Section 3.—Broadcasting in Canada*

Broadcasting in Canada as it has developed over a period of more than thirty-five years is a combination of public and private enterprise. Under the Canadian Broadcasting Act (R.S.C. 1952, c. 32), authority for broadcasting service is vested in a Board of eleven Governors, appointed by the Governor General in Council and chosen to give representation to the principal geographical divisions of Canada. The Board is directly responsible to Parliament for carrying on a national broadcasting service in Canada and for the policies of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It also administers and supervises regulations pertaining to broadcasting which are observed by both the CBC and privately owned stations.

As of Mar. 31, 1957, there were 22 CBC radio stations and ten CBC television stations; 203 privately owned radio stations and 30 privately owned television stations. All the privately owned television stations and many of the privately owned radio stations operate in partnership with the CBC in helping to distribute national radio and television services over five networks operated by the CBC—in radio, the Trans-Canada, Dominion and French networks, and in television, the English and French networks.

The privately owned stations are subject to licensing control by the Department of Transport and to CBC regulations authorized by Parliament. Their primary purpose is to provide community service in the locality where they are situated. Many stations are located in small urban centres and serve, as well, the larger population located in the surrounding rural areas. Others serve cities and their surrounding towns and rural areas, providing alternative programs to those of the CBC. In sparsely populated areas where privately owned stations would not be economical the CBC provides service through unattended, low-power relay transmitters. Many of the privately owned stations form an integral part of the national networks as outlets for national service programming.

The Chairman of the Board of Governors is required to devote the whole of his time to the performance of his duties under the Act. Members of the Board are not paid and must take an oath of office disclaiming any personal interests in broadcasting, and review broadcasting activities in Canada generally in the interests of the country as a whole. Policy is determined and supervised by the Board but day-to-day operations and executive direction of the CBC are conducted by the General Manager. The CBC is responsible for the regulations controlling the establishment of networks and the proportion of time that may be devoted to advertising in broadcast programs, but it neither exercises nor authorizes any private station to exercise on its behalf, censorship of any broadcast program. The responsibility of observing regulations rests with individual station management.

The general principles of this system, as established by Parliament, have been approved by fourteen Parliamentary Committees and two Royal Commissions.

Radio Broadcasting Facilities.—As stated above, the CBC operates three networks: the Trans-Canada and Dominion networks serving English language audiences from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the French language network extending from Moncton, N.B., to Edmonton, Alta. As at Mar. 31, 1957, the Trans-Canada network was made up of 26 basic stations—13 CBC-owned and 13 privately owned. There were 19 supplementary stations, four of which were CBC-owned Newfoundland stations. The Dominion network consisted of 31 basic stations of which 30 were privately owned. Nineteen supplementary privately owned stations also received Dominion network service. The French network had five basic stations, four of which were CBC-owned and one privately owned, and 20 privately owned affiliated supplementary stations.

Table 2 lists the broadcasting stations of the CBC radio networks.

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* Prepared under the direction of J. A. Ouimet, General Manager, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Ottawa. The history of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is given in the 1947 Year Book, pp. 737–740.