

Towards a revived Canadian cultural nationalism

ONTARIO'S NEW ACTIVISTS



Not since the First World War has an Ontario government played such an important role as the current Liberal government in Queen's Park in contributing to the elaboration of national policies in film and broadcasting. In the late teens and early '20s, Ontario was in the forefront of cultural resistance to the onslaught of American radio and, by backing developments like the Trenton film studios, tangibly helped the Canadian feature towards an early, if short-lived, moment of glory.

The election of David Peterson's Liberals last June brought to power a new breed of Ontario cultural activist. Later that year Quebec would fumble its cultural leadership role with the Parti Québécois's ignominious caving-in to U.S. pressure of Bill 109. Today, in 1986, it's Ontario that's carrying the ball. Premier Peterson stands up to Mulroney on free-trade. Citizenship and Culture minister Lily Munro joins Masse to build the foundations for a Canadian cultural policy. Ontario's Ministry of Transport and Communications comes out in support of the CBC as "the primary public policy instrument in the broadcasting system." An imminent end to the ludicrous film censorship system is promised.

In the autumn, Munro named Bernard Ostry to the chairmanship of the province's educational network, TVOntario.

Then on Nov. 1, Munro announced that Ontario would finally be joining Quebec and Alberta with a provincial feature film development agency of its own. The Ontario Film Development Corporation, she said, would be headed by former Festival of Festivals director Wayne Clarkson.

In the following Cinema Canada interviews, both men spell out in greater detail - Ostry from a broad cultural and technological perspective; Clarkson from a nuts-and-bolts approach to funding regulations - the responsibilities they have been charged with.



Rethinking Canada's cultural equations

An interview with TVOntario chairman Bernard Ostry

by Tom Perlmutter

Last autumn former TV producer, author and cultural mandarin Bernard Ostry returned to a direct role in broadcasting by accepting the chairmanship of TVOntario. As the nation's second largest network reaching 95% of Ontarians and a significant proportion of Québécois, TVO has a quasi-national role in broadcasting. As TVO's chairman there is no doubt that Ostry's voice is one that counts in the formulation of broadcast policy in Canada.

Ostry brings to his task very impressive credentials as one of those rare beings who can bridge the gap between the worlds of industry and culture which he combines with a formidable

understanding of the workings of technology. His are the kind of talents desperately needed at a time when free-trade negotiations, technological innovation and an overhaul of Canadian broadcasting are converging the long-standing economic, technological and cultural issues that underlie Canadian development.

Ostry came to TVO from Ontario's deputy ministership of Citizenship and Culture where he implemented policies to further the arts in that province. Prior to that he served as deputy minister of Industry and Tourism coming to Queen's Park from a variety of positions with the federal government including deputy minister of Communications (1978-1980) and special advisor (on culture and communications technology in Western Europe) to the Secretary of State and the minister of Communications.

Ostry has brought to the various positions he has held a historian's understanding of the deep-rooted forces at work creating the particular industrial and cultural profile of modern communications. He has also approached his work with a consistent commitment to enhance Canadian cultural and technological sovereignty. That is clear from the initiatives he took as deputy minister of Communications in Ottawa where, for example, he was instrumental in developing Canada's world-leading videotext, technology, Telidon; as well as in his drive to enhance Ontario's international trade while deputy minister of Industry and Trade. It is also evident in his book, *The Cultural Connection*, a classic analysis of Canadian cultural policy.

This interview with *Cinema Canada* took place just after Ostry took over at TVOntario.

Cinema Canada: You are coming to TVO at a critical time both for the organization and for broadcasting. TVO has established itself and its reputation but it is now operating in a dramatically different broadcasting environment where issues of technology, culture and free-trade, in all of which you have had a fairly major involvement, are converging. These are some of the topics I would like to explore here. Perhaps we could start by getting a sense of what you see are the issues facing broadcasting?

Bernard Ostry: It is no accident or whim of the minister of Communications that there is so much examination of the bits and pieces as well as the totality of the system of broadcasting. It is always dangerous to talk about watersheds, particularly in an industry that is so international, but I think for Canada, for Canadians, the industry is probably at a watershed. That will mean very different things depending on where you sit in the business.

Tom Perlmutter is a Toronto freelance writer.

Cinema Canada: *What is contributing to the watershed? What are the crucial factors at play?*

Bernard Ostry: In Canada, probably the most critical element is the degree to which governments and the public who have interested themselves in the subject are recognizing for the first time, without actually saying it, that there's been a very heavy tipping of the scale in terms of the degree to which we have one system that is both public and private. The weight of the public sector proportionately has declined enormously. We now have a billion-dollar corporation, the CBC, coming for assistance, or being nibbled at or asked to participate in the general restraint program, however you want to describe it. You have a concentration on that institution and that leads to all these investigations of what is it and where is it and where are the others and how did we get there. It stimulates more and more careful examination.

You have a range of pressures going on: the federal sector is pressing; the private sector is pressing. Everybody is reflecting the pressures they are under whether it is for profit or for programs or for producing Canadian content or for satisfying audiences. They all have a different range of concerns that they are not able to meet.

Then you have activities on the periphery which are so confusing they are left unexplained. For example, two prime ministers meet at 24 Sussex for lunch and the only matter of substance that comes out of it is a decision to extend a provincial educational service in French across the country. And there isn't a whisper about that. That is a constitutional issue. It's an interesting event in that political leaders make a decision, but where's the regulatory agency? The regulatory agency doesn't say anything about it. It's evidence of a kind of confusion that expresses the range of activities going on. There is so much going on that nobody even bothers to comment. And that's of immense importance.

I don't say it as a criticism; just that it occurs in a particular way: at lunch between two political leaders. It doesn't occur in the normal framework.

Cinema Canada: *Are the issues today different from what you identified them to be in 1978 in your book **The Cultural Connection**?*

Bernard Ostry: I don't think that given the geography and the economics of North America one should be surprised that the same issues continue to appear. They've been with us for a long time. Ever since the mid- and late '20s when people became concerned about our ability to hear ourselves speak across the country and control or have some say at least about the control of the airwaves. Today we are back to the issue of free-trade which John A. MacDonald first raised and was spurned by the Americans, turning him to a national

policy. If there is a difference it is that Marcel Masse has made an enormous contribution to the cultural debate in this country in the short time that he has been minister. I don't mean because of the cuts associated with his first few months in office but because he's a historian and he's held an education portfolio and he is a nationalist in the Quebec context. He is not the first Québécois in the federal cabinet who is a nationalist but he may well be the first who attempted to extend his feelings about sovereignty and nationalism into the English-speaking community. I don't know anybody else who did, and I worked very closely with Gerard Pelletier and Jeanne Sauvé and, for that matter, Trudeau. I don't think that was their intent. It certainly is Masse's. I think that is a new element in the chemistry.

Cinema Canada: *In your book, you wrote that if television is to contribute to Canadian cultural development and sovereignty there will have to be a re-organization of the Canadian production industry and a new approach to its delivery system. You were writing in the context of the cable industry. But we are now looking at satellite technologies with the potential of an inundation of programming from all over the world. The re-organization problem seems to have become more acute. Do you feel that in coming back into broadcasting? As chairman of*

TVO can you bring a new perspective to the debate?

Bernard Ostry: Well, I don't know. I'm not opposed to participating in a debate on the subject. But it's premature for me. I'm not trying to be modest or to avoid your question. I think a great deal has happened on the technical side since I was deeply engaged in these things as the deputy minister of Communications. From quantum leaps in direct broadcast satellites and superstations to a thing like the VCR. Nobody at the moment really can tell you whether it is going to continue to grow in a place like Canada or whether it is levelling off or declining. There is a view on each side of it. In Europe they are convinced from research they have done that VCR's don't have much of a future because 12 months after the machine is bought it's not used. I don't know. I was just told this at an international communications meeting.

I'm not sure the problem, which has been with us for 50 or 60 years in terms of broadcasting, is really a different problem because of the technology. It may be more severe. You may use it to your advantage. It may complicate your life. The problem is the same problem.

The problem is that the weight of the world's culture that pours in here is unfortunately not the world's. It is one culture in the world. And we are a multi-cultural, pluralist society that wants to live that way socially and politically and be protected that way. And

somehow or other, culturally, we've become the blotter of the accidental. (When I say accidental I don't think of America in terms of a hideous government in Washington planning to brainwash Canada). Not only have we become the blotter, we've invited more through our regulatory system and facilitated it. So the problem is no different.

We did that when we started in radio. Perhaps it was even more severe by 1929 when Aird got excited or when Borden finally did it in 1931-32. But the ratio of ourselves to the United States in the weight of this problem hasn't changed. What has changed now from when the CBC was at its peak is its access to Canadians and the presentation of Canadian material to Canadians and the degree to which everything else is American rather than British, French, Polish, Australian, Yugoslavian or Russian, Scandinavian, African, etc.

Everybody is making pictures, sounds, literature. The world is full of that. But 80% of the stuff coming in here is from one place. And I think that's the issue that governments and the public are always reluctant to address. That's the centrality of the problem. Not something else.

Cinema Canada: *What seems to be different is that in the '20s there was a concerted public reaction against the American influence in radio.*

Bernard Ostry: You didn't read that in my book.

• The buck starts here: Ontario Citizenship and Culture Minister Lily Munro presents TVO chairman Bernard Ostry with a \$200,000-plus contribution to the nation's second largest television network



Cinema Canada: You wrote about the voluntary associations.

Bernard Ostry: They were tiny.

Cinema Canada: They seem to have spread across the country. We don't have the same kind of support today for public broadcasting. There seem to be many vested interests in Canada for opening ourselves to the States: the cable companies are urging an 'open skies' policy; the pay-TV companies would like to massively alter Canadian content regulations. There is a movement in the private sector to encourage people to think that free choice means getting as many American signals as we can.

Bernard Ostry: The issue for me may be what it's always been. When I came back to Canada, from Paris to Ontario - I left the federal government to do that - I did it for a very specific reason. I had become deeply concerned about the incapacity, as I saw it, of Canada to deal with its structural and international trade-economic problems. It seemed from where I sat, trying to deal with communications and cultural industries in western Europe on behalf of this country, seeing what happened to the opportunities that existed, that the department of External Affairs was incapable of responding in any comparable way to any competitor. When I was looking at job offers I thought it would be interesting to treat Ontario as a kind of microcosm of a mature industrial democracy's economic problems: maybe in a smaller context it would be possible to deal with those problems.

And I think in a way it's true. A province of nine million people, as big or bigger than Sweden, with a rich infrastructure from culture to its industrial base, has a much stronger capacity - whether it has the will is something else - to deal with the problems because of the shortness of lines, the proximity of government and finance and industry in a place like Toronto. Everything is natural in the way they cross one another's paths. It's easy to get a decision and the job done. It's almost impossible to do that with the federal structure. I don't know whether the same may be true of culture. TVO is, from my limited knowledge of it, first as a viewer, and before that as a person in Ottawa who didn't want provinces to have licenses for educational broadcasting...

Cinema Canada: Was that when you were a consultant to the CRTC?

Bernard Ostry: No, it was when the issue was being discussed in Ottawa and I was assistant undersecretary of State. I was one of the few people who knew anything about television who was involved in a minor advisory capacity.

I felt the natural inclination of people in the business would be to look for audiences, to put it in the simplest form, and they would not be confined by the terms of the license and eventually they

"Marcel Masse has made an enormous contribution to the cultural debate in this country"

would be into the whole world of broadcasting. Then we would have a situation where public broadcasting would be assisting private broadcasting in undermining the public broadcaster. So in the late '60s I was not a big supporter of handing out licenses to Ontario or Quebec...

Cinema Canada: Did your opposition have anything to do with a federalist point of view in the sense of worrying about what a provincial license might do to Quebec at that time?

Bernard Ostry: No. It wasn't from my part a business of centralizing. I had come back to this country when the agreement to hand out commercial licenses - to destroy the monopoly of the public broadcaster - had been made. And I confronted people both in the business of broadcasting and in the House of Commons who claimed to be believers in public broadcasting. There wasn't even a debate in the House of Commons. It was a unanimous decision. There wasn't a voice in the House that said don't allow commercial broadcasting.

In Britain where the culture was totally secure, that debate went on everywhere. They had to have a free vote in the Commons. It was front-page news. The Sunday newspapers devoted sheets to the issue of whether the BBC monopoly should be destroyed and ITV set up. In this country, there wasn't a whisper. I interpreted that as evidence there ain't great strength behind the idea of public broadcasting. I felt the public broadcaster was going to be undermined on the commercial side and by the growth of another sector.

Cinema Canada: Do you feel that has happened with the provincial broadcasters?

Bernard Ostry: I don't know. I don't think that the provincial broadcasters are participants in the undermining, but we will see what happens with the recommendations of the broadcasting task force. It would not surprise me if they suggested that the provincial broadcasters play a national role or a

larger role nationally as a public broadcaster rather than strengthen the CBC. It would not surprise me at all because of the mood.

Cinema Canada: When you say mood, do you mean the anti-public sector mood in the country or within the government?

Bernard Ostry: I think that, unfortunately, there is an anti-CBC mood.

Cinema Canada: Again, are you talking nationally or within the government?

Bernard Ostry: Well, I don't detect a line. I think the government has been moving along in a way which doesn't suggest it has much opposition. So, what is one to make of that? I'm not a clairvoyant. I've not been taking my own polls. I just observe that Pierre Juneau has to use his own corporation to make large statements, one-day wonders. They are reported the next day and the third day there is nothing. I don't say that with any pleasure. It just suggests to me that there is no groundswell of opinion coming to the rescue of the leading public broadcaster.

Cinema Canada: Do you have a sense of why that is? You argued in your book that Canadians would not be ready to subjugate themselves to American cultural forms. Certainly the public sector is a barrier to that and yet...

Bernard Ostry: But we are talking today about a CBC that has a very important element of advertising and a very important part of its schedule that is American.

Cinema Canada: You are suggesting then that...

Bernard Ostry: It is weakened in its arguments. It has weakened itself. Then you get into the terrible thing of should they have advertising. And they are the ones saying they need advertising. You get these anomalies in the discussion.

I've been at many, many meetings in my life where you find the president of the CBC and the head of one of the largest cable institutions and the head of a national television corporation all saying they need one another, that they must stick together, that they reinforce one another. And the cable people don't want to see the end of the CBC and CBC says we love the cable people and you hear the same noises from Global or CTV.

The real question is: if there are two systems, what is the balance in terms of the one system that the federal government talks about in its legislation? So I come back to the same thing. Within the one system the scales have been tipped.

Cinema Canada: If the CBC is weakened...

Bernard Ostry: You have to be careful with my words. I'm reluctant to say that

the CBC has been weakened. The CBC may be extremely strong. It certainly has a structure involving thousands of employees, production facilities, new buildings, etc. On the one hand it may be stronger as a single institution in its own history. Where it is weak is relative to everybody else.

Cinema Canada: What does that mean for the provincial broadcaster, for TVO which is the largest of the provincial networks?

Bernard Ostry: TVO is the second largest network in the country with 185 stations. I don't know what it means for TVO. Not yet at least. I and my board and the provincial governments are going to have to wrestle with this. We have a renewal of license coming up and we are going to have to decide what it is we are going to do in the next five years and try and make it appear like we know what we are talking about on the eve of all kind of recommendations out of Ottawa. I can only say, looking at TVO on the surface, having the briefings I've had and the reading I've done - which all had to be done while I attended meetings - and without a lot of time for important details to sink in and without enough time to talk to the programming people, that demands may be placed on TVO by either jurisdiction which it will have to have the resources to meet or it won't be in the game. That won't mean it will be any less successful or effective a tool than it is now for the purposes that its legislation calls for, but it may not be in a position to take advantage of what any larger roles are expected of it.

Cinema Canada: It seems you are really coming into TVO, as you said earlier, at a watershed. The policy you may be developing over the next few months presumably could quite radically alter the role of the provincial broadcaster.

Bernard Ostry: I honestly don't know. TVO is not that old an institution. It's a young institution. Even though it has only been around for a few years it has grown immensely. This place is still extending its service though it reaches 95% of Ontarians. It's still increasing the number of its viewers which are well over two million or more a week.

TVO always amazes itself in the response of its audiences. I think its Academy series has some 10,000 registrants. We are in the middle of my first experience with collecting money for memberships. Every evening the percentage increase in the response on the phones and the number of members go up. I don't know anybody else in the business who has experienced that kind of support. So it says a lot for the institution in terms of what is has done with its dollars, how it has used its mandate and how it is perceived by its viewers. A lot that's very much to its credit.

Cinema Canada: *Now the situation may change?*

Bernard Ostry: There's a burden that goes with this kind of situation. You have a task force come down here. They tell me we have nothing like TVO. Incredible. The place knows exactly what it's supposed to be doing and what its goals are. It does it well. Totally organized. People know what their jobs are. I say there must be some other organizations. They tell me, "No. We've been all over. It's unique."

So if the task force has that feeling about it and they want to strengthen public broadcasting, particularly in English where the sovereignty issue is more important than it is, in a different context, for Quebec, where are they going to turn if they feel that they can't carry a government or funding to assist the CBC? That is an opportunity and also a big worry. Because *we* can't do that. We are not geared to do it. There is no big drive here. Nobody is looking for some imperial expansion. That's not in the style of this place and certainly not in its mandate.

Cinema Canada: *But there have been some changes in that direction. For example, Telefilm opened its broadcast fund to the provincial networks. In that way it has immediately opened a national role for them.*

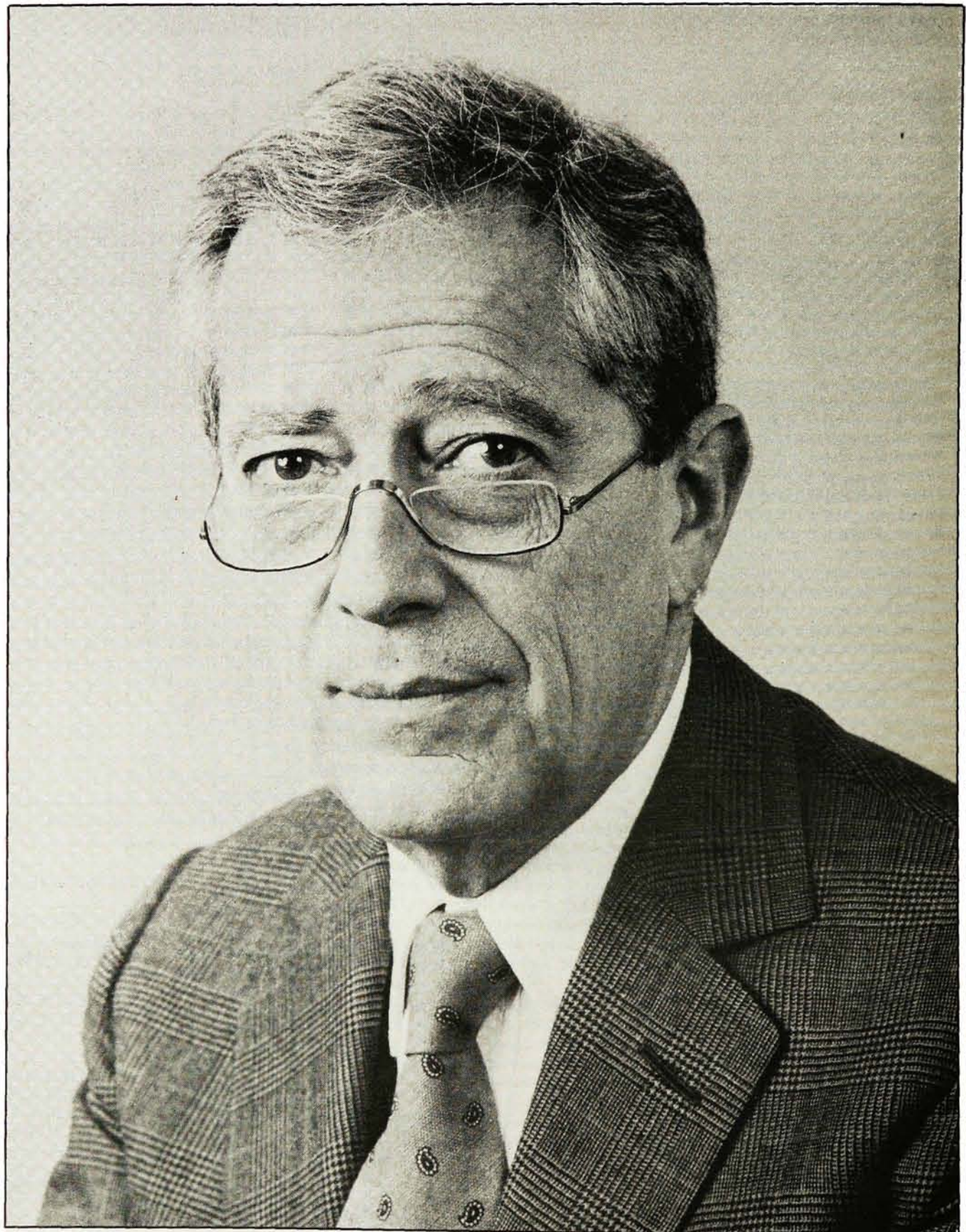
Bernard Ostry: Well, it has and it hasn't. And it's not only Telefilm. It's also the Ontario Film Development Corporation. The OFDC will probably not wish to engage in other than feature films. It will resist, given the amount of money it has, wanting to underwrite in any way what I would describe as a TV series because of the degree to which Telefilm has been pushing television production. So, on the one hand, our own corporation is not going to be tremendously helpful financially. And Telefilm's interest is not in subsidizing the province to do programming for Ontarians. It is only going to be interested in what can move out of Ontario internationally. Now we are not opposed to that, but our first responsibility is to the people of this province who are footing the bill.

Cinema Canada: *But there is nonetheless pressure to internationalize your productions. In a speech Gene Lawrence, TVO's general manager for educational services, mentioned the increasing success of the international marketing of TVO's programs. Does that begin to affect the way programming is done? Particularly if the international marketplace becomes an important source of funding and funding is always a critical problem. One can see that by these public drives.*

Bernard Ostry: We don't go to the international public.

Cinema Canada: *But you do go to the international marketplace.*

Bernard Ostry: TVO is doing that now



and very successfully. This place has been successful for years in marketing material for schools in the United States and while it does not return a lot of money it has an impact on the image of this country. It's interesting to know that millions of Americans on the Eastern seaboard are learning to speak English through TVO broadcasts.

But we have to be careful here. It's not unlike the situation CBC got itself into when it got into advertising and now can't get out though people want

to push it out. At the moment the percentage of our budget that flows from market sources is 30%. Personally, as I told the premier, I don't think that proportion is very healthy if it reflects, as it does, the degree to which the provincial government has failed to underwrite the growth of this place and its needs in programming over the years. We will get ourselves into a CBC situation. It may be piddly amounts of money compared to the CBC but the principal and the process are very simi-

lar. I would not want to be sitting here in the chair if the marketing people were driving the programmers.

Cinema Canada: *Did the premier respond sympathetically to what you said?*

Bernard Ostry: I think so. I didn't put anything on the table with a bill attached. The test will come then.

Cinema Canada: *When does that happen?*

Bernard Ostry: As soon as a document with the right quality can be given to them.

Cinema Canada: You mentioned that the 70/30 split in funding that TVO has at the moment is not one you consider very healthy. What would you rather see it at?

Bernard Ostry: I would care less about the split if I thought that there was a stable operating base that was predictable over time in terms of growth with a substantially larger amount going for programming. It's the dependency for programming purposes on the 30%, which in itself is very unpredictable, that is very bad for an institution.

To use an old cliché, the only important thing is what gets out: the product. In terms of funding, a place like CBC levers its money on a 1: 2 or 1: 3 basis. TVO levers it from 1: 10. It has an extraordinary capacity to find partners. On the basis of a small amount of license fee money it can generate Canadian and foreign interest in a series.

Cinema Canada: It still leaves unanswered the crucial problem of funding programming. The fact is even with TVO's leverage ratio it costs so much more to create one's own programming than to buy it off the shelf.

Bernard Ostry: I don't know that.

Cinema Canada: In the speech I referred to by Gene Lawrence he said that TVO created 500 hours of programming last year versus 700 hours of acquisitions. Nevertheless 85% of the programming budget went on in-house productions. That seems to suggest that making programs is very expensive and that there will be continuing pressure on TVO on how to continue to make programs.

Bernard Ostry: This country is telling us something about programs by producing institutions like Telefilm where the programs are made by independent producers. The proportion that's made in-house will be smaller. The question is how much of the programming will be directed by TVO. When we lever 1: 10 we have minimal control over the product. By that time we are such a small player. We can't absolutely ensure the quality that our people are after. We need to have more say in the product and to do that we have to have more bucks up-front. And to reduce the proportion of reruns we have to have more product. All that is at the expensive end of the business. If we can find \$20 million for a new institution (the OFDC) — I'm glad to see it; I recognized the need when I was still the deputy minister — I think if we can make a reasonable case we should be able to find several million dollars that can be simply handed over to programming.

Cinema Canada: I'd like to get back to TVO's role in Canadian broadcasting. As I understand it TVO is increasing its

French language service.

Bernard Ostry: At the moment about 17% of our schedule is in French, largely concentrated on Sunday. The extension process has only just begun and depends on receiving our share of the funding from Ottawa. What people are going to see when they switch on in January, 1987, I can't tell you. It will be substantially greater than it is now. It will build to the point that French hours of programming would be pretty well equal to English.

The next question is how many Franco-Ontarians is it reaching. There is going to be a lot of growing pains in getting the signal, as our license tells us, to all Ontarians.

Cinema Canada: Is it going to be on a separate signal?

Bernard Ostry: It's going to be on a bunch of different transmitters and I would hope that we will have another place on cable.

Cinema Canada: Is TVO being cabled across Canada at the moment?

Bernard Ostry: No, only in Quebec.

Cinema Canada: So, in fact, the two most populated provinces are being reached by TVO. Doesn't that give it a quasi-national role?

Bernard Ostry: The cable coverage in Quebec is not complete. It's in Montreal.

Cinema Canada: That's fairly substantial. And with satellites...

Bernard Ostry: Broadcasting by satellite laps over all kinds of places. There are people writing to us from places where we shouldn't have a signal sending us money. We send it back telling them that if you are getting TVO it's illegal. So here is your money back, I'm glad you are enjoying it.

Cinema Canada: The dynamics of the technology willy-nilly push TVO towards a national role.

Bernard Ostry: There are a lot of things that may be pushing it. One of the elements is not TVO. You just have to believe me. People here are not strong advocates of moving beyond our territory or jurisdiction.

Cinema Canada: It's interesting to reflect on the way the technology does work. You suggested in your book that...

Bernard Ostry: Let me interrupt for a second. We tried to expand our coverage in a situation that was very advantageous, I would have thought as a Canadian, to this country when an attempt was made with the cooperation of Rogers Cable in having Galaxy approved by the CRTC. The CRTC rejected it.

Today the people cable companies won't support that kind of thing. We don't have a children's channel yet but we have an immense amount of pres-

"Today we are back to the issue of free-trade which John A. MacDonald first raised and was spurned by the Americans"

sure from Americans and the private sector to have one. So when a place like this comes forward with a proposal obviously to the advantage of everybody and is rejected, it is hard not to sympathize with a lot of the (critical) things Herschel Hardin says in his recent book about the CRTC.

Cinema Canada: Do you want to say any more about the CRTC?

Bernard Ostry: No, I'm going before them for a license!

Cinema Canada: You've had a lot of experience in both trade and cultural matters. How do you think the free-trade debate will affect cultural industries and TVO in particular? Are we to believe that cultural industries will be protected?

Bernard Ostry: Nobody said that. Masse said that cultural sovereignty would not be on the table. That's a very different thing. And Joe Clark has said that the industries will be on the table.

Cinema Canada: What does that mean for TVO or to Canadian broadcasting?

Bernard Ostry: I think that, given the quality of TVO's product, its place as the second largest network in the country enhances the importance of its role. It becomes even more important as a symbol of sovereignty.

Cinema Canada: Why did you take on this job? What was the attraction?

Bernard Ostry: To be honest, it took a few days before I said yes. It had nothing to do with TVO. I had been in broadcasting and I'm not a great believer in going where you've been. I also felt I needed another six months at Citizenship and Culture to clean up the OFDC and the cultural industries and to get this French service clearly off the ground. There is a whole range of things like that that I wanted to make sure had been completed. I wanted to protect a

lot of the funding that had been built up with a lot of pain over the past year. The allocation for the arts needed protecting even though it was in the budget. When you have a change it is difficult to know what is going to happen with the cash. Given my commitment to the cultural community, I was very reluctant just to walk out. But the government was concerned about this place in ways I have to say I'm not sure they had a clear picture of, and I agreed to come.

Cinema Canada: Do you have a sense of the sorts of things you would like to accomplish while you are here?

Bernard Ostry: Oh, sure, a few but they derive more from ignorance than anything else. There are some internal problems: tensions between programmers and the people who deal with money. I think that environment could be improved. I think that the programmers need a larger role in this institution. I think the board needs to be moved off of the kinds of things it was asked to deal with onto the large policy issues. All those are internal to the running of the place to make it a happier, more effective machine. I think it has to have more money if it's to meet the challenge of providing quality programming in this highly competitive environment.

Now we are lucky. We have very recently done market tests of our own viewers. A very high percentage know what they are doing when they watch TVO. They know that it's different. That's why they are watching it. It comes out very clearly in the surveys. So we mustn't let them down. To avoid that, let alone building on it, we have to have more and better products.

The larger issue is that of its role. Money has limited the extent that we can reflect Ontarians to one another. Not only on the French side. This is a multi-cultural, pluralistic society and Ontario is the heartland of it in Canada. It's hard to reflect that in a subtle and learning way without cash.

It's easy enough to go into the Italian community and put a microphone in front of somebody's face and say we did a thing on Italians. But that's not good television. Reflecting them to themselves is really not as important as reflecting everybody to everybody else. A lot more has to be there. And that costs money. There are a lot of large groups that are neither French nor English in this country who don't have as clear a play on the schedule as they should.

There are immense numbers of things going on in the schools. We do a unique design system for educational materials. We have to do more of that.

And there is the larger issue of a national role. We have to be able to present the country in terms of what's happening everywhere to Ontarians as part of the learning process.

These are some of the things I'd like to do in the first week. Come back next week and I'll give you another list.