

The Making of the Canadian Media. PAUL RUTHERFORD. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1978. xi, 141 p. (McGraw-Hill Ryerson series in Canadian sociology) ISBN 0 07 082653 6 bd. \$12.95; ISBN 0 07 082559 9 pa. \$5.95.

Rutherford has produced a valuable introduction to the growth of mass communications in Canada. From small colonial presses to the multimedia conglomerates of today, he traces the relationship of the media to the institutions and values of their age in a study that has both historical and sociological importance. His major emphasis is upon the development of print media, especially newspapers, but he also considers radio, television and film, arguing that the triumph of the multimedia finally gave Canadian mass communications a general sway over the public mind or popular culture of the country.

Newspapers were usually first started in Canada by private entrepreneurs who, out of necessity, often tied their fragile operations to powerful political, business or church interests. Encouraged by innovations in printing and papermaking, these newspapers proliferated and were characterized by opinionated journalism supporting their patron's position. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the development of big city dailies gave their owners what Rutherford calls at least the illusion of independence. In contact with a large public, these dailies could afford to break with the supporting party or cause and strive for an objective form of journalism. On the other hand, their reliance upon mass appeal tended to produce a conformity and homogeneity that led W.D. Lasueur to comment in 1903: "The aim of the ordinary newspaper is to be all things to all men." Moreover, ever seeking increased circulation and more advertising revenue, the newspaper had become big business. The highly competitive nature of this business promoted the concentration in turn of Canadian media, and later multimedia, into the hands of a few giants, such as Roy Thomson, Jack Kent Cooke and the Southam family. In this context, there was little room for radicalism.

Except for the 1840's and the progressive period from the turn of this century to the first world war, the mass media have remained a basically conservative force in Canadian society, linked predominately to business interests and principles. One indication of this is that, while relatively early in the growth of daily newspapers specialized departments often appeared for finance, sports and homemaking, labour never became similarly established in the mass press. This fact is perhaps not surprising when it is remembered that by its nature mass media to survive must reflect the majority aspirations of society, or more accurately of that portion of society with the interest and ability to buy the product. Rutherford finds that the mass media in Canada has reinforced established opinions and values by giving legitimacy to the dominant institutional patterns of authority. He believes, however, that the media has also added novelty to the body of conventional wisdom by acting as a liberal influence to alter these patterns. Taking these two functions together, he suggests that mass communications have served to maintain the vigour of Canada's open society by combining continuity and stability with flexibility. Rutherford concludes that even with all their imperfections, the media supply a worthwhile service to the consumer, whose responsibility it is to decide ultimately what use is made of this service.

This conclusion has not been always shared by Canadians. Throughout the development of Canadian mass communications, attempts have been made to control the contents of the media. Rutherford identifies a moral protectionism which developed late in the nineteenth century and was aimed first at protecting Canada from publishing material deemed irreligious, seditious or obscene. In the twentieth century, this concern expanded to film with the strengthening of censorship laws in all the provinces. Rutherford concludes (writing obviously before the *Pretty Baby* or the *In Praise of Older Women* decision in Ontario) that such censorship has now given way to the principle of artistic freedom. In his view, moral protectionism was replaced by cultural pro-

tectionism, designed to prevent the spread of American culture in Canada. While recognizing that the volume of American communications has posed a threat to Canadian independence, he holds that this Americanization could foster a common social ethos which acts as a national bond in the face of sectional and ethnic differences in Canada: "Americanization, from this perspective, is a necessary balance to that Canadian mosaic served by the indigenous communications." An analogous argument is that quick deaths from heart attacks should be encouraged until a cure for cancer is found. Finally, Rutherford sees a recent wave of social protectionism against what is perceived as an irresponsible multimedia, marked by such things as the 1970 Davey Committee on the Mass Media report, recent decisions of the Canadian Radio and Telecommunication Commission and the LaMarsh Ontario Royal Commission findings. In his opinion, such occurrences represent an attempt to humble the media because its overweening power is seen as a threat to the fabric of democratic society. Although it is obvious from Rutherford's book that he discounts such a fear, it is difficult not to acknowledge the potential, given his description of the pervasive influence and concentration of the media in Canada.

The Making of the Canadian Media is 141 pages long, including index, bibliography and notes, and remains inevitably, as the "Introduction" notes, tentative and speculative. Rutherford states that a more scholarly, comprehensive treatment must await a full-scale investigation of all the sources available. Such a treatment is long overdue, but I despair at what this survey of available sources would probably reveal at the present time. Except for the private papers of certain prominent newspaper editors or more rarely of newspaper owners, archival repositories have generally ignored the history of Canadian print journalism. Business records are required and also materials that will document the contributions of the more significant working journalists. As well, runs of newspapers must be assembled and microfilmed before they crumble into dust. We have done a bit better with radio, television and film. But it has been only a start and one which has concentrated overwhelmingly so far upon the product rather than the process. We have begun to collect tapes and film but not the paper documentation that provides their background and context. As someone once commented to me, it is as if an archives wanted to document the history of the CPR but acquired only the trains. Rutherford's book suggests a myriad of possible topics for further research. It is the responsibility of Canadian archives to ensure that whatever sources remain are preserved.

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Canadian Town Planning, 1900-1930: A Historical Bibliography. IAN COOPER and J. DAVID HULCHANSKI. Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 1978. 3 vols. (Bibliographic series; no. 7, 8, 9) \$1.50 per volume.
Vol I Planning. 24 p.
Vol. II Housing. 21 p.
Vol. III Public Health. 82 p.

Recent interest in Canadian town planning and urban history has provided another challenge to archival acquisition programs. The intention of the Canadian town planning bibliography "is to help further research into planning history, and urban history in general, by compiling a comprehensive bibliography of material relating to Canadian planning issues during the first three decades of this century". The publication of a historical bibliography on this subject is a welcome reference source for archivists working in this field.