

CRTC Cancon cut proposals : TV industry response mixed

TORONTO — Proposed reductions in the amount of Canadian programming carried by private television broadcasters has met with a mixed reaction from the television community.

A spokesman for the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA) says proposed changes in CRTC regulations are poorly timed and based on a faulty premise, while a Canadian Association of Broadcasting (CAB) spokesman says her group is pleased with the overall plan.

"We would like to respond...in the knowledge of what the task force has to say," Ellis says about the CFTA, a national non-profit association of independent producers. Ellis also says it was difficult for independent producers to respond to the proposed changes in August, because the summer is their busiest time for work.

He also questions the idea that quality will improve is the same amount is spent on fewer Canadian programs.

"There seems to be a belief of the commission that if you

want high quality you have to compromise on quantity," he says. Ellis adds it is a little like saying we are going to have better programs, but they will be harder for viewers to find.

The evidence from other countries trying to produce better quality domestic programming is that "the quality only emerges when you have things kicking over on a grand scale," he says.

Ellis also says the changes would make it more difficult for Canadian producers to sell television shows for syndication during the day if the Canadian content is reduced to 50 per cent.

The Canadian Radio-television and telecommunications Commission is proposing to reduce Canadian content from 60 to 50 per cent of daytime programming provided certain conditions are met. The changes would not affect the 50 per cent limit the CRTC has

placed on primetime television, six p.m. to midnight, and doesn't apply at all to the CBC or public stations.

Broadcasters who apply for the reduced percentage of Canadian programming must agree to spend the same amount on Canadian shows as spent in the best year of the last three years. The existing regulations will continue to hold for broadcasters who don't want to apply.

The CRTC says the proposal will mean the hourly average spent on Canadian shows will increase and create higher quality domestic programs. Not everyone agrees, however.

Stephen Ellis, CFTA secretary, and past president, says his group is aghast at the timing of the CRTC proposal and the deadline for written responses to the idea. Responses were to be received by the end of August.

Ellis says the federally ap-

pointed Task Force on Broadcast Policy is expected to hand down its report sometime in September. He said the task force could recommend changes that effect the way the CRTC operates.

"When you try to syndicate these shows you will come up against a brick wall."

Another problem, says Ellis, is that if the CRTC takes the previous three year record of broadcasters, finds the highest year of spending, and then makes that year a future target, it will benefit the groups who spent the least on Canadian shows who will continue to pay at the same low level.

Those broadcasters who spent more on Canadian programming will have to continue to meet higher spending targets, he says.



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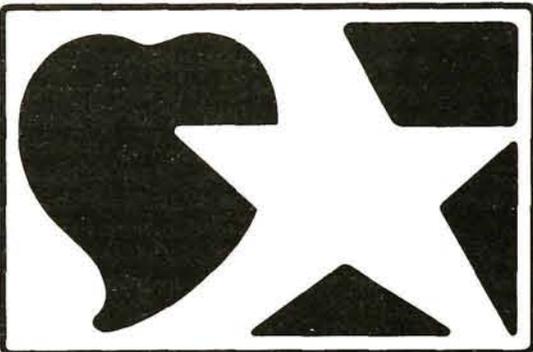
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 "For those who should be rewarded you are making it tougher than others."

Ellis says there is nothing wrong with wanting to improve primetime Canadian shows, but added the CRTC is taking the wrong approach. He suggests the same goal could be reached if the CRTC had decided to use a six-month period over which to average the amount of Canadian content shown by a broadcaster.

Instead of the 12-month period, where broadcasters can put more Canadian shows on during spring and summer when smaller audiences view television, a six-month reporting period would ensure more Canadian shows all year round, he says.

If the larger audience periods of fall and winter had higher Canadian content, then broadcasters would have to ensure there is better quality Canadian shows on the air to stay competitive and bring the same advertising revenue, he explains.

At the same time as the proposed reduction in Canadian content was announced, the CRTC revealed that the reporting period for broadcasters would stay at 12 months.

For broadcasters who do not distribute programming equally during the year, the CRTC says it will use a six-month reporting period as a condition of licence.

Joanne Baldassi, a television researcher for the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, says overall her group is pleased with the proposals. She says several conditions will have to be met including an agreement to spend the same money on a smaller percentage of programs. Baldassi says CAB hopes the provision will lead to improved quality Canadian programs.

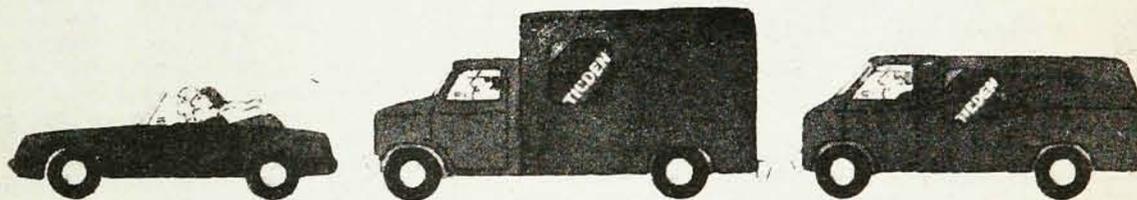
"We welcome it, but we don't know how many of our members will apply," she says. CAB represents 314 television and radio broadcasters in Canada.

In a written statement CRTC chairman André Bureau says the proposals should allow television broadcast and production industries to increase the quality of Canadian programs.

"Considering the increasing cost of foreign programs and the fragmentation of Canadian audiences, committing more resources to Canadian programs is becoming more and more a good business practice," Bureau says.

Films by Arthur Lipsett

1957-1959	Various Clips	Animation Department	NFB
1960	Bande-annonce du 1 ^{er} Festival international du film de Montréal	director/editor	
1961	Very Nice, Very Nice producer: Colin Low/Tom Daly	director/editor	NFB
	The Experimental Film	director	NFB
1962	21-87 producer: Colin Low/Tom Daly	director/editor	NFB
1964	Free Fall producer: Tom Daly	director/editor	NFB
	Arcane (Fr. Production)	editor	NFB
1965	A Trip Down Memory Lane producer: Don Brittain	director/editor	NFB
1966	4 psychology films at McGill	director	NFB
1967	Geological Survey editor	NFB	NFB
	Commonwealth	editor	NFB
	Adolescence	editor	NFB
	Go Northwest	editor	NFB
	Data for Decision	editor	NFB
	Fluxes producer: Guy Glover	director/editor	NFB
1970	N-Zone producer: Tom Daly	director/editor	NFB
1972	Secret Codes	director/editor	
1975	Blue and Orange (incomplete)	with Tanya Tree	
1978	Traffic Flow (incomplete)	NFB Vignette Series	



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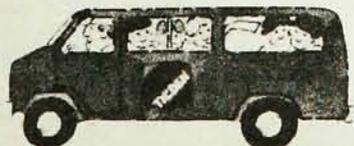
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