

Canadians still had inadequate radio service and there was a growing preponderance of US programming. Out of these concerns the federal government-owned Canadian Radio Broadcasting Corporation emerged in 1932 and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1936, which put together a national radio network. Since then Canada has had a broadcasting system with public and private elements.

Television broadcasting made its debut in Canada in 1952. The CBC began constructing its national television networks, and private television stations began to spread across Canada. The first private television network came into existence in 1961.

Until the 1960s, television and radio signals were all broadcast over the airwaves from broadcaster transmitters to viewer antennas. In that decade cable television appeared, permitting transmission of radio and TV signals over a copper wire from a central antenna. This improved reception and brought a much wider range of TV and radio signals to cable subscribers. In the early 1970s, Canadian communications satellites began to be employed to distribute TV signals, bringing television to many previously unserved rural and remote communities. Radio and television had become big business, with substantial advertising revenues.

In 1980 a growing number of Canadians in remote areas set up unauthorized earth stations to pick up TV signals from American satellites. Though American stations were available either over airwaves or by cable in most major urban areas in southern Canada, the unauthorized reception of US satellite signals began there too, partly because they carried pay-TV programs which included major sports events and first-run Hollywood movies. When these US satellite signals were distributed to other viewers, posing a threat to the Canadian broadcasting system, DOC began to take action.

As a result, the federal broadcast regulatory body, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), approved an application in 1981 for a Canadian broadcast satellite service, CANCOM, to make additional Canadian radio and TV broadcasting available to Canadians living in remote areas. The commission issued licences to six pay-television services which added a new dimension to Canadian TV viewing in 1983.

Meanwhile, DOC had been working on a comprehensive policy for broadcasting in the 1980s. With a growing number of channels available via satellite, cable and fibre optics distribution systems, it was expected that the mass-audience programming of the last few decades might give way to more specialized programming aimed at specific communities of interest. New video-cassette and videodisc technology, allowing users to purchase their own programs or copy broadcast programs, challenged Canadian broadcasters.

**14.4.1 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Evolution.** In 1929 a federal royal commission on broadcasting recommended the creation of a national public broadcasting system, to counter the effects of American radio and to serve areas in which commercial radio was uneconomic. In 1936, Parliament passed the Broadcasting Act which created the CBC. The new public corporation, financed by licence fees and advertising, had two responsibilities: to provide a national radio service and to regulate all broadcasting in Canada — licensing, programs and commercial content.

During the next two decades there was continuing debate about the roles of private and public broadcasting. Revisions to the Broadcasting Act in 1958 gave regulatory responsibility to the Board of Broadcast Governors. In 1968 the CRTC was created and given responsibility for regulating broadcasting. Under the 1968 act, the CBC service was required to be: a balanced service of information, enlightenment and entertainment covering the whole range of programming in fair proportion; extended to all parts of Canada, as public funds become available; in English and French, serving the special needs of geographical regions, contributing to the flow and exchange of cultural and regional information and entertainment; contributing to the development of national unity and a continuing expression of Canadian identity.

**Facilities and coverage.** The CBC operates several national services: a French television network; an English television network; English and French AM radio and FM stereo networks; a special medium and shortwave radio service in the North; and an international shortwave and transcription service.

The CBC owned and operated 29 television stations in 1982-83 and 545 television network relays and rebroadcasters. Television programming was also carried by 32 affiliated stations, 95 affiliated rebroadcasters and 261 private or community-owned rebroadcast transmitters. Its national radio service owned and operated 60 radio stations and 549 rebroadcasters and low-power relay transmitters. The service was carried by 38 private affiliated radio stations, and 66 private or community-owned rebroadcast transmitters. The corporation had production centres in Montréal (French), Toronto (English), and many other cities.

The CBC radio networks, English and French, were available to 99.3% of Canadians as of March 1983. The comparable figure for the French and English television networks was 99.2%.

CBC radio presents popular and classical music, serious drama and light comedy, talk shows, analyses of politics and the arts, local news, current affairs, weather and traffic reports, and regional and network programming. The CBC radio service supports performers and writers and gives expression to the Canadian identity.