REPORT OF THE STUDY GROUP ON
CITIZENS' COMMUNICATIONS

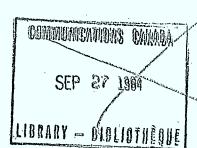# Report of the Study Group on Citizens' Communications

Fate seems to have destined this country to be a textbook example of the way in which a society and its culture can be shaped by the pressure and pull of communications media.

Neil Compton.

Sponsored jointly by the Department of the Secretary of State, the Department of Communications and the National Film Board, the Study Group on Citizens' Communications was established in April 1972 to study an important and rapidly developing Canadian phenomenon: the increasing use by a variety of citizens' and community groups of different types of communications tools to express themselves directly to governments, to each other and to the public at large.

The terms of reference of the Study Group were:
"In general, to identify ways, including a specific operational program, if this is found to be justified and feasible, by which the federal government can best encourage community development, citizens' participation, and opportunities for creative self-expression, by promoting the human and social potential of communications technologies, and in particular:
-to identify ways to advance groups and individuals by enabling groups and individuals to articulate their needs effectively, and to have access to each other, and to institutions and governments, and to participate more directly in the making of decisions which affect their lives, and
-to identify ways to maximize the effective use by citizens of communications

technologies, in particular but not exclusively: videotape recording whether used in a closed-circuit or cable-system model; film; radio broadcasting systems; telephone and radio-telephone systems."

During the first phase of the study, Study Group members examined the developing concepts of participation, social animation and self-expression in relation to communications, and also in relation to more general concepts.

The second phase took the form of an extensive series of interviews and discussions with representatives of citizens' groups, institutions and agencies using or interested in using communications technologies to achieve their goals. Study Group members observed citizens' communications groups in action as far north as Inuvik, N.W.T., as far east as Fogo Island, Newfoundland, and as far west as Campbell River, British Columbia.

In addition, four independent studies by regional consultants were commissioned, to provide more detailed examinations of citizens' communications activities in the Maritimes, Toronto, Alberta and British Columbia. A consultant was also commissioned to prepare a report on the role of the Canadian Broadcasting League in relation to citizens' communications, and to report on the federal government's present role in supporting citizens' communication activities.

Finally, a questionnaire was prepared and circulated to 1147 representative citizens' groups and associations, both established and grass roots, to determine the extent to which they were then making use of communications technologies, or planned to do so in future. The findings and recommendations of all these studies, together with individual reports prepared by each Study Group member, have been synthesized in this final report.

Part 1 of the report explores the origin and development of the citizens' communications movement in Canada, examines the relationship between the movement and the established media, and discusses certain distinct aspects of the movement. Also included is a layman's guide to the techniques of citizens' communications.

The five chapters which comprise *Part II* are devoted to a region-by-region survey of the citizens' communication movement in operation across the country, from Newfoundland to British Columbia.

Part III a separate chapter, examines citizens' communications in relation to Inuit and Indian peoples.

Part IV summarizes the principal issues and findings, and examines the federal government's present role in relation to citizens' communications. The final chapter is addressed to the future. It contains the Study Group's recommendations.

It is hoped that this report will provide an informative background and stimulus for public discussion of what Study Group members consider to be one of the most important and uniquely Canadian developments in our contemporary society.

Study Group Members

Director
H. Anthony Williamson
Head, Social Development
Extension Service
Memorial University of
Newfoundland
St. John's,
Newfoundland

Members
Lise Bouvette
Communications Analyst
Montreal

Marie Kurchak
Film-maker and Communications
Consultant
Toronto

William Nemtin
Executive Director
Metro Media Association of
Greater Vancouver
Vancouver, B.C.

Louis Portugais
Producer
Société Nouvelle
National Film Board
Montreal

Editor
Sandra Gwyn
Ottawa

Researcher
Lyndsay Green
Department of Communications
Ottawa

Consultants
David Baxter
University of Calgary
Calgary

Leslie Gallagher,
Harry Sutherland and
Peter Zimmer
Teled Video Services
Halifax

Christopher Pinney
Challenge for Change
Vancouver

Simon Riley
Canadian Broadcasting League
Ottawa

Ed Waitzer
Interchurch Broadcasting
Toronto

The report of any self-respecting study group begins with a clear, cogent definition of just what it is that the exercise is all about. In the case of citizens' communications, this task is much harder than usual.

All communications, other than those which relate exclusively to business, government or institutions, are for, by and about citizens. And citizens, it goes without saying, were communicating with one another - by talking, writing letters, standing up on soapboxes - long before the glamorous electronic and electromagnetic media appeared.

Our definition, therefore, is somewhat imprecise, and ultimately it has as much to do with style and intent as with specific forms. By citizens' communications we mean people, usually non-institutional, non-professional, non-commercial groups of people, using videotape, film, radio, cable television, radio-telephone networks, telex, computers and the telephone, to connect *directly* with other people, or with institutions and governments.

(Print, because it covers so vast an area, was excluded from our terms of reference, though obviously, it would be impossible to write a report about citizens' communications without mentioning print at all.)

Directly is the operative word. In the kind of process we have been concerned with, the traditional gatekeepers of communications flow - established media like mass-circulation newspapers and magazines, radio and television networks; established media practitioners like journalists, editors, producers, and technicians - by and large have been bypassed. Instead, the man and woman in the street are making direct use of communications technology for themselves.

That citizens have developed this new form of communications is the result both of a clear demand and of an available supply.

The demand springs from the social, cultural and political pluralism of Canada which, now that pluralism (regionalism, multiculturalism, bilingualism and native rights) has been recognized as something to be encouraged rather than denied, places a new importance on heterogeneous rather than homogeneous methods of communication.

The supply is the new, cheap, easy-to-operate communications technologies which have opened up a whole range of new communications options to the public at large. Ten years ago, the technology of, say, television, was so complex that only highly professional (and expensive) producers, writers, cameramen, light and sound men, could produce

programs and they in turn could work only as employees of large organizations.

But the hand-held video camera, of which the first models appeared in 1968, is so easy to operate that almost anyone can learn to shoot a passable production in a matter of hours. (To make videotapes that are really effective still requires considerable time and training.)

These amateur productions can be distributed to the public at virtually no cost, over the local channels of cable television systems. In contrast, a decade ago the only systems of distribution were the closed-shop public and private broadcasting networks. Many videotapes, of course, are not designed to be broadcast at all; instead, they are screened in church basements, union halls, schools and so on. The innovation here, aside from cheap playback facil-ities, is that of the development of audiences interested enough to come out to watch such programs.

As a spinoff, the surge of interest in VTR and cable television has sparked a rediscovery of a range of development of other media, most notably film, radio-broadcasting, radio-tele-phone networks and 35mm slides.

This sudden conjuncture of demand (socio-cultural) and supply (technical) helps explain the advent of citizens' communications. But it does not explain why this demand has not been met by the most obvious source of all - the established mass media.

Economics is one reason, and a good one. Socio-cultural pluralism means small audiences, and small audiences mean high costs and low profits. The mass media are the products of an industrial ethos in which commercial success was predicated upon the sale of larger and lar-ger quantities of identical products to larger and larger markets.

In mass media terms, this meant the diffusion of undifferentiated messages to a vast audience made up of individuals who were treated as if their interests were identical, or at any rate as if their interest could all be accommodated within the limits of a single newspaper, or radio or television station.

A majority of Canadian news-papers for instance, belong to chains and carry broadly identical copy provided by wire services and syndicated columnists. As for radio and television, many of our stations could be moved from one community to another, with few listeners or viewers being any the wiser insofar as cover-age of their own community is concerned. (Some kind of ultimate in mass media has been achieved by the new, all-automated radio stations in which

95% of programming depends upon computer-controlled tapes.) One observer, exaggerating only slightly, has said of English-language television both public and private: "What we really have are two local Toronto stations which are then repeated in each city across the country."

Not that this line of reasoning can or should be carried to extremes. Even when the concept of Canada as a centralized nation was in its heyday, the topography of the country worked against blanket media coverage. Virtually all our newspapers, in contrast to those in many countries, have restricted their audiences to the immediate environs of the city or town in which they are published and hence have reflected local interests. The CBC, though more in radio than in television, has consistently broadcast programs for minority and special interest audiences. These days, now that more and more Canadians are determined to send communications messages directly as well as receive them indirectly, the media are making considerable attemps to accommodate them.

Most big city newspapers, for example, now run *Action Line* features which respond to citizens' questions and problems as quasi-ombudsmen. Many newspapers have also signifi-cantly expanded their letter-to-the-editor sections and

and have surrendered valuable editorial page space to columns sent in by readers. Coverage of local and community affairs has increased markedly. At another level, a radio program like the CBC's *This Country in the Morning,* by its intensive use of interviews with ordinary citizens rather than the familiar roll-call of academic/journalistic/political experts, embodies many of the operational principles of citizens' communi-cations.

A good case can be made that where the established media have been most responsive to citizen and community pressures, the demand for citizens' communi-cations has been weakest. In Toronto, for instance, the three thriving dailies, the innumer-able neighbourhood weeklies, the sixteen highly-competitive radio stations and the five local television stations between them cover the city so comprehensively, in all its aspects, that the level of what Pierre Juneau has described as "barefoot programming" is perhaps the lowest in the coun-try.

(Toronto also illustrates a related phenomenon: Competition is so intense that even a well-conceived, community-oriented commercial venture like CITY-TV, or activist commercial cable TV programmers like Rogers Cable T. V. Limited have trouble attracting measurable audiences - other than, in at least the former instance, for soft-core porno films.)

Even so, there remain vast sections of the country where established media provide inadequate coverage of local events, or none at all, or where coverage is largely unsympathetic to the interests of minority groups: the very young, the very old, ethnic groups, and original peoples. Despite recent gestures in the direction of community programming, the CBC has no equivalent to the 20 local, non-network radio stations which the BBC has established over the past four years; nor is there any Canadian plan comparable to the one under study by the Swedish government to create, through an organization separate from the Swedish Radio Corporation, as many as forty local non-network radio stations throughout the country.

It is in areas starved for information - areas that citizens' communications ventures tend to flourish. Examples include the highly successful community television operation in the Lac Saint-Jean region of Quebec; the community radio project in Kitchener-Waterloo, which in the absence of a local CBC outlet fills a genuine gap; and even more dramatically, the small radio stations in northern hamlets like Tuktoyaktuk, Pond Inlet and Baker Lake which - quite apart from being community-owned and operated - meet a clear and unarguable need,

that of providing a radio service in the total absence of any other form of broadcasting.

Another hallmark of citizens' communications is that it is highly innovative, still groping for form, still setting its own rules. If one takes as a starting point the Fogo Project, an experiment in using 16mm film as a tool for community development launched in the summer of 1967 as a joint venture between the Challenge for Change unit of the National Film Board and the Extension Service of Memorial University of Newfoundland, the movement in Canada is barely six years old. The first attempts at community-organized programming for cable television systems - the Normandin project in the Lac Saint-Jean region, and Town Talk in Thunder Bay, Ontario - date only from 1970.

Even more recently, the CRTC granted a licence to a co-op TV station in Hull, Quebec - the first co-op to be licensed. Coopérative de télévision de l'Outaouais (C.T.V.O.) is the first citizens' group to run a commercial television station on a non-profit basis with members having an equal voice in management and programming.

In graphic terms, a summary history of the movement would show a quickly rising curve, beginning with the formal establishment of the Film Board's Challenge for Change-Société

Nouvelle program, designed to experiment with the media as agents of social change, followed helter skelter by Fogo and Normandin and Town Talk.

Then the curve dips sharply: cable television was seized on suddenly as the New Jerusalem, its limitations obscured by a blizzard of rhetoric - "access"; "demystification of the media" "participation"; "process not product" - until it seemed that everyone was talking and no one acting, still less anyone watching the earnest community-made programs that sometimes flickered over the spare channels of CATV systems. During this period, Challenge for Change (though less so Société Nouvelle) lost much of its early creative thrust; it began to hop from project to project and many of the films it produced had little to do with social change and less with community development.

More recently, at least so we believe, the curve has turned up again. Groups across the country, putting less emphasis on rhetoric and more on organization and action, and demonstrating a born survivor's instinct to sniff out one funding source after another, have started to build up a critical base of experience, and an even more critical base of community support.

Original peoples have been notably successful in using the new techniques; some of the most innovative citizens' communications projects are being accomplished by and with Indians and Inuit. And government, instead of being frightened off by some early disasters, has shown a capacity for the long haul.

To carry the story further forward at this point would be to scoop the body of the report. It would also skip much too lightly over what we consider to be one of the most important aspects of citizens' communications: that the phenomenon is uniquely Canadian.

We not only lead the world in citizens' communications; we in fact invented it and we are now exporting it throughout the world. (One observer has suggested that citizens' communications represents a kind of marriage between "The medium is the message" and the NFB's proud old tradition of social documentary.) It is no accident that the largest citizens' communications group in the United States (The Alternative Media Center in New York) should be headed by a former director of Challenge for Change, nor that a good two-thirds of the first report on citizens' communications in Britain (Television Studies, University of Southampton, November, 1972) should consist of Canadian source material. Canadian teams are working in Tunisia and Algeria; Canadian techniques have been copied in California and Connecticut and Alaska, and are being studied in India.

Action displays of Canadian citizens' communications projects formed an important part of a major exhibition abroad, *Canada Trajectoires '73*, shown at the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Paris last summer.

This chauvinism is forgivable, we think, because it underlines the reason that in the last analysis justifies the existence of citizens' communications and of a report about it.

The fact is that citizens' communications expresses the essence of this country. Canadians have always been massively dependent upon, almost obsessed by, communications - beginning with the world's first long distance telephone call, continuing through an unchallenged record as the world's most loquacious telephone users, and ending for the moment in the world's first geostationary domestic communications satellite system. ("If you're out to move words, if you've got a problem with invisible waves of any kind," author Harry Bruce has written, "get a Canadian.")

Canada has also always been a loose federation, a pluralist and essentially provincial society that somehow managed to combine institutional conservatism with respect for the freedom of the individual or of the group.

In recent years, this pluralism

has acquired an increasingly political dimension. Quite apart from the jurisdictional see-saw between Ottawa and the provinces, there is quite clearly a comparable (and, we believe, a closer-to-reality) see-saw for power between all the new citizens' groups, native groups, neighbourhood, community and special interest associations on the one hand and governments, at all levels, on the other.

Some of the most important uses of citizens' communications have been concerned with broadening the base of participation, and with bringing the views of a wider range of interests to the attention of decision-makers. In St. John's, Newfoundland, for example, the People's Planning Programme, a community action group formed to suggest alternatives to a mammoth urban renewal scheme, turned up at public hearings with a 45-minute videotape showing inner-city residents commenting on the plan and in this way, making their voice heard for the first time.

In Northern Ontario, band chiefs are using a new radio-telephone network to discuss among themselves proposed new government programs, instead of each having to face alone a battery of officials. In December 1972, representatives of some 6,000 Cree Indians, whose way of life is threatened by the James Bay Hydro Project, created a new legal precedent by presenting as evidence in Quebec Superior Court,

a 30-minute videotape indicating ecological damage the project may cause.

These uses of citizens' communications amount to "white papers in action". It is notable that some groups - Neighbourhood Radio in Vancouver is a good example - have linked their communications activities to an information system - in Vancouver's case, this is basically a collection of clippings about current local political issues - and have used the combination of communications and information to advance issues (e.g. tenants' rights, strikes) often ignored by the established media.

A related and potentially significant form of advocacy is being demonstrated by the increasing interest of citizens' communications groups in the activities and performance of established media. Evidence of this is the creation of the Citizens' Media Caucus, formed at the March 1973 meeting of the Canadian Broadcasting League, and a marked rise in the number of interventions by such groups in broadcasting licence hearings - for instance the stand taken by the Association for Public Broadcasting of Victoria, B.C., opposing the possible awarding of licences to commercial applicants for third television stations in the major western cities.

Other citizen advocate groups find media a useful complement to demonstrations. In the Pointe-Saint-Charles area of Montreal, for instance, the Parallel Institute, was formed to provide technical and information services to local citizens' groups, using VTR as a means of documenting and recording group actions. As one of Parallel's staff members told us: "Video helps equalize the bargaining power of poor people when they confront welfare and government officials. For once, they have a means of controlling records of their own experiences. The tapes are also shown to people who are not yet involved in citizens' groups. They get excited when they see other people taking on the welfare office, and discover they don't have to be afraid of the police coming and beating them up."

More profoundly, citizens' communications techniques can also play a part in the most important component of all in community development: the process of developing a new social consensus based upon individual self-respect. This use, which in many instances involves a portable film or VTR camera in the hands of an experienced and sensitive social animator, was, as we noted earlier, the first to be developed. It is commonly known as the Fogo Process, after the island off the northeast coast of Newfoundland where

the technique was first applied.

No evaluation has yet been undertaken, but the key unquestionably is the galvanic effect that seeing oneself on a screen - unposed, unedited, warts-and-all - seems to have on the inner self. "Video-taping pinpoints the failure of an individual to recognize his own problems," one psychiatrist has suggested. "He confronts himself, but remains much less defensive than when someone else confronts him."* A ful-fillment, in a way, of the prediction Robert Burns made two hundred years ago:
...The power
   To see oursels as others
      see us,
   It wad frae monie a
      blunder free us
   An foolish notion.

Crucial to the Fogo process is that citizens themselves, rather than outside animators, control the pace and direction of social change. A first principle is that everyone interviewed has the right to edit his or her remarks before the tape or film is shown to anyone else.

In practice, the technique - partly because it creates a sense of excitement and urgency; partly because it tends to neutralize inter- and intra-community hostilities - usually

* Anthony Marcus, Nothing is My Number, General Publishing, Toronto, 1971.

accelerates change.

On Fogo, for instance, the two-month process of making and screening 28 short films in which individuals, many for the first time, expressed openly their hopes, fears and frustra-tions, catalyzed a latent sense of group identity and solidarity into group action. The result has been visible change. In 1967, sixty percent of the population was on welfare, and the island appeared doomed to extinction via wholesale re-settlement. In 1973, Fogo is a going concern, boasting a new regional high school, and the first successful fishing and shipbuilding co-operatives ever established in rural Newfoundland.

We'll have more to say about the origin and development of the Fogo process further along. At this stage, it's worth remark-ing that this is the aspect of citizens' communications on which international attention has primarily been focused.

We might also add that as a general rule, the technique seems to work best in isolated and semi-isolated areas where there are traditional inhibi-tions against face-to-face public debate, and where, in the absence of daily bombardment by the mass media, the taping-screening process becomes a kind of community focal point.

In the impersonal, media-rich, urban environments by contrast, the most successful citizens'

communications projects usually involve the development of a sense of togetherness between individuals who, though they have common concerns, are scattered in a lonely crowd. Taking a couple of examples from many: in Vancouver, a half-hour program in the Greek language presented on cable since early 1972 attracts thousands of viewers every week; and in Ottawa, again since early 1972, the Senior Citizens' Broadcasting Committee has been presenting a weekly "city-wide tea social and public platform" via cable.

Still another company of citizen communicators, often captained by people who a generation ago would have emerged as painters or sculptors, are exploring the media as a new creative frontier. These new artists, more interested in the process of cultural animation than in producing the traditional artifacts of culture, are using communications techniques to develop within their communities a new awareness of self and of the environment. These groups are usually found in larger cities, clustered round focal points like Toronto's A-Space and Montreal's Véhicule. The fact that these are groups, because communications art requires disciplined teamwork, is a significant break with the post-Renaissance tradition of

artist as individual.

To make all this even more complex, the various types of activities we've cited are rarely carried out in isolation. Because citizens' communications also encompasses citizen advocacy, community development, adult education, entertainment, amateur journalism and aesthetic exploration, the aims and objectives, methods and clientele of individual groups often overlap.

In fact, one of the most interesting and significant developments in citizens' communications we encountered was the emergence of a number of media resource centres designed to provide advice, expertise, and technical facilities to *all* groups who want to use the media, according to their specific needs. So far, the most fully realized of these are Metro Media in Vancouver, Teled Video Services in Halifax and Vidéographe in Montreal. In Newfoundland, the Extension Service of Memorial University provides roughly similar services within an institutional framework. In the national context, the Challenge for Change unit of the National Film Board, which launched the movement back in 1967 and since then has been providing seed money and equipment to community groups, has recently emphasized a media-counselling programming, via five regionally-based media experts.

These resource bases and personnel are serving a clientele that's becoming increasingly

broadly based. Of 145 tradi-
tional social service organi-
zations who responded to a
questionnaire we prepared, 83
reported that they now make
use of all communications
techniques - film and video
as well as print and the tele-
phone. Generally, such
organizations are primarily
interested in preparing
programs for the local community
cable channel. In addition, a
surprising number of groups
have purchased their own VTR
equipment and are helping
clients to experiment with
it.

At still another level,
educational systems all
across the country have made
mammoth investments in commu-
nications hardware (though
these investments are shared
all too rarely with the
community as a whole). Taking
one fairly typical example,
Mount Royal Junior College in
Calgary is equipped with
three television studios, one
radio studio, three colour
cameras, one colour VTR
camera, and five portable VTR
cameras.

Last but far from least,
government itself is massively
involved. It was impossible
for us to arrive at a pre-
cise figure but a ballpark
estimate would be that as
much as 90% of all citizens'
communications activity in
Canada is being funded
directly or indirectly,
wholly or in part, by govern-
ment departments and agencies.

During its first year of opera-
tion, the Local Initiatives
Program alone spent $3.2 million
on 119 separate media projects.
At the same time, a number of
departments - the Department
of Regional Economic Expansion
and the Ministry of State for
Urban Affairs come immediately
to mind - have themselves
adopted the new techniques,
either for research projects
or as a means of developing
new lines of feedback with
their clients.

A nation that pioneers a new
process is also first in line
when it comes to solving the
new problems that the process
brings in its wake. Problems
abound. Some are no more than
inevitable growing pains, as
groups spring up across the
country without knowing of one
another, each repeating the
same mistakes. "We seem to
have been through half a
dozen 'entirely fresh
approaches' already," one
group told us ruefully, "and
we've only been going a year."

Other more serious difficulties,
if left unrecognized and
unrectified, could nullify what
has been achieved so far. If
communications systems can be
used to strengthen identity,
they also strengthen ego, and
the goal of community develop-
ment can be lost in a rush to
make personal rather than
collective statements. A dis-
proportionate number of adher-
ents in the movement come from
the educated middle-class.
Several promising projects seem

to have foundered, or at least failed to live up to their potential, simply because their effect, instead of creating a new social or political concensus, was to polarize a community. Too many groups have mistaken the rhetoric of social change for its reality and, for lack of roots within their communities, withered and died. "Thus words worked for us, but nothing else seemed to", we were told. Other groups have allowed their members to turn into 'media freaks', obsessed with form rather than content, and medium rather than message, for communications hardware holds fatal fascination. "I ask myself sometimes", said one community worker, "if these people who are supposedly demystifying the media aren't actually making it even *more* mystifying, by creating yet another jargon-ridden, elite group".

Unquestionably, the central problem we encountered was a general tendency among all groups - and perhaps most marked among original peoples' groups - to seize on communications systems as a panacea for all problems, rather than as something which, however useful, however versatile, is ultimately only a tool.

For government, the unlikely angel of citizens' communications movement, the problems are as complex as for the groups themselves. Generally speaking, govern-

ment has responded generously and quickly, and through Challenge for Change - Société Nouvelle was largely responsible for launching the movement in the first place. But the response has been unsure, uncoordinated and mostly *ad hoc*.

We found at least 13 departments and agencies supporting some types of citizens' communications activity, in different ways and for different reasons - usually with less knowledge of what each is doing than the actual citizens' groups have of each other.

As a result, some organizations, often those long on articulate spokesmen and short on genuine community support, have received too much too soon while other groups, whose achievements have been substantial enough to warrant a modicum of steady support, are forced to spend half their time and energy shopping for enough short-term grants to stay alive. "Turnstile funding" is the way one of our consultants described the existing situation, and he added, "It becomes a question of who can con the loudest and longest".

Once again, the key problem is that existing government funding methods - with one or two exceptions - have tended to regard communications in isolation, rather than in the overall contexts of citizen development, adult education and community development.

This report is an attempt to
explore some fresh policy
approaches for government,
at a time when the citizens'
communication movement is
trying to move beyond adoles-
cence into adulthood. It
is also an attempt to describe
the existing state of the
movement and, we hope, to
help demystify citizens'
communications for the
general reader.

We begin with a brief layman's guide to the principal citizens' communication techniques. The technical detail is at a minimum. The intention is rather to give an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of each technique, and the uses to which these are best suited.

Videotape Recording

Videotape recording (VTR) heads the list, for more than any other, this system has been catalyst for the entire citizens' communication movement. "The Sony Porta-Pac", one observer suggests, "is to citizens' communications as IBM is to computers". In 1968, Porta-Pacs were virtually unknown in this country. In 1972, we counted 700 in the educational institutions of Alberta alone.

The complete standard unit consists of a lightweight (about 22 pounds) fully portable battery-operated television system, utilizing half-inch videotape (compared to the two-inch tape used for most network TV programming; and the one-inch tape used for most local programming originated by cable companies). Also included is a tapedeck that provides instant replay and live viewing capability. While the equipment is by no means free of all technical bugs, it is relatively sturdy, and quite literally easy enough for a ten-year-old to learn to use in short order.

Cost, as much as ease of operation, has been the secret of VTR's spectacular success. The complete unit costs about $2,500. As important, thirty minutes worth of half-inch tape, with synchronized sound recorded right on tape, costs about $15; compared to about $110 for a half hour of 16mm film with magnetic soundtrack. Unlike film, the tape requires no processing, and may be used over and over again. Its life-span, however, is much less than that of film - only about four or five years.

As for applications of VTR, these are so many and so diverse that the Sony-Porta-Pac camera was described to us, with only a trace of poetic licence, as "an electronic ballpoint". It can be used as a device to organize groups ("Come and see yourself on TV!"); as a recording secretary for meetings; as a means of making statements to be shown to various levels of officialdom; as a way of recording traditional customs for posterity. VTR cameras are also being used extensively in classrooms; for forensic purposes; for group and marital therapy; and as tools for individual creativity and self-expression.

As equipment multiplies, inter-group exchanges are becoming more and more commonplace, and extensive tape libraries are being developed across the country. (Important tape catalogues include those of

Vidéographe in Montreal and Video Inn in Vancouver, the latter being an attempt to establish an international tape directory.)

A central use of VTR is that of making programs for broadcast via community cable channels. According to a CRTC survey, Local Programming on Cable Television, at Summer 1972 some 22 CATV systems in Canada were making regular use of half-inch tapes made by community groups. We uncovered only two instances of half-inch tape being broadcast direct, via a transmitter. One was at La Ronge, Saskatchewan, via a community communications project for Indian and Native groups, using a CBC Frontier Coverage Package Transmitter. The first programs went on air in December 1972. The other experiment was at CBC Inuvik, N.W.T.

A difficulty here is that half-inch tape is difficult to edit - without going into technical detail, the problem is electronic instability - and program quality suffers accordingly. As a result, a fairly common practice is to *edit up* half-inch material onto one-inch tape. In this case, the problem is that since community groups rarely possess one-inch equipment, editorial control is transferred to the cable operator.

Recently, however, experimenters at Vidéographe - Montreal's media resource

centre - have been successfully experimenting with new editing techniques and equipment; as these become more widely applied, the cablecasting of half-inch tape will probably become much more commonplace and certainly, the quality of half-inch tapes played back on a standard VTR monitor will be incomparably improved. (A useful handbook outlining these new techniques is available from Vidéographe.)

Even so - and whether tapes are to be cablecast or simply shown in a church basement - editing requires considerable expertise and specialized equipment. A considerable number of groups have discovered to their chagrin that producing the sort of material that is really central to their purposes requires a great deal more time, energy and money than they had bargained for.

Few organizations in the country are more experienced in using VTR than the Extension Service of Memorial University, and Extension told us: "Producing three relatively simple series of tapes on 'Bookkeeping for Fishermen'; 'Specialty Seafood Processing' and 'Procedures for Community Councils' has taken six months of work on each series". Extension also reported that "the costs of producing these tapes has been greater than the capital costs of our VTR program; in a three-year period we will have spent $50,000 on tape production".

There are other drawbacks: the ease with which the VTR system can be operated opens the possibility that it may be used recklessly and destructively - as, for example, showing interviews out of context and without the subject's permission. Or else it may be used pointlessly - as in shooting endless tapes of meetings that no one will watch. Sometimes the VTR process - as a glamorous first-cousin to television - becomes an end in itself (the media freak syndrome at work) and distracts groups from their real objectives - whether these be protesting about rents or running a service organization.

All of which is not to daunt the enthusiasm of VTR enthusiasts or to belittle the system's immense potential, but simply to restate our central theme: that neither government nor groups themselves can afford to consider communications independently from the purpose - social, cultural, political - of the act of communication itself.

Film

Heavy capital and processing costs, the sheer bulkiness of the equipment and the expertise required to operate it properly virtually preclude the use of 16mm film by community groups. Hence its application in a citizens' communication context is mostly confined to institutions and agencies - notably to Challenge for Change - Société Nouvelle and the Extension Service of Memorial University.

Even so, film continues to have a number of distinct advantages over videotape. On the practical side, film is much easier to edit; as a finished product, an edited film is almost always more satisfactory than an edited tape. Film has an indefinite lifespan, which means that it is a better medium for recording material of archival or cultural value: interviews with early settlers for instance, or native dances and chants.

In the context of social change, while VTR has been shown to deal well with immediate issues, and to be a useful device for organizing groups, film often appears to work more successfully in situations which involve subtle cognitive or attitudinal changes. The immediacy of tape, in other words, can work against the slow process of building concensus. As one community worker suggested to us: "Film demands professionalism and film also has a mystique. Sometimes this mystique can be an important element in the process of social change, for it creates a sense of excitement within a community and forces a planning process that can clarify the issues."

A number of groups also believe that "action white papers" can

be more effectively presented on film: the point being, as one community worker suggested, that "a carefully thought-out film presentation, on a big screen, tends to impress bureaucrats and politicians more than a trembling video-tape on a tiny monitor". At Sky River, Alaska, a project for Alaskan Eskimos developed on the model of Memorial University Extension Service's operations, the usual practice is to use VTR as a tool with which to achieve concensus on a film presentation.

For all these reasons, a number of groups are thinking about making use of film and the system that is within the realm of financial possibility is Super 8mm. Essentially, this is the familiar home-movie technique, using a light portable camera, designed to produce an image the size of a TV screen.

The trouble is that, for once, technological development has not kept pace with demand. The Super 8 camera itself is inexpensive and readily available - one with the necessary accoutrements can be obtained for about $200. But what is not readily available is an efficient, low-cost and fool-proof synchronized sound system to match. Early in 1973, for instance, a Challenge for Change producer had intended to explore the potential of Super 8 by using it for a major project. When satisfactory equipment could

not be obtained, the idea had to be abandoned. Recently, however, a Super 8 sound system has been installed at Capilano College in Vancouver, and it may well be that experimentation here will be as fruitful in this area as that of Vidéographe in relation to editing half-inch videotape.

CATV Systems

Almost as much as videotape recording, the rapid growth of cable television systems has catalyzed the citizens' communication movement. Currently, cable reaches into about one out of three Canadian households, and the number of subscribers is increasing at the rate of about 25% a year.

All this is a shade ironic, for the main reason cable galloped ahead so rapidly is that so many Canadians want to watch programs piped in from the U.S. But thanks to the CRTC's ruling that any system with more than 3,000 subscribers must provide a channel for community programming, cable has also been established as an important distribution system for citizens' communications.

As most groups see it, the community cable channel is their cheapest and easiest means of gaining access to the media. At least one educational institution - Seneca College in Toronto - already offers a course in how to develop program

material. In this case, the emphasis is on community development use of the system.

In any discussion of cable, it's important at the outset to make a distinction between community programming and locally-originated programming. As the CRTC defines it, the latter is programming initiated by the CATV operator and licence holder. "While groups and individuals may be involved, they generally work under the direction of the local channel staff". Genuine community programming, on the other hand, says the CRTC, is initiated and produced by community groups and individuals".

At midsummer 1972, CRTC reports, there were 361 licensed cable companies in Canada, of which some 57 were originating material which could be defined as community programming. During a seven-day period selected for detailed analysis, these systems produced a total of 582 half-hour program units. Traditional public service associations (Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.) accounted for 17% of the total; community information groups contributed 14%; arts and crafts groups 13%; social action groups 12%; ethnic groups 9%; and miscellaneous groups 16%. The balance was produced by individuals.

There were, predictably, some fairly significant urban-rural variations. In

centres with populations over 200,000 for example, social action and ethnic groups produced a much higher percentage of total programming (19% and 14% respectively) than in towns with a population of less than 25,000 (7% and 1% respectively). In small centres, community programs are usually scheduled for one or two hours on weekday evenings, generally between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. Larger centres may program from about 5:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Monday through Friday.

As will become evident in our regional survey, much of the interesting community programming is happening in Quebec.

Cable has been a fact of life here for some years, and several groups have progressed well beyond the stage of simply copying mass media TV formats, and instead are adapting these to the realities of their own communities. Programming is also fairly well advanced in Ontario and British Columbia.

Cable came much more recently to the prairies and to the Atlantic provinces and, though in both cases its advent has spawned new communications groups, programming remains in its infancy. (Edmonton was not hooked up until the autumn of 1972; and for practical purposes, cable does not exist at all in either Saskatchewan or Newfoundland).

With rare exceptions, community programming tends to be most

successful in rural and semi-rural areas. The reasons are fairly simple: systems in rural areas serve genuine communities; community programming, moreover, fulfills some of the functions of CBC outlets and local newspapers when these are absent. In the metropolitan areas, by contrast, community programming has to compete against the established and professional mass media; at the same time, metropolitan CATV systems frequently serve arbitrarily carved-up hunks of a city rather than well-defined neighbourhoods. (In Toronto, for example, there are 10 separate systems.)

The only clear successes in CATV community programming in urban areas have been foreign-language programs directed at ethnic groups, and to a lesser extent, programming designed for senior citizens, experimental programs involving artists, and telecasts of municipal council meetings in a few localities.

Though we'll be taking a closer look at a number of community cable projects further along, we should probably remark now that we encountered a number of groups who are already looking at the system with a jaundiced eye. Much of the elated talk so prevalent two or three years ago, and which peaked at the April 1971 CRTC hearings on cable policy, has given way to gloomy comments

about "poor man's TV" and the "leftovers of someone else's system".

A number of factors appear to have been at work. For one thing, the collapse of two major, much-heralded community cable ventures - Project Inter-com in Toronto and Town Talk in Thunder Bay - has raised serious questions as to whether genuine community control of cable programming can be achieved as long as the industry remains in the hands of private corporations and entrepreneurs. To date, only one Canadian cable system - the Campbell River Television Association in Campbell River, B.C. - is community owned and operated, though a significant development here has been the 1972 announcement by the Saskatchewan Government of its plans to develop cable through publicly-owned co-operatives.

Not surprisingly, the relationship between the community group and the local cable operator is nearly always delicate. While some operators welcome community groups to their studios with open arms - in Calgary we found one operator who, thanks to a dedicated program director, was functioning almost as a social animator - it is probably fair to say that the majority look on community programming as a necessary evil: part of the price to be paid for a licence.

Operators who take this point

of view frequently insist on full editorial control of material prepared by groups, and are extremely reluctant to allow groups to use their equipment. (Of some 85 operators surveyed by the CRTC in 1972, 27 indicated that they allowed groups to use their equipment, and a further 20 said that they allowed this only rarely.) On the other hand, we were surprised to discover that in Halifax, a cable operator has borrowed VTR equipment from a community media resource centre on more than one occasion.

A related difficulty has to do with present legislation in relation to libel and slander. Under the terms of the Broadcasting Act, ultimate responsibility rests with the licensee, rather than with the individual or group programmer. (*Legal* responsibility for the content of programming rests with the CATV operator as a consequence of the prevailing laws concerning libel, obscenity, etc., and not as a consequence of the Broadcasting Act.) One Quebec group, Télévision communautaire Saint-Félicien, has solved this problem by taking out liability insurance, at an annual cost of $321. This group has also signed a contract with the local operator which guarantees T.C.S.F. exclusive access to the community channel, in return for assuming the licensee's responsibilities in relation to local programming.

Other problems relate to misconceptions about the nature of the medium. As in the case of VTR, many groups have discovered that producing effective programming takes an investment of time and energy that is out of proportion to the number of viewers they can attract; moreover, cable programming may not really suit their purposes. Sitting alone in a living room watching a tiny screen can in fact isolate people more than bring them together. As several groups have already discovered, tapes and films made by a community are often more effective when shown to a community clustered in church basements, union halls, even the local pub.

And finally, cable programming, particularly in urban areas, has yet to involve the broad social spectrum. "The notion that cable is Everyman's medium," concludes a study of programming undertaken in London, Ontario, "is at the least not justified by the data. Individuals who use the medium are generally middle class professionals and individuals who have experience with other participatory channels and often with other media."*

Radio

The rediscovery of radio has come as a by-product of the citizens' communication movement. "All

* Cablecast, an analysis of its users and their attitudes, *unpublished study for the Department of Communications, by Professor Benjamin Singer, University of Western Ontario.*

this talk about how cheap and easy VTR is," one group told us, "started us thinking that radio is just that much cheaper, that much easier and that much more flexible. And radio has, somehow, the rare quality of joy."

A pattern has already emerged through which groups have been formed to work with VTR and cable, and then find themselves increasingly turning to radio. Two notable examples are Wired World in Kitchener-Waterloo and Teled in Halifax.

Throughout Canada, community radio means a non-commercial, non-profit operation, controlled by the community, usually by means of a society or board of directors representing different interests. As in the case of cable, programming can take almost any form: Documentaries; special interest shows for ethnic or native groups; drama productions; investigative community journalism; hot line and disc jockey shows.

But it is important to make a distinction between community radio in urban centres and community radio in the hinterland, particularly in northern and remote areas. In cities, community radio constitutes an *alternative* to existing broadcasting systems; in the hinterland it is usually the *first and only* broadcasting system. (According to one CRTC survey, there are more than 150 communities with a population over 50,

which have no broadcast facilities of any kind.) Consequently, the main thrust for community radio has developed in the hinterland, particularly among native groups. In fact, nine stations in the mid-north and northern Canada currently hold community licences, including Tuktoyaktuk on the edge of the Arctic Ocean and Espanola, a pulp and paper mill town in northern Ontario. Native communications groups also program extensively for commercial stations and for the CBC - activities which we discuss in our section on native communications.

In southern urban Canada, only one community-licensed community station so far exists: Radio Laval in Quebec City. Technically, this is a university station but its licence was obtained with a commitment for community access. Similarly, Radio McGill intends to apply for an FM licence as a community radio station.

Community groups get onto the airways through a variety of means: Neighbourhood Radio in Vancouver via CBC Vancouver; Wired World and Teled prepare program packages for commercial stations; Radio Centreville in Montreal programs via the audio channels of cable television systems. Wired World has recently made a formal licence application to CRTC for a Low Power FM station; Radio Centreville in Montreal plans to apply shortly.

Aside from licensing and funding problems, one hurdle community radio groups have to overcome is the difficulty of securing FM frequency channels, a constraint that is compounded by the fact that many groups want to cover only a small section of a city. Under existing rules, this would mean that Toronto, for example, could accommodate only five new FM stations, commercial or non-commercial, including educational and community stations.

The April 1973 CRTC "Proposal for an FM radio policy in the private sector" is both following and pushing this trend. It stated: "As opposed to programming on the AM band, either now present or desirable in the future, the FM band should satisfy selective needs and specialized interests of the radio audience. Furthermore, it should fulfill a new role in the community by encouraging the use of the talent, experience and capacity of expression of members of the community on a more sustained and lengthy basis than is possible on AM." The paper goes on to say that FM programming should "utilize untapped resources of talent in the community it serves." Radio McGill, Wired World and Radio Centreville can be encouraged by the statement that "the Commission endorses and encourages the involvement of community and student groups in forming organizations to apply for FM licences."

As to cost, it has been estimated that a basic FM station can be set up for about $20,000 – although stripped-down models can be found for less than $5,000. The more ambitious the venture, the steeper the expense.

Wired World of Kitchener for instance, has estimated its first year's operating budget at $110,400. About 40% of this is slated to cover non-salary expenses, mostly the rental of studios, equipment and offices. The balance would go to salaries for a projected staff of eight: five people on the program production side, two on the administrative, and an engineer. To get off the ground, Wired World has been looking for about $100,000 in federal funds. After the first year it hopes to become self-sufficient, supported by corporate and individual donations and membership subscriptions. The precedent cited here is the U.S. Pacifica Foundation, which operates five listener-supported stations south of the border.

In the absence of their own stations, a number of community radio groups have encountered difficulties. Unlike cable systems, broadcasting systems are not required to provide citizen access; thus the group is entirely dependent on the broadcaster. In Halifax for example, a regular series prepared by Teled Video and broadcast over a commercial station was abruptly cancelled; the Indian News Media have

also reported that a daily fifteen minute program was discontinued, with no reason given, by a Lethbridge station.

Telephone and Radio-Telephone

Perhaps because most Canadians take the telephone virtually for granted - our record as the world's most loquacious callers is well known - we found surprisingly few groups who identified the telephone specifically as a tool for citizens' communications. Certainly, this would not have been the case a generation or two ago, when the party line played a vital role in community life.

Interestingly, it tended to be highly-sophisticated activist groups in major urban centres who singled out the telephone as their most important means of communication. In Toronto, for example, at the height of the Stop-Spadina controversy, the opposition coalition mustered a system through which 1,000 people could be contacted within an hour.

Even so, a number of groups suggested in passing that new developments in the Canadian telephone system - most notably conference speaker-phones and intercoms - have as much potential for citizen communicators as for businesses and governments. Here, a key problem is that of cost. While businesses can claim telephone expenses

as tax deductions, most citizens cannot. A number of groups which have asked for discounts as non-profit-organizations have been turned down. At the same time, long distance rates remain prohibitive.

In northern and remote parts of the country, however, we found a remarkable resurgence of interest in radio-telephone systems. In these areas, where long-distance telephone facilities either do not exist at all or else are enormously costly to the user, High Frequency (HF) systems, which operate on short-wave, can provide communication from one community to another. HF systems, in fact, have long been the backbone of all communications in the north, the only life-support systems, the only means of passing along news and gossip.

But it has only been during the last ten years or so that HF radio has provided reliable communications for the average person in the north. Prior to then, HF communications used either amplitude modulation (AM) or radio-telegraph. For technical reasons, the former method was never very reliable, while the latter required an operator who could use Morse code. HF systems tended to remain under the firm control of government departments, institutions and agencies; the Hudson's Bay Company; the RCMP; medical missions; and churches.

The almost universal change to single sideband has at

once removed the need for Morse
code, and has made possible
relatively reliable communi-
cations between citizens. Thus
radio telephone systems have
opened up. Native groups in
particular have discovered
them, not only as a way of
keeping in touch, but also as
an effective means of develop-
ing a collective consciousness.

In the last few years, three
community-controlled networks
have been established for and
by Indians: these link 54
communities in British Columbia
(with an expansion planned
into the Northwest Territories),
17 Cree and Ojibway communities
in Northwestern Ontario and a
number of communities in north-
ern Manitoba. In the Keewatin
district of the Northwest
Territories, a five-point
system exists for Inuit communi-
ties. At least three additional
networks are in the planning
stages.

We should note that the use of
HF systems tends to be limited
to those areas which are not
served by more reliable means
of communications. Develop-
ment of low-cost satellite
ground terminals (as has been
done in Alaska, but not to
date for Canada's Anik satel-
lite system) will probably
gradually eliminate the need
for HF, though it currently
serves a vital social function.

The current practical advan-
tage of HF systems is their
cost. The standard unit -
a four-channel sideband radio

transmitter-receiver - costs
only about $1,200, although
installation costs in remote
areas can be relatively high.
Once a network is in place,
each call is free, though funds
are needed for maintenance and
operators' salaries. While it
is impossible to hold a private
conversation via an HF set -
anyone else on the network can
listen in - lack of privacy
can have its advantages. The
listening-in process - like
the party-line of yesteryear -
can be a remarkably effective
way of welding a loosely-knit
group of settlements into a
community.

The Southern Labrador coast is
an interesting case in point.
Here, during the 1950's and
1960's, the Department of
Transport maintained an HF
system. As a supplement to
regular transmission centres,
transmitting equipment was
placed in individual households.
Over the years, a system developed
through which operates,
once their normal duties were
over, talked to each other.
Thus people had a way of know-
ing when the supply boat was
due; who was travelling late
at night; how bad the ice was;
where the fish were running,
and so on.

The real value of this sytem,
ironically enough, was brought
home to people on the Labrador
court only when it was being
dismantled, after Bell Canada
had installed a sophisticated
VHF telephone network to serve
the region. Fishermen and their

families welcomed a reliable system for personal calls, but they could afford to use it only in emergencies; not for casual chats with friends or relatives in a community fifty miles down the coast. The people were so anxious to maintain the old system that they asked DOT to leave the sets in place, indicating that they themselves were prepared to bear maintenance costs.

Other Techniques

While the citizens' communication movement centres around VTR, cable television and radio, it also encompasses - or could encompass - many other communications systems. We were surprised, for example, to find no interest in the use of General Radio Service (citizens' band, as it is known in the U.S.) or amateur radio on the part of community groups, though we realize that innovative uses of this service have not been greatly encouraged. Computers seem to be another information technology that citizens' groups have yet to find a use for. In the U.S., as a grace note, there is one drop-in People's Computer Center, located, more or less predictably, in Menlo Park, California.

One or two groups reported they find Telex a handy way to keep in touch, and an even handier way of sending messages to government. ("Government

takes paper much more seriously than videotape and naturally more seriously than people talking," we were told.) Others are also discovering that 35mm slides are as effective a means of making presentations as VTR, and far cheaper. "You can control the pacing of a slide presentation; by comparison a videotape is inflexible," we were told.

Finally, though beyond our mandate, there are all the print media, from newspapers to magazines and posters.

As a cautionary note we might add that the mystique of telecommunications techniques can obscure the fact that they are nothing more than a means to an end, and far from the only means available. As one community worker remarked: "Film and VTR are tools of the trade - but they're not by any means the whole trade. I've used them; they're very helpful, but there are other techniques. One media access group I know of is really turned on to videotape and has been offering community groups workshops in communications. The only ones they've been asked for so far are workshops on 'How to Use a Gestetner' and 'Silk Screening'. I think it's important to remember, you've got to begin where the people are at."

In the next section, we discuss where Canadians are at, in citizens' communications.

In a society that is becoming increasingly pluralist, probably the best way to describe the current condition of the citizens' communication movement in Canada, and at the same time to convey some of the movement's regional flavour and variations, is to take a *tour d'horizon* from Fogo Island on the Atlantic coast to Vancouver Island on the Pacific. With one exception. Indian and Inuit groups are actively involved in citizens' communications in five provinces - Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia - as well as in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. But since native communications groups represent a defined community of interest, these will be discussed in a separate chapter.

A number of other approaches to organizing the vast amount of material collected could have been taken. One variant to the region-by-region approach, suggested by one of our members, would be to make a distinction between citizens' communications in urban Canada and in the hinterland. Another member suggested a typology based upon the *functions* of the various groups, as for example: communications service (e.g. Saint-Félicien in Quebec), and community animation/participation (Memorial University Extension Service; Le Bloc in Quebec).

As an analysis of the different types of citizens' communications activity, this approach has considerable validity. However, it seems to us that the approach we have chosen provides a handier way of covering the field.

The Atlantic Provinces

If the level of citizens' communications activity is related to population density, more is going on in Atlantic Canada, particularly in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, than anywhere else in the country. Perhaps because people here have recognized that new communications techniques can be used to adapt traditional values and lifestyles to change and thus preserve the best of those values, the emphasis has been on community development uses of media.

Newfoundland

As we noted earlier, one source of the citizens' communications movement is Newfoundland, the usland of Fogo to be precise, where in the summer of 1967, while the eyes of most Canadians were focused on Expo, the Extension Service of Memorial University and the newly-formed Challenge for Change Unit of the National Film Board converged to determine whether and how the media - in this case, 16 mm film - could be used as tools for community development.

Fogo was chosen for the experiment because it represented, in microcosm, most of the basic problems of rural Newfoundland. Lying ten miles off the northeast coast, Fogo, like Newfoundland itself, was isolated from without. Again like Newfoundland as a whole, Fogo was isolated within itself. Only four thousand people lived on the island, but they lived sealed off from one another by religion and background in ten tiny settlements.

Communication between communities was so poor that no one on Fogo ever spoke of the island as their home; instead, they would name their own outport: Joe Batt's Arm, Seldom, Stag Harbour or Tilting. In each village, each denomination maintained its own one-or two-room school. A child could grow up without visiting a settlement five miles away. The decline of the inshore fishery had placed sixty percent of the fishermen on welfare. Only one community had local government; there were no active unions or co-operatives.

The people were trapped in a cycle of isolation and poverty from which they lacked the knowledge and confidence to escape. A single future remained for them: resettlement at the government's discretion.

The basic mandate of the Memorial-Film Board team, in fact, had been to make a film or series of films about the resettlement program. While they intended to involve the islander themselves in choosing topics and locations, they expected to use a standard social documentary approach: centering filming around specific issues.

As the project developed, the method changed radically. The team discovered that people were much freer when short "vertical" films were made,

each one the record of a single interview or occasion. Instead of being woven and intercut to form a single whole, these filmed interviews were left virtually intact. As one team member explained: "If you intercut interviews on the basis of issues, what you nearly always get is one person who is all wrong, one person who is partly right, and a third person who is entirely right. He then becomes the smart guy, who puts the others down. This putting down can harm people within a community."

The final result was 28 short films adding up to a total of six hours. Each was centered around a personality or an event rather than an issue; each expressed an aspect of life on Fogo. "We let the co-operatives we had here once perish in our midst," said one fisherman. "We know we are not educated and we kept our tongues still. We should never do that." Of the prospect of resettlement, another remarked: "I've lived in towns and cities, but I don't want to move. I'd miss the sea."

Far more important than the content of the films was the process of making them. More important still was the process of screening them, a month or so later, for the people of Fogo. All over the island, group viewings were organized. Opposing factions within the communities were given the chance to examine each others' views without direct confrontation or hostility.

The team was amazed to discover that people who would never have considered standing up and expressing their views at a public meeting were quite prepared to attend a public meeting and watch themselves screen expressing precisely the same views.

Through looking at each other and themselves, Fogo Islanders began to recognize the commonality of their problems. As important, they began to become conscious of their identity as Fogo Islanders, and they discovered that preserving the Fogo environment mattered to nearly all of them. A new con ensus was being arrived at.

Eventually, with Fogo Islanders' permission, the decision was taken to screen the films for decision-makers: politician and civils servants. Their impact was profound. As one Film Board official put it, "We finally had fishermen talking to cabinet ministers. If you take fishermen to the cabinet, they won't talk about the problems of their lives the way they will among other fishermen. But if you let government people look at films of fishermen talking together, the message comes through." After the screenings, the comments of several ministers were recorded and played back on Fogo.

Slowly, the island came to life. A fledgling Island Improvement Committee grew to include representatives from every community. A fishing co-operative was formed, and in its first year it attracted 129 members. Five years later, membership had grown to more than a thousand. A co-operative shipyard, set up in 1968, launched its first longliners the following year; by 1972, it had produced twenty-four. From there, the co-operative branched out to take over management of two small, abandoned fish

plants, then talked the government into laying plans for a new multi-purpose plant. The single most dramatic evidence of the new consensus was the establishment of a new junior-senior high school serving all denominations. In a clean break with Fogo's tradition of inter-community rivalries, the school was built in the exact centre of the island.

Since no evaluation of the Fogo experiment has been undertaken, a central question remains unanswered: exactly how much influence did the filming process have on Fogo's subsequent development? Certainly, the films themselves could not have effected change; rather, what seems to have happened is that the cameras, in the hands of sensitive social animators, catalyzed a desire for change that already existed in latent and inarticulate form. At the same time, the filming-screening process opened new channels of communication between individuals, and between communities. Similarly, screening the films for politicians and civil servants opened new channels of communications between Fogo Islanders and decision-makers.

Fogo having given at least tentative proof that film could be used for community development purposes, the Challenge for Change unit moved on to other projects. The Extension Service began applying the technique in other parts of Newfoundland.

A permanent film unit was established. One of its first tasks was to apply film follow-through on Fogo itself. Between 1967 and 1970, the unit focused its attention on the development of the co-operatives and on progress in education in particular, on events leading up to the establishment of the amalgamated high school.

In 1968, the unit also set out to apply the technique in Port au Choix, a community of about 1,000 on Newfoundland's northern peninsula. Since Port au Choix designated by government as a growth centre, its problems were somewhat different than those of Fogo but the results were equally encouraging. When residents, for example, complained on film about the positioning of a break-water was soon relocated. One resident remarked, "the films are doing the work the politicians should have been doing for the past twenty years."

The next step was to show Fogo and Port au Choix material in other parts of New-foundland. In these rural communities, the films began to be used as a link, providing access to information from one group to another.

The advent of half-inch VTR equipment speeded up the process. Portable cameras and playback units became standard equipment for each of Memorial's nine field workers and they used it for everything from introducing themselves to a community (the best way to attract a crowd) to putting together news broadcasts for screening in church halls in northern Labrador. One field worker outlined a fairly typical application:
"the people in Deep Bay wanted to organize an improvement committee but they couldn't get anyone to stand up and speak. So they asked me to organize a five-night workshop on public speaking, and I brought along

VTR. The first night, only five people would get up and say as much as 'I'm John Jones from Deep Bay.' I played the tape back, and I think a lot of people were a ashamed to see themselves sitting there not saying anything: the reaction was, 'If he can do it, I can.' At the end of the third night, the last people got up and said their names. On the fifth night, we organized a mock meeting. The person who had taken three nights to say his name was the one who offered to be chairman."

Fieldworkers also make equipment available for groups to use themselves. As another representative explained:

"In one community in my district a Development Association was being set up, but the young people weren't being involved: I showed the kids how to run the equipment and said, 'You hold your own meeting.' As a result of that tape, a Grade 11 girl became secretary of the Development Association. The kids also made a tape to air their complaints about the school system. The principal and teachers in turn replied to it on tape."

The Extension Service also makes more conventional use of VTR - and also of film. For several years, it has produced a half-hour weekly television series for fishermen and farmers; more recently, it has taped a series of

practical courses, backed up in each case by a printed manual, for screening to groups.

Another development has been the use of VTR specifically as an "action white paper." In 1970, at the request of the Department of Communications and Bell Canada, Extension undertook an audio-visual survey of communications needs on the Labrador coast. It was in the course of this survey that the importance of the old DOT HF radio-telephone as an inter-community link was revealed.

On occasion, Extension has psoselytized outside the province: in March 1972, it sponsored a seminar on "Film, Videotape and Social Change," attended by representatives from about thirty community-development oriented groups across the country, and a corresponding number of observers from various government departments and agencies. A week-long training workshop for members of native groups interested in using VTR was held concurrently. This was attended by representatives from Inuit Tapirisat, the Alberta Native Communications Society, and the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories. A report on this conference was published by Memorial University: *Cinema as Catalyst*.

It's ironic, however, that the Extension Service has in some ways had its most profound influence outside this country.

The National Film Board attempted to duplicate the process, with less success, in Drumheller, Alberta, in 1969; many of its principles have been adapted to the "transfer of skills" process developed by the Department of Communications Northern pilot project (see Chapter 8). But the closest parallel to its work exists in the Lower Yukon River area of Alaska. Here, for the last three years, the Sky River Project, supported by the Office of Economic Opportunity, has been using the Fogo technique to help native Alaskans share in the decision-making process. Sky River developed out of consultations between Alaska's Community Enterprise Development Corporation, Memorial's Extension Service and Challenge for Change. Before the project was launched, Sky River's organizer spent some time observing Extension's film and VTR programs along the Labrador coast. (By way of consolation, we can add that since OEO support for Sky River has now come to an end, its organizer has joined Challenge for Change.)

Closely related to Extension's own operations are those of Memorial's Educational Television Centre. By means of videotapes recorded at the centre and circulated throughout the province, ETC currently provides seven university-level credit courses to adult students in 40 remote communities. A by-product of the program has been a sophisticated VTR hardware network. Extension has applied for funding from the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, which would enable development of this into a province-wide community information and exchange system, a project which potentially may be as important to the process of community development as the original Fogo experiment.

None of these activities are achieved for free - and the cost of software invariably runs much higher than that of hardware. (As we remarked earlier, preparing three practical videotaped courses for fishermen took an investment of six months' time and $50,000 cash.) Most of Extension's funding comes from Memorial University; its citzens' communications activities have also been supported by grants from private foundations (e.g. a $100,000 grant from the Donner Canadian Foundation; $10,000 from the Vanier Institute to produce a series of tapes on the changing family unit in Newfoundland) and by project-directed grants from federal departments (e.g. $20,000 from the Department of the Secretary of State to organize the March 1972 seminar on Film, Videotape and Social Change; four VTR units from the Department of Communications as payment-in-kind for the 1970 survey of Labrador coast).

The Extension Service has evolved a community development use of VTR (and film) that is probably the most fully realized in the world.

One reason is that while audio-visual technology has been emphasized, it has been treated from the outset, not as a thing in itself, but as an integral component of regular community development work. "We don't think of ourselves as media people or experts in communications," one Extension Service official explained. "Our main function is adult education; we help people exchange information and pass it along. VTR and film are a practical and efficient means of handling information."

Another reason is that nearly all Extension's work with media has taken place in rural Newfoundland, a cohesive society where most people share a common culture and common socio-economic problems, and where, even now, outside influences remain relatively few. So far, Extension has done no more than poke its toe into urban areas, by providing VTR equipment and advice to the People's Planning Program, the St. John's Community action group we mentioned in the introduction.

If we've devoted a good deal of space to citizens' communications in Newfoundland, it's because we believe that as one of the precursors to the citizens' communications movement in Canada, the story of the Fogo Experiment ought to be told in detail and because we also believe that the operations of Memorial's Extension Service represent an approach to citizens' communications that other educational institutions might do well to adopt. The only parallels across the country - and in scale and depth of operation neither are very close - are the Extension Department of the University of Saskatchewan, the Division of Continuing Education and School of Social Welfare at the University of Calgary, and the College of Bathurst in New Brunswick, all of which we discuss further along.

Nova Scotia

In Nova Scotia, the province's eleven colleges and universities have so far played surprisingly little part in the citizens' communications movement. "They haven't made any effort to go out into the community," we were told. "The only time we see them is when their sociology and psychology students need to do some research."

One promising exception is Xavier College in Sydney, which makes VTR equipment available to community groups, and is developing a course on communications for community development workers. Xavier College's parent campus, St. Francis

Xavier University in Antigonish, has long been an international pioneer in community development, but its activities in the field appear to have tapered off in recent years.

While Xavier's program remains embryonic, the philosophy behind it, as outlined in the report of our Atlantic consultant, appears to be similar to that of Memorial: communications as a means of preserving a human environment:

"Father Greg McLeod feels that there is a great need for more communication within Cape Breton because of the high unemployment rate, the archaic civic structures and the government's policy of phasing out much of what is in Cape Breton, regardless of what people want... One of the reasons why he saw the need for the new decentralization of communications tools - and in getting people involved in the use of communications tools - was to preserve the community that they had in Cape Breton and to preserve their old cultures. There has been a long history of media in Cape Breton. There were phones in New Waterford in the 1900s and there used to be travelling theatre groups in the area. Forty years ago, there were trams running from Sydney to New Waterford, and boats crossing the harbour to the community from the community to the other side. But since cars and superhighways have appeared, the people of Cape Breton no longer have these services and one result is a kind of crisis of their culture.

The mass media also has to be held responsible, and hopefully the new media - or the new participation in the media will reverse that trend... When Father Greg talked about communications he had a very wide perspective, including theatre and other systems besides just radio, television and newspapers. He said it was important that the new techniques be understood widely in the area and widely used, as a way of regaining the old communications links. When it came to VTR, he suggested that it was more important to use this for 'lateral communication', as a way of letting people in the area know what was going on, than to produce tapes for government on people and on the area."

Also in Sydney, the Metro Centre - a community information service funded jointly by the Provincial Public Welfare Department and the Federal Department of National Health and Welfare - has begun experimenting with communications techniques; it uses half-inch VTR as part of the training process for volunteers (e.g. mock telephone calls are taped to illustrate good and bad ways of handling requests) and lends equipment to various local groups. And the Metropolitan Alliance for Development, with funding from OFY and from LIP, is working with Xavier College to establish a local community media council.

But the axis of the movement in Nova Scotia is Halifax, a city which in the last few years has shrugged off some of its traditional Bluenose conservatism, and has emerged, surprisingly, as a rallying point for citizen action groups.

That story begins with Encounter 70. In February of that year, the Voluntary Economic Planning Board invited a dozen outside experts (representing business, labour, sociology, journalism, etc.) to conduct a weeklong "investigative dialogue" with local citizens, exploring a whole range of local and regional issues. Part of the process was a media blitz. The dialogue was covered almost in its entirety by CJCH-TV (*not*, it's interesting to note, by the CBC) and a two-hour film digest of proceedings was prepared by Challenge for Change.

Encounter in turn produced M.O.V.E. (Movement for Citizens' Voice and Action), an umbrella organization representing more than 40 local citizens groups which during 1971 made extensive use of VTR for social animation purposes, via equipment provided by Challenge for Change.

By late 1972, half a dozen or more groups were heavily involved in citizens' communications, including several community television projects

supported by OFY – and more permanently, the LIP-supported Coalition for Development, the Halifax branch of a national inter-faith organization geared to making organized religion more relevant to the community, which uses VTR in its work with community groups and has made several "action white paper" presentations to government on such matters as welfare rights.

What is interesting in the Halifax experience is that it began with conscious confrontation – Encounter 70 was designed to force Haligonians to think about long-neglected civic issues – and has since then, tempered by the city's conservative environment, evolved into a clear attempt by activist groups to reach out for a broader base of support.

Teled Video Services – by far the most important citizens' communications group in Nova Scotia – is a case in point. This organization arrived on the Halifax scene in the autumn of 1971, almost simultaneously with cable television. Originally, it was designed primarily as a community programming production service. Before long, the approach changed markedly. Teled told us:

"Within a few months, the long precarious process of becoming involved with, and knowledgeable about, the vast structures of citizens' organizations began to have an effect on our priorities. First of all, the

pace of our work had to be slowed down, and a much longer perspective taken on the communication needs of citizens' groups. For it was obvious that most community organizations were too fragile and overworked to put any significant amount of time and resources into cable TV, or internal process work with video. Rather than working with video or cable alone, we began to consider the total information-communications needs of organizations. Our orientation began moving toward content rather than form, and we placed increasing emphasis on systems that were readily available, easy to use, and inexpensive. Slide shows, printing, community radio and newsletters were produced for different groups, and soon a photographer, a graphic designer and a radio freelancer were added to our staff. At the same time we helped the Coalition for Development prepare its video briefs for government."

As Teled developed new priorities for itself, it also developed a rating scale to measure the priorities of groups who asked to use facilities. This takes the form of a point system which relates to the kind and size of the group concerned, the amount of notice given and the purpose for which the equipment is requested. For example, a citizens' action group with more than 24 members who wished to document

a protest march, and requested equipment a week in advance would get top priority. A member of the general public who asked the same day for equipment to cover a meeting would rate lowest. In the first year of operation, about 75 individual community groups either borrowed Teled equipment or asked its help more than 1,000 times. These groups included All Saints Anglican Cathedral, the Atlantic Sports Car Club, the Union of Unemployed and the City Recreation Department. (One surprise client was Halifax Cablevision which has used Teled's VTR equipment on several occasions.)

Teled now operates with a staff of twelve, each member being assigned to a separate phase of activities. In April 1973, it moved from cramped harbourfront quarters to roomy, inviting loft facilities from which it offers community groups a variety of services which include: 1. a video production centre (half-inch VTR equipment plus editing facilities); 2. a sound studio (soundmixing equipment and reel-toreel splicing blocks); 3. a slide workspace (slide library; story boards; vertical and flat slide-sorting tables; a slide duplicator; copying table; and slide projectors with screens); 4. a print workshop; 5. a media library (the emphasis is on "how to do it" material; 6. darkroom facilities; and 7. a photo-copying service. In addition, Teled offers video and audio workshops on request,

and its new offices are available to community groups for their own meetings.

As for major projects, these currently emphasize community radio. Last winter, Teled sponsored a community radio contest "Listen to the Sounds," in which people 18 and under were invited to submit their own home-made programs. The more than 50 entries were judged by a panel of local media people and community leaders. First prize went to a 12-year-old girl, for a series of man-in-the-street interviews on pollution. Using the material the contest produced, plus supplementary material which included the continuing adventures of "Captain Barnacle - Injustice Fighter", Teled then embarked on producing a half-hour weekly program package for a Dartmouth commercial station, CFDR. As an indication of the difficulties citizens' communications groups have when forced to rely on established media for distribution, the program was shunted round CFDR's time schedule and in mid-April, was abruptly cancelled. Teled is continuing to explore the potential for community radio in rural Nova Scotia centres, many of which are poorly served by the existing media.

Another important project is "Teachers and Tapes", a kind of magazine on cassette designed to help teachers sort through the bewildering array of pre-recorded material now available to them and also to encourage them to produce their own. The first issue, for example, includes reviews by teachers and students of the Canadian Authors and Poets Series of tapes produced by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE); selections from a recent session in which high-school students talked with Nova Scotian authors, and a step-by-step description of how to put together a cassette program.

Teled, as we see it, is one of the most successful non-institutional citizens' communications projects currently in existence. For this reason we have discussed its operations at some length.

As to *why* has been successful, two reasons suggest themselves. First, the group has avoided the high-profile, politically intense approach and has instead viewed itself primarily as a *service* for groups and individuals to use as they themselves judge best; second, and flowing directly from the first observation, Teled has worked extremely hard to develop roots within the Halifax community. It's significant that the Mayor of Halifax and the Nova Scotia Youth Commissioner both turned up at the open house which marked the move to new facilities.)

Yet for all its achievements,

Teled still struggles to stay alive. At the time of writing, it still tries to get by on an uncertain mixture of LIP funds, research contracts with various federal agencies (National Health and Welfare; Communications; Secretary of State) and some local support. (In 1972-73, the total budget amounted to just under $60,000, of which about two-thirds went towards staff salaries.) As a result, it becomes difficult to plan more than two or three months in advance, and to get and keep staff. As discouraging is the problem of getting and keeping the confidence of community groups. As one staff member explained: "People tend to be skeptical when they don't know whether you'll be on the scene after the LIP grant runs out."

New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island

In Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, citizens' communications activity is, in the main, small-scale, and so far lacks conspicuously any focus of expertise, such as is provided by Memorial's Extension Service and Teled Video. One partial exception is Saint John, where the South End Tenants' Association, with initial stimulation from Challenge for Change, has used VTR quite actively for social animation purposes, and for "action white papers". But for the most part, the

increasing number of groups beginning to think in terms of using media depend mostly on VTR equipment borrowed from the Secretary of State's regional office in Moncton. Such groups include the Moncton Community Centre, Encounter (a drug counselling and research centre), Centre City (a group involved in working with high school dropouts) and the Social Rights Association, all in Moncton, and in Fredericton, the Community Development Association.

Even so, we discovered a number of promising developments. In Prince Edward Island, for instance, the Educational Media Library Division of the Department of Education, in co-operation with the Audio Visual Department of Holland College, has an embryonic community media program underway. At the same time, field representatives of the Rural Development Council have begun giving citizens access to VTR equipment through its PEI's unique network of community schools. These schools make after-hours use of regular classroom space for adult-education purposes, and community get-togethers.

In New Brunswick, the most interesting citizens' communications projects are being carried out by and among French-speaking citizens. In the northern part of the province, for example, a community action organization

called C.R.A.N. (Conseil régional d'aménagement du Nord) is, with the help of a full time *animateur social,* making an intensive use of half-inch videotape for social animation purposes, particularly in relation to a local resettlement program. C.R.A.N. also makes an effective use of Telex.

On the northeast coast, the College of Bathurst, with funding from the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, is developing a major television project, Télé-Publik. Through Télé-Publik, community-made documentaries on various aspects of life in northern New Brunswick are recorded on one-inch videotape, and broadcast over the air on prime Saturday evening time donated by a commercial station, CHAV-TV, at Carleton on the Gaspé coast, just over the Quebec border. A total of thirty, hour-long programs are planned, on subjects which range from drugs, to pollution, to agriculture, to the question of Maritime union. So far, because of serious technical difficulties - which boil down to the problem of maintaining a stable image - only a handful of programs have so far been screened. At the time of writing, the technical problems had more or less been resolved, and the series was due to be resumed shortly. It is worth noting that for technical expertise,

the project directors turned to a U.S. manufacturer. Despite Canada's pioneering work in citizens' communications, our technical research effort is marginal.

The northeast coast of New Brunswick was also, during 1971, the site of one of the most imaginative variations of the Fogo technique. In this case, a Société Nouvelle film-maker/animator worked with the citizens of Shippegan and Lamèque, two tiny fishing communities, to produce a feature film. The idea, Société Nouvelle explained, was "not so much to do a patch-up job on an existing social situation as to dig deeper to underlying values." As he outlined the process:

"I just sat and talked and asked questions and directed the conversation in some ways, always trying to get back to the same basic themes: the feeling of being impotent and the feeling that they could never take any initiative. They were humiliated by welfare assistance, they knew that even welfare assistance was politicized. It always came back to these things. Sometimes I tried to get them onto themes that interested me, like: 'Why the hell do you want to live here in all this misery?' - because I could sense their basic love for the sea. They would say a few words but then they would go back to their own stories. So after a

few weeks it was quite obvious to me that they had really built a story without knowing it, by telling me very precise incidents. For example, in the film, a tent is burned at one point: well, they had schools, other government property and private property that had been burned.

"I'm not a specialist at psychodrama or anything, but we tried a few little situations of putting two or three people together and saying, 'Let's pretend you are this or that'. And some things just clicked. They immediately entered into the characters, and it was good.

"The story developed so organically that I don't think of it as a story anymore. It developed out of one of those little psychodramas. Something about a new teacher who is a non-conformist, in a situation of conflict with his principal and the chairman of the school board being referee. The story as it finally developed involves this guy who comes mysteriously to fill a teaching position. Nobody knows exactly why he was hired ahead of others who had more qualifications. Actually, it was only when we were shooting the film that we filled in why this happened. We talked about it and people improvised things. It happens finally that he has

been hired as political favour to his father. He's not an activist in any way, he's a long-haired, guitar-playing guy who just walks into the village and plays himself. And without his wanting to do anything, things start happening, just because he's too real, too honest. And then it explodes into all kinds of things, politics intervening, welfare. Suddenly the politicians find themselves caught in this position; that they've hired him, they have to protect him, and they're caught in their own game."

The final result was a 50-minute film, *La noce est pas finie*. Its theme is the manipulation of people by social and political forces they cannot control. Yet there is also a hope for something better. "I have lived all my life in fear," says one of the central characters, in lines she improvised herself, "but I am growing old and I don't want to do that anymore. We can't go back along the same paths. We must find new solutions."

After a première in Bathurst, at which some 1,600 people saw *La noce est pas finie*, the film went on the road in three counties of northeastern New Brunswick. It was shown in halls and private homes to almost 500 people at 14 screenings. Afterwards, discussion ran from 15 minutes to two and a half hours. In

general, Société Nouvelle reports, "the people who recognized themselves in the film saw it as an expression of what they are: victims, sometimes innocent victims. But with reflection and discussion, they admitted their own complicity: 'We have to change not only governments but ourselves as well.' The film, it seems helped them look at responsibilities, priorities and participation.

A second Société Nouvelle experiment, *Un soleil pas comme àilleùrs* ("A sun to shine on us alone") was produced by the same team in 1972. In some sequences, where local people used socio-drama and songs to act out possible futures, this 47-minute film took up where *La noce est pas finie* left off. The basic approach, though, was that of a social documentary; a depiction of a moment of crisis in the Bathurst area in the winter of 1972, when demonstrators protested angrily about the operations of the local UIC offices. The point of view was deliberately contentious: the aim was to provide groups with an opportunity to express their discontent to a wider audience. Some segments - a 7-minute interview with activist leader Mathilda Blanchard, a 7-minute clip showing an actual break-in at the UIC - were deliberately included for their shock value, to

induce the public to discuss their social situation, and to think about it.

This time a much more concerned attempt was made to distribute the film, and to evaluate it. During November 1972, through an operation called Northeast 2000, *Un soleil pas comme ailleurs* was shown to 83 individual groups, with a total audience of 4,333. Four social development officers, who in effect acted as chauffeurs, technicians and publicity agents, were employed to lead post-screening discussions and to document these on videotape. In addition, the film was telecast on three stations - CHAV-TV in Carleton, P.Q.; Channel 10 in Fredericton; and CBAFT, the French language channel in Moncton - for an estimated audience of about 190,000. Here each showing was followed by a round-table discussion between director and film crew and the public, by means of an 'open line' link. (It was a point of some contention that the film was not shown on CBC's affiliated French-language stations in Acadian Nova Scotia.)

According to the S.N. evaluators, the operation was "a conditional success; everything depends on the follow-up". Sixty-six of the 83 group audiences were surveyed and the findings coded; of these,

45 were basically positive
towards the film, 15 were
dubious, and 6 negative. The
most frequent comments
indicated that the film was a
worthwhile tool for social
change. "It teaches people
about the Northeast... We
Acadians are asleep... We are
too inclined to wait for
other people to do something."
A substantial minority,
however - mostly made up of
teachers and white-collar
workers - felt that the film
gave too negative an image of
the Acadian situation.
"What are the people in
Montreal going to think of us?"
"You are making us a laughing
stock in Quebec; it bothers
us that films made here bring
us down." Probably the most
important criticism was that
the film presented too little
in the way of solid
information about possible
alternatives: co-operatives,
communes and citizens'
committees.

As one evaluator summed it up.
"The film has entered the
cultural repertory of the
Acadians, and the operation-
development process has made
possible the setting up of a
bank of resources in this
region for future reference
and action." Present plans
call for the production and
telecasting of one or more
programs based on tapes made
during the post-screening
discussions, with additional
informational material on
alternatives.

Quebec

As might be expected within a
society that is distinct and
culturally homogeneous, the
citizens' communication move-
ment in Quebec presents
certain different, if not
unique, characteristics.* For
one thing, the scene is far
more cohesive than in English
Canada - a fact that also
reflects the close relation-
ships that have always
existed with Quebec's dynamic
film, television, journalism
and performing arts worlds.

For another, a much more
determined attempt has been
made to analyze the movement
intellectually, and to
develop a theoretical frame-
work for it. Typically, one
of the few case-study
evaluations of *any* Canadian
citizens' communications proj-
ects so far produced is the
1972 report, *La télévision
communautaire au Lac Saint-
Jean*, by Antoine Landry and

*Quebec, along with Newfound-
land, is a joint birthplace of
citizens' communications. It
was on the Gaspé coast, in the
course of an ARDA project con-
ducted by le Bureau d'aménage-
ment de l'Est du Québec
(B.A.E.Q.) between 1963 and
1966, that the concept of the
animateur social on which so
many aspects of the movement
depend, was first developed.

Henri Tremblay for the Quebec Ministère de l'Éducation.*

Thirdly, activities in Quebec are much more highly structured. Educational systems at all levels - from the ministère de l'Éducation down to local school boards - tend to be much more heavily involved in the movement than elsewhere in the country. So also is the Quebec ministère des Communications, which for 1973-74 has earmarked $300,000 for citizens' communications projects. There is also a Montreal-based information co-operative, Information Kébec, which has established a distribution system to support all types of community communications groups.

And perhaps most importantly, the Société Nouvelle** unit of the National Film Board is more closely linked to the ongoing citizens' communications scene, if only because it is geographically closer to its clients than its English-language equivalent, Challenge for Change. Although slower to begin than Challenge for Change, Société Nouvelle has established two sturdy success models for others to work from: Vidéographe in Montreal, which is easily the most developed citizens' communications group in any Canadian metropolis; and *Télévision communautaire Saint-Félicien* which is the most active television group in the country.

The community television project in Saint-Félicien was launched in September 1970, as a joint project between Société Nouvelle and the district school commission. Though the idea of organizing residents in the Lac Saint-Jean area to make community programming came partly by accident - when rushes of an NFB film being shot in the area were shown over a local cable system - the project quite clearly has its antecedents in the TEVEQ experiment of 1968-69, an adult educational blitz in Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean (which despite apparent success was cancelled by the ministère de l'Éducation).

* *The other, more limited, evaluation was that completed by the University of Saskatchewan's Institute for Northern Studies on the Comminterphone project in Rankin Inlet, N.W.T., for the Department of Communications.*

The Société Nouvelle unit was established in 1969, two years after Challenge for Change. It developed out of le Groupe de recherches sociales (G.R.S.) which existed in the Film Board between 1966 and 1969, and which produced a number of important films, including Saint-Jérôme (28 Fogo-like films exploring in detail the life and problems of the community) and La P'tite Bourgogne, an examination of citizens' problems in a low-income sector of Montreal.

Many of those who played key roles in getting community television off the ground had also been heavily involved in TEVEQ.

Three villages are involved in the project: Normandin, Saint-Félicien and Dolbeau. They lie within a 20-mile radius. Each has a separate cable system; in the case of Saint-Félicien, this is a two-way system where input can be generated from eight places. In the case of Normandin, the cable system services an additional two communities: Saint-Thomas and Girardville.

The experiment began in Normandin with a five-day media blitz designed to introduce the concept of community TV. Animators were provided by Société Nouvelle (which also provided half a dozen Porta-Pacs) and by the district school commission. The local cable operator also supplied hardware. During this *semaine intensive*, a total of 40 people took an active part in producing three hours of programming nightly for five nights. Regular programming began in Normandin shortly afterwards, followed a little later by programming in Dolbeau and Saint-Félicien. Currently, each system produces about one or two hours nightly, and each has a community programming, non-profit corporation.

As for the content of programming, this ranges from regular coverage of local events and municipal council meetings (often with a phone-in feedback) to news programs, documentaries, and such imaginative departures as a program bridging the generation gap, in which young people were shown hunting and fishing while the commentary, in local dialect, took the form of an oldtimer describing precisely those same activities as he had enjoyed them many years before.

In the beginning, people's inevitable reaction was to copy standard formats, but gradually, they began to break away from these. As one of the project animators explained:

"One of the programs is local news, written, recorded and presented by the people. A girl who worked in a bank offered to help write it. It turned out that she also wrote poetry. No one in Normandin knew that this girl was a poet. People thought that poets were quite bizarre. Then she read some of her poetry on the program, and people realized that there was a poet in the bank. They changed their minds about what a poet was.

"From there, we went on to do a series about creativity. We gave a new value to the idea of an artist in a small

community.

Another community programming concept developed was that of the group reading.

We would transcribe a CBC broadcast on, say, agriculture, and play it for a group a couple of evenings later. Some would have seen it before, some not. In any case, seeing a broadcast, passively, in your living room is not the same as seeing it with a group of people. Afterward, the group would talk about the broadcast; what is that saying to us? We'd tape the discussion and play it over the community channel a few days later. That would get people talking.

As for participation in programming, according to the Tremblay-Landry report, 15.9% of citizens in Saint-Félicien, and 10.9% of those in Normandin have taken part, in one way or another, in the productions. Their reasons for doing so are instructive: 31.4% gave "novelty of experience" as their motive; 28.6% were interested in getting experience in using the equipment; 14.2% of people saw community TV as an opportunity to meet people; and the balance saw it as a means to improve the community (8.5%), a way of occupying leisure time (8.5%), or the first step in a TV career (8.5%).

Tremblay-Landry also reported that about 20% of the citizens in both Saint-Félicien and Normandin watch community TV regularly. Some 67% of Normandin residents, and 75% in Saint-Félicien watch "from time to time". That community programming has been somewhat less effective in Normandin appears to relate to the fact that the technical quality of the system is poor, and that it reaches only about 40% of the local population.

The Normandin-Saint-Félicien-Dolbeau project is almost certainly the most successful community-CATV operation in the country. One reason is that the area is poorly served by established media, and hence local programming on the cable system (an interview with the mayor; a local sports event) provides a genuine service. It is striking that, according to the Tremblay-Landry report, citizens in the area rate community television as more effective for discussions of local issues than either newspapers or public meetings.

Another factor is that the area has a distinct community consciousness. "There is a clear perception of belonging", one S.N. animator suggested. "People identify with specific towns or villages. Even people on farms relate to a chosen nearby town. This diversity of community is well integrated into a sense of

regional belonging and this in turn creates solidarity among the different towns."

Also important is the relationship between the community programming corporations and the cable operators. While the latter are businessmen, with no great aspirations to become community animators, the way in which they were approached by those who wanted to do community programming was pragmatic enough to ensure full co-operation. At the same time, the programming itself is by and large low-key and informative, genuinely reflecting community interests rather than seeking, even if unconsciously, to achieve political polarization or division.

As an indication of the mutual trust which exists, the community programming organization in Saint-Félicien (Télévision communautaire Saint-Félicien Inc.) has signed a contract with the local licensee (Gagnon TV Ltée) which confers on Gagnon the obligation to provide T.C.S-f. with exclusive access and hardware for local programming, in exchange for the obligation of the community group to assume the licensee's responsibility for local programming. And while Gagnon remains legally liable for any liability resulting from libel, defamation, etc., T.C.S.-f. has taken out liability insurance ($321 a

year) in the event of any such damage.

Last but not least, the success of the Lac Saint-Jean project is dependent on the interest and goodwill of local educational authorities. Now that Société Nouvelle's involvement has been phased out, the district school commission has assumed much of the responsibility for community programming, providing a good deal of the hardware (made available to the community virtually twenty-four hours a day), and employing a program animator for each of the three systems. In this connection, it is notable that 50% of all participants in community programming are students; another 12% are teachers.

If Saint-Félicien represents the most outstanding example of citizens' communications in non-metropolitan areas, it is by no means the only one. Other centres actively involved with cable include Buckingham, Drummondville, Port-Alfred and Roberval.

In Sherbrooke, a local fledgling group known as Inter-Média Sherbrooke, made up of 34 community organizations and associations is seeking a contract with National Cablevision (similar to the one between T.C.S.-f. and Gagnon TV) to have exclusive right to produce local programs. On a similar basis, Inter-Média is also seeking space in

the local daily newspaper, *La Tribune*. (So far as we know this is the first occasion where a citizens' communications group has asked a newspaper to "surrender" space, much as several cable-TV companies have done. No answer to this request had been given at the time of writing, but we judge it an interesting heading for future relations between the commercial media and citizens.)

In Chibougamau a non-profit group, Conseil communautaire, is producing programs for the local CATV system, as well as radio shows, VTR programs, and articles for the local weekly. In Hull, the CRTC has approved the licence of a second French-language TV station - Coopérative de télévision de l'Outaouais (C.T.V.O.). This will be the first citizens' group to run a commercial station on a non-profit basis with members having an equal voice in management.

Another distinguishing feature of citizens' communications in Quebec is that trade unions frequently play a central role. (Elsewhere, union interest in direct use of media remains marginal.) In the northwest part of the province, in Abitibi-Rouyn-Noranda, a project called Le Bloc, set up in mid-1969 by the Labour Council of Rouyn-Noranda with support from the Company of Young

Canadians, has been using film, radio and VTR to develop a collective consciousness about the working people of the area. Le Bloc explains:

"The objective is to establish lines of communication between different communities in northwest Quebec by creating a regional communications and information network. This will work in the direction of uniting diverse actions into a single unified action, so that these communities can develop their region in line with their own aspirations."

So far, however, Le Bloc has been only partially successful. The root problem has been to find an approach that works. In the first year, for instance, the emphasis was on information; 17 programs were produced and aired over CKRN-TV in Rouyn. The next year, stress moved towards community animation and expression. Fifteen local groups were established in the region which between them produced a series of 28 programs, again for CKRN. But this approach was in turn abandoned, when the station increased its charges for using equipment five-fold.

In the third year, Le Bloc acquired some VTR equipment of its own, and worked to establish a regional video network. Once again success was limited, this time because of a lack of technical skill, and poor distribution systems.

The current approach, which is receiving support from Société Nouvelle (CYC is withdrawing from the project this year) is a DIFFUSOBUS which will be equipped with basic video equipment and will tour the region, again with the aim of developing a community communications network.

A communications philosophy broadly similar to that of Le Bloc, but one which has been put into practice far more effectively, is to be found at the Parallel Institute in the Pointe-Saint-Charles district of Montreal. Like Teled in Halifax, Parallel, with equipment provided by Challenge for Change and financial support from several private foundations and church groups, provides a range of media services to local citizens' groups. But unlike Teled, Parallel concentrates exclusively on the disadvantaged, tenants' associations and welfare rights groups.

As we noted in the introduction, Parallel has developed a particularly effective use of VTR. "We use this in every possible way," an organizer told us. "As an organizing tool, as a negotiating tool, as a recording secretary and for training purposes." She outlined a number of these in detail:

"A good example of using video to organize groups is the Neighbourhood Television

Wagon we took out last summer. We called it a kind of 'research tableau'. We just went out on the streets of Pointe-Saint-Charles and started showing tapes we'd made with groups fighting for citizens' rights. We'd made up charts of the existing power structure and a chart of an alternate kind of structure. Then we'd talk to people and tape their conversation. Then people wanted to have a meeting, so groups from various streets got together in a public meeting hall."

When it comes to using VTR as a negotiating tool, Parallel has discovered that the camera frequently serves its purpose simply by existing; it need not necessarily be turned on:

"The head of the welfare office is going to be much more careful of what he says if there is all that shiny hardware along. Or the camera can be the place where officials direct their antagonism first. If we just turn up the video, they're likely to say, "Get that camera out of here," instead of "get those people out of here."

In other cases, the tape serves as a constant reminder of promises that have been made. "An issue remains an issue," we were told. "With the mass media we stir up a few bleeding hearts and then people forget the whole thing. When we have an issue on tape, it's

on record forever for our
people."

The Parallel Institute also
provides technical advice
and assistance to the Greater
Montreal Anti-Poverty Coordi-
nating Committee (GMAPCC).
Here, it finds VTR particular-
ly useful in a training
context. One of the tapes -
*The South Shore Citizens'
Association v. Mr. Juneau* (of
the Longueuil Welfare Office),
clearly demonstrates how and
why talks between the
official and the community
group broke down. As a
result, GMAPCC's members
realized the importance of
going into a meeting with
specific demands, rather than
a generalized statement of
grievances. Other training
tapes deal with the principles
of building a grass-roots
organization and the develop-
ment of indigenous leadership.

Because it operates with a
clearly-defined set of goals
and a narrow focus, Parallel
is one of the most developed
citizen advocacy groups using
communications techniques that
we encountered. Almost
certainly, its approach -
essentially the conscious pro-
voking of confrontation - is
viable only in an urban
centre, where particular
social groups may feel them-
selves so fragmented and
polarized that they judge
that only an out and out
assault on "the system" can
achieve results.

Another Montreal communica-
tions group, but one with a
markedly-different orientation,
is Vidéographe, established by
Société Nouvelle late in 1971.
For one thing, Vidéographe's
attention is focused exclusive-
ly on a single medium - half-
inch and three-quarter-inch
VTR. For another, quality of
production is emphasized at
least as much as content.

The primary goal, according to
Vidéograph's formal list of
objectives, is "to develop
the technical capability of
video as an instrument for com-
munications and expression".
Other objectives are "to
encourage the use of video for
self-expression, particularly
by the young" and "to respond
to requests for technical
information by community
groups, and to carry out
experiments that will help
adapt the equipment used by
these groups to suit their
needs".

Much like Teled Video, Vidéo-
graphe, in brief, is the only
group concerned with
technical developments that
will improve the quality and
simplicity of VTR use, either
for community development or
self-expression.

To fulfill these objectives,
Vidéographe can draw on the
best equipment banks of any
alternate media group in the
country. Operating with a
staff of seven out of a store-
front centre on Saint-Denis

Street, close to the Univer-
sité du Québec, its facilities
include highly-sophisticated
editing equipment, half a
dozen monitors and a 115-seat
theatre-in-the-round. The
centre is open 24 hours a day;
passers-by are welcome to
come in without charge to edit
their own tapes, or to look
at those in Vidéographe's
library.

The facilities of Vidéographe
are also available to groups
and individuals who have
formulated a clear idea of
something they would like to
say via VTR, and of the
audience they want to reach.
The staff considers requests;
authors of approved projects
get a production budget and
technical assistance.

As of December 1972, some 420
project ideas had been submit-
ted, and 125 accepted. Sixty
tapes or *vidéogrammes* had
been completed. These strike
a rough balance between
personal aesthetic explora-
tion of media (*e.g. Réactions 26,*
an experiment with electronic
feedback) and socio-economic
documentaries (*e.g. Le
procès des Acadiens*). All
vidéogrammes are made
available to a mailing list of
over a thousand groups.
Those interested in obtaining
a particular production simply
send in a blank tape which is
dubbed and returned free of
charge.

Though in the beginning

Vidéographe's clientele was
in fact relatively restricted -
during the first six months of
operation, for example, the
average age of participants
was less than 25, and some 27%
of those young people reported
that they were working with
VTR in the hope that this
would lead to a career in films
or television community groups
are now becoming increasingly
involved.

But one problem here, Vidéo-
graphe's director reports, is
that "community groups tend to
be slightly allergic to our
strict planning requirements.
They want a Porta-Pac for six
months or a large monitor.
We'd be prepared to let them
out for a few days at a time
if they can tell us when they
want them. Our insistence
on planning is irritating for
them. But after all - Porta-
Pac in an animator's car for
three months is like giving
him a second car."

As a result, the attention of
groups tends to centre on
editing facilities. "There
are many cameras around
Quebec," the director
continued, "but few editing
facilities. People come from
Lac Saint-Jean with a bunch
of tapes and edit here.
While our own projects have
priority, twice as many have
been finished here as were
initiated. Often we don't
even know what the groups are
doing. They come in, work
for three nights in the wee

hours of the morning, and go back again."

As for applied research into editing, this has already resulted in a useful handbook, available to groups and individuals on request.

Another important Vidéographe research project has been *Sélecto-TV*, a ten-day pilot experiment in demand television, organized during the fall of 1972 in co-operation with CATV systems in Beloeil, Mont-Laurier and Gatineau. As Vidéographe explained:

"*Sélecto-TV* is, in principle, a simple idea. It works this way. You use one channel for an animator and you free up at least one channel to broadcast tapes. Cable subscribers get a notice in the mail, announcing the experiment and containing a flier with a list of tapes, and a brief description of each. We supply the tapes, about 80 of them, about 50 made at Vidéographe. During the experiment, *Sélecto-TV* broadcasts 10 to 12 hours a day for 10 days.

"Behind the animator on the first channel is a large board. Subscribers phone in to the animator and he writes their requests on the board. Meanwhile, on the second channel, a tape is running. When it is finished the animator checks the board to see which

tape is most in demand – and that goes on the second channel. While the second tape is playing, people may call in and give commentary on the first one. There might be quite a discussion. And of course, there are new requests coming in to be added to the scoreboard."

One result of the experiment was to give added weight to the argument the community programming functions best in rural centres. In Mont-Laurier, for example, a community 150 miles from Montreal, calls averaged about 372 daily. In Beloeil and Pointe-Gatineau, both suburbs of larger centres, with cable populations about three times as great, calls averaged 320 and 342 respectively.

In all three communities and in Mont-Laurier in particular, *Sélecto-TV* appears to have had a considerable effect on subsequent programming. There have been increased demands for more "phone-in feedback" shows, and community project leaders and young people have evinced considerable interest in developing program projects. As a consequence, the experiment was repeated in Chibougamau in May 1973.

For its first year and a half, Vidéographe was financially supported by Société Nouvelle, the Canada Council and the federal Department of Urban Affairs. During 1973-74, the

group is being supported to the extent of some $300,000 by the Quebec ministère des Communications and other departments.

English-speaking Quebeckers are also deeply involved in citizens' communications. One of the most interesting developments is Radio Centreville, a LIP-supported community radio group currently in the process of applying for a low-power FM licence.

Radio Centreville aims to serve the Saint-Louis district of central Montreal, comprising a population of about 120,000 and including most of the city's Greek and Portuguese communities. "We hope to offer radio that is suited to the community needs and taste of Saint-Louis as a whole," Radio Centreville told us, "and particularly to the various cultural and ethnic groups which make up the area. To the rest of the city, we hope to offer a different type of radio, offering a view of the forgotten inner city."

Currently, Radio Centreville is broadcasting six hours a day, five days a week on the audio channel of National Cablevision Ltd, and also via Radio McGill. A typical program schedule we looked at included two half-hour community news broadcasts (ranging from a discussion of problems of Greek youth in the neighbourhood, to a report on the Natural Food Co-Op Feast, to instruction on how to get rid of cockroaches), a lecture series titled *Women and Their Bodies*, a play called *Seeds from the Underground* and a discussion of *The Greening of America*.

Radio Centreville's licence application has been supported by virtually every community organization in Saint-Louis, from the Free Kids' Co-op to the Family Service Association of Montreal. Even so, as we remarked earlier, the application has been delayed by the difficulties of obtaining a frequency allocation from the Department of Communications and also by uncertainties surrounding the CRTC's long-term policy towards FM broadcasting.

Other English-language activity in Montreal centres around Dawson College, where the Audio-Visual Department, insofar as a limited budget allows, has been working quite actively with community groups.

Ontario

In Canada's richest province, the state of citizens' communications is, if not the poorest, then at least the most confused. Though there are scores of media practitioners - or would-be practitioners - no pace-setting centre exists comparable to Memorial University's Extension Service, Teled or Vidéographe. Instead, activity is diffuse and unrelated within the province as a whole, and within its individual regions.

Toronto is the most obvious case in point. Here the emphasis has been on programming for CATV systems. But so far - with the important exception of special interest programs for ethnic groups and senior citizens, for whom the cable channel operates as a kind of closed-circuit information system - community programming has been pretty much a non-starter. Audiences have been marginal; perhaps in part because participants have tended to use programs as sounding boards for themselves, rather than as a service to the community.

There are other reasons: for one thing, as we remarked in the introduction, the established media, newspapers, radio and television stations, cover the Toronto scene extremely thoroughly. As a consequence, it has been

difficult even for CITY-TV (which has attempted to make its name as much by being a community TV station as through its "baby-blue" movies) to attract many viewers.

Moreover, the city is carved up among ten cable companies in a way that bears no relation to Toronto's demographic patterns. "The franchises are such that they can't follow any logical configurations," our Toronto consultant reported. "They don't follow ethnic boundaries; they don't follow neighbourhoods according to wealth, social classes or any other discernible patterns." To further complicate things, one company may have franchises in several different areas. York Cablevision, for example, covers an inner-city ethnic area, an upper middle class district and a bedroom suburb. Rogers Cable T.V. has territory in the middle of town and in the west end.

And thirdly, because Toronto's first and most ambitious community television venture collapsed amid a welter of recriminations about polarization, it has since been difficult for any succeeding project to win a broad base of community support.

The venture in question is Project Intercom. Launched in the summer of 1970, this group had ambitious plans to network cable channels and to broadcast eight hours a day throughout the city as the prime source of local programming. It also hoped to establish a training and resource centre for all Toronto groups interested in making programs and developing community skills. Yet far from achieving any of this, the project lasted barely six months. Our Toronto consultant explains why Intercom failed.

"The initial boost came from institutional support: Ryerson Polytechnic became an active member; the Social Planning Council was involved, as well as various labour unions and the St. Lawrence Centre. A number of community celebrities lent their names. Thus initially, Intercom got a lot of publicity and became extremely visible.

"But they had a difficult time getting any real community work off the ground. Though their prospectus and written literature disclaimed any political biases, people started calling names and accusing the organization of being a front for the NDP. As soon as cries of political usage surfaced, the institutional members were pressured to withdraw their support. The people from Ryerson who had become involved were rapped over the knuckles by their superiors and withdrew, as did the Social Planning Council. Intercom faded away."

The organization that took Intercom's place, Downtown Community Television, has been more successful. Whereas Intercom had drawn most of its strength from institutional support, DCTV is firmly based in the Ward 7 (Cabbagetown) area, so that its members shared common concerns.

In 1971, DCTV signed a contract with Rogers Cable T.V. (one of the most active cable TV companies in Canada when it comes to originating programming) to program one hour a week live, on Thursday nights. This show is repeated twice a week, and the contract also specifies four hours of editing time.

The actual format is that of a public forum. Anyone who wants to appear attends a planning meeting held a week in advance to present his or her case which is then voted upon. As our Toronto consultant reported, "In DCTV's case, it is the process rather than the product which is important.

"...They realize that few people watch their show; when they have phone-ins, nobody phones in except for DCTV members. The quality of the programs is poor. Yet even so, the program is democratically put together... DCTV has also developed an effective social network among themselves, and oddly enough, the network has less to do with the Thursday night cable show than with the Wednesday night meeting. If you want to find out what's going on in Wards 6, 7, 8 and 9 you can find out more by going to a Wednesday night meeting, than by watching the program. The show is simply the charm that holds the whole thing together."

While this approach may be valid enough, it is scarcely one that makes use of cable television's real potential.

As for other Toronto cable programming projects, these tend to come and go, forming a constantly shifting pool of groups, mostly supported by LIP and OFY, whose names - Earthquake Video, Initiative Productions - are a good deal more electrifying than their actual achievements. Rather more successful have been a number of projects involving artists interested in aesthetic and artistic exploration of new communications techniques. In this case, the key organization is A-Space, a workshop-gallery and VTR studio plus coffee house. This summer, a number of A-Space artists are represented in the international exhibition of new art forms at the Musée d'art contemporain in Paris.

But it is striking that although Toronto probably has more active citizens' advocacy groups per square

foot than any other city in the country, none of these are using media techniques with anything like the effect of the Parallel Institute in Montreal, or even the Urban Coalition in Halifax - a reflection no doubt, that most groups get the coverage they seek in the established Toronto media. In fact, when advocacy groups in Toronto feel the need to communicate directly, they usually turn to that most established of all techniques: the telephone. A case in point would be the extremely effective telephone network organized a couple of years ago by the Stop-Spadina coalition.

One problem that holds up many hopeful media groups in Toronto is that of access to equipment. "The same groups are all competing for a limited number of resources," our Toronto consultant reported, "and this can't help but create a competitive atmosphere." And he continued:

"Incredible energy is expended scrounging for equipment. This has diffused energy and diverted many groups from fulfilling their real objectives ... "A logical step in the development of a viable citizens' communication network would be to create a mechanism capable of providing some sort of coordination between all the media-conscious groups in the city. But as long as the struggle for access continues, it is difficult for groups to develop lines of access *to each other*, except in the context of a power struggle. As a result, all attempts to coordinate media usage, to develop real communication links where people would come to know and share with one another, have degenerated into power struggles."

At the time of writing, another such attempt is underway, via a central council known as Metro Community Media. There are also indications that the new city government in Toronto favours the establishment of a citizens' communications resource centre, as a means of encouraging citizens to share in developing public policy.

In the more relaxed *ambiance* of southwest Ontario, media projects have been somewhat more successful. Promising community groups are developing in St. Catharines, Hanover, and London (London Community Media Services). In terms of CATV programming, in particular, Fergus-Flora has developed into one of the most productive centres in the country. This is mostly because the licensee, entirely unpretentiously, feels it is civic duty to provide community programming. The actual shows are very casual and folksy, but in the absence of local media, they provide a real service. The CATV system in London has also made consistent efforts to originate local programming.

Another group providing a genuine service is Wired World Inc., a community radio project in Kitchener-Waterloo which developed round the university station and now has an FM licence application before CRTC. The nearest CBC outlet is in Toronto and, as Wired World explains, "the four local radio stations are providing a service dictated mainly by their business nature... few local citizens are directly involved in the content and direction of programming."

The FM station Wired World proposes would allow direct citizen involvement in the content and production of the programming. "Groups will be encouraged to assume responsibility for program-ming content in assigned segments of the program day. Also, local artists will have facilities to produce live music and plays... It is a means by which the com-munity can 'self-animate' itself."

As we noted earlier, Wired World estimates its operating budget at around $120,000 annually, and expects to become self-supporting after an initial year, chiefly by means of membership subscrip-tions, corporate donations and funding from programming groups. Like Radio Centre-ville in Montreal, Wired World cites as precedent the U.S. Pacifica Foundation,

which co-ordinates a number of member-supported stations on the Atlantic and Pacific sea-boards. Already, Wired World has raised about $20,000 in the community and it expects to receive support in kind by way of equipment and free rentals.

While it awaits the fate of its licence application, Wired World gets a modicum of community programming on the air by preparing a one-hour package each week for a private station, CHYM-FM. The group has encountered some recent difficulties, its LIP application for 1973 having been turned down. As we noted earlier, it is interesting that the programming that has evolved over an eighteen-month span bears a distinct family relationship to certain CBC programs, notably "This Country in the Morning", and "Inside on the Outside". (Wired World is particularly adept at light-hearted satire, and its skit "The all-purpose grant application" which has been aired on CBC, is a minor classic), and thus is quite clearly fulfilling some of the functions of the absent local CBC outlet.

As a sidebar, we might also note that Wired World is a good example of a group which discovered community radio as a spinoff of cable tele-vision. In 1971-72, this group concentrated mainly on making programs for the local

CATV channel. Yet despite some fairly considerable successes, Wired World now believes:

"Radio is a more effective channel of direct citizen communication. In our experience, we have found that people are more willing to participate in radio program production, because it is less inhibiting than TV, and because the equipment is much easier to operate. In addition - and perhaps most importantly in this stage of our development - radio is far less expensive."

The real significance of Wired World, and of Radio Centreville in Montreal, is that they are the first of a new breed: radio stations which plan to serve cities, or sub-groups within cities, on the basis of programming made almost exclusively *within those communities them-selves*. Just how viable these stations will prove to be - in terms of audience response as well as of finances - is at this point entirely unknown.

As one indication, in Britain the BBC (long one of the most centralized broadcasting systems in the world) has over the past five years developed a network of purely local stations broadcasting mostly talk (phone-in programs, dis-cussions, educational material). There are at present 20 such stations and a typical example - Radio Sheffield - broadcasts six hours a day and attracts about 20% of the local audience.

In Ottawa, Living Radio Vivante programs for two hours each Saturday afternoon, via the audio channel of both Ottawa cable companies. In contrast to Kitchener-Waterloo, middle-class Ottawa is relatively well served by its local CBC station; hence Living Radio's programming con-centrates on what its organizers described as "the realities of people who are earning less than $5,000 a year; who are anything but the middle class or rich or a member of the radio profession". The project lends resource people to community groups to help them make their own programs. At the time of writ-ing, the future of Living Radio Vivante was uncertain. Though supported by LIP in 1972, the grant was not renewed for 1973.

Also in Ottawa, there have been sporadic and so far unsuccessful attempts to develop a media re-source centre. One of these, the Media Access Project, supported by LIP in 1972, produced a useful handbook on available technical and community resources, and how to use them.

Probably the most substantive citizens' communications achievement in the capital has been the community television

program "Coming of Age" produced by the Ottawa Senior Citizens' Council Broadcasting Committee, and supported by New Horizons. This show - and others like it across the country - is an example of how citizens' communications can fill one of the most serious of all communications voids: the almost total absence of programming provided through the established media for a special interest group to whom radio and television is potentially more valuable - both as entertainment and a source of information - than any other minority in the country.

In July, 1972, "Coming of Age" received an aware as "best community-produced cablevision program in Canada". As its organizers describe it, the show "is the property of every senior citizen in Ottawa".

"... The performers, the participants, the interviewers, are all senior citizens. 'Coming of Age' is a citywide tea social cum public platform for them. They tell each other what is going on in their part of the city; they tell about their hobbies; their past experiences; their plans for the future.

"On 'Coming of Age', senior citizens see and show that they and others like them have something truly worthwhile to contribute. Senior citizens who watch the show have a real sense of belonging to the show, because they know that they can see one of their friends on TV, or indeed, be there themselves."

There is also special programming for ethnic groups. This consists mostly of entertainment with some community news. In addition, the Ontario Government's Citizenship Branch has put together a series of ethnic-language tapes describing services available to newcomers. This is one of the very few instances where governments at any level, despite all their talk about the importance of distributing information to citizens have actually made use of the available and free distribution system provided by cable television.

If "Coming of Age" is a good model of community cable programming going right, the 1970 Town Talk experiment in Thunder Bay is a good illustration of cable programming going wrong. Town Talk was a pioneer in the field, in its day a much-quoted success story.

Yet the group fell apart within a year. The reasons for Town Talk's failure are comparable to those of Intercom in Toronto: lack of broadly-based community support; rhetoric that considerably outdistanced reality; and a great degree of politicization of

the group's members. As in the case of Intercom, Town Talk's collapse left a bitter aftertaste, a conviction among many groups that genuine community programming could never be viable as long as cable systems remained in the hands of private interests.

Town Talk originated, one of its members explained, "when a nice middle-class citizens' group decided it would be a neat idea to do television". In the beginning it produced a weekly half-hour documentary cum phone show on local issues, via the commercial station. After one or two of the programs cut rather too close to the bone of the business community, this show was cancelled.

At about this time, the member went on, "the CRTC had just come out with its message about community television, and we thought we should get into that. We raised some money, and we researched cable television. Then the Challenge for Change unit entered the picture and said that they had a little bit of money available to document the process of a citizens' group trying to take on the giants."

With Challenge for Change aid, a number of local people were trained in film and videotape techniques, and during 1970 a considerable amount of pro- gramming was produced. One

significant achievement was to demonstrate, for the first time, that half-inch videotape could be successfully cablecast.

Yet even though a considerable amount of surface excitement was generated - to the point that Town Talk, in September 1970, tried to secure a licence to operate the local cable television system - the commu- nity as a whole never really became involved in the venture. One problem was that the program production teams, chosen primarily for their technical skills, tended to be more concerned with making programs of high production quality than ones which would serve community needs. Another was that while Town Talk's budget was large - at $90,000, many would argue much *too* large - virtually all of it was short-term, provided by Challenge for Change, a program not designed to provide continued subsidy. Town Talk made few attempts to secure funding or other support from the community. When the licence application was refused, the group ceased to function.

Perhaps the real value of the Town Talk experiment was to chart a course for succeeding groups across the country *not* to follow. It is encouraging to report that recently a new Thunder Bay group, Monitor North, has emerged from Town Talk's ashes.

We end our discussion of the Ontario scene with a somewhat more successful model of citizen access to media in the northern part of the province. In this case, the medium is once again community radio; the model is the community station at Espanola, established in 1971 by the newly-formed Office of Community Radio of the CBC. As the Office explains:

"In the spring of 1971, we decided to mount an experiment to see what we could do to provide local information programming to remote countries, who presently receive CBC network radio programs from an unmanned low-power repeater transmitter (LPRT). These are smaller communities (500 to 10,000 population) often without local alternative mass media. Many of them are undergoing serious social changes at present, as resource industries move in and out, or as native (Indian and Eskimo) and white populations come to see the need for self-expression.

"In September, a small studio facility was set up in a hotel room in Espanola, a pulp and paper mill town of six thousand people, whose civic leaders had been requesting local programming for some years. A young CBC broadcaster with a good record of encouraging citizen access to one of our regular stations moved into the community for the next five months.

"Over the months, local programming developed and our broadcaster-animator worked himself out of one function after another. At the end of January (1972) he left the community. The Espanola Community Radio Citizens' Committee assumed full responsibility for programming. A letter of agreement was drawn up and signed by CBC and each member of the local community radio committee, in which CBC agreed to provide studio facilities and airtime on the transmitter, in return for local programming and adherence to basic broadcasting regulations. CBC, as licensee, remained fully responsible for the station and its program content."

At that time, local program content comprised about twenty hours a week, supplementing 110 hours from the network. It included a wake-up program presented by a team of young shift-workers from the mill, an afternoon show of stories and records for subteeners, a hard rock show for older teenagers, a housewives' program, and a community issue phone-in show. On Saturday afternoons, a crew presented an hour of native music, history and current events.

Yet this programming was considerably more impressive on paper than it was to listen to:

"Local people have not been able to develop sufficient news, comment and opinion programming...The availability of a mass medium does not necessarily mean that it will be used for mass information purposes. This is particularly true in a town where there is little evident social dislocation.

"But there is perhaps another reason for this. Radio in North America usually means commercial radio, and that means record-spinning and disc-jockey patter. When you invite people to take part in a radio operation, they tend to think in terms of that model and perform accordingly. Besides, if you have to fill three hours a day, every week-day unless you have a dedicated local information-gathering group behind you, it's difficult."

Another problem was that the pressure and time involved in working for the radio station produced an elite of its own. Most of the program participants were young, single and male. The community itself never really backed the venture. By mid-summer 1972, local programming had all but collapsed.

Since then, community radio at Espanola has taken on a cautious new lease of life. Many of the original programs are back on the air, and there are a few new ones.

Yet the hard fact remains that there is little evidence that the community of Espanola, as opposed to the small group running the station, feels involved in the project. The CBC's Office of Community Radio plans a second experiment:

"But this time there will be no studios, no high-profile hardware, no expectations about a local radio station. Rather, in response to a community request for local information input into its CBC transmitter, we will provide an animator who will help the community to organize around this need and to define and develop the kinds of information input it wishes to communicate.

"Many of these communities need something as simple as an emergency system of mass communication in times of snow-storm or spring flooding. The local input will all be talk, for fifteen-minute periods at important times in the local daily life...the emphasis will be on satisfying the local need for shared information, and not on the need to emulate local radio."

The Prairie Provinces

On the prairies, citizens' communications has so far had comparatively little impact. The outstanding exception are native groups, whose communications activities will be discussed further along.

One useful yardstick is the LIP program, which during 1972 funded only 13 media projects in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan, as against 46 in Quebec alone and 28 in Ontario, while in the four Atlantic provinces, with a population about half as great, there were 11 media projects. An important prairie development, however, is the Saskatchewan Government's 1972 plan to develop cable systems through publicly-owned co-operatives.

As in Atlantic Canada, the emphasis across the prairies has been on community animation use of communications techniques. Most projects involve educational institutions, frequently working in co-operation with Challenge for Change.

Manitoba

So far, activities have centred in Winnipeg. The key institution is the Institute for Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg, a centre for action research, community action and education, which has used VTR extensively in its work with community groups. In

the Roosevelt Park area for example, a district slated for urban renewal, the Institute helped residents set up the People's Committee for a Better Neighbourhood Inc., a neighbourhood development corporation. This committee used VTR to document an analysis of conditions in the area, and to record meetings among themselves and with members of local and provincial governments.

Apart from this fairly standard use of VTR as an organizing tool, IUS has also found that it can be a useful means of providing information support to groups. A staff member reported:

"We've discovered that it is often much easier for groups to look at a tape of a government or welfare official than to actually have the official there in person. The tape acts as a kind of introduction - once the group knows what the official looks like, and has an idea of his personality, that official becomes much easier to meet face-to-face. This technique can also be applied as a means of showing people how to get things done and where to get them from."

Through an experiment backed by Challenge for Change, Opportunities for Youth, the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs and the Manitoba Government, IUS has also been heavily involved in cable television. Late in 1971, during the four weeks prior to a municipal election in which the new *unicity* concept of civic government was the central issue, the Institute organized three hours of cable programming nightly comprising interviews with candidates and profiles of the various wards taped on location. Apart from determining how effectively community television could deal with local issues, the hope was that it would lay the groundwork for an active community television organization in Winnipeg. But the experiment - which critic Heather Robertson described in *Maclean's* as "vintage 1954 CBC" - was a distinctly qualified success, and there have been no subsequent developments.

Saskatchewan

Here, the moving spirit of citizens' communications has been the Extension Division of the University of Saskatchewan. The main project has been an experiment in the community development use of VTR, launched in 1971 jointly with Challenge for Change.

"Moose Jaw's problem is not so much that it is disadvantaged as that it seems to have lost its identity," the project animator has explained. Prairie centralization has drained away much of the city's vitality; a high percentage of

its 30,000 citizens are either over 55 or under 18. No local television or radio stations provide anything in the way of local programming.

The first phase of the project, lasting approximately one year, was to demystify VTR (previously entirely unknown to Moose Jaw) by getting equipment into the community and by getting the community to use it as much as possible. It was used to tape meetings, high school debates, stockmen's conferences and the local little theatre group. The project animator continued:

"Every effort was made to encourage people to handle the equipment - if only to tape a few seconds of their friends. Furthermore, the tapes were always replayed to the participants to view themselves, and to decide who was to view what portion of the tape. Whenever possible, a community group that had a 'message' to give someone was given the VTR equipment to view the tapes and make editing decisions."

In the second phase of the project, emphasis switched to identifying - and attempting to solve - certain community issues. That of cable television emerged as one of the most pressing.

"Having acquired a taste for it, citizens wanted access to the media. A series of meetings were held between citizens and applicants for cable licences. We had something of a confrontation; the cable operators tried a snow job and we were able to use the presence of VTR as a weapon. The operators were astounded to find questions about cable being asked before the fact."

The meetings resulted in a Public Forum on Cable Television (organized by a steering committee) held in the spring of 1972 and financed by way of a grant from the Department of the Secretary of State. This forum almost certainly influenced the Saskatchewan Government's subsequent decision to develop cable in the province through public co-operatives rather than private enterprise - a decision which also relates to that government's demonstrated interest in using media technology for social development purposes.

In Moose Jaw itself, the original steering committee has now matured into a sturdy community television organization, the Moose Jaw Community Channel Committee. The Extension Division, meanwhile, has turned its attention to the community development use of VTR among isolated farm communities.

Alberta

Cable television is also central to citizens' communications in Alberta. In fact in Calgary, the main catalyst of the movement has been the cable company itself, rather than a citizens' group.

Calgary Cable Television, which services the northern part of the city, is one of the few cable companies in Canada to regularly broadcast City Council and School Board meetings in their entirety. Beyond this, Calgary Cable bends over backwards to encourage citizen participation. The company has been granted the right to earmark $.50 a month per subscriber to be used solely for the community access channel; with these funds it has purchased studio and remote facilities, and has run clinics to familiarize citizens with equipment. It has also actively publicized its program through the media. Calgary Cable's former program director reviewed the first year of operation for us.

"When we started, we had ideas of what should be done in terms of public access, but no one in Calgary really had any idea of the concept of participation - what public access really meant - so we had to begin by doing programs ourselves; our staff was on practically the whole time. Then we moved out into the community and tried to encourage people to come and program...

"One of the first things we did was to get permission to go into City Council meetings and into School Board meetings and we were physically thrown out of the School Board. The problem was that the Chairman, in particular, felt we would be 'glamourizing' a serious business, encouraging 'personalities' and that kind of thing. And in fact, what's happened is that the Chairman has taken to modulating his voice very carefully and always speaks to the camera..."

As to the effect of such programming, the program director reported, "It's a growing influence rather than a peak thing...As a general rule, I'd say that younger people are more interested than older people. One surprise has been that a number of groups whom I expected to come up with programs have so far done nothing - service agencies, for instance, and the university and other traditional establishment groups." She continued:

"There's no question that programming has done a lot for the small group of people who have used it. A group of housewives, for instance, put on a regular show and they were just delirious when they discovered they could actually run the cameras and the switching equipment."

That housewives be encouraged to use switching equipment and cameras is central to Calgary Cable's programming philosophy:

"We tend to be down on the use of professionals. Any citizens' media project requires great flexibility and very little ego. People who have worked a long time in any professional broadcasting setup have a great deal of ego and very little flexibility. I think one of the reasons that our local Media Access Committee has been so ineffective is that nearly everyone on it is a professional TV or radio person, and it's done almost nothing in the community.

With this enlightened approach, it is not surprising that Calgary Cable has produced some of the most inventive community programming in Canada, notably in the area of experimental use of the media by theatre and dance groups. Yet the program director freely admits, "In terms of the community at large, we've had very little effect."

One reason for this may be that as yet the community channel reaches very few citizens. Saturation is only about 25% of capacity. (Only one U.S. network is presently piped in; at the same time, the monthly subscription of $6.25 is one of the highest in Canada.) Another explanation, and one that goes to the heart of the viability

of community cable TV in urban areas, is that competition for attention is fierce, and community programming, for all its worthiness, fares poorly when contrasted with the skilled professionalism of commercial television.

Another focus of activity in Calgary is the University of Calgary, specifically the Division of Continuing Education and the School of Social Welfare. Their involvement in citizens' communications dates back to their partnership with Challenge for Change in the Drumheller Valley experiment of 1969.

A variant on the Fogo technique, this project was designed to test the community development potential of the VTR camera. The community in question was Rosedale, a small village whose citizens, mostly retired coal miners, struggled along on tiny pensions without benefit of local government, sewers, water or gas. In contrast to the Fogo experience, where consensus had been achieved gradually, the Rosedale experiment took the form of a video blitz. The tapes produced were not shown to decision-makers outside the community; instead they helped organize a community to meet decision makers face to face.

Before doing any taping at all, the social animator involved in the project spent three

months researching the entire Drumheller Valley. The first experiment - nine tapes made in the village of East Coulee - were only a partial success. The experience, however, led to the animator being invited to work with a newly-formed citizens' committee in nearby Rosedale. Armed with VTR, this group went out into the community and asked people how they felt about living in Rosedale. Did they like having the outhouse right next to their well? Did they like hauling water? Did they think it fair that in a gas-rich region, they had no gas? Each person interviewed was told that he or she could see the interview played back immediately, and could censor it.

A total of eleven tapes were made and edited down to a one-hour program entitled "Rosedale, a White Man's Reservation?". More than half the population turned up to see it in the local community hall. By the end of the meeting, sub-committees had been formed to press for gas, water and sewers. Their meetings were also taped, and edited down to serve as minutes for the next meeting. "Gradually," the animator told us, "as the committees became involved in specifics, the need to use VTR became increasingly less." As a direct result of the community's self-help action,

gas and water lines were installed in the village, a small factory opened and several consumer stores appeared.

As on Fogo, the cameras appeared to have operated as catalysts. "While VTR does not basically *change* the community development process," the animator reported, "it does seem to accelerate it, most significantly in the process of bringing the community together and giving its members a feeling of unity and strength."

Similar video blitzes have since been carried out by the University of Calgary in co-operation with citizens' groups in St. Paul, a rural community north of Edmonton, and in Crossfields, a satellite suburb of Calgary. But in the absence of sustained follow-through, there is so far little evidence of measurable social or civic change in these communities, and even in Rosedale, impact was confined to a single issue rather than affecting the entire community as in Fogo.

Apart from a sprinkling of other developments - of which the most promising is Edmonton's Boyle Street Media Co-op - the citizens' communications scene in Alberta, according to our local consultant, remains embryonic.

"You need a very powerful microscope and a lot of time to find citizens' groups who are interested in media access-citizens' communications. I would say rather that there are clusters of individuals who have not yet defined what they have in common, or how they intend to link up media and citizens' communication.

"There are small groups of people throughout the province - like the small groups in St. Paul, Rosedale and Crossfields - who have an idea what VTR and cable are all about and if given funds, they could probably put a good demonstration project together. But this does not begin to touch what could happen if some of the local institutions (mainly educational) got their asses into trucks and got out into the community like Memorial and did some real extension work."

British Columbia

In this province, the whir of the VTR camera can be heard almost everywhere. Among other things, B.C. is the site of Canada's longest established media resource centre and its only community-owned and operated cable television system. Uniquely in the country, the citizens' communication movement here was launched by artists, back in 1967. Since then, it has grown to encompass community development, citizen advocacy,

native communication and intellectual analysis.

From the beginning, the nerve centre has been Vancouver. The story starts with Intermedia, a co-op workshop established with Canada Council support in 1967 by a group of artists anxious to experiment with new communications techniques. For the first few years, they concentrated efforts on the then trendy but now almost forgotten projects like lightshows and psychedelic happenings. By the start of the seventies, the group had turned its attention towards cultural animation; towards, in other words, an exploration of the relationship between the artist and the community. To this end, Intermedia, in January 1971, received a $21,500 grant from the Donner Canadian Foundation. But within a few months it had become evident that Intermedia by itself had neither enough technical equipment nor a sturdy enough organization to be really effective in the community.

Meanwhile, a communications group with an entirely different orientation had encountered precisely the same problem. The Inner City Service Project had been using VTR equipment provided by Challenge for Change in its work with low-income groups. Like Intermedia, it was short on human and technical resources.

In May 1971, the decision was taken to fuse the two groups into a broadly-based community communications organization: The Metro Media Association of Greater Vancouver. A grant from Challenge for Change made it possible to hire resource people and purchase additional equipment. Since then, Metro Media has also been supported by OFY (1972) and by LIP (1972 and 1973).

In two years of operation, Metro Media has developed into a largely successful working model for an urban-based media resource and teaching centre. Like Teled in Halifax, Metro Media's aim is to provide citizens' groups with an understanding of all the communications techniques available to them, and to give these groups the capacity to use them. A single request from a group, a Metro Media staff member explained, can produce a range of media solutions.

"If a group of West End senior citizens, say, comes to us complaining about loss of their homes resulting from the continual development of highrise apartments, we may find ourselves assisting them in preparing a package of materials: a written and audio-visual brief to City Council, a pamphlet, a seven-minute radio segment, a half-hour cable program and a five-minute segment for CTV news. A training process is an integral part of all this production, so that a group has the ability to carry on without us."

But unlike Teled, the bulk of Metro Media's activity has been in the direction of community cable production. One reason for this is that the original funding from Challenge for Change was contingent on the production of 40 hours of CATV programming, and this set a pattern which has been followed. As of April 1973, Metro Media had produced nearly 200 hours of programs. Another is that Vancouver is one of the most heavily cabled cities in Canada, with penetration of about 80%. "Our approach is not to develop cablevision programming per se," Metro Media explains, "but to use it when it serves a purpose."

One of the most successful cable projects centred around the hot local issue of future development in the Richmond Delta. At the request of Richmond City Council, Metro Media launched a program that included door-to-door interviews made by high schools; setting up a kiosk in the main shopping centre; showing audio-visual informational materials; and taping interviews. The effort culminated in two two-hour cablevision specials that included a representative summary of all the information and opinions gathered, plus a panel of politicians and planners who

responded to phone-in questions.

Metro Media has also emphasized programming for special-interest groups. Examples here include three one-hour specials on the Jewish Community Centre, and "Hellenic Mirror", a weekly half-hour show in the Greek language which so far has probably been the most successful in gaining an enthusiastic audience response.

Another facet of cable programming is the development of programs for specific neighbourhoods. This had been achieved by placing Metro Media resource people and equipment in neighbourhood centres - an approach which has been used in Kitsilano, Strathcona and Woodland Grandview.

Again in terms of cable, Metro Media has acted as a resource and distribution centre for video experiments made by Vancouver actors, dancers and musicians. And by taping sessions organized by the People's Law School it has been a useful means of distributing educational information.

In the latter case, cable programming often forms part of an integrated communications package. A good case in point is the Day Care Centre Workers' Training Program. This project involved taping the activity in a number of Vancouver day care centres, in order to involve parents in their children's daytime activities and to stimulate a discussion on the problems of working mothers. The tapes were also used for staff training, as a means of documenting points of view that the day-care centre worker isn't usually aware of. (She rarely gets a chance, for instance, to follow one child over a long period of time.) All the material was eventually edited down into a single half-hour tape aired over cable in co-operation with the Day Care Association, which organized discussion groups centred round the screening. Afterwards, the tape was bicycled round to groups who missed the showing, or who wanted to see it again.

With the advent of a new provincial government in British Columbia, Metro Media has found itself acting as an advisor on communications policy, in relation to such issues as community control of cable companies, educational television, and communications between citizens' organizations and the government. The group presented a brief on communications policy to the B.C. Government in April, 1973.

In preparing their brief, Metro Media members were forced to do some hard thinking about their own two years of operation - an analysis

obviously useful to other resource centres across the country. Quite apart from the standard difficulties of funding, training, equipment acquisition and maintenance, three central problems were isolated: these relate to the composition and role of the Board of Directors; the role of the resource team; and the selection of projects. On the subject of the Board, Metro Media reported to us:

As in the case of any social service agency, the Board of Directors is the resource centre's means of remaining responsive and accountable to the community. The trouble is, questions as to who should be on the board, and which sectors of the community should be represented, cannot really be answered until it has been decided what the Board can and should be responsible for.

In Metro Media's case, the Board represented a wide spectrum of interests, for many of whom communications was not really a central concern. Thus while the Board was active at the beginning in getting the centre set up, and in defining general project criteria, it later became inactive. More and more decisions were made on a day-to-day basis by staff members.

Now that a number of new policy issues have arisen -

provincial communications, cablevision development and so on - it seems likely that a new Board will be formed. This time it will probably be much more focused, and will be made up of groups who have been involved in Metro Media projects, and who are concerned about the policy issues."

In the case of the resource team, Metro Media continued, "the problem is how to assemble an effective working group out of people whose interests are often poles apart. An organization like Metro Media attracts people with different motives and ideas. People into politics, for example, see community media as an exercise in political journalism; videofreaks see videotape technology and imagery as an end in itself; people involved in the community are interested in the community development aspects; others see the humanizing of technology and a new relationship between citizens and their communications facilities as the end goals. Some put the emphasis on production, others on access. All these themes are present in the dynamics of Metro Media. Generally speaking, the way we've come to terms with it is to divide the work into separate spheres: some of our people work full time on cable production; others as resource people attached to neighbourhood centres; others work on media research and prepare briefs."

"Then, for a while, each resource person decided on his own projects; after that, the executive director and the resource person consulted together. Now, a rotating Projects Committee responds to requests from the community, with all decisions ratified by a weekly general meeting of all the staff. While this works quite well for those projects which are generated by community groups, it means that Metro Media acts only in a responsive role. We need a mechanism to initiate new projects on our own, pilot projects which explore new concepts and uses of media."

One roadblock in the way of long-term planning is that, like Teled in Halifax, Metro Media has no assured long-term financial base. This is particularly difficult in terms of capital expenditure – setting up a studio; purchasing new equipment – since OFY and LIP funds are not available for these purposes. In 1973, Metro Media would like to spend about $60,000 on new equipment (for 1972, its total budget was just over $100,000). An approach to Premier Cablevision for funding has recently been turned down.

Loosely affiliated with Metro Media is Neighbourhood Radio, a community group which specializes in community documentaries aired over CBC Vancouver. Primarily a citizen-advocacy group, Neighbourhood Radio, as we noted in the Introduction, has linked its programming operations to an information program, known as "Muckrakers", centred around a collection of clippings concerned with local issues.

The group's thirty or so members meet weekly to sift through the latest batches of clippings for program ideas – which had ranged from documentaries on fishermen's unions to non-sexist stories for children. By means of a 1972 OFY grant, Neighbourhood Radio members also trained residents of Vancouver Strathcona – a largely Chinese section of town – in broadcast skills, towards the eventual goal of establishing a low-power FM station in the district.

Another important citizens' communications development in Vancouver and one which like Vidéographe concentrates exclusively on VTR, is the Video Inn, a storefront video theatre and tape exchange centre supported by the Canada Council.

Headed by an alumnus of Intermedia, this group has already published an international directory of videotapes, and is currently working on developing a library and catalogue of Canadian videotapes. "For the first time in history," one member told us, "a

sensitive record of social change is being made by those directly affected by it. If no one takes the initiative to collect some of these documents, we may well regret it in the future." A library of the first, almost innocent uses of video, he suggested, may be as valuable as early books and films. "If it is possible to reinject these into the mainstream of society, a mirror situation will occur, affording us a new awareness of change as it happens."

Video Inn is also establishing a tape transfer service and is planning to produce a badly-needed Porta-Pac instruction and maintenance manual. In January 1973, Video Inn sponsored Matrix, an international meeting of groups and individuals working with VTR.

B.C. educational institutions are also becoming increasingly involved in citizens' communications, both in terms of community involvement and in terms of intellectual and policy analysis.

The leader in the latter area is Simon Fraser where a group of academics within the communications department, originally involved in designing the RAVEN communications network for B.C. Indians (to be discussed in our next chapter), have now turned their attention to studying the implications of new developments in the media for public information needs. The research, supported by the Canada Council, has identified three areas that require priority attention: 1) industry regulation and citizen access; 2) industry revenues and support of public information systems; 3) identification and cataloguing of citizens' information needs.

Also active is Capilano Collete which our B.C. consultant reports "has the most comprehensive communications program at the community college level in the province". One and two-year courses are designed to give students technical knowledge and experience in the media, and aim to involve the student in the community by, among other things, placing them with Metro Media as resource people. Capilano College is also the Canadian centre for exploration of the potential of Super 8mm film. Another important educational development is the new but rapidly developing Provincial Educational Media Centre.

As is evident from the discussion so far, cable television is currently the most important aspect of the B.C. citizens' communications scene, and nowhere is it more important than in Campbell River, a pulp and paper mill town on Vancouver Island. Here, uniquely in Canada, the

system is owned and operated by the community through a co-operative, the Campbell River Cable Television Association. Strikingly, one can find clear parallels between this group and Télévision communautaire Saint-Félicien Inc., three thousand miles away to the east. One of our members reports:

"Campbell River has a real sense of community. The structures within the community are no longer building protective walls; the school board, for example, is aware that it is responsible to the entire community and not just to the school system. The library and other assorted civic institutions are willing to co-operate in the concerns of the entire community."

In this model, an operation that was designed primarily as a demand educational system has developed into a demand system serving for the entire community. Two channels, devoted to educational priorities are fed into the schools; during the school-day, a bank of more than 1,000 program hours is available to teachers. At the same time, these channels are available to the community to provide what one observer describes as "the best daytime television viewing I've seen in Canada". After hours, the demand system is turned over to the community. While two channels are scarcely enough to provide total service, the system is currently being adapted for mid-band expansion to include another five channels.

While joining the Association is relatively expensive - each shareholder pays $100 - its monthly fees, at $3.50, are the lowest in the country. Ploughed back into the community, revenues have produced a citizens' production studio and a production unit which has recently embarked on an intensive local programming operation.

Yukon and Northwest Territories

While both these areas are actively concerned with citizens' communications, virtually all projects involve native groups, and will be discussed separately in our next chapter.

PART III: NATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Chapter 8

Native Groups and Citizens'
Communications

Canada's Indians, Métis and
Inuit have had a distinguished
place in the development of the
citizens' communications move-
ment. In fact, they have had
to. Isolated culturally or
geographically from the mass
media serving most Canadians,
they have had little option but
to develop their own networks
and techniques for communica-
tions.

Of the 500,000 or so Canadians
of native origin, most live in
urban or rural settings, rather
than in the hinterland, as is
sometimes imagined. Those who
live close to southern society
are depressingly aware that, so
far as its mass media are
concerned, they are not part
of it. And for those who live
in the remote parts of the
country there is at times a
frightening lack of the kind of
communications service that
any white urban dweller would
consider basic.

In what follows, we concentrate
upon the special problems of
those Canadians of native
origin living in remote areas.
This is because their problems
are particularly acute, their
needs particularly vital, and
the technology required to
serve those needs is complex.
But we recognize that the

urban Indian or Métis is also disadvantaged in this aspect of his life, even if he dwells in the heart of a communications citadel like Toronto or Montreal.

It should be noted that there are two kinds of problems here. One is that, in the hinterland, communications systems may exist, but native persons often have limited access to them. The other kind of problem is that, even where Canadian mass media systems extend, they project a world in which the Canadian of native origin virtually *doesn't exist.* Whether he is a Cree living in Toronto, or an Inuk enjoying the wonders of Anik in Inuvik, Canadian television tells him that the world as perceived by mass media doesn't include him, except possibly in the Sitting Bull or Nanook stereotype.

We might note here some comments made by social philosophers which may be summarized:

"The importance of communication is that it provides a form of behaviour in which the individual may become an object to himself, because he not only hears himself but responds to himself, talks and replies to himself as truly as the other person replies to him, and it is then that we have behaviour in which individuals become objects to themselves. These objects, of course, are their ego, their self, their identity."

Native people are well aware that they must re-create or discover an image of themselves, as a counterweight to the image that has been imposed upon them by white society. Their emerging image redefines their distinctness on the one hand and declares their sameness on the other, particularly their sameness in terms of the fundamental rights and freedoms that they hold in common, or must hold in common, with the rest of Canadian society. Therefore, like all Canadians, whether they live on an Alberta reserve, on the edge of the Mackenzie Delta, or in downtown Winnipeg, native people want and have a right to the basic communications services: telephone, telex, radio, television, print, film and other techniques. In addition their perceived cultural and social need - one which they are articulating more and more forcefully - is for communications links among themselves, among groups with similar concerns, outward to the larger community and upward to decision makers, via systems which they own and control.

Clear evidence of their concern in this area has been the rapid emergence, over the last four or five years, of

native communications organizations. These have been basically of two kinds.

The first, and perhaps the most successful, have been independent communications production and resource societies, administered by an elected board of directors representative of the native groups in a particular region, and staffed by persons with skill in both the technical and community development aspects of communications. One of the most important functions of the staff has been to provide training and counselling to native groups in the use of a wide range of electronic, film, and print media.

The second kind of communications organization developed by native people has been the communications branches or units of the provincial or territorial native organizations. Normally they become involved in several media, but tend to specialize in one, for example either radio broadcasting, radio-telephone, or newspapers.

A model of the former kind is the Alberta Native Communications Society, serving both status and non-status groups. The Society began in the spring of 1966 when Eugene Steinhauer, a Cree Indian who was to become the first executive director of the Society, spearheaded a drive to conduct a government-sponsored weekly radio broadcast for the native people of Alberta. A fifteen-minute program was launched over radio station CKUA, Edmonton, on September 17, 1966. On December 11 of that year, it was extended to CFCW, Camrose, and then north to CKYL, Peace River, on February 5, 1967.

ANCS was incorporated under the laws of the Province of Alberta on April 1, 1968. The purposes of the Society are set out in the preamble to the constitution:

"...to support and encourage the Native People of Alberta to foster and promote communications between the various and diverse governmental departments, agencies and authorities and the Native People of Alberta through ... radio, television, press and field contacts; ....to engage in research in order to not only determine and focus attention upon the needs and problems of the Native People of Alberta but also to advance knowledge and appreciation of and to stimulate interest in the culture, traditions, folklore and arts and crafts of the Native People of Alberta."

Today the Society maintains offices at 11427 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta. These house administrative staff, the newspaper *The Native People,* and radio and television production studios, and offices. The Society has a staff of thirty-one.

The Native People is a tabloid-size, 16 to 24 page weekly newspaper with a circulation of about 7,000. Radio production, some of it in Cree, totals three-and-a-half hours per week and is broadcast by local AM radio stations throughout northern Alberta. Television production is recorded on videotape and circulated for closed-circuit viewing in native communities.

In addition, an educational and cultural unit has recently been formed, which has already undertaken a dramatized 25-part native school broadcast, in co-operation with the Alberta Department of Education. The program, written and acted entirely by Indians, tells the story of an Indian boy's introduction to the city. Recently, ANCS has also become involved in the plight of natives in penal institutions, and increased its activities among native women and young people, and organized information workshops, newsletters and radio facilities in individual communities.

The Society seeks to serve all status and non-status Indians and Métis in Alberta, as well as any other interested parties. Southern Alberta is served principally by the Indian News Media, an off-shoot of ANCS.

The Society was funded initially under a Federal-Provincial ARDA agreement in 1969. Since 1970 its support has been the responsibility of the Secretary of State. Classified as a pilot project, ANCS has been funded annually to the extent of about $300,000.

Other important communications societies include the Indian News Media, set up to serve the native Blackfoot population in Southern Alberta, which publishes a bi-monthly newspaper, the *Kainai News* and prepares one-and-a-half hours of radio programming weekly for stations in Lethbridge and Calgary; the RAVEN Society of British Columbia, which has developed an extensive radio-telephone network linking remote Indian communities throughout the province, and has developed a video exchange among these communities; the Indian Voice, which publishes a newspaper for B.C. Indians; and the Communications Unit of the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, which publishes a newspaper, *The Native Press* every three weeks, prepares program material for broadcast over the CBC's Mackenzie network, and is currently working with RAVEN to expand the radio-telephone network into the Territories.

All four organizations were evaluated and designated "pilot projects" by Secretary of State in 1971, and since

then have been funded to a total of $661,000.

In addition, and still in the formative stages, there are the several communications units of the provincial organizations. These include Native Communications Inc. in Manitoba, which programs a half-hour daily on commercial stations in Thompson and Flin Flon, and is planning to develop a community radio station at Cross Lake, a Cree community of about two thousand, 450 miles north of Winnipeg; the Yukon Native Brotherhood, producing radio program material for the CBC Yukon Network; Inuit Tapirisat (The Eskimo Fellowship), in the process of setting up a single side-band radio system to link several communities; the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, publishing a newspaper *The Saskatchewan Indian*, and producing four half-hour weekly radio programs heard in North Battleford, Yorkton and Regina; the Manitoba Métis Federation, developing a communications program specifically for migrating native people; the Nova Scotia Indian Association, publishing a monthly newspaper, *The MicMac News* developing an information service and preparing a radio program; the New Brunswick Indian Association, publishing a monthly paper *Agenutemagen* since November

1972 and preparing radio and TV programs; and the Native Association of Newfoundland-Labrador set up in January 1973, which via a 1973 OFY grant has embarked on developing a VTR link between communities on the island and in Labrador. (A separate organization, *Kinatuinamot Illengajuk* has published an Eskimo-language newspaper serving the north coast of Labrador since early 1972.)

Attempts are also underway to launch a Native Communications Society in Ontario, on the Alberta model, while in Quebec, as we noted in the introduction, the James Bay Crees have made effective use of communications techniques in their court action to halt the James Bay Hydro Project.

A rather different approach to the problems of communications is the Anik satellite. This $100 million system has intensified the demands of native Canadians for communications techniques tailored to their unique needs. Although the satellite's most conspicuous effect will be to bring southern programming to the North, there will be some significant improvement in the communications service to approximately twenty-six remote communities, of which nineteen have already been receiving delayed-time, frontier-package TV programs. But when this massive system was being planned, no attempt whatsoever

was made to involve native groups in the decision-making process. Now that the system is being implemented, the CBC has yet to provide for special northern programming and for programming in the languages of the Inuit and Indians who will be exposed to the culture shock of southern commercial broadcasting.

For all its technical sophistication - in fact, precisely because of this - Anik represents to us a case example of how communications systems in the pluralist Canada of 1970 can no longer, and *must no longer*, be planned and implemented. At the time of writing, the government is debating whether a special native communications funding program is desirable and feasible. We believe it is both of these, and in addition, that it is essential. In the meantime, the bulk of the assistance being provided today goes under the heading of "experimental".

The two key programs are those of the Secretary of State and the Department of Communications.

Secretary of State has funded a number of pilot projects, described above, to a total of $1,680,112. At the request of the National Association of Friendship Centres, the department began a program of counselling and training for the centres. This involved the development of techniques through which the centres could communicate with their members, other centres, their communities at large, and all levels of government.

The Department of Communications' principal undertaking in social development is its Northern Pilot Project, where it has concentrated on developing a transfer of skills process covering a range of media, all community-owned and operated, with all decisions on their use, access and operation being left to the community. On the Memorial University Extension Service model, field-workers provide the essential link by which skills (technical, programming, administrative) are transferred to the communities so that outside assistance is progressively withdrawn, and then removed. Activities to date are:

- Radio-telephone network covering Northwestern Ontario Cree and Ojibway communities, operated by the Sioux Lookout Friendship Centre. (Six units of this system have been supplied by the Indian Community Branch of the Ontario Government.)

- Radio-telephone network covering five communities in the Keewatin District, N.W.T.

- Community-run and owned radio broadcast station, CKQN, in Baker Lake, N.W.T., with a second station scheduled for Big Trout Lake, Ontario this year.

- Video groups established in Keewatin and North-western Ontario.

Other departments involved more marginally in native communications include Indian and Northern Affairs, which has been involved in establishing a radio-telephone network in Northern Manitoba, and the Department of Regional and Economic Expansion, which is developing an extensive information-communications program in The Pas, Manitoba.

With this introduction as background and point of reference, we turn now to a system-by-system analysis of the communications techniques being used by native peoples.

Newspapers

Newspapers remain the staple of native communications. Practically all organizations from small local groups to provincial and national associations publish a newspaper or newsletter, either as house organs to communicate among their memberships or as a medium to reach a larger, more varied readership. They range from quite simple productions run off on a gestetner to sophisticated, professional-quality weekly or monthly newspapers like *The Native People* (ANCS) and *The Indian Voice*. For most of the friendship centres, a newsletter is the principal communications medium; some of them, like the *Tree of Peace* in Yellowknife, are skilfully put together and widely read.

The operating budgets vary from a few hundred dollars per year, with a voluntary staff, to over $50,000 per year with a full-time professional staff. A common expense to most of them, and one that they often find particularly exasperating, is the high mailing cost.

An issue that some of the larger newspapers are attempting to deal with is advertising revenue. Independently they are incapable of attracting the number and kind of advertisers they would want, particularly national advertisers. They are, however, beginning to investigate the possibility of forming an advertising co-op. Together they hold a large enough readership to be well worth the attention of

national agencies.

Radio

In the more densely populated areas of Canada, where the great majority of native people live, radio broadcasting continues to be one of the most effective media of communication. It is particularly suited to the oral traditions of native peoples, it is reasonably inexpensive, it can be used competently and effectively by amateurs, and it can be used by native groups with similar concerns, outward to the larger community, and upward to all levels of government.

The most ambitious ventures are those of ANCS, the Indian News Media, Native Communications Inc., and the Communications Unit of the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories. These organizations produce regular programming for broadcast over private and CBC stations, most of it in English, but a substantial portion in native languages. ANCS, for example, produces three hours of programming per week in Cree, which is aired over CFCW, Camrose; CKUA, Edmonton; CKYL, Peace River; and CFYK, Yellowknife. The Indian News Media produces one-and-a-half hours of programming per week, aired over private stations in Lethbridge and

Calgary. Each of these organizations produce their tapes in their own studios. (CBC usually pays native groups for programming.)

Among the other organizations involved in radio production for broadcast over private stations are the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, the Yukon Native Brotherhood, Inuit Tapirisat, the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, and the New Brunswick Indian Association. (In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, native groups program through time slots donated by commercial stations.) These organizations have less experience than the former group, and none of them has a full-time radio production staff or their own studios.

The CBC is making a useful contribution to native programming. "Our Native Land" is a one-hour show mostly prepared by Indians and occasionally Inuit, heard over the full network at noon on Saturdays. In addition the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Native Brotherhood have produced program material for the Mackenzie and Yukon networks. All together the CBC Northern Service broadcasts (both shortwave and AM transmission) a total of 28 hours and ten minutes weekly in Inuktituut. A further 15 hours and 45 minutes of programming of interest to the

Indian population is broad-
cast either in English or in
Indian dialect.

Community Radio Stations

The main threat of native
radio broadcasting is in the
more populated areas, but
there is also some
significant native radio
work in the North. Currently
there are five community
radio stations owned and
operated by native people in
remote communities. These
are:

CKON. Baker Lake, Keewatin
District, N.W.T.

In this mostly Inuit
community of about 800, a
low-power FM station opened
on February 14, 1973 and is
broadcasting three hours a
day, in Inuktituut and
English. Fare includes phone-
in and disc-jockey shows,
community discussions and
news, supplemented by taped
programs provided by the CBC.
A full-time operator both
manages the station itself
and acts as a permanent com-
munity-animator.

CFCT. Tuktoyaktuk, Mackenzie
Delta, N.W.T.

Tuk is an Eskimo community of
about 600. Actual control is
vested in the Tuk Broadcast-
ing Society. The station
broadcasts four hours a day.
Programming includes a half-
hour of local news, bedside

stories for children, and
Eskimo tales told in the Eskimo
language. Radio Tuk is now an
affiliate of the CBC, which
provides it with service 16
hours a day from its station at
Inuvik.

Radio Kenomadiwin. North-
western Ontario.

Radio Kenomadiwin is a mobile
radio station, staffed by
Company of Young Canadians
volunteers (all native people).
Originally, it provided service
two days every second week to
seven communities in the Lake
Nipigon region. The project
ran into serious problems, but
with the help of a number of
the Challenge for Change media
counselling team, activities
are currently being integrated
into one community and the
future looks more hopeful.

Rankin Inlet. Keewatin
District, N.W.T.

Through the Comminterphone
experiment, conducted by Bell
Northern Research, Bell Tele-
phone and the CBC, and
evaluated by DOC, the local
intra-community telephone
system was linked to a 40-watt
AM transmitter. Telephones,
in effect, have become micro-
phones, so that up to four
people can conference together
for the community to hear.
CBC has now assumed operation
responsibility for Rankin
Inlet and will develop a com-
munity radio station round the
Comminterphone facility.

Pond Inlet. Baffin Island, N.W.T.

This Inuit community of 450 people has had a community 40-watt AM station for several years. The station broadcasts seven hours a day, and all programming is in Inuktituut. While there are no documen- taries or carefully prepared community shows, the station has developed into what one observer described as "the information lifeline of the community". Upkeep and honoraria are provided from the settlement's community funds.

There are three other community licensed northern stations, at Fort Simpson, N.W.T., Great Whale River, Quebec, and Moosonee, Ontario, but their program- ming consists only of recorded music plus a few local announcements. There is virtually no community programming input.

Other community radio stations in remote communities are in the planning stages. Within the next year, the Northern Pilot Project hopes to help communities establish stations at Big Trout Lake, in Northwest Ontario and in Nain, Labrador. The CBC plans a second LPRT experiment, in Fort Good Hope, N.W.T. The N.W.T. Government has offered assistance to a group at Broughton Island and as we remarked earlier, Native Communications Inc. of Manitoba, hopes to establish a station at Cross Lake.

Problems

In the case of broadcasting via a commercial station one difficulty is that the native association is dependent on the goodwill of the station owner. Even though the association usually pays heftily for the time slot, unless an ironclad contract has been signed this can be cancelled without warning. In October 1972, for example, a regular fifteen- minute program prepared by the Indian News Media was abruptly cancelled by a Lethbridge station. Similarly, Native Communications Inc. reports that its time on CHTN in Thompson has recently been cut by two-thirds. And even when sufficient time is made available on a regular basis, this may not always be at the hours best suited to the pro- gramming group or the listening audience. One answer here might be for the CTRC to suggest guidelines for commercial stations, calling upon them to donate time to native radio groups (in fact, to any community radio group) as a public service, particularly in terms of educational, informational or issue-oriented programming.

When it comes to full-scale com- munity stations, there is a problem with present licensing requirements. The time lag

between applying and receiving a licence can be discouraging: Radio Kenomadiwin, for example, waited three years for approval and in the interim the project lost much of its original momentum - which in fact, has yet to be regained. But the overriding problem that confronts many native groups engaged in radio is sheer lack of confidence and expertise. Groups have frequently had to turn to non-native experts to produce a good part of their programming. Where ghost programmers have not been available, programming frequently degenerates into non-stop disc-jockey shows. This has happened with Radio Kenomadiwin. The situation at Baker Lake looks more hopeful, but it will at least be a year before the word *success* can be used.

In spite of these problems, radio seems to be the preferred medium of many groups, and it has been remarkable how accomplished certain groups have become in a very short time. The conclusion to be derived from the disappointing results of some native broadcasting ventures is not that the medium is unsuited to native communications, but rather that "it is too much to hope for any group, no matter how dedicated, to sustain programming effort day in and day out, year in and year out, on the basis of volunteer labour."

Above all, the examples of ANCS and the Indian News Media have demonstrated that the talent, initiative, and the administrative and technical skills necessary for radio communications exist within native groups, and that with some training, and with reasonable and timely financial assistance, they may well expect as much success as with any other venture.

Radio-Telephone Networks

For those native people living in small remote communities, radio-telephone systems seem to be one of the most effective and efficient communications media. The pioneer here is RAVEN (Radio and Visual Education Network) serving British Columbia. The Society presently consists of Indian bands throughout the province, each of whom pays $1,000 membership dues, receiving in exchange a four-channel sideband radio transmitter-receiver, capable of communicating with any other such set anywhere in the province. Once the transceiver is installed, and local residents are trained in operation and maintenance, the band itself becomes totally responsible for when and how it is to be used. Currently, there are 54 units in operation, and the system is currently being expanded into the Northwest Territories, in co-operation with the Northwest Territories Indian Brotherhood.

RAVEN is in constant use, for purposes ranging from emergency communication, to province-wide band meetings, and keeping in touch with friends. Recently RAVEN received licensing permission to patch a telephone line into the network; this, for example, will allow cabinet ministers to telephone RAVEN and take part in a conference discussion with Indians in all parts of B.C. Although RAVEN has been established to serve native groups, its facilities are also available to other residents.

As for funding, apart from memberships, RAVEN has received about $130,000 from the Donner Foundation and the provincial government (via the First Citizens' Fund), and $100,000 from the Department of the Secretary of State, as well as extensive technical assistance from the Pacific Regional Office of the Department of Communications, in terms of providing licences and general advice.

The success of RAVEN has provided a model for other native groups. In 1972, through DOC's Northern Pilot Project, a mid-Canada counterpart was established in Ontario, in the region north and northwest of Sioux Lookout, at the request of the Sioux Lookout Fellowship and Communication Centre. Under the direction of the Centre, assisted by an NPP field representative, 17 Cree and Ojibway communities are presently linked, and the system is due to be expanded to twenty-four.

This network is in continuous use for four-and-a-half hours each day. At least half of all communication is in the native language. Topics discussed include band chiefs debating resolutions in advance of their meetings (at a consequent saving in travel costs), new government programs, personal messages, and collecting news items for a newspaper put out by the Sioux Lookout Centre. Recently, the communities discovered a new use: comparing food prices in Hudson's Bay Stores.

Also under the Northern Pilot Project, a small network has been established in the Keewatin District of the N.W.T., linking the communities of Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Baker Lake and Whale Cove, along with Eskimo Point, which will be joining the network later in 1973. This system operates about two hours daily and is becoming increasingly widely used, but in contrast to Northern Ontario, the communities have preferred a less structured network. Each community participates individually, without a control station.

In each case, the people concerned have a firm sense that the systems belong to *them*.

The installation of the systems included comprehensive training sessions in how to operate and maintain equipment. Of particular importance is that while the first sets in Northwestern Ontario were installed and their operators trained by non-native outsiders, the second and third sets of radio-telephones were installed by members of the communities, and their operators were trained by the first graduates of the training course. These Northwestern Ontario operators have since gone on to train radio-telephone operators in Northern Manitoba.

In contrast, there have been several attempts in the past to simply provide HF radio-telephone units without providing the necessary training or funding for their maintenance. Almost always, this approach has resulted in a gradual decline of the system, and eventual breakdown.

At least two other native associations, Inuit Tapirisat and the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, are laying immediate plans for radio-telephone networks and these will almost certainly be followed by others. The major drawback of such systems is the poor quality of reception, and at times, non-reception. Their major benefit, apart from serving as an all-purpose gossip network, is low cost.

VTR

While native communications groups have concentrated on newspapers, radio-telephone systems, and radio broadcasting, VTR has by no means gone unnoticed. Nearly all the native associations, most notably RAVEN, The Alberta Native Communications Society, Inuit Tapirisat and the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood have had some experience with videotape. By far the most common usage is that of recording meetings, for in remote areas band council leaders and other native representatives who attend meetings are rarely in a position to report personally to all their members.

Recently a Challenge for Change media counsellor and Northern Pilot Project field worker have provided assistance to a group at Sandy Lake, Ontario. The Film Board is also supporting the Department of Communications in the development of a Keewatin video network centered on Baker Lake and a similar network in the Mackenzie Delta. A somewhat similar approach, also in the early stages, is being taken by a Quebec Department of Communications field worker among Inuit communities on the eastern shore of Hudson's Bay.

A number of native groups have got well beyond the stage of simply recording meetings. While effective use of VTR in

community development has taken place primarily in urban areas, often in co-operation with the friendship centres, similar developmental work is also being done in the North. The Yukon Native Brotherhood has made "action white paper" use of VTR; in this case, to present a brief to the Senate Committee on Poverty. And increasingly, native groups are looking to VTR as a means of establishing informational and educational networks. In the North, this would require native groups to videotape programs relevant to their needs, and bicycle them from community to community.

This type of system is not dissimilar to the frontier packages of the CBC, except that native groups themselves decide which programs to tape. In fact, one working model already exists on the coast of Labrador, where for the last two years the Extension Service of Memorial University has taped off-air broadcasts and bicycled them to seven coastal villages. The service comprises about five hours of programming weekly and includes mostly public affairs information material, special programs on the north, and "Sesame Street". In addition, a spot news program in the Eskimo language has been developed, and is aired twice a week.

Apart from feeding an information-starved area, the purpose of the network is to stimulate community awareness. "The seven participating communities have only one monitor each," Extension reports, "and this is usually set up in the school or village hall. As opposed to the isolation of home viewing, community hall television becomes a social event, bringing the community together. Viewing becomes a shared experience, and with an experienced animator at hand, such sharing can be expanded to include constructive discussion." Though developed independently, this approach is virtually identical to the group readings pioneered by Télévision communautaire Saint-Félicien in Quebec.

Currently, native groups in several areas - the Northwest Territories, Northern Ontario, Alberta, Nouveau-Québec - are developing videotape networks. But rather than depending on CBC, or any other institution for programming, these groups all intend to concentrate on distributing educational and informational material which they themselves have produced. But many of the groups continue to be in desperate need of training. One of our members, experienced both in working with native groups and in developing VTR program packages, studied the situation in the North closely and reported:

"In reviewing VTR proposals of the native associations, and in talking with these groups, it became evident that while the groups had taken into full account the cost of production equipment there was little understanding on the time, cost and expertise involved in producing tapes which would achieve their objectives.

"There is, unfortunately, a tendency for native groups to develop communications projects, particularly VTR projects in isolation from an overall educational and developmental context. In part, this has come about because native associations have perceived that there are sources of funds for communications projects, and in the desire to sell a particular project, groups have tended to describe such projects as the solution to all native problems.

"It is all too easy for government support of native communications projects to give the illusion of supporting native development, when in reality it is only creating a few jobs and providing a useless technology."

Community Television

Several of the native communications organizations have been attempting to develop VTR programs for distribution via cable television. ANCS has had considerable success in producing and distributing cable programs on a regular basis. The Indian News Media regularly produces programming for cable distribution in Calgary, and intends to increase its involvement in this area.

Because of the lack of television facilities in northern and remote areas, native groups here have so far been involved only marginally in community television production. As Anik beams programs from the south - into more and more northern communities, the question of programming originated by native people becomes more and more urgent as a means of protecting and developing their own heritage and their individual and group identities.

The first full-scale experiment in community programming was launched in October 1972 at La Ronge in Northern Saskatchewan, a community whose population is about two-thirds Cree and Métis, and one-third white. It has received backing from the CBC, the Department of the Secretary of State, the Department of Communications and the Innovative Services Branch of the Department of National Health and Welfare. (Some preliminary attempts at broadcasting locally made half-inch tapes have been made using a Frontier Coverage Package transmitter at Inuvik.)

Two young community workers are responsible for the project; the system they are using is that of broadcasting half-inch videotape over a CBC Frontier Package Coverage transmitter, which regularly operates four hours a day. VTR packages of anywhere between five and thirty minutes are presented two or three times a week. At one level, La Ronge represents an important experiment in the broadcast potential of half-inch videotape. But it is a far more important experiment in participatory programming involving native people, one that is all the more delicate because the community is mixed, and because the organizers came from the outside.

One specific difficulty, according to the organizers, is that less than ten percent of the Métis population have television sets. "As a result, the local Métis society is not interested in using the transmitter to reach its people." As important, "those native people who are involved in community affairs are already grossly overburdened with requests to join or form committees, and feel they are already asked to attend too many meetings."

At the time of writing, the situation in La Ronge was looking a little more hopeful. A native cameraman had been trained to tape and edit programs on his own, and he in turn was training another. The Métis Society had been actively involved in producing a special on housing. A Challenge for Change media counsellor was preparing to help and advise. Even so, the community development process has scarcely begun.

The crucial question is that of funding. The organizers estimate that they need approximately $30,000 to carry on, and this has not been easy to find. "Most organizations," they report, "are prepared to give seed money to innovative projects, but the La Ronge project is now a going concern, and needs secure funding so as not to suffocate in its own fund-seeking and financial problem."

Summing Up

"Only connect! That was the
whole of her sermon...
Live in fragments no longer."

E.M. Forster, *Howard's End*

In the preceding chapters we
have done our best to describe,
and where appropriate to
analyse, the citizens' communi-
cations movement as it exists
in 1973 - without attempting
to list each and every project.
On the basis of the data that
have been presented, we think
it is possible to draw a
number of general conclusions.

First, it seems clear that
the nature of citizens' communi-
cations is in part existential.
The act of connecting in
other words, defines itself.
As much as the concrete
expression of some defined
objective or philosophic
concept, citizens' communi-
cations is what the people
engaged in it are actually
doing.

Not that one can simply leave
it at that: this would give
action a self-justifying
value unrelated to purpose
or thought. Indeed, through-
out this report we have
stressed the point that
citizens' communications
cannot be considered in
isolation from community
development, citizen advo-
cacy or self-expression.
Nevertheless, we believe that
the existential quality of

citizens' communications cannot
be ignored: we presuppose, along
with Forster, that to connect -
only to connect - is good in
itself, whether the act of
connecting involves a community
becoming more aware of itself
and so reinforcing its identity,
or a community connecting it-
self to other communities, or
a group connecting itself to
those in power by making the
authorities aware of its
needs and interests.

All of which amounts to a
long-winded way of saying
that the citizens of Saint-
Félicien know best what
messages they want to send
through their community
television system, and so
do the Indians of British
Columbia through the RAVEN
radio-telephone network,
and the fishermen of Fogo
through their video moni-
tors.

But what these groups don't
always know best is how to
organize, produce and pack-
age those messages, how to
maintain and operate the
equipment, and how to sur-
vive until they reach the
point that the community
they serve - or claim to
serve - considers the groups
valuable enough to support
them itself.

Before discussing more
particularly what it is
that citizen communicators
don't know - and hence
where they may need help -

it's worth drawing on the survey to fill in a little more background, particularly in terms of how citizens' communications relates to government, and to established institutions.

Citizens' Communications
vis-à-vis Government

As should be evident by now, all citizens' communications groups implicitly - and most of them explicitly - operate independently from government and from established institutions including the established media. As they see it, their role is to provide a service which is not only not being provided, but which of its nature *cannot* be, through traditional forms and structures. It would be a total contradiction of principle (and a self-defeating exercise in practice) for government even with the noblest of motives to run a community cable TV service in Saint-Félicien, or a community radio-telephone network in British Columbia.

And yet - this is both the irony and the challenge - few and possibly none of the ventures we've discussed could exist without public funding, whether this comes direct as with OFY and LIP, or indirectly through the programs of educational institutions like Memorial and Saskatchewan universities, and the support given by the National Film Board and the CBC.

A parallel relationship exists between the established media and citizens' communications groups. Some of these groups serve, if unintentionally, as a kind of Junior A league for the professional media; others, as a refuge for escapees from institutional media. At the same time - partly because they sensed the shift in the social climate, partly because the non-professionals taught them some unacknowledged lessons - the established media, as we discussed in the Introduction, are putting increasing emphasis on citizen communications. It is at least worth speculating whether at some time in the future, just as cable television companies today allow virtually no-strings access to outside groups, newspapers, magazines and broadcasting stations may not also surrender part of their columns or airspace to outsiders to express themselves.

One can also make a comparison between the citizens' communications movement and the sudden explosion of para-professional, or non-professional cultural activity in Canada. No sooner had a cultural palace been built in every major city, and filled with a network of permanent professional companies from Stratford to the National Ballet, than artists and performers began turning inward, away from big institutions, and downward, towards local community roots.

Nourished mostly by OFY and LIP, these roots sprouted a bewildering multitude of small publishing houses, warehouse theatres, experimental dance troupes, street musicians and street painters.

The comparison is too close to be coincidental. Both phenomena express, it seems clear, a social and cultural pluralism, a fatigue with bigness, a rediscovery of local identity. A pride in difference, in other words, and a search for self-reliance or, more accurately, for a scale of operation small enough so that self-reliance becomes possible. Some critics believe that this process, if continued indefinitely, could produce a fragmentation of society to the point where almost no common values remain, a "city of a thousand ghettos" as one observer has put it, rather than a global village.

This picture, we believe, is too pessimistic. Communications (and culture) can build communities as much as it breaks them down - and even more. ("Live no more in fragments," says Forster.) Communications can bring together groups dispersed within the totality of a society (Indians of the North with their brothers in southern cities; the fishermen of Newfoundland with those of British Columbia); communications can bring identity, and therefore self-respect, to forgotten towns

like Moose Jaw, Espanola and Saint-Félicien; communications can give identity, and therefore confidence to truly participate in a larger community to sub-groups within cities, whether these are the Portuguese and Greek immigrants served by Radio Centreville in Montreal, or the trade union rank-and-file served by Le Bloc.

Our assumption here - and no doubt it can be challenged - is that much of the apparent homogeneity (the "unhyphenated Canadianism") of other years was artificial, or no more than skin deep. It survived because so many of us were passive and hesitant about our true interests, and because so many groups lacked the skills, the means and the nerve to define and express themselves.

Today, native Canadians are no longer passive; immigrants no longer try to preserve their language and customs as a private, almost embarrassing activity; all the special interest groups from subteeners to senior citizens from women to the unemployed, from farmers and fishermen to industrial workers, are expressing increasing confidence in their particularities and a sense of self-worth in their differences, and are developing the skills to express themselves. For all these groups, the media are becoming what Ivan Illich has described as "tools of conviviality", those which "give each person who

uses them the greatest oppor-
tunity to enrich the environ-
ment with the fruits of his
or her vision."*   But what
continues to be lacking often
is the means.

Which brings us back to the
irony, and the challenge. For
though the various groups are
seeking, in different ways,
independence and self-reliance,
they are also asking govern-
ment to help them become
self-reliant and independent.
The contradiction is more
apparent than real and
certainly, it is not in the
least novel. Business cor-
porations and companies rely
massively upon government
assistance, through tax
write-offs, direct grants
and purchases, tariff
barriers - yet they proclaim
and believe in their
independence. (The same
holds true for the most
independent-minded Canadians
of all, farmers.) University
professors owe their intel-
lectual independence to their
dependence on public funds
and so now do medical doctors.
For years, at least two
distinct groups in society -
artists and scientists - have
been free to do their thing
because government gave them
the money to do it. The
question then becomes, "Does
citizens' communications merit
the same treatment?" In part,
the answer is that it is al-
ready getting it.

1 *Ivan Illich*, Tools of
Conviviality, *Harper and Row*,
1973.

Government vis-à-vis Citizens' Communications: Today

As should be apparent by now,
the government today is heavily
involved in citizens' communi-
cations. LIP and OFY alone
gave $6.2 million to "media"
(a somewhat loose term) projects
in 1972; at least 13 depart-
ments and agencies are involved
in one way or another. (Some
may not know that they are
involved; a contract to use
VTR to research drug usage
just that, and not citizens'
communications as far as the
Department of National Heath
and Welfare is concerned; yet
the group uses the contract to
refine its techniques, and
perhaps even to survive.)
Insofar as a scale of involve-
ment by particular departments
and agencies is concerned, a
very rough order of importance
might be as follows:

A) LIP and OFY. Without these
two programs, perhaps two-thirds
of all the projects we have
described might not exist at
all; at the very least, they
would exist at a much lower
level of activity. Yet this
method of funding has consider-
able drawbacks. LIP and OFY
are not concerned with commu-
nications (or culture) or with
any goal except reducing
unemployment, other than that
the projects they support
should meet general criteria
of usefulness. In the winter
of 1972-73, LIP in particular
shifted its emphasis away
from communication and as a
consequence, many promising

groups - Wired World, Living
Radio Vivante, the People's
Planning Programme come imme-
diately to mind - encountered
difficulties. The grants from
both programs are short-term,
and provide little assistance
for the purchase of capital
equipment (obviously a must for
communications). Neither
program makes much provision
for evaluating specific projects,
nor do they encourage conti-
nuity from one season to the
next.

LIP and OFY, of course, march
to a much bigger drummer than
citizens' communications. For
all their shortcomings, the
programs constitute a critical
source of assistance to the
movement; at the moment they
are in fact almost the only
major funding source available.

B) Challenge for Change-
   Société Nouvelle,
   National Film Board

This program has been mid-
wife and earth mother, cata-
lyst and spiritual creator of
the bulk of citizens' communi-
cations activity in Canada.
Launched in the mid-60s to
encourage social change and
community development through
use of film and VTR techniques,
the programs were put on a firm
footing ($1.4 million a year
originally, now $1.8 million)
in 1970, on a five-year experi-
mental basis that ends April
1, 1975.

The programs are run by a

directing committee, its
members drawn equally from
the Film Board and the parti-
cipating departments. Each
of the nine departments
(Labour; Regional Economic
Expansion; National Health and
Welfare; Secretary of State;
Communications; Manpower;
Agriculture; Central Mortgage
and Housing Corporation; and
Indian and Northern Affairs)
is scheduled to contribute
$100,000 annually to Challenge
for Change. The balance is
to be supplied by the Film
Board.

Both programs have won a
reputation that is known,
envied and copied throughout
the world.

Broadly speaking, the acti-
vities of Challenge for
Change-Société Nouvelle are
two-fold. At the regional
level, the programs have pro-
vided seed money, VTR equip-
ment and expertise to a num-
ber of community communica-
tions projects across the
country, nearly all of which
have been discussed in our
survey sections. (We should
note that the bi-monthly
Challenge for Change News-
letter is by far the best
continuing source of informa-
tion on community communi-
cations projects in Canada.)
Challenge for Change is now
operating at the regional
level through a six-member
media counselling team, an
experimental program designed
to last for 18 months.

In the national context, both programs have produced about 100 films, used for educational and community development purposes, documenting existing social conditions and problems, from the position of women in Quebec society to the disappearing family farms of Ontario.

The shortcomings of Challenge for Change-Société Nouvelle are the obverse of its virtues. Its projects are short-term, innovative and experimental. One problem is that expectations of both communities and communications groups can be raised beyond the capacity of the program to fulfill them. Another is that experimentation can become a self-justifying goal, substituting for actual accomplishment, which usually requires a longer harder pull.

The media-counselling team of Challenge for Change has been set up as a partial solution to these difficulties. (Société Nouvelle has no counter-part to the media counsellors, because, being located in Montreal, it is much more closely in touch with its constituents.) Yet as we see it, the team's expertise and ingenuity is stretched far too thin. One member is responsible for all of Northern Ontario and Manitoba, another has Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories to cover. Given available resources and personnel (experienced communications animators are in

critically short supply and the media counselling team is drawn from the cream of the crop), it might be more useful for team members to begin on a smaller scale, even if some parts of the country have to do without their services for a year or so. In other words, a concentrated approach is likely to be more fruitful than a scatter-shot one. Further, eighteen months is far too short a time to prove out the utility of a concept like media counselling.

Another problem with Challenge for Change is that close to 90% of the current budget goes towards production of films - many of which are social documentaries which could as readily have been produced by the Film Board itself. For this reason, coupled with the fact that many innovations pioneered by Challenge for Change - such as more effective methods of distribution, and decentralized film production have now become part of the Film Board's overall policy, one school of thought has it that Challenge for Change - Société Nouvelle ought to be discontinued when the five year experimental period comes to an end. Another line of reasoning - one with which we on the whole tend to agree - is that the Challenge for Change concept is much too valuable to go by the boards; that starting now, the media counselling team should be developed on a long-term basis and that very serious

consideration should be given to extending the Challenge for Change mandate into all media as a focal point for experimentation, but on a more consistent and intensive basis, into the media and community development. (Viewed from the perspective of community development, differences beween specific media, even those as far apart as say print and VTR, are marginal).

C) Secretary of State

This department has broad responsibilities for culture (exercised in large measure through autonomous agencies) and for citizenship development and participation. On both counts - quite apart from the specific experimental program for funding native communications groups discussed in Chapter Nine - Secretary of State has been active in supporting citizens' communications, through its regular social development and multicultural granting programs and through grants for special projects (e.g. the Conference on *Film, Vidéotape and Social Change* held at Memorial University in 1972).* In addition, regional offices of the Department have provided assistance to groups and loaned VTR equipment.

*See *report,* Cinema as Catalyst, *1972, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Extension Service.*

D) Department of Communications

DOC is responsible for communications policy, planning and research (where to date it has given virtually no attention to the technology of citizens' communications). It has no funding programs, but since April 1972 has been heavily involved with native communications through the Northern Pilot Project program, discussed in Chapter 8. DOC has given research contracts to a number of groups - including Teled, Metro Media and Wired World - and concentrated resources on developing techniques for evaluation and documentation.

E) CBC

The Office of Community Programming, set up in 1971, operates on a small scale (probably two experimental projects in 1973). The Northern Service is heavily involved with multi-language programming. On the whole, however, we consider that the CBC has been remiss in its responsibilities to the citizens' communications movement. Rather than being in the forefront of events, it has been overtaken by them. While the CBC is currently, and we suggest belatedly, engaged in a program of regionalization, it has undertaken nothing on the scale of the 20 BBC local community stations nor the Swedish local radio plan mentioned in the Introduction.

F) CRTC

CRTC is responsible for the regulation of radio and television policy and for the awarding of specific licences. It has no funding program, but is an important repository of research, information and advice. In its cable TV policy the CRTC has strongly supported local ownership and the organization of community programming.

G) Other Federal Departments and Agencies

The net casts wide. The Canada Council ($60,000 in 1972) constitutes one potentially important source of support, particularly in relation to its new $1 million Explorations program, partly designed to support social and cultural animation, which went into effect April 1, 1973. The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs has funded a considerable number of research projects involving citizen participation via communication, so also has CMHC. Also active is National Health and Welfare, its Drug Abuse Research division having funded, among others, Teled and the La Ronge Project. Health and Welfare is also responsible for the New Horizons program, potentially valuable for citizens' communications projects for the elderly, particularly in that - unlike OFY and LIP - it allows for purchase of capital equipment.

Other agencies worth singling out include the Company of Young Canadians, presently providing workers to staff Le Bloc and Radio Kenomadiwin; the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, funding Memorial University's projected community-information VTR network, and developing an extensive information-communications program for native people at the Pass in Manitoba; the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), developing a network of cultural educational centres and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

Though outside our terms of reference, we should note that some provincial governments, notably Quebec, are involved in funding citizens' communications projects, and so also are a number of private foundations. In the latter case, the undoubted leader is the Donner Canadian Foundation, which has provided seed money to Memorial University Extension Service, RAVEN, and Metro Media. In addition the United Church has given solid backing to the Parallel Institute, while the Vanier Institute has given contracts to Memorial University.

In summary, a great deal more is going on than is generally realized - including sometimes those involved in it. (Examples of two departments funding the same research project are not hard to find.) All this activity is uncoordinated, at times duplicative, and it responds to no overall

policy or philosophy.

Most critically, no on-going program exists. Instead, nearly all government activity in the citizens' communications is defined as experimental either because it *is* in fact experimental or because so-called experimental citizens' communications projects are the only ones that can be justified by the various departments and agencies concerned (excepting NFB, which has an explicit mandate.)

Only two of the scores of projects we have discussed - Espanola and La Ronge - were initiated by the CBC, and these appear to have been launched almost in opposition to the policy and attitude prevalent at senior levels. Apart from a few token gestures, the Corporation in striking contrast to the National Film Board has shown little interest in community development or citizens' advocacy programming, or in working with community media groups. The Office of Community Programming lives hand-to-mouth and the Northern vice has consistently been constrained in its budgets (in stark contrast to the pure *hardware* expenditures involved in Anik and in the CBC's Accelerated Coverage Program). Local outlets, in particular, are uncritical and unaware of the needs and interests of their communities, and indeed they are frequently much less

aware than local private stations. It is significant, for example, that Encounter '70 was covered almost in its entirety by CJCH Halifax, and that while Metro Media in Vancouver frequently prepares program packages for CTV in Vancouver, it has been informed time and again that CBC Vancouver "is locked into its schedules".

One of our members who has had experience as a CBC producer, came up with some useful suggestions as to how the Corporation's consciousness, particularly at the level of the local public affairs producer, might be heightened. He reports:

"Some of the best people to ensure citizen access to *mass* television, as opposed to the often masturbatory minority programming on cable systems, are the producers of local public affairs programs. They have allocated time; they have budgets; they have audiences. But they don't have much idea of what citizens' communications is all about.

"Suggest that their consciousness be heightened by bringing them together each year - maybe twice a year - to talk to each other, and to government people and to representatives from citizens' groups. This would be a working session of television producers, not a formal and use-less meeting of senior management people who don't in any case have their hands on the programming levers.

"This conference could probably be best arranged by a group like the Canadian Broadcasting League, or perhaps through the producers' associations."

This member suggested that CBC could also play an important role in providing what he described as "a prime-time voice of the disadvantaged

"Citizens' groups have spokesmen, and their spokesmen are often forced by the exigencies of the mass communications media to adopt ever more radical rhetoric, ever more defiant postures, simply to get the media coverage they feel is appropriate to their causes. This suggestion is for a system to puncture this blister.

"What I have in mind is a 90-minute television special once in a while, to be produced and controlled by some major but disadvantaged social element - such as the Indians. It would be a mosaic, blending the elements of documentary realism, music, perhaps humour and drama, to produce an entertaining and skilful program with a major message.

"The security of having final control would allow the spokesmen for such a social group to abandon the posturing that obtains on a 90-second news item."

Not that all these factors are

necessarily drawbacks. For one thing, a good deal of citizens' communications activity is, always will be and always should be, experimental and ad hoc. For another, if groups are to resolve the contradiction between government aid and independence, some form of multiple funding is essential; while one-hundred-and-one pipers may be too many, one is plainly too few. Formulation of an overall policy and program would do much to resolve the present confusion; beyond this there exists a clear need to establish mechanisms for co-ordination between complementary - and sometimes competitive - activities by so many departments and agencies. On this note, we turn away at last from description and analysis, in the direction of prescription.

As matters stand now, the central problems we consider to be these:

1) In the absence of a program designed to support citizens' communications, most groups are forced to scramble from one short-term grant on research contract to another expending energies which should be applied to their principal goal, that of becoming truly a part of their community, and reflecting its needs and interests.

2) In the absence of a complementary program of support services, encompassing training, information distribution and technical research, citizens' communication groups are also impeded by:

a) At the socio-cultural level, a shortage of experienced communications animators. In view of the fact that at least two thirds of all the projects we surveyed involve the use of community development techniques, this shortage is particularly critical. To be effective, communications animators need a sound knowledge of the principles of community development, together with a solid grounding in the uses of media.

b) At the technological level, a shortage of personnel experienced in the use and maintenance of communications. equipment.

c) An ironic but no less serious communications gap between groups themselves, and between those government departments and agencies presently involved in funding citizens' communications projects. For lack of an effective system of information distribution, a common pattern has been for groups to spring up, and to repeat the same mistakes as their predecessors.

3) Because they represent so new, and so fluid a pheomenon, citizen communicators have by and large not come to terms with the established media. The relationship between the two is sometimes one of antagonism (a state of mind that is not necessarily unhealthy or at any rate unproductive), and less commonly one of co-operation. For citizen communicators, the established media provide models of professionalism, and a place to display their wares to wider audiences, and test their skills against competition. The established media, we suggest, can in turn learn about inventiveness, freshness, commitment.

There are no neat and tidy solutions to any of these difficulties. The best that can be done, in a field that is itself so un-neat and untidy, is to create a framework within which effective solutions are likely to be found, and to lay down some

guidelines for agencies concerned to help.

The starting point must be a recognition by government that citizens' communications - the process by which citizens connect directly with whomever they want to reach - has become an important part of the Canadian social fabric. The content of these acts of communications belongs to the group, or the organization or the individual concerned. The responsibility of government is to help them to do what they want - subject of course to regulations established in relation to communications and broadcasting, and to relevant laws on matters such as libel, obscenity and plagiarism.

For government to provide recognition to citizens' communication involves much more than an assemblage of pious phrases. It implies, for one thing, an acceptance of the fact that Canadian society has evolved to the point where it can afford social and cultural diversity, and that it has matured to the point where such diversity will reinforce the national structure, not strain it. For another, recognition implies an understanding that the established media will no longer play an *exclusive* role as the nation's communications carriers. And finally, recognition by government implies action by

government. The action must begin with defining broad policy goals. We propose the following:
 - "Government should provide support to citizens' communications in order to assist groups or communities to make the best possible use of communications techniques to achieve their objectives."

 - "Government assistance to citizens' communications (in terms of either funding or of support services) should be directed towards groups which have developed non-profit programs and are able to demonstrate broad community support. These programs should involve the use of communications techniques in relation to community development, citizen participation and self-expression."

A. Funding

The communications activities of citizens' organizations are frequently beyond their means once they progress beyond much more than a simple photocopies newsletter. As we have noted, these activities may involve a wide range of communications equipment, and require expertise to operate and maintain it. While the costs of equipment have dropped dramatically in recent years, particularly in the electronic field, they are still substantial.

The principle of funding the voluntary sector is well estab-

lished in Canada, as an effective means of promoting social well-being without direct government intervention. What is required, we believe, is the extension of this concept into the field of citizens' communications activities.

The variation in groups is considerable; so is the variation in their needs. Native communications projects such as ANCS, for example, tend to indicate that *communications resource organizations* may be a useful model. Such an organization, to be effective, would require substantial funding having some degree of certainty over several years, so that equipment costs could be effectively amortized, and necessary planning and evaluation be undertaken. But long term funding has its disadvantages, and would certainly be wholly inappropriate for other kinds of groups, which might need only a one-time grant for a special project, or an occasional shot in the arm rather than continuing heavy support. The possibilities of both kinds of funding should be examined.

Long-Term Funding

Some of the advantages of long-term funding are:

1) It permits the group to plan effectively, in an atmosphere of some financial security, and therefore to be evaluated according to its success in achieving its

objectives;

2) It permits the purchase of costly equipment, which can be amortized over several years, and whose design and use is therefore more likely to be systematic rather than ad hoc;

3) It permits the group to concentrate its efforts on providing a service to the public rather than diffusing its energies in the pursuit of funds;

4) It permits the development of larger groups, and therefore a wider area and range of services, and certain economies of scale.

However there are unquestionably some difficulties with this approach. Over-reliance on outside-the-community financing reduces the need for a group to develop support within the community for its various projects. Instead of building a strong community base, too many groups are likely to turn toward government. The result could be alienation of communications groups from their own constituencies.

On the other hand, funding approaches must ensure that groups deriving the bulk of their support from non-governmental sources do not flounder when ends don't quite meet. Many of the communications activities of the voluntary sector are financed through churches, foundations, businessmen's associations, service

clubs and so forth.

Some of the more vibrant groups we have seen - such as Wired World in Kitchener-Waterloo - have made enormous achievements with a minimum of government financial support. Even a group so energetic as Wired World may occasionally need an injection of public money to help it over a lean time - not for a special project, simply to survive until new funds are forthcoming from other sources.

Special Project Funding

Voluntary organizations whose activities usually have nothing to do with communications may well want, once in a while, to undertake a special communications project. The group's primary objective, for example, might be training in the techniques of community organizations. If it were to mount a special conference of experts in this area, it might decide that a permanent record should be made that could be used in the further work of the group itself, and of others like it. This might be a film or a videotape, and might well be handled through a communications resource organization such as Teled in Halifax or Metro Media in Vancouver. But where no such resource organization existed, or where the special project would put an intolerable strain on the budget of the voluntary groups,

special one-time funding should be available.

Some General Words on Funding

We are not suggesting that any of these methods is better than any other, nor that governments at any level should undertake any or all of them in an exclusive way. What we *are* suggesting is that funding is needed, and urgently needed, if the voluntary sector in Canada is not to find itself so handicapped that its role will atrophy entirely, and as a consequence more and more direct intervention fall to government itself.

B. Support Services

Little can happen without a bare minimum of funds. But far more is needed. An effective system of information exchange would represent a partial solution to the frequently expressed desire of citizens' groups to have information about each other, about government programs and procedures, about new types of equipment and about new uses of old equipment. At present, a fair amount of material on the subject exists, including the Challenge for Change-Société Nouvelle newsletters; catalogues like the international directory produced by Video Inn; brochures put out by equipment manufacturers; reports such as this one and *Cinema as Catalyst*, documenting the conference on

Film, Videotape and Social Change, held at Memorial University in March, 1972; along with several "how to" booklets, such as the one produced in Ottawa by the Media Access Project.

The establishment of an ongoing system of information exchange would provide a way of filling in existing gaps, making sure that the field is adequately covered in all its aspects, from technology to social animation, and, as important, of making sure that the material is properly distributed.

Even the best-written report about non-print communications carries with it an air of unreality. Practitioners learn more from meeting each other than from reading about each other. Thus there is a clear benefit in a program to organize a series of *working* (as opposed to policy, or rhetoric) conferences about citizens' communications, and a parallel program to make it possible for a representative of one group to spend a week or two observing the operations of another.

A final support service concerns making available the *products* of citizens' communications, particularly audio and video tapes. Vidéographe has developed a highly sophisticated circulation system within the province of Quebec; and Video Inn in Vancouver is attempting to develop a comprehensive catalogue of tapes. On a national level, two considerations are key: Developing a comprehensive catalogue(s); defraying the costs (postage and tape itself) of sending requested tapes across the country.

C. Research

As we have already noted, a central criticism of present government aid to citizens' communications is that it is concerned almost exclusively with innovation and not at all with operation. But the emphasis should not be switched one hundred and eighty degrees. In a field subject to incessant change, research remains critical.

A range of support services should be made available to groups. These include:

a) Training, in the following areas:
- program preparation
- technical operation and maintenance
- community development and animation
- administration, including procedures for applying for technical certificates and broadcast licences and for dealing with legal issues and organizational approaches.

b) General information, including:

- provision of material (written, taped, filmed) describing comparable projects, elsewhere in Canada, and abroad;

- provision of opportunities for practitioners to meet to discuss common problems, and to study one another's operations *in situ*.

These support services can be made available by a number of departments and agencies, and by a number of institutions and organizations. Two agencies in particular stand out as repositories of expertise: The National Film Board and the CBC. Quite apart from the Challenge for Change media counselling program, NFB regional offices have much to offer, particularly in relation to production and distribution advice. The CBC, in addition to its Office of Community Programming, can offer extensive experience in regional broadcasting, multi-language programming and general radio and TV operation and maintenance. The Department of Communications, through its Northern Pilot Project also has developed a body of practical experience in the "transfer of skills" which is the basis of citizens' communications development; the Department of the Secretary of State can provide assistance through its regional offices from which video-equipment is available. Several provincial governments, most notably Quebec, are also developing programs in this area. At the same time, entirely outside of government, a solid and priceless body of knowledge exists in institutions such as Vidéo-

graphe, Teled, Metro Media, and the Extension Service of Memorial University.

At present, with the important exception of Challenge for Change-Société Nouvelle, the skills and expertise of these various organizations are made available to others largely at random rather than on the basis of an established program.

Research obviously is required in two areas: technical and programming. A third area is process - as exemplified by the differing approaches to community radio taken in Espanola and Baker Lake; the different approaches taken to community development via VTR in New-foundland and in downtown Montreal; or into community cablevision as between Metro Media and Saint-Félicien.

Process research requires that certain projects be designated as pilot or demonstration projects, carefully documented and evaluated and the lessons learned passed on to other practioners. Pilot or demonstration projects can be carried out either by government agencies, or by independent citizens' communication groups. Obviously they require special funding.

Technical research can be viewed in two ways. At one level, it involves the devising of new equipment (such as the low cost FM transmitter, *Snowgoose* or modifying existing equipment to improve its dura-

bility, ease of operations and overall flexibility. In the area of videotape, NFB and Vidéographe have been active, though limited by the shortage of funds.

At another level, technical research involves the development of new communications technologies based on citizens' needs - a reversal of the usual pattern in which a commercial manufacturer develops a new product, and develops a market around it. In other words, a study might be undertaken through which groups are asked to define in general terms what they would like to achieve, and a subsequent research program established to provide the tools with which to do it.

Program research, in the citizens' communications context, is not so much concerned with the techniques of making attractive images (aesthetic research into media would fall within the mandate of the Canada Council), as with the process of developing themes and presentations so that the messages produced achieve their desired effect, whether this be to foster social or political change, to record an event, or to inform viewers and listeners about a set of facts and opinions. Important roles can be seen here for the CBC, the NFB, and the CRTC, and also for citizens' communications groups which

have themselves mastered the art of making programs that others will watch and absorb.

D. The Established Media

The Davey Committee described the media as "agents of social change", a description we support although many publishers and broadcasting operators might want to quarrel with it. Their goals, often, are less lofty: to entertain, to inform, to turn a profit.

One of the Study Group members commented that any government program of direct support to citizens' communications would be "like stringing together tin cans to compete with the telephone company." The alternative approach, that of trying to change the telephone company and other established communications media including newspapers and broadcasting undertakings from within runs the well-known risk that it will be the change agents rather than the insitutions which will be changed.

The two approaches, of course, are not mutually exclusive. The media today, quite clearly, are more sensitive than ever to local conditions and to special interests. We have noted developments such as "Action Line" columns and the use by radio programs such as "This Country in the Morning" of interviews with more-or-less ordinary citizens rather than the predictable roster

of experts. We have noted also how in Toronto extensive local coverage by the media pre-empts much of the territory occupied by Citizens' communications groups elsewhere. (Other reasons for the generally poor state of the movement in large cities, can be identified: in cities the various subgroups are often lost, or are less sharply defined, in the general hubbub.)

Community control of communications systems can be an answer in some circumstances. It is in Campbell River (community control) and it is in Saint-Félicien (community control of local programming on a privately-owned cable TV system.) The decision of the CRTC to award a television licence in Hull, Quebec, to a co-operative group is of particular interest. Community ownership certainly is not a panacea (an evident danger is that effective control may fall to a clique, which lacks the saving graces of professionalism and balance.) But it is a trend to be encouraged, as it is being in Saskatchewan. If cities can run telephone companies (Edmonton, Thunder Bay) they can run cable TV systems.

It is noteworthy, for example, that the Quebec draft cable regulations place an emphasis on the virtues of community ownership in what they consciously call "a public ser-

vice." One public institution which plainly can play a key role is the CBC. It is now moving, belatedly if strongly, into a program of regionalization. A step beyond, and one taken already by the BBC, is that of community broadcasting in radio and less easily, in television.

E. Citizens' Communicators

If the traditional media are the agents for social change, then the advocates and practitioners of citizens' communications are the evangelists.

The rhetoric has become a familiar part of CRTC hearings and conferences on the media - "demystification of the media," "community access," "participation," "process not product". The difficulty of realizing these aims does not invalidate them. Many are the by now over-familiar slogans of social action and community development this time translated into the communications arena. At times, something has been lost in the translation. In the sixties, the underground press flourished across the country - *The Last Post, The Georgia Straight, The Mysterious East, Guerilla. A Globe and Mail* editorial of August 11, 1973 commented on the disappearance of much of the movement and asked "It makes us a bit uncomfortable to note the fading outfront boisterousness of the underground press....

What happened to all that revolutionary tabloid zeal?" It concluded "the burning journalistic reformers of the sixties are growing up."

It is easy for the proponents of citizens' communications to be seduced by the glamour of the media they are working with, and to make communications into a tool for social change. Some of the products of citizens' communications groups are personal statements in the narrowest sense of the word, a mirror held up to reflect only the images of those making the film, slide show or newspaper. One instance of this is the tendency of some groups to use more sophisticated and more expensive media such as film and videotape when the same effect could be achieved with a much simpler process such as 35mm slides, which add the advantage of flexibility to that of low cost.

A final cautionary note. The citizens' communications movement, no matter what aesthetic and journalistic accomplishments it may achieve, ultimately justifies itself to the extent it is by, for and about citizens. If the communications activities of native Canadians are excluded, there is a clear danger that a disproportionate amount of the total activity will involve a small, and relatively predictable group -- the young,

educated middle-class. A number of citizens' communications groups are perfectly aware of this bias and have made sustained efforts to broaden their basis of participation and at the very least to respond to the needs of representative segments of the total population; some groups, however, even if in part unconsciously, are holding up the mirror only to themselves.

And, Lastly...

So often in our study it has seemed that there were two kinds of Canadians: those who thought that citizens' communications were the ultimate solvent, dissolving all the obstacles to a perfect society; and those to whom a Sony Porta-Pac might as well be six bottles of Japanese beer. As ever, the realities lie elsewhere.

We know that a large part of the Canadian voluntary sector wants to use communications techniques in attaining its various objectives. We know that, in the teeth of skepticism and discouragement, certain organizations have demonstrated that effective use of the communications tools can be possible by using the skills of ordinary citizens rather than media professionals. We know that a growing number of citizens, whatever their reasons, appear to be less and less willing to entrust their message, at least

exclusively, to the mass media.

Why should this be?

In part, it comes from a
demand for diversity, a feel-
ing that the various consti-
tuent groups of society have
the right to speak for their
members, rather than have some
central media voice speak an
averaged-out opinion on behalf
of all. It comes from a
sense of the right to be
wrong - the right to make
an opinionated (rather than
carefully objective) statement
on the issue of the day. It
comes from a sense that
passive acceptance is not
necessarily the only role for
the ordinary person in the
media-saturated society in
which we live.

The citizens' communications
movement, viewed from the
perspective of the essen-
tially accidental point in
time at which this report is
written, is clearly in flux,
changing, in part shaping
its own future and in part
reacting to the changing
environment around it.

REPORT OF THE STUDY GROUP ON CITIZENS' COMMUNICATIONS

DATE DUE
DATE DE RETOUR