held my breath while men landed on the moon and while one man stood his ground in front of a tank in Tienanham Square. I have watched and heard the roar of airplane engines and gunfire of the Gulf war, reminding myself that this was a real conflict, not a movie set. I have viewed scenes of Canada's unrest, the War Measures Act blockades, the stand-off at Oka, and the trashing and burning of a Cape Breton apartment building in protest over unfair hiring practices. The trial of O. J. Simpson and the eventual pardon of Donald Marshall illustrated both sides of the scales of justice. There are those who would suggest that television's view of the world is only one view and a narrow one at that. But without television, what view would I have had?

<sup>1</sup> Editor, R. Fitzhenry, "About Television," The Fitzhenry and Whiteside Book of Quotations. 3rd edition, (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1993), pp. 436-438.

<sup>2</sup> Colour television was promised within two years of CBC across Canada network. Sets were on sale in Canada for \$1,000 as early as 1955. But most producers felt that colour would never replace black and white sets because of the price!

The Halifax Mail-Star, August 25, 1954, front page.

Just in case though, producers produced shows in both black and white and colour hoping to cash in on re-runs and a quick recovery of the costs.

The Halifax Mail-Star, January 6, 1955, p. 16.

By December 1955, "32 stations were in operation in Canada with nearly 2,000,000 television sets in use, and with the CBC's national service reaching 80% of Canada's population. In November 1956, the microwave network was extended westward to bring live programmes from the East to Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is expected that by 1958 Canada will be linked together by a microwave network extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast and including all of the larger and many of the smaller centres in the country." (p. 317)

"A Brief History of Broadcasting in Canada," Report of the Royal Commission on Broadcasting (Fowler Commission I), (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1957), pp. 297-317.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Garner, "Technicolor In The Parlor," Saturday Night, May 29, 1954, p. 14.

However, by 1960, the difficult economics of maintaining a Canadian network was becoming evident. Canadians were "viewing three times as much foreign as native philosophy." Dean Walker raised the alarm that "it was a serious failure that Canadian television had not turned into the instrument of national policy" as had been hoped. He felt that the loss was not only measurable in advertising dollars but in the "loss of Canadian sovereignty." Canadian television had been developed to educate Canadians while American television was purely an entertainment vehicle. Canadians had shunned what the program creators had deemed "good for them" in favour for the entertainment that American channels offered. Nearly five hours per day was being dedicated to watching "foreign programs on foreign stations."

Dean Walker, "Canada's TV Dilemma: The American Influence," Saturday Night, July 23, 1960, pp. 15-17.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Audley, Canadian Cultural Industries, Broadcasting, Publishing, Records and Film, (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1983), pp. 251-315.

By 1984, some 30 years later, cable subscribers would number over 148,000 in Nova Scotia alone and some 5,319,00 in Canada.

Table 13.4: Radio and TV Statistics in Atlantic Provinces and Canada - 1972 and 1984, Atlantic Canada Today: Atlantic Canada Economic Council, (Halifax: Formac Publishing Ltd., 1987), p. 153.

"The Future of Television," Report of the Royal Commission on Broadcasting (Fowler Commission I), (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1957), pp. 217- 287.

<sup>5</sup> Barbara Moon predicted that television screens would hang on the wall, massive screens that would resemble a mirror. There would be personal sets, small enough to carry and sets for the car. All barriers to communication would disappear and by 1956 she claimed that 50 million sets world-wide was only a conservative estimate of the medium's saturation. Massive television productions attracting millions of viewers would turn 'spectacular' into a noun.

Barbara Moon, "The Next 10 Years of TV," Maclean's Magazine, October 13, 1956, pp. 17, 102-106.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Jane Miller, CBC: Turn Up The Contrast: CBC Television Drama Since 1952, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press and CBC Enterprises, 1987), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Peers, The Public Eye: Television and The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting: 1952-1968. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p.413.

The Canadian Marconi Company, XWA - Montreal, (later CFCF), the first call letters was to begin regular broadcasts had their beginnings by selling radio-telephone equipment.

Ostry, The Cultural Connection, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> Miller, p.19.

<sup>9</sup> Some of these same questions were asked as part of a separate study of a town in western Canada that had no television. Two years later the survey team would return to assess the impact that television had on the inhabitants.

T. M. Williams, "Background and Overview," The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities, (Florida: Academic Press Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp.1-7.

<sup>10</sup> Hugh Garner, "Remember When TV Was Fun?" The Star Weekly Magazine, December 23, 1961, pp. 12-13, 25.

<sup>11</sup> The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Table 13, question 19. Radio After One Year of TV In Metropolitan Halifax, CBC (Ottawa: Audience Research Bureau, January 1957), p.2, Table 6c, questions 11 and 11c.

<sup>12</sup> Television also generated a new crime, the first tv-repair scam. A man and his wife over-charged customers in their television repair shop to the amount of \$350,000. They would find sets in such bad shape that the set could never be repaired in the home but had to be taken back to their shop. New parts were always required so the average bill was \$30. They were eventually charged with fraud and theft.

The Halifax Mail-Star, March 1, 1955, p.8.

<sup>13</sup> "Radio After One Year of Television in Metropolitan Halifax,": CBC Audience Research Division, Ottawa, January 1957, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Summary of Findings, pp. 19-20 and the tables included in the 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time Activities in the Television Age, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, (Ottawa: Audience Research Division, October 26, 1959).

<sup>15</sup> T. M. Williams, "Background and Overview," The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities, (Florida: Academic Press Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), p.12-14.

In 1965, one magazine called MacLean's Reviews conducted their own unofficial survey of television saturation. In Barrie, Ontario, more people used the bathroom during a television program if they were not really interested in the content. The authors suggested that a large consumption of water for baths, flushing the toilet, brushing teeth, fetching glasses of water was a sure indication of bored viewers!

"How The Flush Test Rates Your TV Habits," MacLean's Reviews, Volume 78, No. 12, June 19, 1965, p.53.

<sup>16</sup> The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, (Ottawa: Audience Research Division, October 26, 1959), Question 3, Table 3.

<sup>17</sup> The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Question 4, Table 3a: Social Activities When People Get Together With Friends.

<sup>18</sup> The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Question 4, Table 3b: Topics of Conversation when People Get Together With Friends.

<sup>19</sup> The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Question 5, Table 3c: Number of Times Persons Attended a Motion Picture Theatre During the Past Month (October/November 1958).

In ten years, the number of movie houses had declined from 1,801 in 1950 to 1,427 in 1960. The number of employees in the Canadian motion picture theatres dropped from a high of 13, 866 (8,297 male and 5,569 female) in 1950 to 10,560 (6,124 male and 4,436 female) in 1960. Revenue receipts also dropped, from a high of \$82,708,000 in 1950 to \$65,505,000 in 1960.

Historical Statistics of Canada, (Toronto: MacMillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1965) Series T213-226: Statistics of Motion Picture and Drive-In Theatres, 1930-1960, p.580.

<sup>20</sup> Information was gathered from informal discussions with the staff of the "TeaRoom" on Quinpool Road, the "Bluenose" Restaurant on Hollis Street, and the owner's daughter of Casino Taxi (Isleville Street). Take-out orders from the local diners increased around the College Street location as the technicians, producers and actors worked long, irregular hours in order to get the programs on the air. Business would increase significantly around Bell Road when the new CBC facilities opened in 1955-56. Unfortunately, no historical accounting records remain.

- 21 Erik Barnouw, Tube of Plenty, The Evolution of American Television, "Prime," pp. 151-184..
- 22 Letter from Pauline M. A. Hildesheim, Deputy Chief Librarian, Halifax City Regional Library, November 15, 1994, Chart: Circulation 1952-1957 Inclusive.
- 23 Letter from Pauline M. A. Hildesheim.
- 24 Letter from Pauline M. A. Hildesheim.
- 25 Letter from Pauline M. A. Hildesheim.
- 26 Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 2, pp. 9-13, Table VI-5, p.17.
- 27 Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 2, Table II-7, p. 9, Table II-9, p. 12.
- 28 Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 2, p.13.
- 29 It is not clear when magazines became a borrowable item. For awhile, they were classified with newspapers and were not to be removed from the Library's Reference section. This fact might also cause some discrepancies in the Library's circulation figures.
- 30 Sandra Gwyn, "The Critics," Canadian Art, September/October, 1962, pp. 344-347.
- 31 Letter from Theresa Kenny, Office Supervisor, The Halifax-Herald Limited, November 18, 1994.
- 32 Historical Statistics of Canada, Canada Year Book 1956, Canada Year Book, 1957-58, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1959), pp. 903-905 and p.917.  
Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, November 1956, Part One, pp. 3-4.
- 33 Letter from Theresa Kenny.
- 34 The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time Activities in the Television Age, Table 12: Source of News - questions 25 and 26.
- 35 The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Question 25 and 26, Table 12.  
Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 2, pp. 7-8.
- 36 Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 2, pp. 7-8.  
The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Question 25, 26.
- 37 Further study would show that this discrepancy would be eliminated as the student entered the higher grades, the advantage noticeable only from Primary to Grade 3. When children who had grown up with television, start school, they would have a 1-year advantage in vocabulary over children without television. But by grade 6, the advantage would disappear.  
T. M. Williams and R. S. Corteen, "Television and Reading Skills," The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities, (Florida: Academic Press Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), p.39. See also, "The Process of Learning To Read," pp. 40-41 and "Television and Reading Habits," pp. 41-42.
- 38 This comment would be further explained in a book by Morris Wolfe. He wrote, "...Books, movies and plays are finite; they have clear beginnings and endings. We speak of reading a book, seeing a movie, going to a play. But we watch not a television programme, but television - we regard as never-ending."  
Morris Wolfe, Jolts: The TV Wasteland and The Canadian Oasis, (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1985), p.6 and pp. 103-116.  
The Halifax Mail-Star, March 16, 1955, p.4.  
The Halifax Mail-Star, April 26, 1955, p.14.
- 39 The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Table 4a: Sports Attendance Frequency, By Age, question 6 and Table 5: Participation In Sports.
- 40 Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, pp. 227-228, p. 245, p. 323.
- 41 The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Table 5b: Participation In Sports, question 7.
- 42 The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Table 6b: Organization Membership, question 10.  
Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, November 1956, Part 2, Table II-1, pp. 2-5.

<sup>43</sup> As the 1950s ended, a few employers were allowing their employees to work a shorter work week. Instead of working all day Saturday, for example, offices closed at noon, giving some clerks and secretaries more time to pursue recreation. However, it would be another fifteen years before the majority of offices closed on Saturdays and a five-day, forty hour week was instituted. At first, this extra time was spent visiting with family and friends or pursuing favourite hobbies. By the 1960s however, most of the extra time was spent watching television. In statistics gathered for selected building trades, in Halifax during the years 1905 to 1955, there was a reduction in the working hours. For carpenters, electricians, plumbers in 1940, for example, their average work week was 44 hours. By 1955, their average work week had dropped to 40 hours per week. Labourers however, worked between 44 and 48 hours per week in 1950 and 40 to 50 hours by 1955.

Historical Statistics of Canada, Series D60-63: Standard Hours(Toronto: MacMillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1965), p. 184.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from Patti Hutchison, Historian, Nova Scotia Sport Heritage Centre, December 2, 1994.

<sup>45</sup> In 1956, the percentage of those respondents that stated that they were affiliated with a church organization was 33.8% (168) but in 1958, the leisure study saw a decrease in this figure to 18.5% (92 respondents). This was a decrease of 15% in less than four years.

Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Part 2, Table II-2, p. 3, and The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Table 6b, Organizational Membership, question 10.

<sup>46</sup> T. M. Williams and A. G. Handford, "Television and Other Leisure Activities," The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities, (Florida: Academic Press Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp.182-189.

<sup>47</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, November 1956, Part 6, Table VI-1, VI-2, p.3.

The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Table 13: Preferred Leisure Activity If Extra Time were Available, question 19.

<sup>48</sup> The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Table 6c, question 11 and 11c.

<sup>49</sup> The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Table 7, question 12.

<sup>50</sup> C.B.C Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, chapter 2, p.8.

<sup>51</sup> The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Tables 7: Amount of Time Spent Watching TV on Average Weekday (question #12), Table 7a: Number and Location of Radio Sets (question #13), Table 7b: Where Is Your Set (sets) located? (question #14).

<sup>52</sup> The 1958 Halifax Study of Leisure Time in the Television Age, Table 7b: Amount of Time Spent Listening To Radio on Average Weekday, question 15.

<sup>53</sup> T. M. Williams and L. F. Harrison, "Television and Cognitive Development," The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities, (Florida: Academic Press Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp.87-127.

<sup>54</sup> As radio became the favourite "background noise" of the 1950s, so too would television become the "background noise" of the 1960s and 70s. Within a short time, television sets would remain on while people talked with friends, answered the telephone, did homework and completed other chores. Alistar Cook would be proved right after all, television had become "photographed radio."

<sup>55</sup> T. M. Williams and M. C. Boyes, "Television Viewing Patterns and Use of Other Media," The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities, (Florida: Academic Press Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp.245-248.

An American Study entitled Television In the Lives of Our Children was a survey compiled by Drs. Wilbur Schramm, Jack Lyle, Edwin B. Parker. By 1961 all but 700,000 of 4 and one-half million homes had television. How much television did children watch? 14 hours per week to age 10, 24 hours per week to age 13. Sunday was the heaviest, peak time was 08:00 PM.

The results proved that poor viewing conditions, sitting too close or too far away, in a dark room, at an awkward angle, did damage eyes. However television did not delay children's bedtime more than 20 minutes. Television did not frighten children but they reacted strongly to

realistic injury of their favourite character. Television was a second hand experience, they 'watched' life but they did not 'live it'. Television was neither raising idiots or geniuses, it made little difference to the average intelligence. Television however, was full of fantasy and stimulated creativity or intellectual activity - sometimes a positive stimulant, but mostly an initiator of fads - Mickey Mouse, for example. Many channels narrowed children's taste for the constant exposure to the same type of entertainment reinforced the taste for it. By age ten to eleven they were watching adult programming.

Television gave them an inaccurate picture of life, a warped picture of adult life based on what is seen, forcing a child into premature maturity, marked by bewilderment, distrust of adults, superficial approach to adult problems. Television effects children's personality only as television was used as a passive, receptive, helpless dependent.

Does television teach violence? Mr. Katz points out that Canada's juveniles brought to court jumped 50%. He claimed "if prison was a college for crime, television is their preparatory school."

Sidney Katz, "What Television Does to Children," Maclean's Magazine, April 22, 1961, pp. 31, 38-40.

<sup>56</sup> P. Suedfeld, "Adult Thinking, Personality, and Attitudes," The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities, (Florida: Academic Press Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp. 378-380.

<sup>57</sup> P. Suedfeld, "Adult Thinking, Personality, and Attitudes," p.378.

<sup>58</sup> Hugh Garner, "The Joys of a Sabbatical," Saturday Night, November 12, 1955, p.45.

<sup>59</sup> Meredith Kimball, "Television and Sex-Role Attitudes," The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities, (Florida: Academic Press Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp. 265-290.

<sup>60</sup> Barnouw, Tube of Plenty, p. 73.

<sup>61</sup> Kimball, pp. 265.

<sup>62</sup> Radio After One Year Of TV In Metropolitan Halifax, p.7.

<sup>63</sup> Rutherford, pp. 353-358.

<sup>64</sup> Kimball, p. 270.

<sup>65</sup> Kimball, pp.267-271 and Rutherford, pp. 357-359.

The exception to these types of male/female portrayals was the DON MESSER show, no big production, no fancy costumes, no fancy camera angles. The set never changed, playing simple, folksy music, by real people. In fact many people wrote in to book a holiday at the "Holiday Ranch."

Dorothy Sangster, "The Most Baffling Show on Television," Maclean's Magazine, June 9, 1956, pp. 26-27, 84-88.

<sup>66</sup> Lesley Joy, Meredith Kimball, Merle Zabrack, "Television and Children's Aggressive Behaviour," The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities, (Florida: Academic Press Inc., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), p.311-340.

George Comstock, Television and Human Behaviour, pp. 1-17.

<sup>67</sup> Comstock, pp. 311-384.

<sup>68</sup> Comstock, pp. 5, 8-9.

<sup>69</sup> Statistics gathered for indictable offences show an increase after television arrived in Nova Scotia. However, no direct link can be confirmed. In 1952 there were 41,591 offences and 1,323 in Nova Scotia. In 1953, 45,071 in Canada and 1,699 in Nova Scotia. In 1954, the year television arrived in Nova Scotia, there were 1,744 offences and 47,981 in Canada. One year later, Nova Scotia's rate was 1,802 and Canada's rate was 46,239. There is insufficient breakdown by centre and crime to determine a correlation.

Historical Statistics of Canada, 2nd edition, (Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing Ctr, 1983), Series Z66-78: Convictions for indictable offences of persons aged 16 years and over, Canada and the Provinces, 1886 to 1972.

<sup>70</sup> M. M. Kimball, p.267 and Comstock pp. 5-7.

<sup>71</sup> At first, television was seen as a positive influence serving the art community, presenting art as news, suggesting an appreciation of art. But as the years progressed some critics felt that television was cheapening art by considering it merely as entertainment.



Television definitely brought art to the people with visual impact but what was lost in the translation?

- Alan Jarvis, "The Arts," Canadian Art, September/October 1962, pp. 356-359.  
72 Strowan Robertson, "The Arts," Canadian Art, September/October 1962, pp. 356-359.  
73 Peter Conrad, Television: The Medium and Its Manners, pp. 32-36.  
74 Conrad, p. 33.  
75 Conrad, pp. 32-45.  
Edith Hamilton, Mythology, (New York: New American Library, 1969), pp. 87-88.  
76 Paul Rutherford, The Making of the Canadian Media, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1978), pp. 124-127.  
77 Rutherford, p. 125.  
78 Rutherford, pp. 24-127.

There was awareness that Canada could not have a truly national culture as long as this 'culture' was shaped and influenced by Toronto. It was felt that Vancouver and Halifax must become cultural centres of regional and national self-expression. CBC was merely producing and transmitting the illusion of the distinctly Canadian talent to the heart of Canada. But the reality was that it left Halifax as far away from Vancouver as it was at the time the Trans Canada railway was built.

Stephen Vizinczey, "Regionalism," Canadian Art, September/October, 1962, pp. 350-352.

Robert Russel, "Drama," Canadian Art, September/October 1962, pp. 360-362.  
Edwin Diamond, Sign-Off – The Last Days of Television, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute of Technology, 1982), pp. 175-186.

79 Edwin Diamond, Sign-Off – The Last Days of Television, p.175.

80 W. Soderlund, W. Romanow, E. Briggs, R. Wagenberg, Media and Elections In Canada, p.10.

J. Meisel, "Stroking the Airwaves: The Regulation of Broadcasting by the CRTC," Communications in Canadian Society, editor Benjamin D. Singer, (Scarborough: Nelson Canada and Thomson Canada Ltd., 1991), pp. 217-238.

81 Marshall McLuhan - "Prospect," Canadian Art, September/October 1962, pp. 363-366.

82 McLuhan p.364.

83 Rutherford, Prime Time Canada, p. 3-9.

84 Comstock, p. 156.

85 In 1985, daily circulation of six newspapers (morning and evening editions) would be 205,870. Twenty six weeklies would still be distributed with a circulation of 172,766.

Atlantic Canada Today, Atlantic Canada Economic Council (Halifax: Formac Publishing Ltd., 1987), Table 13.3: Newspaper Statistics, Atlantic Provinces 1985, p. 152.

## Tables

**Table 1:           How did respondents select their radio programs?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Respondent's Replies</b>	<b>Percentage of Households</b>
By reading the newspaper	203	40.8
Accidental Listening (Flicking the Dial)	169	34
Personal channels (Word of Mouth)	148	29.8
Program Reviews	84	16.9
CBC TIMES	1	0.2
No answer	20	4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>625<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>497<sup>2</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> More than one answer to the question.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 3, Table III-1.

**Table 2A: What were the ages of the survey respondents compared to the 1951 Canadian Census?**

<b>Age of Respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Sample Population</b>	<b>Percentage of Adult Population - 1951 Census</b>
20 - 24	29	5.8	15.3
25 - 34	130	26.2	29.0
35 - 44	137	27.6	21.9
45 - 54	89	18.0	14.6
55 - 64	66	13.2	10.2
65 - 69	19	3.8	3.5
70 +	21	4.2	5.5
unknown	6	1.2	0.0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>497<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 10, Table X-5.

Table: Metropolitan Halifax," C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One, p.61.

**Table 2B: What was the education level of respondents?**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
None	2	0.4
1 to 4 years	19	3.8
5 to 8	125	25.2
9 to 12	296	59.6
13 or more	51	10.92
no information given	4	0.8
<b>Total:</b>	<b>497<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>100 %</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 10, Table X-7.

Source: C.B.C. Halifax-Dartmouth Study: Part One - Radio Listening Patterns in a Canadian Community ... Before Television, C.B.C. Audience Research, Ottawa, December 9-15, 1954, chapter 5, Table 11, pp. 35-36.

Table 2C: What was the breakdown by national origin of the sample population compared to the 1951 Canadian Census?

National Origin	Percentage of Sample Population	Percentage of 1951 Census
British Isles	68.4	80.0
French	5.2	8.4
German	2.6	2.6
Italian	0.2	.2
Jewish	4.6	3.6
Polish	0.8	.4
Scandinavian	0.6	.7
Other - European	1.6	.5
No Information Stated	13.5	2.3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>97.5<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>98.7</b>

<sup>1</sup> Variance not explained nor defined.

Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 10, Table X-8, p. X-6.

**Table 3: What was the socio-economic status of the respondents?**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
High	138	7.6
High Middle	63	12.7
Low Middle	249	50.1
Low	121	24.3
No Information given	26	5.2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>497<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>99.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 10, Table X-4, p. X-4.

**Table 4: What were the occupations of the respondents?**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Unskilled, Farm labour, Service Workers	24	4.8
Semi-skilled, Tenant Farmers	91	18.3
Skilled Craftsmen, Protective Services, Retail Sales, Clerical Workers	243	48.9
Small Business Supervisory, Semi-Professional, Sales Representatives	92	18.5
Independent, Full Professions	18	3.6
Large Business, Political Office Holders	5	1
No Information	24	4.8
<b>Total:</b>	<b>497<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>99.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 10, Table X-3, p. X-4.

**Table 5A:** What was the breakdown of the individual household members and their hours of listening within the household?

Number of Persons in Household	Hours of Listening <sup>1</sup>		
	Light Less than 10 hours	Medium 10 to 20 hours	High More than 20 hours
1 and 2	11	19	20
3 and 4	35	47	56
5 and 6	11	20	22
7 and more	3	7	7
<b>Total:</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>105</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 3, Table III-4, p. 7.

**Table 5B:** What was the use of radios, by the number of hours?

Use of Set				
Household	Light	Medium	High	Total
Unmarried adults	5	6	5	16
Nuclear Family	43	59	65	167
Extended Family	12	28	35	75
<b>Total:<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>60</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>258</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 3, Table III-4 and III-5, p. 7-8.

**Table 6:** From the diaries, the table below shows the order of preference for CBC radio programs.

From this list, researchers hoped to supply the producers with data that could be converted into a programming schedule that would become popular.

<b>Order</b>	<b>Name of program</b>	<b>Approximate Day/Time</b>
1 <sup>1</sup>	CBC News and Weather	1:00 PM - 1:15 PM, weekdays
2	CBC Times	
3	CBC Wednesday Night	8:15 PM - 11:00 PM, Wednesdays
4	Maritime Farm Broadcast	5:00 PM (?), weekdays
5	Metropolitan Opera	
6	National Hockey League	10:00 PM - 11:30 PM, Saturdays
7	National News Bulletin	10:00 PM, weeknights
8	Our Miss Brooks	7:30 PM - 8:00 PM, Sundays
9	Rawhide	
10	Roving Reporter	
11	Stage '55	
12	Toronto Pops Symphony	Thursday evenings

<sup>1</sup> Radio Listening Patterns in a Canadian community ... "Before" Television, chapter 8, pp. 51-58.

**Table 7:** How many households were in the survey population?  
What was the composition, by the number of people, in each household?

Household	Number of Households	Percentage of Sample Population	Percentage of Actual Population (Comparison To 1951 Census)
1 person	15	3	5.1
2 to 3 people	166	37.8	38
4 to 5 people	208	41.9	35
6 to 9 people	76	15.2	19.3
ten people or more	10	2	2.6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>497<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>100</b>
			Actual Population: 29,637

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 10, Table X-1, p. 3.

**Table 8:** What were the religions represented in the sample population as compared to the 1951 Canadian Census?

Religion	Respondents	Percentage of Survey	Percentage of Census Population
Baptist	41	8.2	7.5
Church of England	122	24.5	29
Greek Orthodox	1	0.2	0.1
Jewish	6	1.2	0.8
Lutheran	3	0.6	0.8
Presbyterian	7	1.4	3
Roman Catholic	179	36	38.7
United Church	88	17.7	18.5
Other	11	2.2	1.7
None	6	1.2	--
"Protestant"	30	6	--
No Information	3	0.6	--
<b>Total:</b>	<b>497<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>100.1</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 10, Table X-9, p. 6.



Table 9: What were the community activities in Greater Halifax?

Community Activity	Respondents	Percentage of Survey
Membership In or Belonging to Organizations	159	32
Participation in Church Affairs	169	34
Participation in Civic / Political Organizations	89	18
Participation in Leisure Clubs (golf, exercise)	5	0.01
No Organization Membership of any kind	194	39
<b>Total:</b>	<b>616<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>99.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> Respondents gave more than one answer.

Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 2, pp. 2-21.

Table 10: What was the primary source of news for respondents?

News Source	Respondents	Percentage of Survey
Radio	306	61.6
Newspaper	156	31.4
Other People	18	3.6
Magazines	9	1.8
No Information	8	1.6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>497<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 2, Table II-5, p. 7.

**Table 11A: What was the overall percentage of participation in various communication activities?**

<b>Participants in Various Communication Activities</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Percentage of Survey Population that did Participate <sup>1</sup></b>
Regular Newspaper Reading	98
Regular Magazine Reading	83
Regular Voting (Federal and Provincial)	78
Active Organizational Membership	61
Movie Attendance	55
Sports Attendance (Last Month)	52
Book Reading (Last Month)	28
Regular Metropolitan News Reading (defined as reading a newspaper giving national and world news coverage)	21

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television - Second Report - Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 1, Table I-14, p.16.

**Table 11B: What memberships were held by respondents?**

<b>Membership Held<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No Active Membership	39.4
Church-connected	33.8
Home and School	22.7
Political and Civic / Business and Labour	17.9
Fraternal	11.7
Women's / Women's Auxiliary	10.5
Special Activities - lecture groups	5.6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 2, Table II-2: Kinds of Active Memberships Held by Respondents, p. 3 and pp. 16-19.

**Table 12: What expectations did respondents have concerning the anticipated television programming?**

<b>Expectations / Interest</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Sample</b>
Sports	248	49.9
Children's Programs	76	15.3
Informational	58	11.7
Special Performances	46	9.3
Live Events	39	7.8
Movies and Stories	26	5.2
Religious Programs	15	3
Specific Television shows or As On Radio"	354	71.2
Don't Know / Take Anything	26	5.2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>888<sup>1</sup></b>	

<sup>1</sup> More than one answer from respondents.

Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 6, p. 3, Table VI-2.

Table 13: What were the salary levels and occupations in Halifax around CBHT's installation date?

Occupation and Salary Levels <sup>1</sup> (in Halifax)			
YEAR:	1952	1954	1956
Carpenter	\$3,078.	\$3,349.	\$3,682.
Labourer	\$2,205.	\$2,288.	\$2,621.
Electrician	\$3,286.	\$3,357.	\$3,890.
Plumber	\$3,224.	\$3,536.	\$3,869.
Senior Bookkeeper (Female)	\$ –	\$ –	\$2,340.
Senior Typist (Female)	\$ –	\$ –	\$2,028.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Historical Statistics of Canada, Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1965, Series D40-59, Wages, Series D60-73 Standard Hours.

Source: Historical Statistics of Canada, Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing Center, 1983, E326-375.

Table 14: What were the reasons for having reservations over the television purchase?

Reasons for Reservations	Percentage of Respondents <sup>1</sup>
Financial	45 <sup>2</sup>
Poor Reception	15
Programming	11
Effects on Children	3
General Social Effects	3
Other	13
None	23

<sup>1</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 6, Table VI-3: Reservations Regarding TV Purchase Among Acceptors, Uncommitted and Resisters.

<sup>2</sup> Many respondents gave more than one reason for their hesitation over television purchase.

Table 15: Why would families NOT purchase television?

Why Families Would Not Purchase Television <sup>1</sup>				
Main Concerns:	No children	One to Three Children	Four or More Children	Five or More Children
Economic	32.5%	39.5%	51.9%	74%
Social Effects	4.7%	4.7%	3.8%	—
Total number of families: 497	168	276	52	1

<sup>1</sup> Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 6, Table VI-3: Reservations Regarding TV Purchase Among Acceptors, Uncommitted and Resisters, p.7.

Table 16: What kind of programs did parents want in a Children's Hour?

Type of Program <sup>1</sup>	Ages of Children in the Family					
	No Children	Under Age 4	4-8	9-12	13-17	All Ages
Lore/Fairy Tales	50.9	55.6	63.0	54.1	54.5	54.1
Educational	29.6	34.7	31.2	33.3	31.7	32.0
Western / Action	16.6	29.9	36.4	42.3	33.7	27.4
Animals, Puppets, Cartoons	19.5	30.6	31.2	20.7	15.8	24.7
Activities	8.9	14.6	17.9	16.2	13.9	12.9
Children's Quizzes	8.3	9.0	8.1	10.8	8.9	8.6
Religious	4.7	13.2	5.2	8.1	4.0	5.6
Morality Stories	8.3	2.1	2.3	1.8	6.9	5.2
Adult Shows Children Like	1.8	4.2	5.2	8.1	10.9	5.0
No Crime / Violence	10.9	13.0	13.2	15.0	15.3	13.1
Don't Know	17.2	4.2	2.9	2.7	7.0	9.6

<sup>1</sup> More than one answer if more than one child in the family.

Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 8, Table VIII-6, p.6.

Table 17: Where should emphasis be placed for programming in Halifax?

Program Interests <sup>1</sup>		
	Respondents	Percentage of Survey
Maritime	311	62.6
Balanced Mix	86	17.4
Outside Programming	75	15.0
Other / Don't Know	17	3.4
No Information	8	1.6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 7, Table VII-1, p.3.

Table 18: What about commercials on television?

Opinion Stated <sup>1</sup>	Respondents	Percentage of Survey
Against Commercials	100	20.1
None on Sundays	93	18.7
None during Church hours	4	0.8
Some Limits	107	21.5
No Restrictions	193	36.8
No information	10	2.0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>99.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> First opinion taken although others may have been stated.  
Source: Study of a Canadian Community Before Television, Second Report, Canada Broadcasting Corporation, Audience Research Division, Ottawa, November 1956, Part 9, Table IX-3, p.3.

**Table 19: Percentage of Television Households Viewing Programs  
between 06:00 to 09:00 PM**

	January 1956 <sup>1</sup>	April 1956
Evenings from: 06:00-09:00	International Survey Limited	Elliott-Haynes Limited
Sunday	76	75
Weekdays	62	59
Saturday	77	74

<sup>1</sup> Number of homes in survey not given.

Source: Radio After One Year of Television In Metropolitan Halifax, CBC  
Audience Research Division, Ottawa, January 1957, p. 6.

**Table 20A: Halifax Memorial Library (Main Library - opened November 12, 1951)  
Circulation Statistics From 1952 to 1957**

	1952 <sup>1</sup>	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Adult	180,142	218,579	265,627	305,226	324,428	337,381
Children	60,290	61,012	63,980	81,448	87,308	93,271
<b>Totals</b>	<b>240,432</b>	<b>279,591</b>	<b>329,607</b>	<b>386,674</b>	<b>411,736</b>	<b>430,652</b>
Reference Department Questions	3,610	4,984	5,454	6,115	6,817	7,230

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Pauline M. A. Hildersheim, Deputy Chief Librarian, Halifax City Regional Library,  
November 15, 1994.

**Table 20B: Registered Active Borrowers — Halifax Memorial Library: 1952-1957**

	1952 <sup>1</sup>	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Adult	10,035	13,046	16,316	19,496	14,748	15,140
Children	3,468	5,024	6,486	7,436	7,233	7,379
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,503</b>	<b>18,070</b>	<b>22,802</b>	<b>26,932</b>	<b>21,981</b>	<b>22,789</b>

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Pauline M. A. Hildersheim, Deputy Chief Librarian, Halifax City Regional Library,  
November 15, 1994.

### Milestones in Canadian Broadcasting<sup>1</sup>

Year	EVENT
1901	Marconi's transatlantic wireless signal from Cornwall, England to Newfoundland.
1902	Marconi sets up a wireless telegraphy station at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, licensed by the Canadian government.
1905	Canada's first Wireless Telegraph Act.
1913	Radio Telegraph Act - transmission of voices. Licensing authority Department of Marine and Fisheries.
1919	September: First broadcasting license issued in Canada to a Marconi station XWA <sup>2</sup> Montreal (now CFCF).
1922	First Canadian licensing of commercial broadcasting stations including CKAC Montreal, first French language radio station in North America. Canadian National Railways begins radio experiments, (radio in trains by 1923).
1927	First regularly schedule network service in Canada links CN stations Montreal and Ottawa. By 1932 regional and national network service involves some 20 stations. July 1st: Special coast to coast broadcast on the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation originates from CN station - Ottawa and carried by network of 23 stations and overseas.
1928	Royal Commission on Broadcasting appointed (Aird Commission), reports to Parliament 1929.
1930	Canadian Radio League organizes.
1930-31	First Canadian television experiments in Montreal.
1932	First Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting. May 26: Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act passes. December 25: First Empire Christmas Broadcast -- Address by George V - distributed to all Canadian stations.
1936	November 2: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation established.
1939	Royal visit to Canada Declaration of war. A CBC broadcasting unit sails for Britain with the First Canadian Division.
1940	CBC school broadcasts started in Nova Scotia.



### Milestones in Canadian Broadcasting<sup>1</sup>

Year	EVENT
1941	January 1: formal opening of CBC News Service CBC National network broadcast of Churchill's address to the Canadian Parliament.
1943	CBC International short-wave broadcasting, established near Sackville, New Brunswick, Tantramar marshes - Headquarters in Montreal, programs fed to Sackville.
1944	Dominion network opens.
1945	CBC International Service officially opens.
1946	CBC FM Stations open in Montreal and Toronto.
1947	<u>CBC Wednesday Night</u> establishes a new concept on radio - that of a full evening of ambitious and adult programming. Fishermen's broadcast and junior farm programs join the daily fare. Weekly program guides for listeners begins with the publication CBC TIMES. CBC Symphony series begins five years later.
1949	CBC completes detailed plan for development of television in Canada and Government announces their plans for television. April 1st: Newfoundland joins Confederation. Stations and staff of the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland become part of the CBC. Massey Commission appointed (Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences). Reports to Parliament 1951.
1951	CBC radio coverage begins of four-week Canadian tour by Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip of Edinburgh.
1952	CBC participates in the BBC broadcast from London of the funeral of King George VI.
1953	CBC television is the first broadcasting system in North America to show complete film of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth on television (within four hours of the end of the ceremony in London).

### Milestones in Canadian Broadcasting<sup>1</sup>

Year	EVENT
1954	CBC Bureau of Audience Research established. First CBC telecast of the Opening of Parliament. Armed Forces Service - Headquarters Ottawa, Production centre, Montreal. <b>December 4th: CBHT-Halifax signs on.</b>
1955	Royal Commission on Broadcasting appointed (Fowler Commission). Reports to Parliament 1957.
1957	CBC television coverage of Queen Elizabeth's address to the nation from Ottawa, October 13th and the first opening of the Canadian Parliament by a reigning monarch, October 14.
1958	August: New Broadcasting Act passes, creating the Board of Broadcast Governors, to regulate all Canadian Broadcasting.
1959	Microwave network extended to Newfoundland.
1960	Second television station licensed for Halifax.
1961	CTV network begins October 1st.

<sup>1</sup> CBC: A Brief History of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Public Relations, Ottawa: CBC Head Office, July 1976, p. 29-38..

<sup>2</sup> An "X" in the call letters signified an experimental station.

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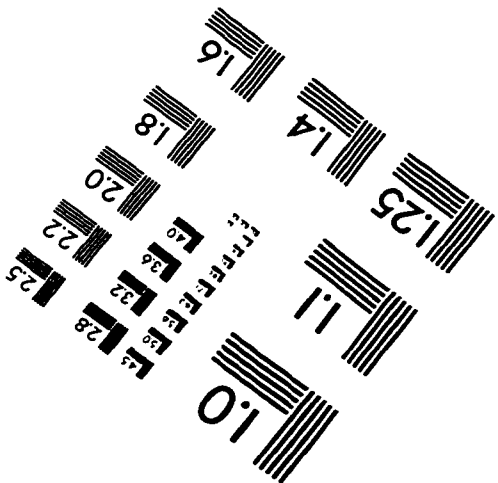
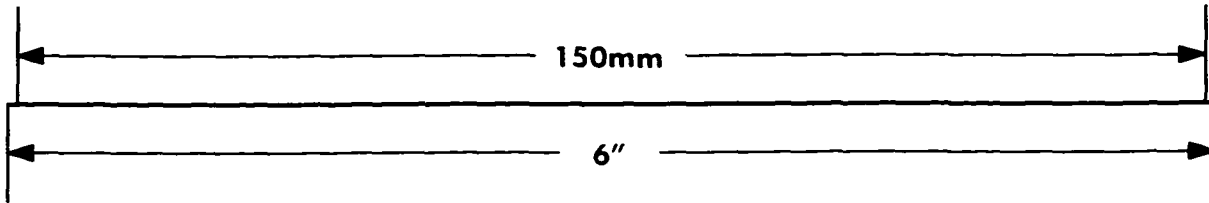
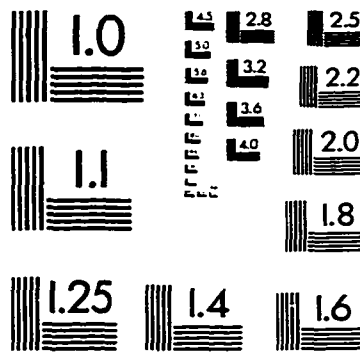
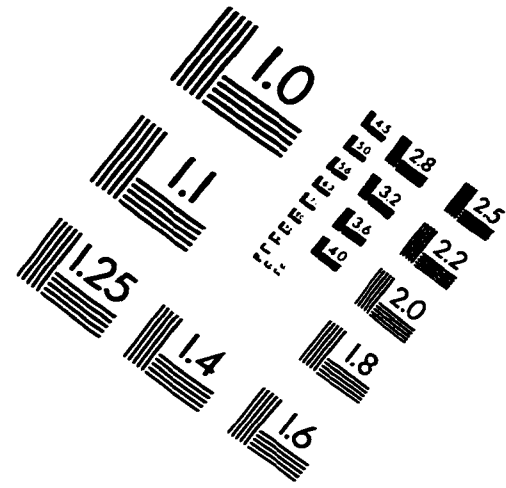
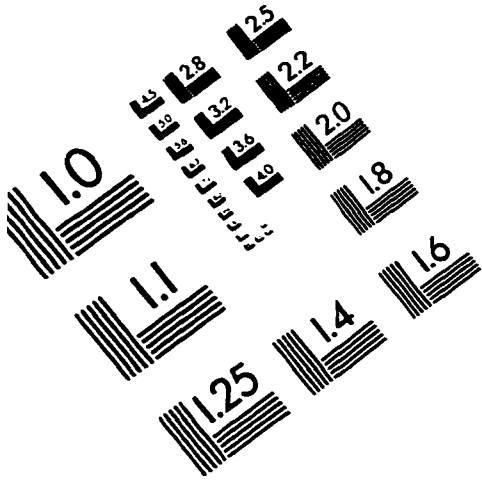
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