

Broadcasting Task Force members and secretary speak out

Gerald Caplan : "It's a useful place to play a role for a while. I'm persuaded that (Marcel) Masse is truly open to doing something and something important. I'm convinced that if the task force comes up with something which intrigues him he will fight for it. I needed to know that it was open, that there were no hidden agendas. I was reassured on that. It seems to me in my little knowledge that everybody's position is easily defined. Somebody has to synthesize and reconcile. I'm openly a friend of public broadcasting."

Florian Sauvageau : "The situation of the media in Canada requires government intervention because of the relatively small market and because of the great importance of U.S. influence and infiltration. The real question, however, is what form should this intervention take? There are three possibilities : either through direct participation, as with the CBC, through intervention as with the CRTC or through encouraging of the private sector. Which, if any, should be privileged is still to be determined."

Francine Côté : "The two (government and private sector) are never completely independent. A study of the private sector must include an analysis of CRTC regulations on key issues such as Canadian content and licensing surveillance. The role of new technology on a particular medium must also be considered by the Task Force. We have to see whether or not certain media should be protected from new technologies. (But) we must also be careful. A problem with previous similar Canadian media studies has been to only look at each medium individually."

Fil Fraser : "It's an incredible challenge. I think the mix of members is good. They're all very media-literate. We're not an academic group. We're oriented towards practical ends. Our mandate is to look at what's on the shelf and make decisions. I am quite convinced that Masse is serious in his plans to rationalize the broadcasting system within two years. I'm not anticipating any bolts from the blue. This is a pragmatic exercise. The art of the possible which will carry us into the next century. I don't think we're going to propose extra-idealistic, utopian concepts. There is a concensus in

the task force that public sector broadcasting is important and valuable. Once said that we have to ask how well is it doing under the present regime and what can be done to make it better."

Mimi Fullerton : "I accepted because I think it's important. There are an awful lot of changes in the environment. Look at cable, pay-TV, specialty services, VCRS, look at the shifts taking place. Every one of these things has had an enormous impact. I bring an industry view. That is where I'm coming from. I also have a reasonably broad perspective. I come from a very strong arts background. I worked in the commercial art business. I think the cultural element is very important. As a Canadian and an individual I think the public sector is very important."

Conrad Lavigne : "I've been a broadcaster for 35 years in French radio and English television. At one time I produced 20 hours a week of local programming. I have both feet well on the ground. I bring to the committee a down-to-earth, practical approach. I was surprised by the appointment of Caplan. He is very bright. He is quite a charmer. Very good with words. He is not a newcomer to communications and dealing with people. I was very impressed."

Finlay MacDonald : "It is interesting and challenging work. I'm very interested in the broadcasting system. I've got some hard-earned lessons from pay-TV. I come from a broadcasting family. I have been exposed to it in a practical way since I was 15 or 16. I know most of the major players. I have a lot of experience appearing before the CRTC and recently worked on a CRTC task force. I'm there to reflect Maritime concerns. I've dined off that position for quite some time. I'm very much committed to public broadcasting. It's more of an ingrained commitment to the broadcasting system and public broadcasting is an integral part of it. I have a great respect for the CBC. I regret any edginess CBC and its supporters may have. The task force is not out to do a hatchet job on the CBC. I was pleasantly surprised by the composition of the task force. I think there's going to be some great personal chemistry."

Paul Audley : "I'm responsible for all of the administration of activities for the task force including research. To some extent I'll have to decide how much is passed on and what to say gets passed on. I'm very reluctant to say what ideas do or do not get through."

Audley's advice

TORONTO - Recommendations by consultant Paul Audley on changes to Ontario's film and video policy have been put into the form of a cabinet submission, says senior ministry of industry and trade official, Bart Hildebrand.

Audley's report was completed last summer. At last year's Trade Forum then-industry minister Frank Miller promised imminent action on a film and video policy. Since then Miller became leader of the Ontario Conservative Party and led his party to humiliating losses at the polls May 2. The future of Miller's government is uncertain. Hildebrand said he didn't know whether the cabinet submission would be addressed. "It's not a priority," he said. Neither Audley nor Hildebrand would comment on the contents of the report.



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