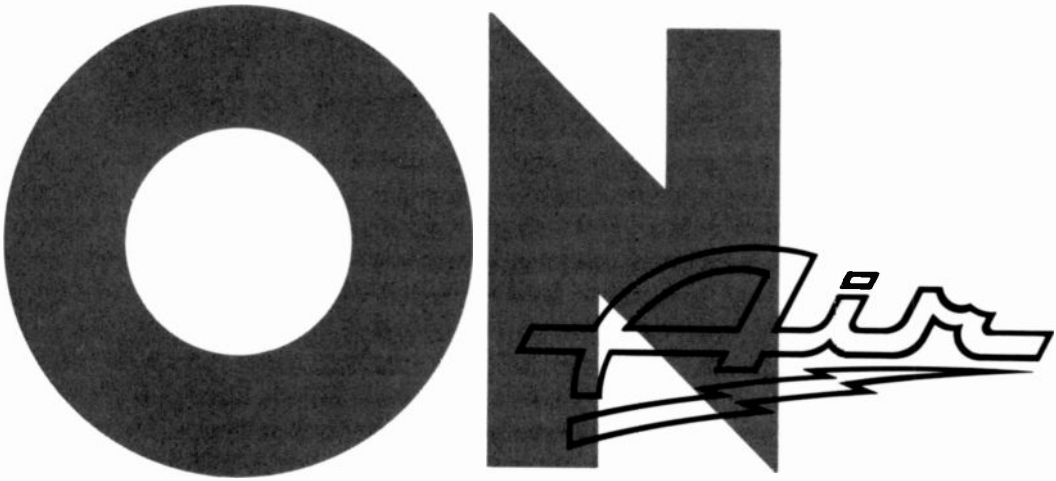
ON Air

RADIO IN SASKATCHEWAN

WAYNE SCHMALZ

ON AIR
RADIO IN SASKATCHEWAN



RADIO IN SASKATCHEWAN

WAYNE SCHMALZ

COTEAU BOOKS

For my family

Edited by Don Kerr.
Cover photograph by Robert Patterson, from *Radios: The Golden Age*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco. Used by permission. The radio is a 1937 Fada in original condition and is from the collection of Ed and Irene Ripley.
Cover design by Randy Butterfield.
Typeset by Coteau Books.
Printed and bound in Canada.

The author thanks all of the people he interviewed for being extremely generous with their time. He is especially grateful to Lyman Potts, Godfrey Hudson and Dennis Fisher for their extra effort.

The author also thanks the Saskatchewan Arts Board for supporting production of this book and Don Kerr for his insightful comments.

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the Canada Council, the City of Regina and the Department of Communications.

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Schmalz. Wayne. 1948-

On air

ISBN 1-55050-010-4 (cloth) — ISBN 1-55050-009-0 (pbk.)

1. Radio broadcasting – Saskatchewan – History.
2. Radio stations – Saskatchewan – History. I. Title.

HE8699.C2S34 1990 384.54'097124 C90-097138-X

COTEAU BOOKS
401-2206 Dewdney Avenue
Regina, SK S4H 1R3

CONTENTS

When You Drive a CBC Van

my point of departure

When you drive a CBC van
You're a somebody
The man in the Esso cap
    shines so bright
    scrapes so hard
Then fills you up with questions
    like how come CBC isn't in this year's bathtub race
    no, he doesn't know who's been told but
    he phoned CBC in Saskatoon and they referred him to
        Regina and Regina doesn't know anything about it
        and you know CKCK is coming up all the way up and
        it sure would be nice
    besides, how come you don't carry Blue Jays baseball?

When you drive a CBC van
You're just like all the rest
In the public trough
To the one with the thick middle finger
    who clutters the left lane
    with his black and blue Buick
    and won't let your blinking lights through

When you drive a CBC van
You're a logo you can't shrink
Small towns eye you warily
Quit talking when you enter
Like men with white canes
    they creep cautiously
    tip-tapping the limits of their transgression
    groping for the assurance of a curb
Whispering your sign when you leave

When you drive a CBC van
You get two scoops of ice cream
    having paid for only one

Preface

IT HAD A GREEN PLASTIC CASE WITH A BIG CHUNK MISSING from the upper left-hand corner. Its back panel clung desperately to the frame, and the tuner knob was missing. Two inches of its face hung out over the edge of the Japanese orange box into which it had been stuffed and which held it to the centre beam of the cow barn. A twisted brown cord connected it to an electrical outlet. It had never been cleaned and it was filthy from years of accumulated grime. If you pointed it south you could get CFQC, Saskatoon. Face it east and you got CKBI, Prince Albert. In rainy weather its first, faint sounds would give way to a fuzzy, guttural rumble, which in turn would evolve into a high, protesting squeal, and you would have to switch if off. During the hour and a half it took you to milk the cows, separate the cream and wash the pails, it could give you—in snatches here and there—up to thirty minutes of unsullied sound. It therefore became of strategic importance how you proceeded with your evening chores. When the top ten was being counted down, you tried to position yourself within earshot. When Garner Ted Armstrong thundered out admonitions about the world tomorrow, you gladly moved under the three-teated Ayrshire at the other end of the barn.

One day this green companion squealed itself into oblivion and we had to find a replacement. That's when we discovered the delights of portability. Our new red friend with the square handle could roam the gangway only an arm's length away, except when you were under the skittish Holstein, who was notorious for relieving herself just beyond the edge of the gutter and spraying everything within a fifteen-foot radius. On barn-cleaning Saturdays, our congenial partner could follow us and the stoneboat down the length of the building, so we could catch most of the second period between the Russians and the Trail Smoke Eaters. Portability also meant it could be taken out into the potato patch, where I first detected our hired man's aversion to the Roger Miller hit "Dang Me." This normally placid man would turn homicidal when that song came

clamouring through the noonday heat and he would leap recklessly over anything in his way to throttle those moronic lyrics. After one minute and forty-seven seconds of silence, broken only by the agitated slash of a hoe and the occasional indignant mumble, he would turn the switch back on and calmly go about his business. At the height of his passion he was less than sanguine about my suggestion that if he didn't like the music he should buy a different radio.

We listened to fill in those empty mental spaces that accompany repetitive physical labour. Long before radio-equipped tractor cabs became commonplace on Saskatchewan farms we rode the summer fallow fields with a tiny transistor pressed firmly against one ear in a valiant though futile attempt to hear above the noise of a roaring engine. It was on my Saturday night car radio, after a week of heaving green bales in the roasting July sun, that I first heard CBC Radio's "Anthology." Mordecai Richler was denouncing Canadians for their provincialism, and although I didn't have enough opinions of my own at the time to know whether I agreed with him or not, I was willing to concede his points because of the powerful and convincing way in which he spoke. He brought nourishment to a famished mind. And it was on a weary journey home from a fruitless fishing trip up north that Loudon Wainwright III threw a carload of us into a spontaneous frenzy with "Dead Skunk in the Middle of the Road." We hooted and hollered and stomped the floorboards, and to this day I still see a dusty stretch of gravel highway on the other side of La Ronge every time I hear that song.

There was a standing joke those days that radio could induce cows to give more milk, and farmers were advised to install this appliance in their barn. We didn't know about experiments that demonstrated music could affect listeners in a predetermined way and so had no empirical evidence to substantiate this claim. But while it might have been profitable for a farmer to employ a radio in his cowbarn, I learned very quickly that radio itself did not provide profitable employment. My first job, in 1973, as a full-time announcer at CFMC-FM, Saskatoon, paid me $330 per month, a salary barely above the subsistence level even then. A fellow announcer, with over ten years experience, earned $360 per month. After I passed my audition for the job and before I signed the necessary documents, the station manager asked if I had any objection to changing my name. "Schmalz may be okay in Düsseldorf," he

said, "but it's no good in Saskatoon." The station had an image it wished to project and an obligatory ethnic program of *lieder aus der heimat* was as Teutonic as they wanted to get. My first name was acceptable but my last name had to go, and he suggested I replace it with another beginning with *S* so that when I initialled the daily logs I would still feel like I was me. I shrugged, said I guessed that was all right, and from a list chose Sanders. I wanted the job.

What I found decidedly less all right though was the station's strict music policy. We were cautioned not to play anything too spirited or strident—an edict fairly easy to observe since albums containing anything more raucous than the Thousand and One Strings' rendition of "Moonlight Sonata" were savagely mutilated with a nail file so the offending song could not be broadcast, even inadvertently. So we hunted tranquilly through stacks of Johnny Mathis, Nana Mouskouri and Mario Lanza for just the right somnolent touch. Sometimes on Saturday we were allowed to cut loose and indulge ourselves by playing those bouncy little numbers by James Last and his orchestra. During long Mantovani nights in which I put even myself to sleep I could swear that no one was listening, a suspicion borne out by the ominous silence that usually greeted my attempts to generate listener participation. "Guess one of Bing Crosby's biggest-selling songs of all time—a song we usually hear during the holiday season—and I'll send you Wayne Newton's latest album," I'd zealously announce. Nothing happened. The phone remained mute. When enough time had elapsed to make it obvious no one was going for the bait, and to prevent public humiliation, I'd phone a friend and inform him that he had just won yet another collection of saccharine ballads. Then, in a voice coping as best it could with a flurry of calls, I'd interrupt Andy Williams to declare, "We have a winner! Could you please hold your calls, we do have a winner!"

I'm exaggerating when I say I had no listeners because I know I had at least one. She phoned often, usually toward midnight, and she spoke feelingly of things that moved her. Her voice was gentle, caressing, and I saw her clad in a diaphanous negligee, lounging elegantly on silk bedsheets. She liked my music and one evening she joyfully proclaimed that she had actually known what selection I was going to play even before I announced it. To her this meant we were communicating on an unconscious level. I didn't have the heart to

suggest that she could probably predict my music so easily because I played the same songs over and over again. My colleagues knew her well and assured me that she didn't look the way she sounded at all. Don't get any high hopes about her, they advised, because she got us all excited too at the beginning until we actually met her. I learned of her departed husband and the son who had been killed in a car crash. Sometimes she cried. I was naturally embarrassed by these confidences but also flattered that she should entrust to me, a stranger with an assumed identity, the deepest secrets of her life.

She never actually invited me to her place to talk and have tea, but even if she had I wouldn't have been able to go. I was too busy after my shift ended recording commercials for the next day's morning show. Although all of us at the station knew we weren't being fairly recompensed for this extra work, we accepted these assignments with equanimity, maybe because it was only in the production booth at one o'clock in the morning that we could take vengeance on those who forced us to drip honey every time we opened our microphone. In addition to ads for ladies pantyhose and cozy, living-room sofas, we manufactured tales of timorous maidens and long-pronged cowboys, underscoring the scurrilous lyrics with lush, orchestral arrangements. We'd chuckle and congratulate ourselves on our cleverness and then donate another fifteen minutes to the station to make up for the time wasted on this little diversion. But we didn't mind. We were having fun. Besides, we weren't in it for the money; we were doing it because we loved it.

From Saskatoon I went to the Canadian Forces Network (CFN) station in Lahr, West Germany, whose music policy was more flexible, but where it was nevertheless deemed in bad taste to play Country Joe McDonald's anti-war song, "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag." At least that's what an indignant program director told me after having been informed himself by someone close to the base commander. Such breaches of military etiquette were sufficient to revive our director's nervous, though otherwise dormant, tics and cause him to exhibit some of the curious mannerisms that he normally only put on display when under the pressure of speaking into a microphone. These peculiar gestures were of course intriguing to observe, but even more remarkable was his ability to conceal them while talking on air. Never did his calm radio voice give even the slightest hint of the agitated energy that went into

producing it. Whenever he read from a script, his right hand would move to the top of his head, twist its way through his hair, and then claw repeatedly at the left side of his face. His left hand meanwhile would pull doggedly at his left ear lobe. It was a wonder to observe and we usually pointed him out through the small window in the studio door to anyone who wandered into the station. When we tired of watching his contortions, we would retire to the coffee room and listen to the mellifluous, self-assured tones of a professional broadcaster coming over the monitor.

We laughed a lot at CFN, often against our will and, whenever possible, at someone else's expense. When reading the news, we tried not to glance up for fear of being startled by a nose and two eyes observing us from the other side of the control room window in front of us. The person who was bent over, so only part of his head was visible above the two and a half foot window sill, was prone to leap up and expose himself just as you were listing the casualties from a hurricane in Southeast Asia. Sometimes he would sneak around and open the control room door behind you and drench you with a pail of water, making you lose your concentration. Or, he would perch just out of eyesight as you went through the interminable list of items for sale on "Swap Shop," and in that brief pause you took to reach for another sheet, he would feign a deep snore. His weather forecasts, brought in just seconds before you announced them, might include the prognosis that the sun would set tonight and rise again tomorrow morning.

The military tolerated our hysterical outbursts and sometimes quizzed us about what caused them when we met at the officers' mess. We were officially classified as civilians with officer status, which entitled us to dine with colonels, majors and generals—providing of course we were properly attired in a suit jacket and tie. If you couldn't find your tie, a partly camouflaged sock would sometimes fool them. After our two year stint was up, they gave us each a beer mug.

I eventually returned to Canada and found my way back to Saskatchewan, where I was hired as a radio drama and features producer for CBC in Regina. That's where I was put in charge of my own show and where I got to drive a CBC van. That's also where the idea for this story began.

This book grew out of a curiosity about the business in which I have spent most of my adult life. Initially, I was interested in those who had gone before me in this province

and how they had helped shape the medium we have today. But after collecting the necessary material and listening to all the stories that constitute the basis for a history, I had a nagging need to further explore the significance of what I had read and been told. As I began to work my way through the specifics of radio in Saskatchewan and my own experiences, patterns began to emerge, and I began to formulate explanations for the way radio people and listeners behave and why we have the kinds of radio programs we have. My aim, therefore, is to present a history of radio in this province and then to use the characters and events which make up that history to put forth some rudimentary theories on how the medium works. I discuss national issues only to the extent that they elucidate developments here, while national announcers and hosts periodically figure in the discussion because they are as much a part of Saskatchewan radio today as local personalities. For a fuller analysis of national broadcasting I would refer readers to a number of books cited at the end. All footnotes have also been placed at the end.

I've been especially fortunate to have had access to a series of interviews by Kenneth Bambrick, who travelled through Canada in 1976-77 talking to radio pioneers, mainly about the early days. Several of those interviewed had at one time worked in Saskatchewan. Some were still alive and I managed to track them down for additional information. They invariably put me on to others who provided equally invaluable stories.

The greatest excitement I derived from working on the early history was first thumbing through newspapers from the twenties, the pages yellow and dusty and falling apart, and then finding that those faces that peered out so self-consciously from the inaccessible past were still around: Pete Parker, allegedly the first person in the world to broadcast a hockey game, by now in his nineties, living in British Columbia; Martha Bowes, the first female announcer in Saskatchewan, by now in her eighties, living in Ontario; Geoffrey Bartlett, who held a screwdriver between two parts of a transmitter so California lawyer Aaron Sapiro could continue his broadcast to prospective Wheat Pool members sixty years ago, by now in his nineties, living in Saskatoon; Rhea Naish and Roberta Davies, who sang and played over a Saskatoon radio station run by the International Bible Students Association, also in their nineties, still in Saskatoon.

In a broader context, the achievements of these radio people

may not be of world-shattering importance. But within any activity there are always those who acquire a mythical status because of what they have done or where they have been at an important period in that activity's history. All of them were present at radio's birth, and they watched it evolve into the sometimes sophisticated, sometimes tawdry medium it is today. One rarely gets a chance any more to meet someone who was there when it all began, and speaking to them helped to fulfill that metaphysical longing all of us have of making contact with our origins.

I've relied on the goodwill of these pioneers as well as many other people. There was one who wouldn't give me access to a crucial person unless I supplied him with references (I took a different route) and some halfheartedly asked to see what I had written before it was printed, realizing the futility of the request even as they made it, since they knew it violated a principle they themselves held most dear—the freedom to say what one chooses. But almost all were unreservedly generous with their time and their anecdotes. They suffered me and my tape recorder and my notepad and my telephone call at almost any hour and at times that were not always the most convenient for them. They gladly divulged information and passed on photographs and newspaper clippings, entrusting these precious documents to my care with the implicit faith that they would get them back. They had long felt that the story of Saskatchewan radio should be told, and they were glad that someone was actually undertaking the project. They were flattered that their contribution to the industry would be heard—a contribution that amounted to nothing less than their life's work—and it was not uncommon for them to conclude our telephone conversation with a thank you, presumably for listening. In those instances in which I was invited into their homes, I was able to see them in another way, in the revealing light of a domestic situation. Many had wives whose sole purpose it seemed to me was to nurture their husband's careers. These women sat discreetly in the background, speaking only to remind hubby of some forgotten detail or to jog his flagging memory. On my way out the door they would whisper thanks and say how much this meant to him.

It wasn't possible to include everything that Saskatchewan's radio people told me or that they felt was important, but I hope that even in those instances where my aims were different from what theirs might have been, I have got most of it right.

I HISTORY

1

Beginnings

AN ALERT FILMMAKER, RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL significance of the event, managed to capture and preserve for posterity a few flickering moments of what went on that day. First, we get an outside view of the building in which the subsequent events take place. It's made of brick, stands six stories high, and supports two tall towers which are connected by horizontal wires. Inside, in a carefully staged scene, a neatly dressed man sits writing at a table. After a few seconds he removes the headset he is wearing, glances at his pocket watch, and reaches up to flick a switch on the box in front of him. He gets up and walks to a row of knobs that are positioned on a panel beneath six massive vacuum tubes. He makes a few adjustments, then turns to speak into a microphone. We get a close-up shot of this microphone, which he patiently takes apart so we can see its inner mechanism. Next, he places a record on a turntable and re-positions a large cone, which looks like a megaphone, so the wider end faces the music. The camera moves slowly over a silently singing choir and settles on a minister who is soundlessly speaking into the large end of another megaphone. Then abruptly, the scene ends. There is no more.

From the dark and shadowy images we can tell we've been inside a small, cramped radio studio. It's not certain that we've seen all of it. And while we've received brief, illuminated glimpses of the faces of those making a radio program, we have no idea how this broadcast is being received outside. For that

story, and for a fuller sense of this special occasion, we must look elsewhere. For that elsewhere there is no better authority than the *The Leader* in Regina, the newspaper which built and officially opened Saskatchewan's first commercial radio station, CKCK, in 1922.

For several months during the spring and summer of 1922, *The Leader* predicted that the radio craze sweeping North America would soon reach Regina and bring listeners here the same entertaining programs that only those in large metropolitan centres like Boston and New York had until now enjoyed. It noted that some people were still incredulous that the human voice could be carried over long distances without wires, and it sought to explain how each of radio's components works. It provided hints on how to fashion your own set, and it cautioned readers against unscrupulous dealers who exaggerated the receiving power of their machines. It ran pictures showing the unusual ways in which radios were being used (on bicycles, in rowboats, beside baby cribs as surrogate mothers), and it printed stories from correspondents throughout the province whose communities were picking up CKCK's test programs. Saskatchewan was to have a station of its own, cause for great celebration.

Most other Saskatchewan newspapers, however, were more reticent about this new medium. They didn't wish to trumpet the arrival of something which in time might jeopardize their profits, not to mention their entire operations. Many ignored it altogether. Only a couple even bothered to mention its official arrival in the province. And while those who had most to lose from its local presence were guarded in their comments, *The Leader* was ebullient—with good reason. It had a stake in radio's future. Instead of watching nervously from the sidelines and plotting ways of preventing advertisers from deserting the printed page for the spoken word, the *The Leader* had decided to forestall competition by getting into the business itself. By opening a station before someone else did, it could firmly establish itself in a medium that was bound to flourish in the coming years, and use that new medium to promote the paper.

There were several attempts to get the premier, the mayor of Regina and other civic dignitaries together for CKCK's official opening, but each time the plans fell through because of conflicting schedules. Finally, everything was in place for July 22. Early that day, however, a thunderstorm began building in the

west and the owners reluctantly considered postponing the opening once again. Atmospheric static from such a storm could make the broadcast of the ceremonies difficult, even impossible, to hear. But the swirling clouds admitted sunlight just long enough for them to decide to go ahead anyway. There had been too many delays already, and who knew how long it would be before such an august group could be assembled in one spot again?

All those making speeches or playing instruments or singing for this opening were installed in the CKCK studio on the fifth floor of the *The Leader* building on Hamilton Street, and an audience was invited to hear the broadcast through loudspeakers placed in City Hall. Understandably, *The Leader* viewed the event with considerable hyperbole.

> In silent curiosity and wonderment, as they might have stood about the baby steam engine or the infant telephone, Regina citizens last night gathered by hundreds in the City Hall, awaiting the first quavering note to come from the mouth of the big horn which was attached to the receiving instrument destined to give to them the first public radio concert ever heard in this city....
>
> Pouring rain failed to deter those who had made up their minds to hear the concert. Weather conditions would not keep them away from this first revelation of the new wonder, the infant prodigy making its initial public appearance in the city....
>
> The wonder of the achievement which made possible last night's entertainment was impressed deeply upon the waiting crowds when the first sound, a little scratchy and feeble, but eventually assuming the proportions of a human voice, speaking as it were directly from the platform in front of them, issued from the throat of the Magnavox, the big horn which poured out into the auditorium the speeches and the music which were, at that same time, being broadcasted all over the country within a radius of nearly 1,000 miles; for the City Hall crowd was but a small portion of The Leader's audience last night....
>
> There were in that audience many who had never in their lives before heard what they were hearing at that moment—a human voice, carried through the unknown element in the atmosphere, which, for want of a better name, the scientists have called "ether," a human voice vibrating in waves which finally struck the receiving machine and was transmitted to the waiting hundreds as if it spoke close beside them.

There were the stirring strains of "Rule Britannia," a violin concert by R.H. Cooke, addresses by Premier Dunning and

Mayor Grassick, baseball scores and market reports from CKCK announcer Bert Hooper, more music from gramophone records and local singers, a few more speeches and then "God Save the King." After the official part of the program was over, the City Hall crowd milled about the gadgetry on stage, which included a wheel-like structure wrapped with wire which served as an antenna, and they posed questions to those assigned to explain how sounds could be conveyed from one part of the city to another without wire or any other visible means of transport.

Meanwhile, for those many thousands who hadn't been privileged with an invitation to City Hall and who didn't have their ears pressed against their home receivers sharing in the excitement of this historic occasion, there was an event of much greater significance going on outside at that very moment. It was finally raining after weeks of hot, dry weather.

—

Surrounded as we are by radio and television signals connecting us to all parts of the world twenty-four hours per day, and with ready access to transportation which can take us almost anywhere within a few hours, it's sometimes hard to imagine what life was like in Saskatchewan before radio. By today's standards it was certainly isolated and quiet. According to the 1921 census, over 70 per cent of the population lived on farms. Many were separated by great distances from their neighbours, and only the fortunate few had a telephone or automobile to make those miles less forbidding. During housebound winters they might go for months without hearing a voice outside their immediate family. Recent immigrants, with an imperfect grasp of the English language, were isolated culturally as well as physically. Newspapers were already a few days old when they arrived so the news, market prices and weather forecasts were outdated before they were read. Men had occasion for contact with others during the normal course of their work, but for women the church and its related activities often afforded the only opportunities for escape from the confines of the home. Mechanization had not yet made a serious impact in rural areas so there were few distracting motorized sounds buzzing around the field or house. For those new to the province, coal oil lamp evenings, especially in the winter, must have been very long and silent.

It's not hard then to understand the excitement, the en-

thusiasm, that the first radio broadcasts must have generated in those accustomed to communicating through personal contact only. This marvelous new technical achievement could obliterate distances and put one into immediate touch with other people and other places.

CKCK was the first commercial station in Saskatchewan, but by the time it opened in 1922 broadcasting had already been taking place in the province on a small scale for over ten years. Shortly after Guglielmo Marconi showed that messages or codes could be sent without wires, and after R.A. Fessenden illustrated in 1906 that voice and music could be transmitted via radio waves, those captivated by this new technology began tinkering in basements and garages building rudimentary radio sets with which they could conduct their own experiments. The news and reports they sent each other might occasionally be of interest to an outside listener who happened to tune in on a home receiver, but their purpose was not to provide entertainment for the public. They were primarily interested in exchanging information with other aficionados. These small broadcasters began to grow in number and band together into radio clubs. The first registered club in the province was established in Saskatoon in 1912. That year it exhibited its new equipment at the summer fair and experimented with wireless transmission from an airplane. The federal government eventually decided it needed regulations to govern such clubs' activities. In 1914 it passed The Radiotelegraph Act, which contained provisions for the development of public and private commercial stations and which allowed for the licensing of "amateur experimental stations"; it defined the latter as "small stations used for instruction, experimental purposes or amusement by persons relatively inexperienced in operating." These small stations could not use more than a half kilowatt of power, and they were identified by a call letter which began with the prefix X.

When war broke out, the government halted radio broadcasting and confiscated all radio equipment to prevent sensitive information from being deliberately or inadvertently relayed to the enemy. William Pickering and Ivan Taylor of Prince Albert were a couple of Saskatchewan operators to lose their sets in this way. After the war they were allowed to resume their activities, and like others in their situation they considered this a good time to expand their operations. Pickering acquired new equipment and moved his station from his

home to the back of W.A. Johnston's store, and there are indications that many other small broadcasters similarly relocated to larger premises. They remained, however, one-person operations (except when a radio club was involved), and they had more in common with current ham operators than with radio stations as we know them today. By 1922 there were sixty-one such amateur broadcasting stations licensed in the province. Most were situated in larger centres like Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw and Regina. But there were also others in Buchanan, Indian Head, St. Louis, Strasbourg, Lajord, Morse, Davidson, Rosetown, Yorkton, Swift Current, Loreburn, Steven, Churchbridge, Landis and Qu'Appelle.

This proliferation of local stations reflected what was happening on a larger scale elsewhere. Broadcasters began appearing all over the continent, especially in the United States, once the commercial possibilities of the medium were realized. Although Canada could proudly claim to have established the first commercial station in North America in 1920 (XWA, later CFCF, Montreal), and although there were ample Canadian programs to choose from, Canadians from the start showed a distinct preference for the American product. It was radio, more than anything else before, that brought attention to our inherent predisposition to seek and cherish the culture of other countries to the detriment of our own. Radio waves didn't observe borders, and it was relatively simple to pick up American stations and diligently follow what Americans were thinking and saying. KSL, Salt Lake City; KOA, Denver; KFNF, Hastings, Nebraska; or WLS, Chicago were as easy to bring in as CKCK, Regina, because the airwaves were relatively uncluttered then and signals could travel unhindered for great distances. Most people considered these American stations as part of the local market, and they knew American entertainers more intimately than performers from their own area. When newspapers eventually got around to publishing radio schedules, they devoted considerably more space to American listings than Canadian listings, partly because they regarded American radio more exciting than Canadian radio and partly because there were simply that many more American stations available to Saskatchewan listeners.

In some quarters it became a mark of distinction if you could pick up a station from a great distance away, and DX Clubs were formed throughout the province for those eager to participate in the sport of DXing or "Radio Golf" (DX being the

telegrapher's shorthand for "distance"). Avid listeners spent entire evenings scouring the dial, stopping at any one station only long enough to get its call letters and calculate how far away it was, before moving on. The one who amassed the greatest number of miles on a particular night would be declared winner. As could be expected, hot disputes often arose when an alleged mileage was considered suspect enough to warrant a challenge. The only sure way to settle any disagreement was to write the station or stations in question, saying you heard a certain program at a certain time, and ask for a verification card which provided indisputable proof to your claim. All stations kept these cards handy in order to reply quickly to such requests.

To pick up faraway places you needed a good receiver. Since many in the twenties couldn't afford this luxury, they had to content themselves with the simplest set available—the "crystal set." If they were mechanically inclined they could actually construct one themselves. All they needed was wire to wrap around a cardboard or apple box to serve as antenna; shellac to insulate this wire; a piece of crystal (also known as a cat whisker) to rectify the signal; solder, a switch, a few nuts; and anything metallic to catch the signal—bedsprings were sometimes strung up outside to catch those signals that passed through the air, while a rod from the endgate of a grain box was often pounded into the ground to intercept signals that passed through the soil. Total cost: less than a dollar. Because crystal sets didn't have an amplifying system, one could only listen to them through headphones which usually cost two or three times as much as the receiver itself. Catherine Humphrey Stalker, whose father R.J. Humphrey was one of the first to own a set in the Kinistino area, says people used to line up in their living-room.

> They would wait their turn to go into the den [where the radio was]. . . . As each one left my job was to go quickly into the den and with the bottle of alcohol hidden behind the curtain I would wipe the earphones with a cotton swab so the listeners would not be in danger of an ear infection. This was done very discreetly—so nobody would know.

Other owners, less committed to such personalized service, simply placed the headphones in a genuine cut glass bowl; this sufficiently amplified the sound so it was audible to a room full

of listeners. R.J. Humphrey had another way of bringing radio to a large number of people.

> I remember—my dad calling Mrs. Shannon, the telephone operator, to tell her he had a good reception. She would throw all the rural switches open so people all across the town and out of town could listen. Dad would work the dials to get the best [sound] and I would hold the ear phone tilted at just the right angle into our limoge [*sic*] cup which amplified the sound.

With the development of vacuum tubes it was possible to build a set that amplified as well as received the signal, and soon Saskatchewan homes were adorned with consoles bearing the names Westinghouse Radiola, Arcadia, Northern Electric and Atwater Kent. These radios were powered by dry-cell batteries, and they proved relatively expensive to run since the batteries had to be replaced when they ran out of juice. Some enterprising individuals devised ways of powering radios with wet-cell batteries, which had a longer life because they could be recharged by home-made windchargers. But this had its attendant disadvantage. It wasn't feasible to use such a battery exclusively for radio, and so listening was confined to those times when the battery wasn't otherwise being used; that generally meant winter. Radios running from an electric current appeared in 1927, but they weren't of any use on Saskatchewan farms until rural electrification began twenty-seven years later.

—

The principles on which radio worked were mysterious and perplexing. The seemingly magical transmission of sound over great distances without wire prompted some to philosophical musings. Perhaps with Einstein's recent theories in mind, they grandly predicted that radio might very well change all existing notions of life. Others thought of radio more prosaically, and with a tentative grasp of its mechanics they sought ways of stretching its capabilities. Seager Wheeler and his brother Percy, who lived about a mile and half apart in the Rosthern district, decided one day that they should be able to communicate directly with each other by radio. So one phoned the other, and after establishing contact they set down their telephone receivers. They then went to their radio sets, and while Seager shouted into his set, Percy listened to his. When that plan failed to produce any sound they switched roles with Percy shouting

and Seager listening. It's uncertain which scientific principle they thought they were applying in this experiment but, as Percy's son Maurice suggests, they probably would have heard more had they simply opened the doors of their houses.

Well, then, how did radio work? Scientists and those in the radio business were often as unclear as those whose questions they tried to answer. Their explanations, as recorded in newspapers and journals, were only partially satisfactory. The human voice, they said, was buoyed up by an inexplicable matter called "ether." Beyond that they couldn't be sure. But as with most things that science creates and that to the uninitiated may seem incomprehensible, there are explanations that even lay people can understand.

Any kind of energy, be it heat, light, or sound, can only be transmitted over long distances with electromagnetic energy. In broadcasting, that means that the human voice or music or any sound produced in a studio must be linked with electromagnetic waves before it can be sent out and heard many miles away. The sound piggybacks, so to speak, on the electromagnetic waves, which are also known as carrier waves. A voice produces sound waves and a microphone converts these sound waves into electrical impulses. This electrical energy is then fed to the transmitter where it is combined with electromagnetic waves and beamed out into the atmosphere. Electromagnetic waves also pass through the soil. When they are intercepted by the antenna or grounding rod, they are passed to the receiver. The crystal, or diode or rectifier in the receiver separates the electrical impulses from the electromagnetic wave. Having fulfilled its purpose, the electromagnetic wave is dispersed while the electrical energy is fed to the speaker or headphone; there it's converted back into sound waves which replicate the original voice.

Electromagnetic waves, which travel at the speed of light, can be compared to the waves you create when you drop a stone in water; they have a crest and a trough. The length of a wave—its wavelength—is the distance between two adjacent crests or between two troughs. In the early years radio stations were identified by their wavelengths. CKCK, for example, was licensed to broadcast at 420 metres. Eventually, frequency replaced wavelength as the common designation. Frequency is defined as the number of complete waves which pass a given point in one second—the number of cycles per second. To calculate frequency, you divide the velocity of the wave (con-

stant at about 300,000 metres per second) by its wavelength. CKCK's frequency, therefore, would have been 714 kilocycles per second. The words "per second" were usually omitted and frequency expressed simply as kilocycles. As kilocycle came to mean both a definite number of cycles as well as the number of cycles per second, it was thought advisable to avoid confusion by creating a new unit. The hertz, representing one cycle per second, has been adopted internationally, and frequency today is expressed either in kilohertz (kHz) or megahertz (mHz).

When a radio wave leaves the transmitter, it passes along the contour of the earth and up into space, where it's reflected back to earth by an ionized layer known as the Kennelly-Heaviside layer, named after its discoverers. Longer or flatter waves are more inclined to follow the earth's curvature than shorter, more pointed waves and the former are therefore capable of blanketing a greater area. Since sea vessels are generally a small speck in a large ocean area, naval communication has been fixed by international agreement to take place in the lowest possible frequency range—400 to 530 mHz. AM broadcasting stations operate within the 540 to 1600 kHz range. This broadcast band is divided into 106 channels; each channel can accommodate more than one station as long as stations maintain a 5 kHz clearance on either side to avoid interference. Since FM stations modulate the frequency of the wave rather than the amplitude (FM means frequency modulation; AM means amplitude modulation), the former need a greater band width. Able to use the full frequency range they therefore produce better quality sound. But because these waves are in the very high frequency (VHF) band—between 88 and 108 mHz—they don't follow the curvature of the earth and aren't reflected by the ionized layer. They move in a straight line from transmitter to receiver, giving them a very limited range compared to waves in the AM band.

To many of us, wavelengths and frequencies and kilohertz may be nothing more than a lot of technical gibberish and induce in us prolonged yawns of indifference. But for those in the radio industry they are vital issues which have been at the centre of some of the most astute manoeuvering and acrimonious bickering to take place in the radio business. Stations naturally covet frequencies at the lower end of the spectrum because longer waves cover a greater area, and the larger the area you serve the greater the potential there is for advertising revenue. If a station isn't assigned a low frequency when it first

obtains its licence (almost impossible now with a glutted frequency band), it can apply to move down later when a space becomes available. But these spaces are rare and when one does open up several stations usually lobby intensely for it. Today, such moves don't have as much of a direct impact on listeners as they did in the past. In the twenties and thirties, when stations sought vainly to combat poor reception, a slight shift in frequency, even to a higher spot, could make a big difference. Now that reception is uniformly good throughout the frequency band, stations are primarily interested in obtaining lower frequencies so they can increase their broadcast range.

—

Ranges and frequencies and potential profits wouldn't have figured very prominently in the mind of CKCK's owner, George Bell, as he mingled with wellwishers that soggy July evening in 1922. He was probably just happy that everything had gone off as planned. Regina had finally been placed on the radio dial, and through CKCK the province could now be part of this exciting new phenomenon. Whereas creating a station for a local audience was a significant accomplishment, getting people to listen when American programs were there for the taking was another matter. Would CKCK be able to compete with places that were only a fraction of an inch away? Could its presence help offset the cultural invasion from the south that radio had inaugurated, an invasion that brought American customs, American values and American models of behaviour to Canadian soil, making them an inextricable part of Canadian experience? Saskatchewan was particularly vulnerable to such outside influences in the early twenties because, as a new home for immigrants from Europe and elsewhere, it hadn't yet developed its own distinct character, nor had it evolved a clear image of itself. CKCK, formed specifically to protect the interests of a newspaper, may not have had any large cultural aspirations in mind, but along with those stations that came later, it would nevertheless play a role in shaping and giving expression to an identity that was distinctly different from that found on American stations.

2

Spirited Growth

BY 1922 THE BROADCASTING CLIMATE IN CANADA HAD changed considerably from that of 1914, and the number of individuals, groups and companies involved in radio production had risen dramatically. Many of the old regulations were no longer adequate and so the Department of Marine and Fisheries, which supervised broadcasting, drafted new policies.

It obliged anyone owning a receiving set to purchase a one-dollar licence, a law which many listeners observed but which was almost impossible to enforce. Whenever the radio inspector arrived at a house requesting to see a valid licence, it wasn't uncommon for him to be greeted by a brief flurry of activity on the other side of the door and then dead silence as the transgressors waited from under the bed for him to leave. Statistics listing the number of sets in Saskatchewan in the twenties are highly unreliable.

Amateur experimental stations were still allowed to operate on a half kilowatt of power, which meant their range seldom exceeded ten miles. Their activity consisted mainly of sending messages to each other, although some were notorious for pirating popular American programs that people with poor receivers couldn't pick up, and then rebroadcasting these programs within the immediate area. None of these stations originated shows of their own. Whereas previously they had been identified by the prefix X, they were now given a number which varied according to the region. Stations in Alberta,

Manitoba and Saskatchewan began with 4. Licenses were also issued to recognized radio clubs to establish amateur broadcasting stations. One of the largest such clubs at that time was the Moose Jaw Amateur Radio Association, which in 1921 had thirty-three members, many of whom operated experimental stations.

According to the Department of Marine and Fisheries annual report for 1922-23, Canada was the only country in the world to allow amateurs to operate broadcasting stations, a situation that persisted until the mid-thirties. They were assigned the prefix *10* and were required to broadcast on a special wavelength of 250 metres so as not to interfere with commercial stations which used the 400-450 metre band. Those which couldn't be encouraged to switch from using spark transmitters to continuous wave transmitters were asked to observe "silent hours." Spark signals, it seems, created considerable interference.

In terms of operation and facilities, though, there was little to distinguish these amateur stations from commercial stations, which any British subject or Canadian company could form. They were all run by one person who announced, shovelled the walk and maintained (even built) the equipment. All the materials necessary to broadcast were usually located in a tiny structure built at the transmitter site or else placed in a reconverted room in an existing building. "In those days stations operated in a minimum of space," says Wilf Collier, who worked for CKCK.

> Our control room, which also housed the transmitter, was roughly nine by twelve. Everything was squeezed into that space, including two seventy-eight r.p.m. turntables. The studios were bigger. They occupied the room where the editorial staff and reporters had their 'office' space. All the walls were lined with straw pressed into bales about four inches thick with drapes hanging in front of them. This was both for soundproofing and for taking out any 'hollow' sound from the room. Of course with all that straw the place smelled a bit like a stable and it also made a perfect place for mice to set up housekeeping. Once two sisters were playing twin pianos. The announcer was introducing them when a mouse decided to join the act. Suddenly the girls went into hysterics and the whole place was in pandemonium—all going out on the air.

One difference between amateur and commercial stations, however, was the licence fee. Horace Stovin, who established

10AT (later 10BU) at Unity, says, "The real reason for taking the 10AT licence rather than the regular commercial broadcasting licence was because the amateur licence cost ten dollars and the commercial one fifty dollars. We didn't have the extra forty dollars." The extra forty dollars didn't allow commercial broadcasters to do programs that amateurs couldn't, but it enabled them to carry advertising. It's debatable how much this privilege was worth since in the early years no station could be expected to earn a profit. Electric companies and retail stores got into the radio business not because they thought they could make any money from it directly but because it would help them sell more radio sets, which is where they made their real profit. They figured people were more inclined to buy receivers if they had a local station to listen to. Besides that, the crystal sets they handled could only pick up stations ten to fifteen miles away, and therefore were only of value if there was a station in the vicinity. Otherwise, as a pioneer points out, "... it would be more like buying an automobile and have [*sic*] no gasoline to run it." For these companies radio was a business expense, an adjunct to their regular commercial activities. It was never calculated to be self-sufficient.

Nevertheless, they had to adhere to strict regulations governing advertising, which the Department of Marine and Fisheries divided into two classes—direct and indirect.

> An example of direct advertising would be an automobile salesman renting a station for ten minutes to extol the virtues of his particular make of car. An example of indirect advertising would be a departmental store renting a station for an evening, putting on a first-class programme, and announcing its name and the fact that it was contributing the programme, before and after each selection.

In 1922, the department limited all direct advertising to the period before 6:00 P.M. Four years later it prohibited direct advertising of any kind without the written consent of the minister responsible. The following year it noted that few stations were using direct advertising any more, meaning that the regulation had either been effective in stopping it or that stations were still using it without seeking prior permission. By the early thirties only indirect advertising was allowed, which meant that neither price nor money could be mentioned. There's considerable evidence, though, that these rules were

only half-heartedly enforced and that stations contravened them without consequence.

Devising regulations to be observed within Canadian borders was not a simple task in the twenties, but it proved far less difficult than coming to a workable international agreement with the United States. In 1922, Canadian stations were assigned frequencies in the 400-450 metre band because that was a band the United States was not using at the time. But American stations were multiplying so rapidly that the United States decided it needed more channels. So in 1923 it simply appropriated all channels in the radio band, including those Canada was using. Predictably, this created chaos. Signals from all over America came riding in over Canadian stations. Since receivers were still highly susceptible to atmospheric interference it was almost impossible to hear any broadcast clearly. Negotiations the following year provided a temporary solution. Canada received exclusive use of six of the 106 channels, the United States had exclusive use of 89 channels, and they shared eleven. But in 1926 a Chicago station successfully challenged the United States Department of Commerce's right to regulate frequencies, and another free-for-all followed. In 1927, Canada began negotiating with the newly formed U.S. Federal Radio Commission, claiming it needed more wavelengths because it was broadcasting to an area as large as the States. But the Commission rejected this reasoning, arguing that frequencies should be alloted on the basis of population, not geographical area. Canada went into the negotiations asking for exclusive use of twelve channels; it came out with the six it already had.

With such a heavy demand on the few available wavelengths, the Department of Marine and Fisheries had no alternative but to require stations operating in the same market to double up and, inconceivable as it may sound today, broadcast on the same wavelength. The day was divided into several segments with one station assigned something like Monday, Wednesday and Thursday nights; Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday mornings; and Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. The other station or stations used the remaining times. When a station reached the end of its broadcast period, its operator called the other station's operator by telephone, saying the time was now free, and a new station signed on where a different one had previously existed.

CKCK, Regina was the first commercial station in the province but others followed quickly. By 1925 there were three stations in Saskatoon, all operating on the same wavelength. Although individually they were only responsible for a few hours each day, in aggregate their programs covered the entire day.

Thirty-six years after the event, in a jovial mood at a meeting of fellow broadcasters, A.A. Murphy recalled how he and David Streb, secretary-treasurer and president respectively of The Electric Shop, had started CFQC.

> In the latter part of 1922 some red-headed fella from eastern Canada took a swing through the west and he came to our place of business. He loaded us up with a lot of cats whiskers and horns and what not. My partner bought all this stuff and when I came in and he told me about it, I said, "What are we going to do with all of it. I guess we'll have to have a radio station to sell this kind of stuff." CKCK was in operation then but it wasn't very powerful. I took a trip to Calgary, saw a guy there and made a deal with him to build me a 50-watt station. He brought it up, under his arm so to speak, to Saskatoon.
>
> In the meantime we brought in a lot of material required for radio sets in those days. And of course we kept it a dark secret. Nobody else had anything to sell except us. We had a kind of a closed corporation you might say.

CFQC began broadcasting from a small, frame building in July 1923. Stan Clifton was the first engineer/announcer/cleaning man, and at the beginning he was on the air for an hour and a half at noon and for another hour in the evening. He read news from the local paper and relayed the latest grain prices and sports scores, usually in a semi-shout because microphones in those days were highly insensitive. It was in order to compensate for this insensitivity that stations like CFQC built boxes or cones to amplify the wanted sound and keep out the unwanted sound. The tapered end of this megaphone-like device was placed against the microphone while the wider, open end was placed in front of a person or a gramophone record. Gramophone machines themselves were less than perfect and the one CFQC used was known frequently to lose its tension, usually mid-way through a song. More than once Clifton would interrupt what he was doing when he heard the music begin to slow down, crank up the machine, make a brief apology, and then resume his other business.

Besides records, CFQC broadcast many local artists, the most famous of the early ones being Guy Watkins and his Art

Harmony Seven. They became so renowned that in a 1928 popularity contest sponsored by *Radio Digest* magazine they placed first in Canada and fourth in the continent. Madame Sherry, a well known concert singer in the city, also made regular appearances on CFQC. There's only one surviving anecdote about her on-air performance, and it tells us less about her than about the handicaps under which broadcasters functioned. Occasionally CFQC broadcast a program originating in the Streb household by remote control, and it was during one of these sessions that Madame Sherry's aria was cut short abruptly by a passing streetcar. The shaking house had agitated the microphone, causing its carbon granules to pack. Faced with such a situation, announcer/engineers had one of three options: they could shut down the station and replace the packed carbon with fresh granules; they could switch the station off just long enough to shake the microphone and unpack the granules; or if they were sadistically inclined, they could give the microphone a good whack while still broadcasting, sending the person listening on headphones reeling across the room. There's no indication which of these options CFQC's operator chose in the august Madame Sherry's presence.

CFQC, like other Canadian stations, depended a great deal on live, local talent because of a regulation that prohibited the use of mechanically-reproduced sound (i.e., records) after 7:30 P.M. Legislators imposed this rule in order to limit the importation of American syndicated programs and to ensure that Canadian artists and musicians got on the air. According to broadcast historian Mary Vipond,

> The motivation seems to have been a belief that listeners did not want recorded material, that such programming was somehow of lower quality, and that it constituted a deception of the public. This was similar to the feeling of U.S. authorities, who banned records totally on the stronger and more prestigious stations. . . .
>
> In my opinion, there was some justification for this ban in the very early twenties, because the technology of reproduction was very poor and because playing gramophone records destroyed radio's main innovation, its "immediacy." Later, however, the policy made much less sense, for it in effect condemned listeners to second-rate local amateur talent when good records might have been much preferable from everyone's point of view. At any rate, the policy does not seem to have been very tightly enforced, although even in the 1930's under the CRBC [Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission]

announcers were required to identify every piece of recorded material as such.

—

Saskatoon's second station, run by the International Bible Students Association (IBSA)(affiliated with the Jehovah's Witnesses), opened in 1924. The Department of Marine and Fisheries was generally reluctant to issue licenses to religious groups, but it was eventually persuaded by the argument that in thinly populated rural areas such a station could fill a spiritual need for those deprived of regular church services. Three other IBSA stations were also set up in other parts of the country, but all remained autonomous in their operation.

CHUC was located on the top floor of the Regent Theatre. It had a staff orchestra which performed twice a week, a children's choir which sang at noon, and an announcer—Cliff Roberts—who supervised the studio's activities. It's not clear how well the station was initially received by listeners who belonged to mainstream Christian denominations, but it wasn't long before official resentment against its presence became public. Without mentioning CHUC by name, the Saskatoon Board of Trade, in January 1927, wrote to the Department of Marine and Fisheries asking it to confine the broadcasting of religious subjects to Sunday. Sermons were taking up too much of the scarce time available on radio during the week, it said, and people weren't getting a chance to hear programs of a more general nature. In response, W.F. Salter, Canadian general of the IBSA, reminded the Board of Trade that local stations were not built for city residents only but for the entire province. "For the department to say that religion can be broadcast on only one day a week, while jazz is allowed on seven days would sound strange to the ear of any person, let alone a Britisher," he declared.

CHUC claimed that while its musical programs always included a short Bible or educational talk, they couldn't be strictly considered religious services. Neither was there anything inflammatory about them, according to Rhea Naish. She feels the fuss that subsequently erupted over the station's programs was instigated by other churches who felt threatened by the IBSA and were afraid their members would be lured away by its teachings.

Church services and short talks on religious principles were also regular features on CJWC, Saskatoon's third station, which

operated out of the King George Hotel. It had been set up in the fall of 1925 by C.W. Wheaton, honorary president of the Saskatoon Radio Club and owner of The Wheaton Electric Company. CJWC, however, complemented this religious fare with numerous secular shows; there were broadcasts of orchestras from the Zenith Café and the Hudson's Bay store, and children's programs which had Alex Cuthbert, "the Sandman," reading stories to piano accompaniment by Helen Zollis. These programs brought solace and joy to many a lonely soul; one bachelor wrote to say he appreciated the station because "the only way I can get a woman in my house is over the radio." Others, though, were less thrilled with what CJWC was bringing into their house, and within two years the station became embroiled in one of the two major battles of the twenties—the fight over who had control over the marketing of wheat. CJWC's unwitting involvement in this issue tarnished Wheaton's reputation in the community and threatened to jeopardize his electrical business, so in 1928 he sold the station to J.H. Speers, who ran a flour mill and seed/feed store. But Speers didn't have any better luck at radio himself. Unable to bear the cost of its operation and unable to create a harmonious working environment, he sold CJHS, as it was now called, to A.A. Murphy less than a year later. Murphy kept CJHS and CFQC as separate entities on the same frequency until the fall of 1930 when all of CJHS's contractual obligations had been met. Then he shut down the CJHS transmitter and closed its studio. Following CJHS's closure, and for the next twenty-two years, CFQC had a monopoly in the city.

—

Even though Saskatoon and Regina, like many other centres in the province, had radio clubs and eventually amateur and commercial stations, Moose Jaw had the most active group of radio aficionados anywhere. A year before CKCK went on the air, the Moose Jaw Amateur Radio Association claimed close to a hundred members. In 1922 the senior members of this club formed a new association—the Moose Jaw Senior Amateur Club—with the stated aim of building and operating a broadcasting station. Though they raised enough money in the community to buy equipment and pay for the licence, their one dollar membership fee was not enough to keep the station operating. They also apparently had difficulty in collecting this fee and so were forced to borrow $100 from the Kiwanis Club

just to keep the organization afloat. By the spring of 1923, however, it was obvious they couldn't continue. They therefore sold the equipment they had purchased to the Kiwanis Club for a fraction of its initial cost and at the same time handed over control of the station. When 10AB officially went on the air in April 1923, it was directed by a committee appointed by the Kiwanis Club executive.

Although amateur radio had had mixed success in the city, there were high expectations for its future. At 10AB's opening ceremonies, Mayor Dunn said the station provided an opportunity for all civic organizations in the city to participate in what was essentially a community undertaking. And he suggested that a night might be set aside from time to time so an organization could prepare a complete program, "thus creating a friendly rivalry and tending to make for better programs."

Over the succeeding months 10AB broadcast performances by violinists, pianists, saxophonists (concerts which sometimes had to be repeated because electrical storms interfered with the original broadcast) and talks by local people such as Dr. D.M. Bayly, the city medical health officer, who regularly discussed public health. Records were rarely used. The station had a total of ten discs and they were only played to fill in the time needed to get one person out of the studio and the next one in. When A.J. Wickens, a local lawyer with his own program, purchased a set of records, the event was considered worthy of an announcement in the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*. The oratorio of Handel's *Messiah* would be heard, in its entirety, on Christmas Eve. Wickens operated mainly from his home (a line ran from his house to the transmitter), which accounted for frequent apologies like, "Excuse me for that little bump. The needle jumped because the kids were playing around."

By the fall of 1924 the Kiwanis Club found the financial burden of running 10AB too onerous, and it returned control to a reorganized radio club called the Moose Jaw Radio Association. Many local merchants contributed both cash and merchandise to the association, and Norman Bellamy built and equipped a studio on the top floor of his furniture store. Furnished with a new organ, a Heintzman piano and an Orthophonic Victrola, this studio was lavish compared to the two by four space 10AB had previously occupied in the YMCA building. All the major churches in the city installed remote control lines so the station could broadcast their Sunday ser-

vices and any other activity during the week. According to a 1927 newspaper story, 10AB brought in programs from other locations as well.

> During the past political campaign 10AB was requested by all political parties to broadcast their respective speeches from the armories. The remote control wires to the armories were installed by some business men of Moose Jaw, in 1925, so that 10AB could broadcast any event of interest taking place there. From there 10AB has broadcast the Southern Saskatchewan Musical Festival, and also all the political speeches during the last election. 10AB received many thanks for these speeches from the four western provinces. Early in 1926, 10AB had remote control wires into the Capitol Theatre and the Temple Gardens dance hall, the four churches, and the armories, all of which are used as occasion requires. All the artistes and men who work for 10AB do so without any remuneration whatever, under the community spirit, and its operators, under the direction of Mr. Alf. Jacobson, who built the set, are all radio hammembers of the A.R.R.L. [American Radio Relay League]. . . .
>
> 10AB installed a radio receiver in the Children's Home for the entertainment of the 150 children there, and also for the staff, and at the present time are forming plans for the installation of receivers in the General Hospital. 10AB holds meetings during the winter months and gives instructional talks on radio, etc. These lectures are usually given by the old radio hams, and the meetings are attended by city and country members.

—

Like its counterpart in Moose Jaw, the Kiwanis Club in Prince Albert got involved with radio soon after it appeared in the city. Along with the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club prepared programs for broadcast over 4FC, an experimental station started by Bill Pickering, Bill Hart, Ralph Leadbetter and Ted Grimes. Broadcasts were sporadic and generally involved simple concerts: piano recitals, saxophone solos, violin duets and male quartets. These were all intended for the "amusement to the radio public." Occasionally, Pickering played tunes from his private collection of RCA Victor records. Despite a meagre fifteen-watt transmitter, 4FC developed a following in centres as far away as Blaine Lake, North Battleford, Saskatoon and Rosthern, and there was a great deal of excitement one day when it received a letter from a listener in Minnesota.

In June 1925 those associated with 4FC, and who comprised the Prince Albert Radio Club, managed to get an amateur

broadcasting licence for station 10BI. Unlike the originators of 10AB, who canvassed the community for money to operate the station, this enterprising lot decided to raise money in a more speculative way. They figured they had a better chance of quickly getting the funds they needed by playing the stock market, so they invested all of their club's money in wheat futures. It turned out to be a fortunate decision. With a $100 investment they made a $400 profit, which they used to buy a new microphone and other equipment.

Station 10BI relocated several times during its early years. It was situated variously in J.A. Klein's and Ralph Leadbetter's homes, the Legion Hall, Davy's Electric Shop, the fire hall, and the Burns and Company meat plant. It continued the kind of programming 4FC had undertaken except on an expanded scale. In March 1926, in conjunction with the first Northern Saskatchewan Winter Carnival, it broadcast its first opera, *The Chimes of Normandy*, performed by a group of Prince Albert players. It tried repeatedly to get a commercial licence, to no avail, and finally in the late twenties, beset by financial problems, 10BI decided to shut down. Were it not for the zealous efforts by Lloyd E. Moffat to keep it going, it would have likely disappeared.

Moffat had grown up on a farm outside Regina. As a young boy he listened assiduously to CKCK, usually in the field on a crystal set he had built and attached to the plough. In the evenings he would visit CKCK's announcer Bert Hooper to query him on the technical matters of broadcasting. He had been working part-time as a projectionist in Regina when he was offered a full-time job at the Orpheum Theatre in Prince Albert. There he joined the Prince Albert Radio Club, and when the club disbanded he bought its assets. While maintaining his day job, he continued to play records over 10BI for farmers and trappers who had expressed appreciation for the station and who, like others in the area, wanted to see it continue. Geoffrey Bartlett, who used to accompany the provincial radio inspector on his excursions around the province to check on operators, remembers a visit to 10BI in the late twenties.

> Amateur stations were only allowed 25 watts but when I went to look behind the transmitter I nearly flipped. Moffat was putting 500 watts into the air. "Well, what do we do," the inspector asked me. I said he wasn't doing any harm and he had quite a following. So we didn't do anything and eventually Moffat got a commercial licence.

The province's third amateur station was located in Unity. Since the early twenties Horace Stovin had been experimenting there, in the dispensary at the back of his pharmacy, under the call letters 4AA and putting out sounds that could be picked up on the receivers he was selling in the front of the store. In 1923 he received an amateur broadcasting licence for 10AT and moved the studio and transmitter to his home. Most of the broadcasts were done in the evening when Stovin and others in the community were free of their daytime commitments. His son Bill remembers being frequently disturbed in his sleep by feet tramping up the stairs past his bedroom to the attic, where the broadcasts originated. In 1925, Stovin built a new studio near the Odd Fellows Hall and began operating as commercial station CHSC. He broadcast violin performances by an uncle from the Channel Islands, plays adapted from O. Henry stories, and regular appearances by the Toastmaster and His Airmen, an orchestra in which Stovin himself took part.

—

Because regulations allowed individuals or companies to open stations anywhere in the country, two Manitoba groups were able to move into Saskatchewan in the twenties. They did so because the Manitoba government, which had been given monopolistic control of radio in that province, repeatedly denied their application for licences there. The Winnipeg Grain Exchange (a marketing agency) and James Richardson and Sons (which owned the Pioneer Grain elevator system and traded wheat internationally) had basically the same reasons for wanting to get into broadcasting as the Regina *Leader*. They wouldn't earn any profit from it directly but they could use it to promote their main business activities. By broadcasting up-to-date market reports and detailed business information, they hoped to encourage farmers to make greater use of their services. Both companies augmented their business news with entertainment, some of which was produced locally but much of which came via telephone line from studios they had built in their offices in Winnipeg.

The Richardsons set up CJRM in Moose Jaw in 1926 (the JR stood for James Richardson). The station was managed by D.R.P. "Darby" Coates and the operator was Billy Ward, a company man, who curried favour with his employers by naming his daughter Caroline June Rose Marie so her initials would spell CJRM. It's not certain if the company rewarded

him for his devotion, but his good work was recognized by his listeners. In 1927 he won the Radio Announcer's Popularity Contest, a poll sponsored by *Radio Digest* and conducted among *Radio Digest* readers in both the United States and Canada.

The Richardsons also opened another station, CJRW, at Fleming, near the Manitoba border in 1928. This allowed them to broadcast into Manitoba without actually being situated there.

The Grain Exchange created CJGX in Yorkton in 1927 (the GX stood for Grain Exchange). Its studio was located in the Collacott Block with the transmitter on top of a hill. If you lived near the transmitter you apparently didn't always need an aerial to pick up the station. One neighbour found that when his tin water cistern filled to a certain level, it rectified CJGX's signal, and programs came booming into his house from under the floorboards.

—

Like Moose Jaw, Regina received its second station in 1926. It was owned by the R.H. Williams and Sons department store, a business later bought by Simpson. CHWC began operating at fifteen watts from a room on the top floor of the store where the transmitter was located. It gradually increased its power over the following years, but by the time it reached five hundred watts, federal government regulations required that stations of that power had to have their transmitter located at least ten miles from an urban area. *The Leader*'s CKCK, which had been at five hundred watts for some time and which operated on the same frequency as CHWC, was not required to move. As a result, CKCK came in much more strongly than CHWC, whose transmitter was now outside the city at Pilot Butte, and listeners constantly had to adjust their volume as the stations took turns on the air. Should you set your radio at a comfortable level for CHWC and leave your apartment for any length of time, when you returned you were sure to be confronted by angry neighbours demanding you do something about the thundering sounds of CKCK.

CHWC's studio was eventually relocated to the Kitchener Hotel, in sample rooms previously used by travellers to display their wares. The walls were so thin that a listener could hear a flushing toilet from next door over the air. As a result,

CHWC's call letters in some circles came to stand for "Can Hear Water Closet."

A number of people who later established reputations elsewhere worked at CHWC. One of them was Bill Speers.

> I don't think I'd ever heard a complete radio programme in my life when I got my first job at CHWC. Not long after I got there, my boss said to me, "You go over to the lobby of the Metropolitan Theatre. You'll find a group called Jeff Germaine and his Band there. The equipment is there. You just have to turn a button. You put on a headset and when you hear, 'We take you now to the lobby of the Metropolitan Theatre,' you put these guys on the air." I said, "What do you mean, put them on the air?" He said, "You turn the switch, and you announce the programme." I really didn't know what I was doing. I turned the switch, and I heard the cue, and I said, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen," as if I knew what I was doing, and I quickly dreamed up a set of cliché phrases like, "Our next selection is . . . " and "Now we're going to hear . . . " The next day, I'm sitting in the studio and this same guy leaned over my shoulder and said, "Now we bring you the five o'clock news," and he handed me a copy of the *Leader-Post* [*sic*]. So I read the first two paragraphs of every story on the front page and then signed off ten minutes later.

Andy McDermott, who wrote for the *Regina Daily Star*, helped the station promote an amateur hour which was broadcast on Saturdays from the Capitol Theatre.

> It was supposed to be an hour long but it ran on sometimes to three hours depending on how much talent there was. People paid ten cents to come and stand there while the amateur show was on. But CHWC was mostly forced to play records. They didn't have the money to attract talent that CKCK had.

CHWC was a looser operation than CKCK which was run by Bert Hooper. During the twenties and early thirties he was the most celebrated radio personality in southern Saskatchewan and there are grounds to believe that his popularity was province-wide. No one, least of all he, could have predicted this fame. He was a young wireless operator for the Marconi Company in Vancouver in 1922 when George Bell, owner of the Regina *Leader*, came to town. Bell was looking for someone to help him set up a radio station. The company suggested he talk to Hooper who, as it turned out, had never heard of Saskatchewan. After a lengthy discussion in an ice-cream parlour, Bell asked Hooper to pick up a newspaper, go to a

telephone booth down the street, and read the New York stocks to him over the phone. Hooper's voice was huskier and lower than usual because he had a cold, but it was on the basis of that ingenious audition that he was hired.

Hooper did everything from announce music to solder wires to clean windows at CKCK. When he took holidays the station shut down. According to Hooper, CKCK existed primarily for news and market reports for farmers. "It didn't give a damn about the public." It was under Hooper's tutelage that CKCK claimed several broadcasting "firsts," he said many years later. On February 11, 1923, CKCK was the first station in the British Empire to broadcast a church service by remote control. Two ordinary telephone mouthpieces were placed in front of the minister and choir at Carmichael Church and the sounds fed by telephone line, courtesy of Saskatchewan Government Telephones, to the studio for transmission. In May that year, CKCK broadcast the results of the Prince Albert Music Festival through 307 miles of telephone line—allegedly the longest remote control broadcast in the world at that time. Again, Saskatchewan Telephones was happy to oblige, because it felt that by co-operating in these experiments, it would create a good public image and thus inspire more people to buy telephone service. Hooper was also instrumental in organizing the first hockey broadcast in Canada. CKCK had been raising money to buy earphones for tuberculosis patients at Fort San when a nurse at the San suggested the station might consider doing something besides playing gramophone music. Many patients, she said, were interested in hockey. Would CKCK consider broadcasting a hockey game? Hooper needed to get approval from the manager of the Regina Capitals, a team in the Western Canadian Professional Hockey League, who agreed providing CKCK didn't announce its intention beforehand and thus keep people away from the rink. And so, on March 14, 1923, one week before Foster Hewitt made his hockey debut, Pete Parker, assistant to the manager of *The Leader*, called a game between the Regina Capitals and the Edmonton Eskimos.

—

Hockey, as well as boxing, baseball and other sporting events, proved to be highly popular, and soon became an established part of the radio schedule. Cliff Jones, a telegrapher for CNR, used to simulate live hockey broadcasts over CFQC by reading

reports of games from the telegraph wire. Other announcers described World Series action by listening to American stations on headphones and repeating the American play-by-play commentary over their own station. In 1927, CJRM even brought experts into the studio to play checkers, numbering the playing board from one to thirty-two so listeners could follow the game at home and play along if they wished. In the late twenties, 10BI began regular curling broadcasts and in 1938 they hired a full-time commentator, Dale Yoos, to call the games. He devised the "clock system," which told listeners where the rock was located and which is still in use on broadcasts today.

Whereas sporting events like hockey were available in large supply all year round, the same could not be said for records. Record companies released around ten songs per month at that time, so even if a station were willing to commit part of its meagre resources to building up a collection, it would take a while to do so. Stations therefore often borrowed records from a local music store, giving the store credit for their use and returning them after they had been played. The agreement was clearly in the station's interest since it didn't require any investment, while the music store participated because it subscribed to a principle that is still in force today—hearing a song, no matter how many times, enhances its desirability and makes a listener want to buy it.

Through much of the twenties, CKCK had fewer than a dozen records at any one time. One quiet Sunday, Bert Hooper was being as ingenious as he could in finding new combinations in which to play them, when through his open window he heard what sounded like gospel music. The sounds got progressively louder until finally a Salvation Army Band rounded a corner and came into view. They stopped under his window and the band leader began an impromptu sermon directed at the only two people on the street—a policeman and a vagrant. Recognizing a rare opportunity to vary his Sunday afternoon offerings, Hooper quickly placed his microphone on the window sill and began transmitting what surely must have been the most unorthodox remote church broadcast in the world. The Salvation Army, unaware of what was going on, was naturally bewildered by the stacks of mail that arrived complimenting the major on his uplifting message.

Hooper had a large audience, the magnitude of which became clear in a radio competition. After CJRM's Billy Ward

won the Radio Announcer's Popularity Contest, sponsored by the *Radio Digest* in 1927, *The Western Producer* decided to run a contest of its own to see how Saskatchewan announcers fared with their own public. It offered a silver cup to the announcer of the most popular radio station. Listeners were asked to base their assessments on how well the station was received, the standard of its programs and the voice, enunciation and manner of its announcer. Each week the paper profiled one of the contending announcers and gave interim results. Hooper slowly began to pull away from the rest, and by the end he had received over half of the 17,000 votes cast. Martha Bowes of CJWC was second, Cliff Jones of CFQC third and Billy Ward fourth.

Even though its announcer was being celebrated, the Regina *Leader* was distinctly displeased with the whole episode. *The Western Producer* was its opponent in politics (*The Leader* supported the Grain Exchange and private interests), and its competitor for readers. None of this publicity for the *Producer* would do *The Leader* any good. Nevertheless, CKCK good-naturedly hooked up with CFQC in Saskatoon for the official, on-air presentation of the trophy to Hooper.

The purpose of the contest, the *Producer* said, was to draw attention to the merits of Saskatchewan broadcasters, and to that end it had been successful. In January 1928, when the winner was announced, it noted:

> A great many people have written recently that they do not tune in to U.S. programs any more while Saskatchewan stations are on the air. These correspondents state that until their attention was drawn to them they did not realize the excellence of local programs. From the broadcasting standpoint, those responsible for sending out these programs were becoming somewhat discouraged over the poor response being received from listeners, and came to the conclusion that appreciation came only from points outside the province.
>
> However, the response from fans during the past eight weeks has been nothing short of wonderful . . . .

—

Radio in the twenties was relaxed and unstructured. Programs appeared haphazardly and schedules varied according to the dictates of the moment. If equipment malfunctioned, there was nothing to do but close the station until repairs had been made. If a storm began to brew, it was much wiser to shut down than

risk damaging precious crystals, vacuum tubes or the inner ear of anyone foolhardy enough to keep listening on earphones. If the one person who performed many duties went for a meal or took sick, the station remained silent until he returned.

Arrangements about who appeared on air were customarily conducted on the street during an accidental meeting, and announcers carried notebooks and pencils with them all the time for such occasions. Those who worked in the profession went about their duties in a carefree way. If there weren't enough records at work to put together a full program, they simply brought in some of their own from home. If a station came on the air a few minutes before the one it was sharing a frequency with had signed off, overriding the final moments of the previous program, no one got terribly upset—it was to be expected. If an announcer forgot to turn off his microphone at the end of his shift and treated his captivated audience to an unexpurgated conversation with his lusty sweetheart, no one minded as long as neither said "damn."

Ask a pioneer about those days and he'll say radio was "fun." It had spunk. It didn't take itself as seriously as it does today. Multi-track recording studios, vast record libraries and potentially large profits are all right, he'll say, but they don't make radio as enjoyable as it was in the old days, when announcers worked long hours for poor pay, but when they were at least allowed to do what they wanted to without being ruled by the accounting department.

It would still be a few years before radio was accepted as either a legitimate business activity or a significant cultural force, but the medium was already, at this early stage in its development, exhibiting traits that would ensure its continued survival and that would characterize it to the present. All stations relied on community participation, and although the amateur operations weren't strictly constituted as co-operatives, they nevertheless operated on the co-operative principles of joint effort and consensus. Radio supplied news and entertainment on a consistent basis, which was particularly beneficial to those 90,000 people who couldn't read or write and to that half of the population that spoke a language other than English at home; it kept them abreast of events they would have had difficulty learning about from written sources and helped them learn the language of the country.

Theoretically, everyone had access to the airwaves. But things didn't quite work like that then any more so than they

do today. Like the newspapers which carried cricket scores and old country football results on the front page, and like other institutions which set the cultural standards for the province, radio reflected a distinctly male, British consciousness. Through its implicit assumptions and particularly through its speech, it reminded listeners of who was in charge. Of all Saskatchewan announcers in the twenties only one was born in the province; he was Mel Poulter, a local boy from Yorkton and the only broadcaster able to pronounce "Saskatchewan" correctly. Only one announcer was a woman—Martha Bowes of CJWC, born in Ontario; all the rest were British men. There are countless stories of how these British announcers revealed their estrangement from the place by frequently mispronouncing standard names and words. These indiscretions were generally received without complaint but periodically the mistakes were too flagrant to be ignored. Geoffrey Bartlett tells of reading from a newspaper over CJHS one day.

> I came across the word slough. I knew what a slough was ever since I had come to Canada but I had never seen it in print. So I called it "sluff." And that wasn't too bad. Till I came across an article from Luseland. I called it "Louseland," and boy did I hear about it. "Damn Englishman, why don't you go back home."

Besides the pervasive but appealing strains of America, therefore, there were also the accents and attitudes of Britain, and together these sounds reinforced the notion that Saskatchewan was an extension of some other place.

3

Unholy Battles

IT WAS PERHAPS INEVITABLE THAT GIVEN ITS NONchalant attitude and unsystematic approach, radio would in time stumble into an unpleasant situation. The surprising thing, therefore, was not that this would happen but that it would take almost five years before it actually did. Radio became entangled in two controversial issues in 1927—one political, one religious—and although it was only partially responsible for one of them, once implicated it could not easily extricate itself from either. These incidents clearly pointed out what could happen to broadcasters if they continued to operate in a casual, inattentive manner, or if they took too great a liberty with the responsibilities entrusted to them. The result of such events was that the federal government introduced measures which changed the face of the industry.

Unlike newspapers, which were aligned with political parties or political ideologies, radio stations were for the most part politically neutral. As tools for mercantile interests, whether those interests were small businessmen selling receivers or large corporations marketing grain, they naturally had a mercantile ideology embedded in their programs. And when they broadcast news from the local paper they indirectly propagated the newspaper's political bias. But there was nothing in what they themselves originated that gave listeners any idea of what their political convictions might have been. Even CKCK, owned by an avowedly Liberal newspaper, seems not to have been required to espouse Liberal principles in any blatant

way. So while many people in the province accepted and came to expect prejudiced reports in print, they thought of radio as being somewhat more objective.

I think there are two main reasons why radio was not as overtly political as the newspapers. First, it was not yet considered as potent a force in shaping public attitudes as print, so those owners with strong political leanings may not have considered it worthwhile expending a great deal of energy in making it their mouthpiece. In fact, *The Leader* had such a slight opinion of CKCK's potential that, according to Wilf Collier who worked there, Bert Hooper "had a hard time getting money even to buy new tubes to keep us on the air. *The Leader* wouldn't give him money to buy anything and it wasn't because they didn't have it." Second, one must remember the industry's uncertain status throughout the twenties. Licences came up for renewal each year, and since they were issued by the federal government, there was always the chance that political considerations might inform the decision to approve or revoke a licence. It was therefore in their own self-interest that station owners kept their politics to themselves.

Sometimes, however, they got drawn into volatile political situations against their will, and when that happened their best course was to try to disassociate themselves as best they could from the contending parties. It was a tactic that, in the case of CJWC and the battle over the marketing of wheat, was only partially successful.

Like other Saskatchewan stations, CJWC carried the closing prices from the Winnipeg Grain Exchange each day. This service was begun in 1922 as a method of notifying elevator agents what the price would be for the next day's deliveries. It was run from Winnipeg by Dawson Richardson, editor of the *Grain Trade News*, a publication associated with the Exchange. When the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool appeared on the scene in 1924, threatening the livelihood of existing elevator companies and jeopardizing the future of the Exchange itself, these previously innocuous reports took on a strongly partisan tone. There were editorials attacking the notion that only pooling could bring stability to a notoriously unstable business, and unkind words about the orderly marketing process which the not yet firmly established Wheat Pool was attempting to implement. Unlike other elevator companies that paid the farmer the price in effect on the day of delivery, the Pool paid farmers the same price no matter which day the grain was delivered. It

made an initial payment when the grain was brought in, an interim payment when most of the grain for that year was sold, and a final payment at the end of the year when costs had been deducted and an average price calculated. The Pool method meant that farmers wouldn't be penalized for selling their grain in the fall when prices were habitually lower and when they needed the money most. Opponents feared that entrenching this method of marketing would bring about the end of the speculator, the mainstay of the Grain Exchange, who bought and sold wheat for future delivery and who, according to the Pool, lived comfortably off the farmer's labour.

In 1924, Saskatchewan farmers committed fifty per cent of the province's wheat to the Pool through five-year contracts (the minimum necessary for the Pool to operate effectively), and as the time came near to renew or annul those agreements, the battle heated up. The Grain Exchange realized that unless it could convince the majority of farmers not to sign up for another term, the Pool and orderly marketing would remain indefinitely. Its future, like the Pool's, would be determined by the outcome of that sign-up campaign. And while it stoked the fires in the pages of the *Grain Trade News*, the Pool retaliated with editorials and articles in its unofficial organ, *The Western Producer*. CJWC got caught in the crossfire.

During a market report on CJWC, a member of the Exchange said farmers would one day wake up to the fact that they were paying for all this Pool propaganda, and they would also learn that they were picking up the tab for Pool delegates to take questionable jaunts to Australia, Argentina, Chicago and other exotic places. On another broadcast he claimed that the six cents per bushel more the Pool was paying for wheat was really a loan which farmers would have to repay. Pool supporters were incensed. One listener suggested that Mr. Wheaton must be earning a pretty penny for broadcasting such rot, and he urged farmers to boycott the store until these scandalous transmissions ceased. Someone else cut CJWC's closed circuit telephone lines from its studio to its transmitter.

The alarmed Wheaton company moved swiftly to minimize the damage. In a bold advertisement in *The Western Producer* in early January 1927, it refuted allegations that it endorsed the Grain Exchange views. And in a letter to the editor it explained how CJWC had got mixed up in all this trouble in the first place. The station's aim all along had been to provide information on grain prices and markets—that and nothing more. When Daw-

son Richardson's contentious broadcasts came to their attention, they asked him to stop. He argued, however, that since he had purchased the time he could say anything he liked. Legal advice subsequently affirmed CJWC's position that the contract was for market quotations only. "Naturally, we are not acting as a board of censors regarding matter or topics," CJWC explained, but in the future Richardson would only be allowed to broadcast what the contract stipulated. It was this unsavoury incident, as well as an uglier one later, that soured Wheaton to radio and prompted him to sell the station to J.H. Speers.

—

While Wheaton was getting out of radio, those who had started the fight were getting in. It must have been more than mere coincidence that the Wheat Pool and Grain Exchange started stations just about the time Pool members were thinking about whether or not to renew their contracts. The Pool had been buying time on CFQC since the end of 1926. These broadcasts, however, were irregular and also expensive, requiring Pool people from every area of the province to travel to Saskatoon. The company's publicity department was therefore charged with finding an alternative arrangement. It created studio space in the Pool's head office in Regina, arranged with Saskatchewan Government Telephones to clear a long distance line between Regina and Saskatoon, and began broadcasting by remote control through the facilities of CFQC and CKCK. Beginning in February 1927, and for half an hour each week, Pool delegates and directors spoke on issues such as world wheat conditions, the Pool's selling policy, the grain marketing act, the grading of wheat, the relationship between Pool agents and members, how commercial and elevator reserves are handled at head office, and so on. Sometimes they directly addressed claims made by the Northwest Grain Dealers' Association (NWGDA), an organization of about thirty-five hundred private grain companies in Saskatchewan and Alberta who were being financially affected by the Pool's presence. But in these talks, which were subsequently printed in *The Western Producer*, they never became hysterical in defence of their operations. They very calmly reminded listeners that the NWGDA was naturally upset because the Pool was cutting into private company profits, and that the NWGDA would do whatever it could to kill a new sign-up. Adopting the slogan, "Sign

a contract today," they urged listeners to recognize this outside propaganda for what it was and keep up the good fight.

In June 1927, the Pool received the call letters CJBR from the Department of Marine and Fisheries and promptly asked members to come up with a suitable phrase that matched those letters. It chose the one that also most suitably matched its own philosophy—"Co-operation Justified By Results." By 1930 CJBR had increased its programming to twice a week, with a fifteen-minute message to members on Tuesdays and a half hour children's program on Thursdays. It was for Thursday listeners that CJBR came to stand for "Children's Jolly Birthday Rally." Broadcasts were in English, but there were also programs in German, Ukrainian and French.

Because male farmers spent little time indoors during the summer—a time when reception was also particularly bad—programming was suspended from May until September. In the spring of 1931, broadcasts ceased as usual with the stated intention of resuming in the fall. But CJBR never returned to the air. There are at least two good reasons for its demise. The Pool's 1929 sign-up campaign had been successful and radio was no longer as crucial as it had been in keeping the Pool's message before the public. Also, by 1931 the Pool was negotiating to take over the financially-uncertain *Producer*. It considered the newspaper more useful than radio in the long run, and since the Pool was already feeling the effects of the Depression, it wasn't economically feasible to keep both. And so after only five years, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool ended its brief foray into broadcasting.

Although CJGX, Yorkton never became directly involved in the spat between its parent and the Wheat Pool, and although at its official opening in August 1927, Dr. Robert Magill, secretary of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, disavowed any intention of using the station to fight the Pool, there are strong indications that its owners had a semi-propagandist role for it in mind. In the president's annual report to shareholders in 1927, A. Thomson wrote:

> The radio has come, and has come to stay. Indeed, there are those who say it is already challenging the supremacy of the newspapers. Certainly it costs less to build, equip and operate a radio station than to set up, equip and operate a successful newspaper. And perhaps if we had to give a reason for making this comparatively small investment, it would be enough to say that just as the farmers' organizations own "The Western

> Producer" and other journals, so the Grain Exchange has ventured upon the much less serious risk of having a radio broadcasting station.

Radio continued to serve Grain Exchange interests after it ceased to be a force in the Wheat Pool cause. But when the Canadian Wheat Board was formed in 1934 to market grain internationally, neither the Grain Exchange nor James Richardson and Sons had any compelling reason to remain in broadcasting, and they sold their stations. This brought to an end that brief period in the medium's history in which it was used primarily as an instrument for ideological purposes.

—

As careful as most broadcasters were to shun direct political involvement, they were totally uninhibited when it came to matters of religion. They arranged to carry church services from all denominations in their area, and before long church broadcasts formed a major part of the radio schedule, not only on CHUC, a specifically religious station, but on all amateur and commercial stations in the province. Geoffrey Bartlett says that CJHS, Saskatoon broadcast sermons almost exclusively during its alloted time, and that in their talks ministers often found inventive ways of integrating the station's identity into their message.

> Wylie A. Smith from the Elim Penticostical Tabernacle used to come on and say, "This is Pastor Smith broadcasting the Sunshine Hour over radio station CJHS—Christ Jesus Heals and Saves!" It used to make us giggle. I don't think he appreciated that.

Clergymen also found parallels between the word of God and the medium which carried their words. "The principle of broadcasting is not new. It is the life of Christianity," said Reverend P.I. Thacker over CKCK, Regina in August 1922.

> Our life and service must be in harmony with our faith, otherwise we are out of tune with [God]. . . . God speaks and the vibrations reach every boundary. If we fail to catch them, it is because the great static power of sin has put us out of tune.
>
> Has your selfishness, indifference, faithlessness, destroyed the sensitiveness of your soul, so that you no longer hear the message of salvation flashing out from the great broadcasting love of the Eternal Father?

Preachers eagerly seized the opportunity to speak over the air since it allowed them to reach a much larger audience than the one attending their churches. So successful were these broadcasts that before long ministers in rural areas began to complain that too many parishioners were staying home listening to the radio when they should have been in church. These radio addresses were generally restricted to biblical injunctions, and as long as each denomination was given equal time to state its view everyone was happy. But it was when the sermons turned into biting commentaries on current political issues like immigration and the ethnic character of the province that the trouble began.

Because Canadians were moving to the United States in unprecedented numbers (over 81,000 in 1927 and another 73,000 in 1928), and because settlers from Britain couldn't make up for this loss, the Canadian government began actively seeking immigrants from continental Europe, particularly those who could work on farms. These "alien outsiders," who a few years earlier had been prohibited from entering the country, were now welcome. The Canadian National (CNR) and Canadian Pacific (CPR) railways undertook expensive recruitment campaigns abroad, and as a result nearly 370,000 people from previously "non-preferred" classes came to Canada between 1925 and 1931. Some considered this immigration a catastrophe because it diluted the essential British nature of the province and jeopardized British institutions. Leading the battle against the importation of foreigners was George Exton Lloyd, Anglican Bishop of Saskatchewan, who requested and received permission to present his views in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* and *The Saskatoon Daily Star*. Believing "no one can be a good Canadian who is not a good Britisher," he deplored the "influx of undercutting, work-snatching flood of Jews, Italians, Poles, Greeks, Ukrainians, etc." British blood was being "cheapened" and "prostituted," and if Canada's open door policy continues, he said, a "mongrel" will appear where before there was a Britisher.

> Fifty percent is going to be bull dog. The two hind legs will be French poodle. One foreleg will be Austrian wolf hound and the other leg will be German, they are coming in by thousands. The tail will be Ukrainian, and as that uses up 100 percent of the population the poor dog will have no inside.

His attack on Canada's immigration policy was buttressed

by Canon Bird of Prince Albert who claimed that the policy played directly into the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. Twenty-five Roman Catholic priests have been hired as immigration officials, he said at the Anglican Synod in the fall of 1927, and their self-proclaimed aim is to flood the country with people of the faith.

Such openly stated bigotry was neither isolated nor unusual for the time, and it coincided with growing agitation against any French-Catholic presence in the classroom. In some Saskatchewan school districts, Protestants were the minority, and their children were taught the Catholic curriculum by Catholic teachers. "Would you like to have a black-skirted 'she-cat' of a Nun teach your children in a public school that you are a heretic and that you and your wife are living in sin and your family are bastards, then chastizing your child to make it kiss the forbidden image, the crucifix?" thundered *The Sentinel*, a publication of the Orange Lodge. "Better wake up before it is too late and we have a revolution, for as sure as you are alive, blood will be spilled if the Protestant people don't band together."

The time was ripe for anyone wishing to exploit this growing fear and hostility. And in 1927 the Ku Klux Klan moved into Saskatchewan signing up an estimated 15,000 members. The Orange Lodge supported the Klan, whose philosophy was best summarized in this poetic credo:

> I would rather be a klansman in a robe of snowy white,
> Than a clergy-priest in a robe as black as night;
> For a klansman is a Canadian and Canada is his home
> While a priest owes his allegiance to a dago pope at Rome.

So strong did feelings run that, in 1929, a seemingly impregnable Liberal government with the largest majority in the province's history lost the provincial election to the Conservative party, which was able to capitalize on that hate. Many Protestant clergymen were quiet about the Klan's activities and did little to combat its racist and paranoic doctrines because they sympathized with it. For the most part, only United Church ministers spoke out against the Klan.

As if CJWC hadn't already had enough trouble over the marketing of wheat, it now had to deal with this issue as well. According to Bertram Tash, who repaired radio sets for Wheaton Electric, this was the event that finally propelled Wheaton out of the radio business.

> One night they [the Ku Klux Klan] phoned Carl [O'Brien, CJWC's operator] up at the station and told him that the night riders were coming to get him and Carl, of course, he belonged to the Catholic faith, and they were coming to blow up the station and that he closed it down and got out, and it wasn't long after that that Wheaton decided to dispose of the station because he had a lot of customers that were Liberals and Catholic people and he had a lot . . . that were Protestants and Anderson type or Conservative type . . . I think that's the way he felt and I think probably he was right and it [the station] was sold to Speers Feed Store after that.

—

There were many allegations that the Jehovah's Witnesses were influenced by the Ku Klux Klan, and in 1928, P.J.A. Cardin, minister of marine and fisheries, told the House of Commons that his department had been getting complaints about IBSA radio broadcasts for over a year. Lately, he said, these complaints from the listening public have increased

> until to-day the department has received a large number of protests and petitions asking that the broadcasting activities of this association be either curtailed or entirely suspended. The matter being broadcast is generally described by complainants as having become intolerable and that the propaganda carried on under the name of Bible talks is said to be unpatriotic and abusive of all our churches. Evidence would appear to show that the tone of the preaching seems to be that all organized churches are corrupt and in alliance with unrighteous forces that the entire system of society is wrong and that all governments are to be condemned.
>
> The department has before it many letters and a petition asking that the Toronto station be closed. A petition from the board of trade at Saskatoon asks that the association's broadcasting from the station at that place be restricted and the local inspector, who originally recommended the granting of the license, says that he has a "continual deluge of complaints."

All broadcasting licenses issued by the department were valid for one year. In light of the complaints against the IBSA, Cardin decided not to renew the licenses of CHUC and three other Jehovah's Witnesses stations when they expired at the end of April 1928.

Local response to this action was lukewarm. In a talk to be broadcast on radio, Reverend W.S. Reid, pastor at Third Avenue United Church, agreed that CHUC was usually "going after somebody" but he didn't think the government was

justified in shutting down the station. There had been no warning, there was no mention of compensating the IBSA for its considerable investment in the plant, and the decision infringed on the British principle of free speech. For *The Saskatoon Daily Star*, however, the issue was not free speech but "regulation in the interest of the listening public." It defended Cardin, observing that freedom of speech has its limitations and that without regulation there is chaos. Only *The Western Producer* came out strongly in defense of CHUC.

> So far as we are aware, it is the first time the government has stepped in to refuse the use of the air to any organization. It is true that the religious matter broadcast by the Bible Students is controversial and there is no reason to doubt the Minister's word that many complaints have been received, but it should be remembered that there are no religious opinions now which are not controversial. There is no religious body which does not argue that the ideas held by other religious bodies are false and founded on faulty premises. Presbyterians, Lutherans, Anglicans, Roman Catholics and other denominations have used the air freely, although they may not have owned broadcasting stations. If the government took the attitude that it would not grant broadcasting privileges to any religious denomination, its attitude, although it might be resented, could be understood, but to single out one religious denomination for official displeasure is difficult to understand. . . . In the interests of religious liberty, strong protest should be made to Ottawa against the action of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. The matter is one of general principle; we are not concerned with the particular welfare of the IBSA. This same editorial would be written were the parties affected Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Christian Scientists, Mohammedans, the Wheat Pool or the Grain Trade.

Cardin received 9000 letters and a petition with 458,026 names condemning the cancellation of the licences. But in a letter to the *Producer*, and also in the House of Commons, he defended his action. If radio is to be a benefit to all, he said, "there must be a substantial curtailment of freedom." He continued:

> If we were in the fortunate position of having an unlimited number of radio channels available, it could be well arranged so to place stations broadcasting matter of the character objected to where their transmissions could be easily eliminated, but we have a very limited number of these channels and cannot accommodate all requests. The demand for channels from

> proposed stations ready to broadcast desirable programs of a high order far exceed the number of channels available, and up to the present we have refused nearly a hundred applications for broadcasting licenses. The present trend of the listening public is for stations employing high power and providing "entertainment" of the better standard rather than propaganda.

Cardin astutely linked the IBSA issue with concerns about flaws in the present broadcasting situation and so was able to justify his decision on grounds that it had to do with more than just religious or democratic freedoms.

The furore over religious broadcasts and the demonstrated inadequacy of radio's internal checks to keep it from abusing its power made it obvious to the government that changes to the industry were necessary. The medium was far too powerful to be allowed to continue operating in the haphazard fashion it had until now. It needed guidance and guidelines. Implicit in the government's subsequent decision to appoint a royal commission to investigate broadcasting in Canada was a recognition that, whereas radio had been used successfully in the past as a promotional vehicle for various interest groups, it was now time for the medium to fulfill its larger responsibility to all Canadians. Given the dominant presence of American stations throughout the country, it was in fact a matter of some urgency and importance.

4

A National Service

AMERICAN PROGRAMS WERE READILY ACCESSIBLE TO Canadians in the twenties because no agreement had yet been signed between the two countries for each to regulate their broadcast patterns in such a way that signals from their stations stayed largely within their own borders. This meant that while Saskatchewan listeners had little trouble in picking up American stations, it was difficult for them to hear Canadian stations outside the province which were farther away and which operated at significantly less power. They therefore became thoroughly acquainted with what was going on in Omaha and Detroit and Salt Lake City but at the same time remained ignorant about events in Vancouver or Toronto or Halifax. The only way to counter this American presence was by creating a Canadian network made up of stations across the country.

It's perhaps appropriate that the first company to form such a network should be the CNR, which along with the CPR was already binding the country together physically. The CNR formed a radio department in 1923 and installed radio receivers in its observation cars so travellers could tune into stations while in transit. Later it built its own stations. The railway had no grand, nationalistic purpose in mind. Rather, it considered radio an effective means of luring people to use its service by offering to divert them during long, uneventful trips. It also deemed radio to be a useful method of keeping the company in touch with its employees. Sir Henry Thornton,

CNR president, frequently addressed his workers in what were described as "fireside chats," keeping them informed of the company's activities, relaying anecdotes about colleagues and passing on compliments from satisfied customers. Through radio, CNR employees got to know their leader not as a remote and alien figure but as a warm and concerned voice.

By the mid-twenties the CNR had stations in Ottawa, Moncton and Vancouver. It also contracted private stations to provide programs while transcontinental trains were in their area. An hour or so before the train arrived in Saskatoon, for example, CFQC would sign off its call letters and sign on as CNRS (the first three letters represented the railway, the final letter the location). CNRS remained on the air for about an hour after the train had passed through the city. Then it became CFQC again. The CNR paid "phantom stations" like CFQC $25 for these programs, the same amount it paid CKCK to become CNRR and CJGX to become CJGR. Herb Roberts, who was later to become manager of CBC Radio in Saskatchewan, worked for CNR's radio division in the twenties; he says, "Passengers' eyes would pop out when they put on their head phones and listened to these programs coming in. It was a miracle of the times." Jack Carlyle, a CNR supervisor, adds: "Many a time when I was travelling from coast to coast, I'd get on the train and the dining car steward would be mad. Nobody was in the dining room. Everybody was in the observation car. That was the time Amos 'n' Andy was on, and it was jammed." There were many exciting programs available then, the most memorable one for the following passenger taking place during a trip to Saskatoon.

> One Sunday morning, an east-bound CNR train was flashing across the Prairie, no longer golden, but white with snow as far as the eye could see. Within the observation car a group of passengers sat, toying with magazines and books, engaging one another in conversation that lagged, wondering how long before lunch would be served. Suddenly the sound of an organ rolled through the car. Its music softened, almost died away, and then, a clear soprano was uplifted in an old familiar hymn. Books were dropped. Drooping faces brightened. There was no need for conversation. Lunch was forgotten. Bible reading, sermon, and more hymns followed. Then the announcements of meetings to be held during the coming week by a church in Saskatoon, nearly three hundred miles away. Then the collection. There was silence in the car, except when a jingle of silver was heard as the offering plates were assembled in that far-

> away church. A passenger at the rear end of the car rose and walked to where the radio operator sat. He asked the operator for his cap and dropped a five-dollar bill into it. And then he passed the hat around. Without exception every passenger contributed. Late that afternoon, when the train pulled into Saskatoon, almost thirty dollars went from the train to the church whose service had been heard far away in the morning. It was the first known time that a broadcast sermon had elicited voluntary contributions from an unseen congregation.

There were great distances between cities that had radio stations so travellers moving through the country received broadcasts only intermittently. Programs from CNR stations were also sporadic because the telegraph wire over which they were sent was in use for most of the day with regular railway business. But early in 1927, the company developed a carrier-current system which allowed several signals to be carried on the same wire simultaneously. Broadcasting was now able to occur at any time of day, and stations could send programs to each other without having them interfere with normal telegraph messages. Within two years the carrier-current system was installed across the entire country, enabling the CNR to begin regular national broadcasts. These programs consisted primarily of musical concerts and recitals, and they took place in both English and French. In 1930 it decided to extend its radio drama production, which had gone on in Vancouver and the Maritimes throughout the twenties, to the full network, and it commissioned Toronto writer Merrill Denison to write a series based on incidents from Canadian history. The eminent stage director Tyrone Guthrie was brought over from England to direct the "Romance of Canada" series which was broadcast over CNR stations in the spring of 1931. The CNR's success in these ventures prompted the CPR to briefly run its own radio operation.

As significant as these early programs were in starting to forge a national consciousness, the CNR's most important contribution was the central role it played in 1927 in linking twenty-three private stations across the country to carry a broadcast from Ottawa commemorating Canada's Diamond Jubilee. Of the event, Prime Minister Mackenzie King later said:

> On the morning, afternoon and evening of July 1, all Canada became, for the time being, a single assemblage, swayed by a common emotion, within the sound of a single voice. Thus has

> modern science for the first time realized in the great nation-state of modern days that condition which existed in the little city-states of ancient times and which was considered by the wisdom of the ancients as indispensable to free and democratic government—that all citizens should be able to hear for themselves the living voice of a single orator—a Demosthenes or a Cicero—speaking on public questions in the Athenian Assembly or in the Roman Forum. Hitherto to most Canadians, Ottawa has seemed far off, a mere name to hundreds of thousands of our people, but henceforth all Canadians will stand within the sound of the carillon and within hearing of the speakers on Parliament Hill. May we not predict that as a result of this carrying of the living voice throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion, there will be aroused a more general interest in public affairs, and an increased devotion of the individual citizen to the common weal.

—

The prime minister's clear delight with the trans-Canada hook-up, coupled with the controversy over religious broadcasts and the acknowledged need to develop an alternate system, prompted the government to form the Aird Commission in the early part of 1928 to come up with recommendations for a new radio policy. The commission was charged with examining how the channels available to Canadian broadcasters could be best used in the interests of the country as a whole and to suggest the kind of management, financing and control of broadcasting that should take place. The commissioners were all men from central Canada. Sir John Aird, chairman, was president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, Toronto; Dr. Augustin Frigon was director-general of technical education for the province of Quebec; and Charles Bowman was editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*. Before the Aird Commission formally began its inquiries, however, newspaper correspondents and those with a vested interest in the matter began to debate the merits of a nationalized broadcasting system, which Cardin had hinted might be a good one to adopt. No one knew exactly how such a system might operate in Canada, but many were uneasy about the possible implications for listeners, taxpayers and those who had invested time and money to build private stations. One of Saskatchewan's most vocal opponents of nationalized radio was Horace Stovin, who in February 1929 began a series of letters to *The Western Producer* outlining his objections. The cost of building a national system and compensating existing private stations for loss of broadcasting

privileges, he estimated, would force the government to raise the receiver licence fee from $1 to between $14 and $17 per year. This would be too much to pay for programs of questionable quality, especially since listeners could now tune in to superior American programs for free. Stovin doubted that in a government monopoly with no competition Canadians could produce anything worth listening to. For him, broadcasting was a business, not a public service, and he could confidently predict the deleterious effect a nationalized system would have on Canadian manufacturers. They would be effectively barred from the airwaves, since advertising would no longer be permissable in this country and it would be impractical to think of buying time on American stations.

The Aird Commission visited Saskatchewan in the spring of 1929, holding meetings in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina and Moose Jaw. Most of those making presentations to the commission were against nationalization, and their arguments were the common ones of the time. Owners of private stations and members of amateur stations said they could better serve the needs of their community than some distantly-controlled operation, whose concerns were more national and international in scope. Besides, added H.R. Worden of CJHS, Saskatoon, a man is more interested in a dog fight in his own back yard than in the overthrow of an empire. At least two submissions argued that the present system should be retained and revised, rather than abolished, to make it more effective and more responsible. The Saskatoon Board of Trade said more stringent rules could lead to higher quality programs, while Dr. S.A. Merkley of Moose Jaw suggested that those stations making large profits from high advertising rates ($40 per hour) should have their licence fee raised from $50 to $500 per year. Of all those making presentations, only George Williams, representing the United Farmers of Saskatchewan, favoured national control of broadcasting. He said it would break up the newspaper monopoly that currently existed in the province and provide alternate views to the ones expressed by those hostile to the co-operative movement. To eliminate the possibility of a government using its control for political purposes or for curtailing free expression, he proposed that broadcasting be administered by the federal government in co-operation with the provinces. The provinces would decide whether the system within their own borders should operate as a public or private enterprise. Given the differing political complexions

across the country, this would ensure that no single, untenable system was foisted on everyone.

It's hard to say what effect any of these briefs had on the commission, since variations of what was expressed here were heard elsewhere as well. But one can see that in its recommendations the Aird Report addresses, however tangentially, nearly all of these points. Private broadcasters have achieved laudable results in providing entertainment, it said, but lack of resources has forced them to carry too much advertising, and too many programs originate outside Canada. "Canadian radio listeners want Canadian broadcasting," the report concluded, and the best way to accomplish that was through some form of public ownership, operation and control.

Before the report could be properly assessed, however, and brought into effect, Mackenzie King's Liberal government, which commissioned the study, was defeated by the Conservatives in a general election.

—

When R.B. Bennett came to power in 1930 he had a number of pressing matters to deal with, many of them related to the stock market crash and the gathering depression. It was not until two years later that he appointed a parliamentary committee to study the Aird Report. This committee came under intense pressure, especially from the Canadian Radio League, which zealously lobbied for a system that placed public service above communal interests. If Canadians do not exert themselves, warned the League's co-founder, Graham Spry, during a trip through Saskatoon, broadcasting will pass into the hands of a private monopoly.

> It will be a monopoly that will have public opinion at its mercy, and which will not be strong enough to resist the power and influence of the American radio monopoly. A serious choice is before the Canadian people. Do they wish to have broadcasting controlled by persons responsible to them or by a commercial monopoly?
>
> At the present time, Canada, for purposes of commercial exploitation, is part of the territory of the Radio Corporation of America. By an agreement between British and American interests after the war, the world was divided into spheres of commerce, British interests being given a monopoly in one part of the world, the Americans other parts of the world. Canada was included in the sphere of exclusive American influence.

> Only the national power of the whole Canadian people can ensure that Canadian broadcasting is owned and operated by Canadians for Canadians.

It was largely because of the League that the parliamentary committee upheld Aird's central recommendation for a public broadcasting system. As a result, the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC) came into effect in May 1932.

The CRBC had two main functions: to produce and broadcast original programs, and to regulate the entire industry by allocating frequencies, determining the number of stations to be licensed, and assigning their power. There was also provision in the act, subject to parliament's approval, for the CRBC to take over all broadcasting in the country. In the meantime, private stations were allowed to continue operating although they could not form networks. Licence fees were raised to two dollars to pay for the CRBC.

Most of the CRBC's staff came from the CNR's radio division. In its first year of operation, the CRBC bought the CNR stations in Ottawa, Vancouver and Moncton, and began broadcasting two hours per day. By the fall of 1933 it owned five stations, but because these stations covered only a small portion of the entire country the CRBC contracted private stations to carry its programs. The schedule during these early days consisted mainly of symphony concerts, variety specials, dances from hotels and sporting events.

Since the CRBC was designed to serve the entire country some of its programs were in French, and that raised the ire of many Anglo-Saxons. One of the most outspoken opponents of French on the air was F.W. Turnbull, a Conservative Member of Parliament from Regina, who was publicly linked with the Ku Klux Klan. Turnbull objected on the grounds that only five to six percent of the people in Saskatchewan were of French extraction. Other ethnic groups, he argued, who form a much larger proportion of the population have a more legitimate claim to programs in their original language. French was not an official language, he pointed out, and by forcing it upon an unwilling public, the CRBC was undermining its own purpose of fostering unity and getting Canadians to listen to Canadian stations. Any amount of French, even the obligatory thirty-second station identification, would drive listeners to American programs, he said.

The only empirical data available on how the public felt about the issue is in a survey done by the *Regina Daily Star* in February 1934. Of the seven hundred ballots it received from subscribers in southern Saskatchewan, eighty-seven per cent objected to the use of French. Most also felt that CRBC broadcasts had failed to provide and improve Canadian programming, and most listed their favourite station as KSL, Salt Lake City. Because the survey was conducted only among the *Star*'s subscribers and thus indirectly reflected the paper's ideological stance, its results are not conclusive. But there's little doubt that the CRBC's French programs fuelled the passions of those who resented paying for something they couldn't understand and inflamed bigots who needed a pretext for their anger. It's interesting to note, however, that at the same time that Turnbull was harassing the CRBC, the Saskatchewan Department of Education was broadcasting French programs over private stations as part of its correspondence courses. These programs were apparently highly valued and favourably received. The Saskatchewan government reported to Ottawa, "No other province in Canada outside Quebec is giving so much consideration to the French language." One might take this statement partly as an indication of the province's true commitment to French but also partly as its attempt to dissociate itself from Turnbull and to dispel the negative image of the province he was creating abroad. But neither the government's declaration nor the educational broadcasts diminished Turnbull's claim to represent majority opinion.

The CRBC also came under attack in the early thirties for constantly shifting stations' frequencies in a desperate attempt to deal with the perpetual problem of poor reception and interference. It was common for a station to wander from its assigned frequency by a margin more than regulations allowed and to impinge upon the signal from another station, making it impossible to hear either distinctly. There were mumblings if Saskatoon interfered with Moose Jaw or if Prince Albert interfered with Saskatoon, but there'd be an uproar should a Saskatchewan station impede the signal from an American station.

—

The final major issue the CRBC faced in Saskatchewan was its alleged discrimination against CHAB, Moose Jaw. (Amateur station 10AB had commercialized in November 1933, becom-

ing CHAB.) Carson Buchanan, the station's manager, claimed CHAB was the only station in the province denied the right to carry CRBC programs, and he regarded it grossly unfair that the CRBC chose to distribute its shows through the other Moose Jaw station, CJRM. After all, CHAB had been the second station in the province, had always operated solely for the benefit of its listeners, and was dedicated to helping local people become proficient in broadcasting. CJRM, meanwhile, was owned by a company only nominally interested in radio and based in Winnipeg. Although Buchanan repeatedly assured the 1934 parliamentary committee on broadcasting that he had nothing but healthy respect for CJRM, he nevertheless insisted that CHAB had been wrongly passed over. In response to CHAB's grievances, Hector Charlesworth, CRBC chairman, explained how the situation had come about.

> In April, 1933, when we began planning for the distribution of programs throughout Canada, it was at once obvious that the Commission would have to enter into an agreement with certain private stations in order to obtain the necessary coverage throughout Canada. It was also obvious from the amount of money available that we could not undertake to pay all stations in Canada, and we therefore made a very careful survey in order to determine the stations which would give the best coverage with the available funds. Our plan was to purchase a limited amount of time daily on these basic or key stations, but to leave time suitably disposed so that the stations could take on commercial or sponsored programs when such were available. For this reason, the three hours purchased by the Commission were distributed throughout the evening, leaving gaps at suitable intervals for this purpose. . . . Insofar as the other stations were concerned, we offered them the programs if they cared to take them to fill out their own schedules, but there was no obligation on their part to take the programs nor on the part of the Commission to pay for any time that might be used. After a month or so of operating along this line, the Commission was deluged with complaints from all over Canada that there was nothing to be heard from Canadian stations except Commission programs, and with demands that we should not have more than one station in each area carrying Commission programs at the same time. As a result of this our policy was changed late in the summer of 1933, and our programs were fed in such a way as to ensure that no two stations in the same locality would be carrying Commission programs at the same time. When this ruling went into effect it was natural that we should select the largest station in each location, in order to obtain the best coverage and therefore give the best service to the listening public.

By this time Saskatoon had only one station, as did Prince Albert and Yorkton. In Regina, CHWC and CKCK operated on the same frequency, so when it came to broadcasting Commission programs they were in effect one station; whichever was on the air when the program was broadcast would receive the payment. In Moose Jaw, however, there were two stations and a choice had to be made between them. Because of recent changes CJRM was larger. The Richardsons had received approval to close the Fleming transmitter in September 1933 and to consolidate their Saskatchewan operations in Moose Jaw, on condition that they accept a new frequency of 540 kilocycles. The old frequency of 880 kc had been creating interference in the States, and the CRBC could now offer the precious 540 kc frequency as an alternative since it had, through international agreement, been cleared for use by any station at least 1300 miles from the sea coast. Coupled with a boost in power to 1000 watts, this frequency made CJRM one of the most powerful stations in the province. It was also one of the most popular. A survey conducted by the Saskatoon Board of Trade in sixty-five Saskatchewan centres revealed that, among other things, over half of the respondents preferred CJRM to other Saskatchewan stations. It was therefore logical that the CRBC should choose CJRM rather than CHAB, which at that time operated at 1200 kc and 100 watts.

There was a very practical reason behind CHAB's desire to get CRBC programs, and it had nothing to do with their excellence. In fact, Buchanan took with him to Ottawa a file of letters supporting his contention that Commission programs were of very poor quality, and that given the choice most Saskatchewan people would prefer to listen to American stations. Quite simply, CHAB needed CRBC programs to survive. It needed them to fill out its schedule, and it needed the money the CRBC paid to stations to carry those programs. The basic station status fee was around five hundred dollars per month. The Depression and poor crops had made it impossible for CHAB's predecessor, 10AB, to collect its one dollar membership dues, and it had been in serious financial straits. In desperation it even at one point turned to CJRM, suggesting that the two merge and operate on the same frequency. When that offer was rejected, it decided to try generating revenue through commercials, and so it became commercial station, CHAB. When the CRBC demanded the station honour its commitment to spend eight thousand dollars on a new transmitter

(one of the conditions for receiving a commercial licence), CHAB had nowhere to turn. It hadn't been able to raise the money and it couldn't go to Moose Jaw citizens to ask for more. Unable to convince the CRBC to reverse its decision to broadcast over CJRM, it had no alternative but to shut down. And so, to the tune of "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf," CHAB went off the air at midnight, November 11, 1933. A few weeks later a benefit auction was held, and together with a personal contribution from Carson Buchanan the station was able to upgrade its transmitter to near CRBC specifications. CHAB resumed broadcasting December 17.

—

The CRBC took its role as industry regulator seriously, and since there was provision in federal legislation for the public broadcaster to take over all broadcasting in the country, owners of private stations were understandably nervous. They couldn't be sure they would have a place in a new system, and if they were expropriated there was no guarantee that they would be adequately recompensed for their investments. So in February 1932, while the debate continued over whether public broadcasting was feasible or desireable, David Streb decided to divest himself of his share of CFQC. He became sole owner of the Streb and Murphy Electric Company while A.A. Murphy assumed control of the other half of their holdings—the Electric Shop Wholesale Supplies Ltd. and the radio station. Over the succeeding years, as A.A. Murphy built fashionable houses and took expensive holidays in exotic places, Streb must have viewed with some dismay the imprudence of his decision.

CFQC and the other stations in the province may have been uncertain about their future, but that didn't stop them from forging ahead with their plans. They set up an interprovincial network in 1928 called The Western Broadcasting Bureau, which provided sponsored programs to Saskatoon, Yorkton, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Regina as well as to stations in Manitoba and Alberta. The "Quaker Oats Hour," created for this network in 1929, originated at CFQC and ran for three years. It consisted of musical acts interspersed with announcements extolling the virtues of Quaker Oats products. There were also larger links with stations throughout the continent, as in 1927 when fifty-five stations combined to broadcast the long anticipated heavyweight fight between Gene

Tunney and Jack Dempsey. Those people in Yorkton who didn't own a receiver jammed into garages, restaurants and any other public place that had a radio to hear a blow by blow account. There were new programs like CJRM's "Shut-In Club," in which names of those sick in hospital or confined to their homes were solicited so they could be honoured with a friendly greeting and a musical selection. There were numerous storytelling programs featuring the likes of Darby Coates, who read from Charles Dickens in the evening and who, in the afternoon, became Uncle Peter relaying children's stories to his "Peterkins." Those growing up at the time remember dashing out of the schoolhouse as soon as they had been released and whipping their horse into a lather so as not to miss anything he said.

And everywhere there were concerts, with local or visiting orchestras broadcasting from studios and from outside venues. None of the musicians was paid for these radio performances. It was mutually agreed that the exposure they received from these appearances was sufficient payment in itself. People hearing them on the radio would presumably make a point of attending one of their many dance hall dates in the area. But as the thirties wore on and as companies like Massey Harris, Ford Motors and Purina Foods began sponsoring music programs, it gradually became accepted practice to remunerate musicians. In Regina, for example, a band called Walter Budd and His Blossoms had been playing for free on CHWC until CJRM lured them away by offering them a retaining fee of two dollars per man per half hour broadcast. They became the exclusive property of the station in exchange for this fee, which they received whether or not the station could find an advertiser. Whenever a sponsor was found, the rate rose to $2.75. So popular was this group that they soon began broadcasting twice a week, but under different names. For one set of sponsors they were Walter Budd and His Blossoms; for the other sponsor they altered their instrumentation and appeared as Sy Perkins and the Boys.

—

Sponsored programs were the norm in the United States where radio was thriving, and it must have been obvious to Saskatchewan stations that they couldn't continue indefinitely as one-person operations. If they had any intention of developing into a significant force in the community and of becoming

self-sufficient, if not profitable, ventures, then they would have to start functioning more like a business than an avocation. They couldn't continue operating on a barter system whereby a business's name was mentioned in exchange for sponsoring an artist. They would seriously have to go about securing advertisers who were willing and able to pay. But before that could happen they needed changes in the laws concerning advertising. The Department of Marine and Fisheries believed that if radio stations had their way they would broadcast little more than commercial messages, and it felt that the Canadian public wouldn't tolerate the level of advertising that was common south of the border. It maintained its prohibition against direct advertising until well on into the thirties, and not until the late forties did it allow stations to mention the price of a product.

In 1929, CKCK decided to go "commercial." The Regina *Leader* turned the station over to a group called Plainsman Broadcasters. Their aim was to shift programming away from a heavy reliance on phonograph records and to feature live performances with high class artists from the community, along with talks and lectures. The station would be on the air from twelve noon until late evening, and for the first time it would have a full studio orchestra for midday programs. The money to carry out this ambitious programming would come from sponsors.

The main impetus for this venture came from the man who headed Plainsman Broadcasters—Horace Stovin. No matter how ambitious his programming may have been at CHUC, Unity, it was obvious that this small station could never fulfill his ambitions. He approached the Wheat Pool with the idea of creating a permanent station for them, but when they said no he turned to CKCK. According to Andy McDermott, who wrote for the *Regina Daily Star* and read news on CHWC, Stovin "convinced *The Leader* that he should take over their station and run it. He would pay them for the privilege of doing so. This, to *The Leader*, was a great way to get rid of what they considered a nuisance and an expense. So they turned the station over to him." Although some of the professional antipathy that existed between *The Leader* CKCK and the *Star* CHWC may colour this version of the story, there is nevertheless little doubt that Stovin was a man in search of a station—a station that would allow him to do programs like The Atwater

Kent Hour, The Ever-Ready Hour, Firestone Hour, Collier's Hour and other American favourites.

Stovin leased CKCK's equipment and studio and assembled three associates. Pete Parker, who worked in *The Leader*'s circulation department, was placed in charge of selling commercials; W. Knight Wilson, head of the violin department at the Regina Conservatory of Music and leader of the Capitolians Orchestra, was musical director; Bert Hooper remained the announcer. From the start, however, Plainsman Broadcasters was in trouble. Parker says Regina businesses didn't recognize the commercial possibilities of radio and there were few takers for the two-minute spots which sold for $2.40. Not only was there no steady revenue, but the four-piece orchestra that Wilson had formed became an unmanageable expense. And Wilson was not one for whom love of the medium was sufficient compensation in itself. According to Parker, Wilson was "a union man. He needed the money on the dot, and therefore lots of money came out of Stovin's pocket." Since Parker's own income was based on a percentage of the meagre revenue that trickled in, he was forced to bail out within a year and go to work for the Simpson Company as credit manager. Stovin reportedly lost a considerable sum of money in the enterprise, and he was constantly forced to borrow from his Unity drugstore to cover his payroll. Soon it was impossible to continue, and Plainsman Broadcasters disbanded less than a year after it had been formed. The station reverted to *The Leader*, which by this time had been purchased by the Sifton family, and Stovin remained as manager.

There were sound reasons for wanting to establish a commercial station in the province, but as this first unsuccessful attempt proved, it wasn't quite the right time yet.

—

In 1933 Stovin was made western regional representative for the CRBC, a highly ironic appointment given his earlier opposition to public broadcasting. With an office in Regina's Hotel Saskatchewan, he was placed in charge of developing talent and program segments for all broadcasts originating in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. He travelled the province extensively and placed a number of Saskatchewan artists and performers on the network, including Grey Owl. Fred Usher, then a high school student singing with a group called the Freshmen Quartet, remembers auditioning for him.

> He said, "All right, boys—sing." We sang about fifteen numbers. He said, "Some more." So we did a couple more. He said, "Some more." We said, "There ain't no more." He said, "Boys, I like what you have to offer. Go home, keep practising, and when you've got a hundred numbers down as well as the ones you've just auditioned for me you come back, and I'll put you on the network." So we went away for six months and got the numbers down pat. Then we went back to Stovin and said, "We're ready." He said, "Good. Let's go." He was as good as his word, and he put us on the air.

With a national broadcasting system in place, Saskatchewan performers now had access to a national audience, and through these artists the province could in a modest way make its presence felt across the country. By sending programs from east to west and west to east, the CRBC started to extend Canadian culture along a horizontal axis and thus, however slightly at first, began to counterbalance the impact of programming from the south. Listeners were not yet ready to give up their American entertainers just because Canadians were now available, but at least by the early thirties they had that option.

5

A Sound Base

IT MAY SEEM ODD TO SAY THAT RADIO BEGAN TO PROSPER at a time when most other businesses were in straitened economic circumstances, but that's exactly what happened during the depression. As crops became progressively thinner and the need for goods reduced, railways cut back their service. Whereas before a train might pass through a community once a day, now it appeared every third or fourth day. A whole week's supply of newspapers would therefore be delivered in a bundle, containing old news which had already been heard on the radio. Reduced train service, as well as the financial effects of the Depression, drove newspaper circulation down drastically. Through the thirties, for example, *The Leader*'s subscription list fell from 130,000 to 35,000, the *Regina Daily Star*'s from 70,000 to 14,000. At the same time, the number of licensed radio receivers increased, especially in rural areas. By March 31, 1937, the total in Saskatchewan had risen to 39,089, more than double the year before.

With fewer people reading newspapers, businesses became more interested in radio. They recognized its ability to help them sell their merchandise, and they also saw that being associated with it had other potential benefits as well. Some felt that by advertising on radio they were entitled to have a say in what kind of music was broadcast; others thought they now had the right to put friends or acquaintances on the air. "You had to be very careful with sponsors," says Vern Dallin, who worked for CFQC. "They figured if they were sponsoring a

program they should have their Aunt Tilly come in and sing a solo on it. They really would try. A lot thought they were God's gift to radio. And a lot of them wanted to do their own commercials." Walter Dales, formerly of 10BI, adds: "It was a sort of glamour thing; they did it for fun because they wanted to put their wives on the air singing. They didn't do it as a business venture." Stations were loath to lose revenue by offending those they courted and so were extremely discreet and diplomatic in discouraging businesses from becoming too interested in the station's operations.

In response to their growing well-being, stations expanded their schedules. Programming was now continuous from early morning until late at night. They began to subscribe to transcription services, such as Thesaurus and Standard. These were sixteen-inch discs, produced in New York or Los Angeles, containing music and entertainment features. Announcers reading the accompanying scripts were obliged to acknowledge that this was a transcription, not a locally-produced program. In Saskatoon in 1938-39, the most popular program on the air was a transcription series involving Eb and Zeb, a couple of fireside philosophers. They appeared daily for fifteen minutes at 12:30 in the afternoon. The series of 128 episodes ran five times, and when CFQC finally took it off there were hundreds of protesting letters.

Some announcers were able to exploit for their own benefit the immense popularity these series enjoyed. They would often buy a series themselves (usually a religious one) for five to ten dollars, purchase time on their station for another five dollars, and read the supplied lecture. After inveighing against the sins of the flesh and calling for moral rectitude, they would ask for donations to support a worthy cause. The worthy cause, of course, was their own welfare. The cash they received from listeners went directly into their pockets. One self-confessed sinner admits, "I made one hell of a lot of money."

—

The brightening prospects of actually being able to count on revenue from advertisers in the thirties, and the desire to implement more ambitious programming which this money made feasible, prompted the province's two remaining amateur stations to become commercial operations. It took Prince Albert's 10BI five years to complete the process. J.A. Klein and Ralph Leadbetter of the Prince Albert Radio Club

first petitioned the city to apply for a commercial licence on their behalf in the spring of 1929, just as the Aird Commission was making its way across the country. The city agreed to do so on condition that it could "appoint a Committee to supervise all radio announcements before broadcasting," and "maintain a censorship of all matter broadcasted from the station." Surprisingly, Leadbetter and Klein agreed. With the future of private broadcasting in doubt, and feeling perhaps they had no other option, they then went about coaching the city on how to proceed. The first step, they said, was to ask for the appropriate forms.

> This will open up a correspondence in which the Department [of Marine and Fisheries] will want to know why the license is wanted.
>
> They will probably say that there is no room on the broadcast band for more Canadian stations and they are placing the application on file for further consideration.
>
> This should be immediately followed up with letters pressing for the granting of the licence.
>
> It could be shown that the city will censure all matter broadcast and that the reason for broadcasting at all is to put the North Country and Prince Albert City and Park before the eyes of the people in the south.
>
> It would be well for the city to mention that the people of this district do not want to see a government monopoly of broadcasting.

A few weeks after the city sent its letter, it received the predictable reply from the deputy minister of marine and fisheries. Because a commission was currently investigating Canada's system, the department would not take any action "pending receipt of the Commissioner's Report, which would tend to further complicate the existing situation." The department could not at the moment consider an application for a broadcasting licence but it would hold the application on file, if the city so wished. Disgruntled, the radio club gave up. Shortly after, it disbanded. In July 1933, by which time the station had passed into the hands of Bill Hart and Lloyd E. Moffat, the idea was revived. A city councillor accompanied representatives of 10BI to Saskatoon where they met with Hector Charlesworth, chairman of the CRBC, to make their case once again. "The situation in Prince Albert is unique," they said, "owing to the geographical situation of Prince Albert from a radio reception point of view and the local station is very much used for the

purpose of giving more local news than would be possible over a chain of big stations. Further, in case of sickness in the North, it is essential the station be in service here." The following year they got their licence.

Like 10AB, 10BI had strong links with the community, and it made the transition from amateur to commercial status with the active involvement of local groups. For the official opening of CKBI in January 1934, the Prince Albert Historical Society presented a radio drama, replete with music and sound effects, on the founding of the city. In succeeding years the station was able to present live music, skits and plays because those who worked in the station were musically or dramatically inclined and because they could draw on talent in the community theatre groups to which they belonged.

CKBI's studios were located in the basement of the Canada Building on Central Avenue, with the transmitter in the Orpheum Theatre across the street. Since the studio didn't have a turntable, Lloyd E. Moffat, the station's operator as well as the theatre's projectionist, used the theatre's turntable when it wasn't in use and fed the sound directly from the projection booth to the transmitter. Theatres used turntables then to play the sixteen-inch transcription records which carried the sound for film. When Warner Brothers introduced sound on film, many of these turntables were sold to radio stations who used them to broadcast the syndicated shows which came in on large 33⅓ RPM discs.

It was at the Orpheum that Moffat met Bob Price, a bookkeeper who had been laid off by Burns Meats and who, in the middle of the Depression, could only get janitorial work at the theatre. Together they purchased the Radio Club's assets and formed a partnership. Moffat was the technician, and a brilliant one at that; according to a colleague, "He could construct a transmitter from a coat hanger and a couple of light bulbs." Eventually, Price gave up his janitorial duties and became the station's manager. "The commercial revenue was pretty low," says Walter Dales. "I know my cheque often bounced. I got $20 per week. We'd cash our cheques at the Fruit and Confectionery Store across the way because we figured it would bounce if we took it to the bank." By 1937, though, CKBI's fortunes had improved sufficiently for the station to spend $4000 on new equipment and new studios in the Sanderson block. A significant portion of CKBI's revenue by this time came from its affiliation with the CRBC.

CKBI's crowning achievement during the thirties was its part in setting up what for years was to be one of the largest weekly events in the province—the "ACT Amateur Hour" shows. ACT (Associated Canadian Travellers) was a national organization whose provincial branches regularly became involved with local charities. In 1934, ACT decided to become part of the campaign to eradicate tuberculosis, and with the Anti-Tuberculosis League it helped raise money through the sale of Christmas and Easter Seals, Health Bonds and direct appeals to the public. During a blizzard in the late fall of 1938, a group of ACT members from Prince Albert, stranded in Nipawin, happened to meet CKBI's chief announcer, Bill Hart. As the conversation naturally drifted towards what ACT was doing, they soon found themselves concocting ways in which radio could lend its resources and become involved in the fight. According to a newspaper report, their first joint effort was to hold weekly Saturday night dances for young people.

> A small donation was asked from all attending and part of the evening was aired over CKBI. During the broadcast time some of the young people had a chance to go on the air with a song or other entertainment. The idea was to bring to the attention of the public the fact that these young people were helping in the fight against T.B. Announcements were aired calling attention to the fact that T.B. could only be fought with dollars and by the education of the general public.
>
> No one of the committee or the staff of CKBI had any idea then just how popular these broadcasts would become. Before long—in fact in a matter of weeks—requests started to come in for ACT and CKBI to take their show to the smaller towns and villages near Prince Albert. . . . The first out-of-town broadcast was held at the village of Parkside [in January 1939], where something like $50 was realized.

So popular was this venture that other radio stations adopted it as well. Within a few years the idea of "ACT Amateur Hour" shows had spread to CJGX and CFQC (1944), CKRM (1945) and CHAB (1946). Organized by local ACT clubs, these amateur nights usually took place in a community hall, rink or theatre. A telephone was installed in the back of the building to receive pledges, but when this wasn't possible organizers took calls at a local café. ACT lined up between twenty and twenty-five contestants and hosted the first hour of the show. At 10:00 P.M. it handed the show over to the radio station, and the broadcast began and continued for as long as

there were acts available and for as long as donations kept coming in. It often went until one o'clock in the morning. Winning acts were judged according to who generated the loudest applause as measured by the radio volume meter. There was also a prize awarded to the one bringing in the most money, and this was not always necessarily the most popular act. Wilfred Gilby, who announced CFQC's broadcasts, says some of these performers subsequently went on to establish professional careers elsewhere. But most of them just viewed the occasion as an opportunity to display whatever talents they had.

> It was one thing to practise at home, but once some of these people got out in front of a crowd of between three hundred and five hundred, with loudspeakers and the stage all dressed up, they would freeze up and be unable to talk. They'd be literally shaking. It was therefore my job to ease them into their act; ask them questions about their mom and dad and lead them into their act. You had to be there to realize the wonderful feeling. They made the great effort. To us, it was just another run in the week's programs.

Announcers, of course, weren't paid for this extra work. It was considered part of their personal contribution to the cause. After completing their regular broadcast duties on Friday or Saturday, they packed up the equipment and headed out to yet another town, not entirely sure of what they might encounter along the way. "Of all the experiences I had during my term as MC," says John Hayden of CJGX, "I think the one that stands out most vividly in my mind is a trip that took our group seven hours to travel eight miles. This may sound fantastic but it nevertheless is strictly true." He continues:

> As I recall it, we were starting out on the first trip of a spring tour. We left Yorkton in bright sunshine and arrived in the town of Stenen, about 52 miles north, without incident or mishap in a light drizzle of rain at 3:00 p.m. It was here our troubles began. Our show was scheduled for Sturgis, eight miles away. The freezing rain had now become a heavy, steady downpour, and we had not gone more than a few hundred yards when one of our two cars got bogged down. The usual procedure of getting out and pushing seemed the thing to do. Getting out and pushing appeared to be the order of the day for it certainly took up the rest of *that* day. As a matter of fact, we were out pushing more than we were in riding. Eventually we pushed one car practically all the way from Stenen to Sturgis. About three miles

from there a farmer came along with a team of horses and a wagon. He and his family were bound for Sturgis and the Amateur Show [*sic*]. We promptly abandoned the car and hitched a ride. It was thus we finally arrived at Sturgis, seven hours out of Stenen, at 9:55 p.m. and with our show scheduled to go on the air at 10:00 p.m. We just made it. A muddier, dirtier bunch of fellows never have and never will put on an Amateur Show [*sic*]!

One problem was solved when we had aired our show. But there remained the problem of getting back to Stenen over—or, rather—through the mud. Well, we got through it all right after another seven hours of pushing and pulling cars over the same eight miles of so-called highway. We arrived at Stenen at seven Sunday morning and the first place we headed for was the Stenen Hotel where we woke up the friendly hotelkeeper who promptly rousted out his kitchen staff and his good wife and set them to work making breakfast for ten hungry and tired people. After breakfast we were told to pick rooms and go to bed. This was one time a hotel man had a full house without making a cent for our host refused to accept any money for his very generous hospitality. All in all, it was quite a trip and one I shall never forget, nor will any of the other fellows who were along. It may have been quite an ordeal at the time but travellers are a great bunch of fellows and, ordeal or no ordeal, nothing was going to stop our show that night. We had our show. We raised some money for a wonderfully worthy cause. And regardless of the difficulties we encountered, no one grumbled or complained.

With "ACT Amateur Hour" radio was working at its best, tuning into the cultural life of rural areas and extending that life beyond its immediate borders. From the drought-stricken thirties to the tuberculosis-free seventies, these broadcasts raised over $1.2 million, an astounding amount from a population of less than a million people.

—

Meanwhile, in Moose Jaw, CHAB was being kept financially afloat through the single-minded tenacity of the man who turned it into a commercial venture—Carson Buchanan. Buchanan, former secretary of the Moose Jaw Radio Club, had inherited a princely sum of money from his father and used it to pay CHAB's debts and operating expenses. He was a tall, gangly fellow and was considered by some to be a bit eccentric. He had the proper credentials for being a respected member of the community—unimpeachable morals, professed devotion to his family and an unwavering commitment to the church.

He was also an accomplished swearer. Ingenious in stringing together an array of expletives and delivering them with great gusto and conviction, he was severely taxed to complete a sentence without a profanity. In short, he had a foul mouth. One might think that anyone so given to the almighty cuss word would be leery of speaking over the air lest he betray himself. But Buchanan either had remarkable self-control or else he became another person on air, because for years he hosted Sunday morning programs without incident. Anyone hearing his radio persona wouldn't have had the slightest clue about the extensive nature of his vocabulary. It was only one unfortunate day when he forgot to switch off the microphone that people travelling to and from church were treated to a royal stream of colourful invective. A little while later, when an announcer who had gone home for lunch forgot to turn off the microphone, it happened again.

"Why didn't you phone me?" Buchanan demanded when he learned the announcer had heard him at home.

"Because you were too interesting to listen to," was the disarmingly honest reply.

Buchanan had no stomach for his law practice, and he slipped out to the station every chance he got. According to those who worked for him, the only thing that equalled his passion for radio was his hatred of newspapers. "As soon as you went to work for CHAB you were told the newspaper was the eternal enemy," says Eileen Bradley Lillico, a former employee. Although relations between the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* and 10AB were cordial (the newspaper conscientiously listed the station's activities and schedule), things soured when the station went commercial. This pleasant little operation, which subsisted on volunteer labour and public largesse, was now a rival for advertising revenue. Abruptly, the *Times-Herald* eliminated its coverage of CHAB programming and publicly ceased to acknowledge that the station even existed. So seriously did it view this menace to its profits that it allegedly threatened to stop reporting on local merchants' activities if they continued to promote their goods over the air.

The *Times-Herald* also tried to hinder CHAB in a direct way. In the days before radio stations had access to wire copy and syndicated news items, it was common practice for announcers to pick up the morning edition of the local paper and read over the air the first few paragraphs of however many stories it took to fill fifteen minutes. In its attempt to ensure that people read

the news before they heard it, the *Times-Herald* claimed it owned copyright to its stories, and it tried to prevent CHAB from using them within twenty-four hours of their appearance. This was basically the same kind of injunction that *The Leader-Post* of Regina tried to place on CHWC in the early thirties. Legally, it was a moot point since radio men rightly maintained that once a paper is published, its contents become public property and can be used in whatever way an individual sees fit. No lawsuits ever resulted from radio stations refusing to observe newspapers' claims to copyright, and these episodes served mainly to increase the hostility between the two media. While newspapers resented radio's incursion into their advertising domain, radio station owners claimed that the strangulating regulations by which they had to abide were due to the direct and undue influence newspapermen had on those formulating these regulations. It's not clear how long the animosity between CHAB and the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* persisted, but it was certainly over by 1947, when Carson Buchanan retired and sold the station to Bill Davis of the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* and Jack Slaight of *The Galt Daily Reporter*.

—

Whereas the industry had been in a constant state of flux throughout most of the twenties (uncertainty about what kind of system Canada would adopt, the appearance, disappearance and amalgamation of stations), it had by the thirties achieved a level of stability. Private stations were financially secure, and a public broadcasting network had been set up to provide Canadian programming to the entire country. For the most part, the CRBC had been even-handed in its treatment of private broadcasters, but it was experiencing internal problems which were inhibiting its effectiveness. Also, by the mid-thirties it reached less than half the population. Broadcasts were confined to evenings and Sundays, giving it a less than commanding presence. When Mackenzie King was re-elected in 1936 he appointed a parliamentary committee to investigate broadcasting. Among other things, this committee recommended that the government reconstitute the CRBC as a crown corporation. King accepted this recommendation and on November 2, 1936, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was formed.

Like its predecessor, the CBC was based on the principle of public ownership and public control. It had exclusive control

over all networks and the programs and advertising of all private stations. It advised the government on licensing and related matters, such as power increases and frequency assignments. Besides regulating the industry, it also produced programs and carried network shows from the States. In order to reach a larger part of the rural audience, the CBC proposed to build high-powered transmitters throughout the country. Originally it intended to place one in each of the three prairie provinces, but because of the distressing economic situation it decided to build only one to serve the entire region. Engineers spent a year searching for the ideal location, and they finally settled on Watrous because it was centrally located, because the high salinity of the soil in the area aided transmission of the signal and because there were no trees or hills for miles around to interfere with broadcasts. "It would take four times the power to cover the same area in Toronto," said Dick Punshon, the station's maintenance supervisor.

CBK, Watrous came on the air in July 1939. With the 540 kH frequency confiscated from CJRM, along with a maximum power of 50,000 watts, it became one of the most powerful stations on the continent. (The *K* in CBK stood for Henry Kelsey, the first white man to come to the prairies.) CBK was heard from British Columba to Ontario to the northern States, and there were reports of it being received in Hawaii, the Northwest Territories, Japan and northern Europe. Along with the 540 kHz frequency, it also inherited listeners' complaints that had been previously directed towards CJRM. Now it was CBK which was overriding programs from KFYR, Bismark, North Dakota.

Early programming originated at the transmitter site and included a morning show called "The Clockwatcher" with Norm Micklewright. News was transcribed from CBC's international short-wave service and broadcast in both English and French. There were also regular reports from the RCMP's F Division headquarters in Regina informing the public of stolen cars and other misdemeanors. At its peak in the mid-forties, CBK, Watrous employed sixteen people.

From the network, CBK carried a number of "sustaining" programs—that is, programs which the CBC itself originated—like "The Happy Gang" and broadcasts of symphony concerts and radio plays. But it also brought in numerous American shows like "Lux Radio Theatre" and "Charlie McCarthy," which raised the question of just what kind of service it should

provide. In May 1938, the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* published what some people in the Moose Jaw area felt about the CBC and its role.

> In view of the criticism in Eastern Canada against the corporation for taking a selection of American Commercial programs, the following facts revealed by the recent impartial telephone survey of radio listeners made in Moose Jaw and its immediate rural area, will be of interest. Of 2,907 listeners questioned as to whether they enjoyed the American programs now being broadcast on the CBC network, 1,892, or 90 per cent., said "Yes," with varying degrees of enthusiasm; one said he "enjoyed most of them"; nine said they "hadn't heard them"; nine said they "didn't like them particularly"; 119 said they enjoyed "some of them"; and only 67, or .03 per cent., said they "didn't enjoy them."
>
> An examination of the survey also showed that in the evenings, between 7.00 and 10.30, when it happened, CHAB was taking the complete schedule of Canadian Broadcasting Corporation programs. 57 per cent. of the radios were tuned to CBC programs over CHAB, 10 per cent. were tuned to CBC programs over other stations, 17 per cent. were listening to programs other than CBC over Canadian stations, 18 per cent. were tuned to various United States stations, and three per cent. were doubtful as to what station they were listening to. Of the 17 per cent. who were listening to programs other than CBC over Canadian stations, 10 per cent. were listening to a hockey match over a Regina station in which Moose Jaw fans were greatly interested.

Although there are no similar studies from the twenties to tell us what proportion of listeners tuned into American stations then, there's little doubt it was considerably higher than the 18 per cent in Moose Jaw in 1938. And whereas this informal survey may not have produced statistics that could be applied to the province as a whole, it did in its limited way show that by the late thirties Saskatchewan listeners were slowly being weaned from American stations. This apparent shift in listener loyalty was not terribly surprising since the CBC by this time was carrying several American shows, making it unnecessary for Canadians to seek out southern stations in order to get their fix of American culture. The CBC imported American shows because they brought in valuable revenue, because it was cheaper to buy them on occasion than to produce original material, and because private stations were more inclined to carry the CBC service and people more likely to listen to it if such material were available. The demand for

American programs grew to such an extent that in 1944 the CBC had to create a separate network—the Dominion Network—to carry them. By bribing listeners with American shows, the CBC was in a strange sense using American culture to build and develop a constituency for things Canadian.

—

Even though more people were listening to Canadian radio than ever before, this was still a makeshift enterprise. It isn't possible to judge the quality of radio at this time without taking into consideration the role it was expected to play or how it was received and judged by listeners; one can't always fairly evaluate yesterday's results by today's criteria. But for purposes of comparison it's safe to say that radio in thirties was, by modern standards, raw and unsophisticated.

Announcers had no special training, and they often got their jobs because they knew the manager, or because they were willing to work for next to nothing at a time when there was little employment available. As in the twenties, they did everything from play music to scrub floors to help fix the transmitter after sign-off. They were generalists, "absorbing the atmosphere more than anything else," according to Elwood Glover, formerly of CHAB. Overly conscious of their public presence and wishing to compensate for the poor reproductive quality of microphones and the omnipresent static over which they had to speak, they tended to over enunciate and talk louder than normal. To our ears, many of them would have sounded formal, if not stiff and harsh.

Broadcasts were still bedevilled by frequent intrusions. Drapes hung over studio walls to dampen the sound and make it more mellow were ineffective in silencing outside noise if the studio was located in a hotel or apartment building. "Children would be out in the hall playing, especially in the winter," says Carl O'Brien, "running up and down and yelling at each other while a person in the studio of CFQC was reading some news or something. You'd hear this in the background. A lot of times they would be crying even. There was some rumours spread around about that and the effect that they thought that the broadcast was coming from some children's bedroom."

There were also problems with lines. Because the telephone and broadcast lines, which ran side by side, were not properly insulated, radio broadcasts often picked up telephone conversations. CFQC was broadcasting a church service from Third

Avenue United Church one Sunday, says O'Brien, when all of a sudden listeners heard a phone ring. A girl answered, and a boy spoke.

> "Hello, Sweetheart! How are you tonight?" And it wasn't very hard to figure out what was going on, he was just phoning up his girlfriend and they were having their conversation. Mainly what was going on, he was going to make a date, see if he could come up and get her and go out for the night. Well, that was so loud that we had to cut our program line off and play a record at the transmitter and deaden that line because [there was] no telling what might go out on it.

Engineers eventually found a way of isolating broadcast lines from telephone lines. They also learned how to patch the turntable to the control board so music could proceed directly from the phonograph to the transmitter, thus bypassing the studio space and anything that happened to be going on there while the music was playing. Stations could therefore get rid of the microphone cone, which at best had been an imperfect insulation against the bustlings of the announcer around the studio or the extraneous noises from the world outside. This development may have helped eliminate most of the sounds not intended for listeners' ears but it wasn't enough on its own to ensure that people got quality programs. Lyman Potts, who broadcast for CHWC in the thirties, says:

> The turntable ran all the time. An announcer would lift the head over and say, "Now here is a selection by Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra." He'd lift the needle over and drop it on the record. If the music was there when he brought the volume up, fine. If it wasn't, that was fine too. Nobody cared about this.

Such a casual attitude towards broadcasting, coupled with the less than ideal circumstances under which local announcers sometimes worked, clearly distinguished them from their more polished counterparts south of the border—those who drew legions of Canadian listeners and who were idols to the young Canadian boys who were joining British announcers in growing numbers. Many who worked in Saskatchewan in the thirties claim they learned primarily by listening to American programs. "I began by imitating newscasters I heard on stations such as WHO, Des Moines," says Godfrey Hudson. Most wanted to be big stars themselves some day, and to that end they applied themselves diligently to their more modest

and immediate chores at hand. They worked long hours, seven days a week, often with no holidays, because they wanted to get ahead as quickly as possible, but also because, as George Dobson, formerly of CKBI says, "There were hordes of people wanting to take our job."

Despite their commitment, however, they didn't always get the respect accorded other professions. "I hear your brother on the air all the time; when's he going to get a decent job?" some would ask, while others taunted friends with, "Do you want your kid to grow up to be an announcer?" Working for a radio station wasn't really considered a career, unless of course you worked for a station in the States. Some critics suggested that if people could get only Canadian radio stations, they'd quit listening.

There were justifiable reasons for having a less than salutary opinion of Canadian announcers during this time, but as is often the case today, personal shortcomings too easily came to symbolize national deficiencies. As imperfect as these announcers often were, they nevertheless served to remind listeners that those who spoke to them over the air were one of them. Less than proficient renderings of the news or announcements of local events reinforced the notion that announcers were members of the community, doing the best they could through a medium that reflected the community and that was responsive to its needs and wishes. If people felt close to their flawed announcers and their error-prone stations—and there is abundant evidence that they did—then it was because they saw both as an extension, an integral part, of themselves. That is why they believed they had a legitimate say in programming and why they turned out in droves to events like the amateur hours.

The problem remained, however, that no matter how well a community station was tuned in to its constituency, it could never compete with the more professional sound from elsewhere that puts people in touch with a larger world. To grow and thrive, it needed to gain the esteem and allegiance of listeners who clearly preferred the American product—an enormous if not impossible task. Americans invested huge sums of money in their programs and generated so much publicity around their stars that only the most immune or insensate person could fail to be captivated. In their deliberate plan to mythologize the American entertainment complex, American stations were supported in no small measure by Canadian

newspapers, which slavishly reprinted press releases documenting in intimate detail the comings and goings of these media heroes.

—

There was only one newspaper person in the province at the time who had the temerity to attempt an honest evaluation of what was being broadcast. And the stringent criteria he used in his critical comments stood out in sharp contrast to the sycophantic posture of most other writers who unquestioningly accepted the prevailing views of American radio. For six months in 1934, J.S. Base animated the cautious pages of the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* with "Radio Remarks," a column of bold opinion and uncompromising standards. It's intriguing to speculate why he only wrote for such a short time. Given his admission that some listeners complained he was too outspoken, I wouldn't discount the possibility that he was either forced to leave by his employer or that he quit in frustration at constantly having to defend himself.

Many may have agreed with his opinion that public broadcasting was good in principle even though the CRBC's announcers were stuffy and its programs boring, but they were not likely to accept with equanimity his remarks about things they held dear.

> On Central Avenue the other day, a mother and some friends stood around a baby carriage admiring the infant within. The youngster made one of those peculiar gastronomical noises considered "cute." Immediately, the mother exclaimed, "just like Eddie Cantor." Everybody laughed. Well, for much less than that, hundreds clap their hands and "split their sides" in the studios across the boundary line, while the Cantors and the Penners draw huge salaries for making less intelligible sounds.
>
> I shall stir up a great deal of criticism among my two readers (proofreader and myself) by regretting the lack of facilities in present day broadcasting to permit listeners heaving nice ripe tomatoes and unworthy eggs at some of the so-called "stars," particularly Eddie Cantor.

Noting that American entertainers like Cantor and Ed Wynn get $5000 per week (more than what a Saskatchewan teacher is paid in a year), he said it wasn't hard to imagine that Canadian performers, with only a fraction of this salary, could produce equally competent programs. An apologist for national culture

and a booster of Saskatchewan talent, he wasn't loath, though, to pass critical judgement when it was called for.

> Two piano classics, Evelyn Eby and Reginald Bedford, from Saskatoon, last night had a sort of lifeless quality which can make piano music sound so heavy and monotonous, as though it was all good theory and a thumping good loud pedal. More spirit and less noise would have made this pleasant entertainment and these pianists are capable of giving it.
>
> Canadian entertainers are slipping badly into that baneful habit of imitating popular artists. The impersonations of Harry Lauder are particularly obnoxious to many, besides being hoary with antiquity.

He was an inveterate listener ("Somebody said to me the other day, 'people think you sit by your radio every night.' Yes I do and all day Sunday. How could anyone write a column if they didn't."), and he used his critiques to stress once again the larger point.

> I might have been mistaken but I am convinced one of the bandsmen in the United States Navy Band struck a false note at the beginning of "Stars and Stripes" last night as President Roosevelt's birthday ball was being ushered in. . . . From the point of view of fine entertainment and nobleness of purpose, many of us will wish the president of the United States had a birthday every week. We're fond of copying things American in this country—so why not let's have a Prime Minister's birthday ball to aid a similar cause (battling infantile paralysis),—and thereby use this "god-given gift" (radio) for something worth while for once.

Nothing escaped his attention or interest, except the amateur station down the street which was being transformed into a commercial operation. It's possible he ignored 10BI/CKBI because the station's battle to get a commercial licence and its preparations for a grand opening had already been amply covered in the *Daily Herald*'s main news section. But I suspect he also had a loftier mission in mind for himself than discussing a fledgling operation with volunteer staff.

Then just as suddenly and inexplicably as he appeared, he was gone. "Radio Remarks" for June 5, 1934, carried the simple announcement: "Today this column comes to an end. I hope you have found it both interesting and informative. The weekly listing of programs has also been discontinued. S'long listen-

ers." Later that year a new column appeared, entitled "Radio News," but it did nothing more than list schedules, relate behind-the-scenes stories, and complain about poor reception. Gone was the verve, the wit, the pizzazz that characterized J.S. Base. There wouldn't be anything like him again in Saskatchewan newspapers.

Base's columns were a perfect complement to radio because they appeared daily, meaning the programs under discussion were still fresh in people's minds. With his clearly defined criteria he gave listeners something against which to measure their own views. If they hadn't heard the program he was talking about, then there was a good chance his outspoken opinions would prompt them to listen, and listen more attentively, next time they tuned in. Before long he was sure to discuss a matter with which they were familiar, and there would be an opportunity to compare altering viewpoints. I don't think there's any doubt that Base, even during his short time, heightened people's awareness of the radio, and through his own example sharpened their critical perceptions. He may have been slightly harsh from time to time but implicit in everything he said was a respect for the medium and what it could accomplish.

> Scarcity of population and no little poverty, coupled with the rigours of life in the West, would seem poor soil in which to sow the seeds of culture such as radio is revealing. But history shows this just the proper background for the beginnings of culture in music, art, literature and kindred subjects. Radio will do much to hasten the fullest and soundest development of these phases of national life.

Radio had a mission to perform, one that involved more than just ensuring its own financial welfare, and Base was one of those who believed it could best discover and carry out this mission through critical guidance.

6

Wartime Prominence

RADIO WAS FLOURISHING IN THE LATE THIRTIES, generating respectable profits for its owners and stimulating listeners with exciting programs. Remote broadcasts, which transported audiences to distant locations and allowed them to experience another world that was still a part of themselves, came into their own during this period. The Sunday service from a downtown church, the classical recital from a concert hall, the dance band from a ballroom and the "ACT Amateur Hour" from a rural community hall were staples on the Saskatchewan radio schedule, and they distinguished broadcasting here from that in other parts of the country. According to Lyman Potts, they were part of what made radio in western Canada vastly superior to that in the east. He says when he moved to Ontario in 1940, he found stations which did nothing more than plug into network shows.

Then came the war. And with war, full recognition of the medium's power. Radio reported instantaneously on battles and advances and shifting fortunes; it brought Hitler and Churchill in all their oratorical glory into Canadian homes. Never before had listeners been so close to the people shaping events on a world scale. Because radio had already demonstrated its ability to persuade the public to support worthy causes like the treatment of tuberculosis, it was now enlisted to fight the biggest fight of all—the fight for freedom. With rousing music and inspiring words it entreated its audience to sign up, to donate money to the milk fund, to grow

food for the soldiers, to send clothes overseas. The CBC's national radio drama department, created in 1938, produced a series of classic plays about democracy under the title "Theatre of Freedom"; noted actors like Walter Houston and Raymond Massey performed for free. All-star variety programs, featuring Percy Faith, Bob Hope, Cary Grant and others, sold war bonds.

Stations routinely took part in emergency exercises to keep the populace alert, even in landlocked Saskatchewan, thousands of miles from the action. To ensure the wrong kind of information didn't get broadcast, either deliberately or accidentally, everyone reading a script over the air, including the local preacher, had to submit it to the program director or manager for prior approval. "We had to read every speech that came in," says Vern Dallin. "It was a real headache. If the person deviated one little bit from what was written he was cut off." Stations continued to take music requests, but because the accompanying greeting might contain a coded message, they couldn't guarantee they would play the song at a particular time. Security was tight everywhere but especially at CBK, Watrous. A high, barbed wire fence was built around the site, an insulator placed on the transmitter to prevent it from being shot out, and a guard placed on twenty-four hour duty. No visitors were allowed, no pictures permitted. Because it was thought enemy bombers might use CBK's powerful signal to direct North American raids, the station cut its power from 50,000 watts to 1000 watts. But the ensuing public outcry forced the CBC to reverse its decision quickly. Safety precautions were all right as long as they didn't affect reception.

—

The news changed radically during the war. Leisurely fifteen-minute reports, lifted verbatim from the local paper and heard twice a day, gave way to shorter and more frequent newscasts. By mid-war there were six daily reports on many stations, and announcers were being sent out to report on local military activities. In 1941, the year CBC created its own national news department, news bulletins took up 20 per cent of the corporation's schedule, up from 9 per cent two years earlier. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, network bulletins appeared every hour on the hour. Radio could no longer rely exclusively on papers for its news.

Before the war, there was virtually no local coverage other than what has been called "firetruck journalism" (fires, accidents, crimes, etc.). Stations were unwilling to invest personnel or resources in an area that couldn't be expected to bring a financial return. In the late thirties, however, "Scoop" Lewry began doing reports from city council for CHAB, and it was Lewry's example as well as the work of prominent American broadcasters that inspired Godfrey Hudson to create a newsroom at CFQC. He did it by convincing the tight-fisted A.A. Murphy that a little investment could go a long way in promoting the station's bank balance as well as its public image.

Accustomed as we are today to regular, local newscasts, Hudson's accomplishments may not seem as remarkable or revolutionary as when they first appeared. Convinced that the essence of a community lay outside the police and fire departments, he frequently consulted teachers at the university for informed comment. Whenever possible he visited the Bessborough Hotel, the social and political centre of the city, where politicians and other newsmakers were known to gather. He brought people into the studio to give a national or international story a local angle. In order to add variety to newscasts, he added a second reader. He listened to the radio constantly, and it was from the crusty American commentator Boake Carter that he got the idea for a fifteen-minute program called "Opinion," the first radio editorial show in Canada. By the time Hudson left CFQC in 1955 for eastern Canada he had built CFQC's news department into the largest in the country (sixteen people), and he had brought the station the "top news operation award in North America" from the Radio-Television News Directors Association in the United States. It was the first time a Canadian station had been so honoured. By this time he had also garnered for himself more major electronic journalism prizes than any other Canadian. Hudson eventually found his way to CKEY, Toronto, in 1961, where he says he found a news operation not nearly as developed as CFQC's had been six years earlier.

Once radio abandoned the paper as the primary source of its information, it began to create and present the news in accordance with its own requirements. The CBC's annual report from 1941 states, "An effort was made to establish an acceptable style for the CBC news bulletins and all those present had much practice in writing copy in the idiom and rhythm of ordinary speech, intended for the ear rather than for the eye." It also

began to shape its newscasts differently. When the radio newscaster read from the front of the paper to the back until he had filled his alloted time, he was observing priorities set out by newspaper editors. But once radio newsmen began to gather and edit their own material, newscasts took on a shape more consistent with the medium. "The structure of a radio programme, because it is articulated in the spoken voice, is of necessity more akin to the structure of drama than print journalism or fiction," says Damiano Pietropaolo, in an essay examining the way radio presents the "truth." In news especially, he sees a structure similar to that which Aristotle found in classical comedy.

> The "good news" at the end of a radio current affairs broadcast works very much like a marriage in comedy. Having exposed the audience to the social discord that seems to be part of the randomness of experience, the radio editor then resolves the conflict with the good news. Thus the news is a clear example of a contrived artistic unity, a manufactured product. Because, like drama, it is articulated within a finite time, it must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Like any good comedy, the news usually begins with the most turbulent scene (the bombardment of Beirut) and, arranging each subsequent scene according to its decreasing threat to the collectivity, concludes with a symbolic "marriage": a return to social order and stability —it is what Bertolt Brecht would call gastronomic radio, fit for consumption by an urban middle-class intent on resuming its normal routine as soon as the broadcast is over.

Radio had started to dissociate itself from newspaper stories just as the war began, and the war provided radio with the rationale to reshape newscasts in the manner Pietropaolo observes. Because the fighting overseas affected everyone in one way or another, listeners wanted to know about the most recent developments as soon as they became available. Radio obliged by heading each newscast with the latest information from the front. After telling of battles and casualties there would be good reason to leave listeners with a consoling, if not happy, story at the end to allay their anxieties and reassure them that things would indeed turn out all right.

As newscasts appeared more frequently, they grew shorter, thus starting a trend that has seen the news degenerate to the cursory, pseudo-informational thing it is on many private stations today; a two- or three-minute formality heard at the

beginning to each hour, whose sole purpose is to maintain a radio ritual.

During the war, casual readings from rustling newspapers gave way to formal declamations, as epitomized by Lorne Greene, CBC's "Voice of Doom." Death and mayhem had to be reported in a grave manner. "We would bark at people," says Bill Cameron, "and try to push the news down listeners' throats." In this enterprise, an announcer was greatly aided if he had a baritone voice that imperiously demanded respect. This overbearing, instructional style persisted for a long time after the war. Not until the sixties, and in some cases the seventies, was it incompatible with programming in which speakers sought to establish a warm rapport with their audience.

—

There were few classical music groups and little live theatre in Saskatchewan in the forties. The only place people got cultural entertainment on a consistent basis was from the radio. Besides running serials from the United States, local stations periodically had readings and dramatizations. Bird Films of Regina, for example, sponsored a fifteen-minute program of plays, based on Dick Bird's experiences in various parts of the world, each Sunday afternoon on CKCK. The station also carried poetry readings with organ music. "Radio was the cultural event of the whole community," says Art Crighton, who managed CKCK in 1942. "That station was making a lot of money out of Regina, but we were also contributing a lot to the life of the community. We were giving them something they couldn't get anywhere else, and we were showing them that there was talent in the town."

The CBC, meanwhile, was becoming the most important drama institution in the country. It commissioned Canadian writers to produce original works for radio, and of the three hundred plays it broadcast in the 1948-49 season, 92 per cent were by Canadian authors. This was the so-called "Golden Age of Radio," the time of Andrew Allan and the "CBC Stage" series and of W.O. Mitchell's "Jake and the Kid." In 1961, *The Globe and Mail*'s theatre critic, Herbert Whittaker, wrote: "For the past twenty-five years, the CBC has supplied most of the dramatic intake of Canada. No other country has had to rely so heavily on one single source for its theatrical knowledge, experience and expression."

While Andrew Allan's plays often dealt with controversial matters, the CBC's family farm dramas, created in various regions of the country in 1939, were designed to provide agricultural information in an entertaining fashion. Each series had its own writer and its own name. On the prairies it was called "The Jacksons and Their Neighbours" and it was written by Mary Pattison of Saskatoon. It featured the languid Dollar Dick Jackson, his daughter Colleen and his son Buddy. Down the road was Dick's more industrious neighbour, Jim Davis, his wife Sarah and their son Jim. As the years went on, the characters' activities changed to reflect their advancing years and changing circumstances. When Colleen married Jim and joined the Davis clan, the Jackson household was replenished by Mrs. Somerville, a new housekeeper. Between 1946 and 1964, Pattison wrote over five thousand plays. They were produced in Winnipeg, live, at noon.

Writing the series required an intimate acquaintance with agriculture. "There's no fooling farmers," she says. "They can get quite snooty about some things." It also required quick adjustments in the story line, especially when one of the actors playing a central character left Winnipeg. On the occasion of the three thousandth episode being broadcast, Pattison described some of the factors that affected her scripts.

> These changes in acting personnel, the temporary absence of key members of the cast, and other complications over which a script writer has no control have often had more effect on the Jackson story line than it is perhaps proper to admit. If the actor playing Dollar Dick for instance should leave the cast his replacement does not take over immediately. The practice is to remove Dick temporarily from the scene on as plausible an excuse as I can invent and keep him away till the listeners will, we hope, find a new voice in the part more acceptable. Invention of the excuse may bring its own plot complications or even make it necessary to introduce new characters. And the preparations for departure and the absence of such a confirmed stay-at-home as Dick is bound to provide material for several episodes.
>
> Another outside factor which influences the Jacksons and their neighbours is the weather. By this I don't mean the day-to-day weather which they can't even discuss too directly. (The reason for this is that I write the scripts two weeks ahead of time and am not at all clairvoyant.) But the general weather pattern across the prairies affects them, as farmers, very much. If drought conditions are common, the Jacksons suffer for want of rain; if wet weather delays the harvest they have to be held up

just as everyone else is; and if the winter is long and hard their roads are blocked and their feed reserves depleted. Similarly, they are affected by general agricultural conditions: they suffer from the cost-price squeeze, they have a surplus of wheat, they eagerly await the next shipping quota. And their crops are subject to attack from whatever plant disease or insect pest is prevalent.

I realize that this somewhat dismaying list does not sound as if it would be likely to evoke humourous incidents, although the episodes are intended to be mildly humourous. But anyone can guess that an infestation of grasshoppers or an attack of rust can provide local tall-story tellers with a wealth of material. And other difficulties can have their lighter side as well. The wheat surplus, to give a specific example, caused one of the Jackson's bachelor neighbours to store grain in his house a year or so ago, reserving just one room for himself. This attack on gracious living greatly disturbed Mrs. Somerville, and when Mrs. Somerville is disturbed she does something about it. On another occasion the low price of eggs inspired the curling club to hold an Eggspiel with several crates of eggs as first prize. Winner of the Grand Challenge was a bachelor too and he searched cook books and taxed his imagination for the rest of the winter to supply recipes to use up his superfluous prize.

So the Jacksons and their neighbours meander along in step with the seasons, their story being related through closely-connected but self-contained incidents rather than as a continuous narrative. I confront them with no major personal crises, and the good or bad fortune brought them by wind and weather is always held down to factual proportions. Seasonal activities, sports, community projects, real events in the real outside world, even such topical phenomena as women's fashions, often provide episode material.

—

Although the Jacksons touched on topical agricultural subjects they were not intended to provide a venue for serious, detailed discussion. Those discussions took place on the "National Farm Radio Forum," a weekly series of programs started in 1941 through the combined efforts of the Canadian Chamber of Agriculture (forerunner of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture), the Canadian Association for Adult Education and the CBC. Farm forum groups of ten to twelve people were formed throughout the country and assembled each Monday evening to hear a panel of experts debate a particular subject on radio—marketing boards, farm and home management, cash advances, crop rotations, need for mechanization and so on. Sometimes short dramas were used to make a point. Each

group was supplied with supporting material outlining the various sides to the issue. After the radio broadcast ended, the group continued the debate. This was all part of a social evening which invariably included lunch and the playing of cards. The conclusions each group came to were mailed to the CBC. The final five minutes of the following week's forum were reserved for announcing the results from across the province, and once a month a national tally was taken. These results were sent to the regional and national centres of the CBC, as well as to provincial and national legislators. The forums influenced not only politicians, who implemented some of the recommendations, but farmers as well. During a 1943 broadcast reviewing the year's activities, Saskatchewan secretary Rupert Ramsey observed:

> Credit Unions were certainly the most popular action project among our forum groups. Indeed, 21 groups indicated their intention to get ready for credit union organization and were provided with the study material which would prepare them for action. The people in several of these communities have already set up their own credit unions on a sound foundation of study, while the balance are on the way. . . .
>
> Several [groups] organized beef rings, a number organized trips to experimental farms, one group purchased a combine co-operatively. Because of wartime demand for edible oils, one group decided to study the growing of sunflowers. After their winter's study, they purchased their sunflower seed co-operatively and each member of the group is planning to grow five acres. Then four other forums sponsored three-day farm machinery repair short courses.

Promoting co-operative action, the forums provided farmers with the means to analyze and improve their operations. One participant suggested that those who listened to these programs "singly in their own homes are losing the fundamental value of the whole scheme—the opportunity to meet people, the social contact. And, missing that, they also lose the opportunity to discuss their local problems in relation to the national and international situation."

It's estimated that in the late forties, 70 per cent of the province's farm population listened to the broadcasts. There were more groups in Saskatchewan than in any other province except Ontario (and more than in Manitoba and Alberta combined), despite the fact that farms were widely scattered and travel during winter extremely difficult. In the mid-fifties there

were over 150 groups with more than 700 people participating. But by the early sixties, the forums were no longer deemed relevant in a country becoming increasingly urbanized. And farmers were getting information from ag reps and other sources. When the number of groups dwindled to less than 100, there didn't seem much point in continuing them. Like the Jacksons, the "National Farm Radio Forum" died in 1964, and with it went a link between rural and urban audiences.

—

Insofar as they built listener participation directly into the program, the forums were similar to the province's school broadcasts. These broadcasts began in 1931, when the Department of Education arranged for six private stations to carry correspondence courses for children in rural areas whose schools had closed. The agreement was made at the beginning of the Depression when there wasn't much advertising on radio and when stations didn't mind donating the time. But as commercial revenue increased, the stations grew less generous with their support. Since it wasn't feasible for the government to set up studios specifically for school broadcasts, the Department of Education in the mid-forties worked out an agreement with the CBC: the department would pay program costs and the CBC would provide facilities, production personnel and air time. Gertrude Murray, who in 1951 took over as supervisor of the broadcasts, ran a number of series such as "Highway to Health," "Adventures in Science," "It's Fun to Draw" and "Let's Write a Story." In this last series, the studio was described as a story tower which housed a group of imaginary characters; students in the classroom were asked to write stories around these characters and send them in to the station. From the parcels of ensuing mail Murray would select a few to read over the air the following week.

> My emphasis was on writing creatively, writing out your own ideas, not being too concerned about the mechanics of writing, because sometimes a child has wonderful ideas but has trouble putting them down. We wanted them to put ideas down. The carryover was there for the teacher to use this in the written language work if she wished. She could see the weaknesses that were evident but that hadn't spoiled the flow of story writing.

This programming was most beneficial when the majority of children attended small country schools and when non-spe-

cialized teachers needed all the help they could get, especially in unfamiliar subjects. As smaller schools were amalgamated into larger units, however, and as additional resource material became available, the broadcasts became less important. Classrooms grew larger. Schedules became more complicated. It might not be convenient any longer for everyone to listen to a dramatization of *Hamlet* at two o'clock on Wednesday afternoon. By the seventies it was clear to both the CBC and the Department of Education that school broadcasts had had their day. Whatever tapes the department accumulated after that time were made part of school resource centres, and the CBC found an alternative use of the air time.

—

In 1945, the newly-elected Canadian Commonwealth Federation (CCF) government began legislative broadcasts, which gave listeners indirect access to the legislature by letting them hear for themselves what their elected representatives were saying and doing. And this, together with the farm forums and other participatory programs, contributed in more than a marginal way, I think, to some notable characteristics of life in the province. Between 1934 and 1975, for example, an average of 83 per cent of Saskatchewan voters turned out for provincial elections, compared to 67 per cent in Alberta and 64 per cent in Manitoba. And in a 1950 study on agrarian socialism, S.M. Lipset found that Saskatchewan people were far more involved in community organizations that any other region. "There are from 40,000 to 60,000 different elective rural posts that must be filled by the 125,000 farmers. There is, then, approximately one position available for every two or three farmers," he wrote. Given the nature of its programming, radio played a major part in helping to instill a political awareness and stimulate public and communal effort.

Even programs whose primary purpose was to entertain and amuse had a social impact. "The Jacksons and Their Neighbours" may not have been considered high drama, but it did give rural people a sense that their lives and their work were as worthy of dramatic treatment as subjects from distant places. By broadcasting this series at noon, when everyone was gathered at the table for dinner, the CBC ensured that the people these plays were in some measure about actually heard them. For many, this was the only drama they ever saw or heard. As well, from the late thirties to the sixties, several

stations ran "Mail Bag" shows, in which listeners were invited to come into the studio to sing, play an instrument, tell jokes or send a greeting. Like the "ACT Amateur Hour," these shows gave listeners a place to display their own talents, and as such constituted one of the few outlets available for personal artistic expression.

The forties were in many ways radio's heyday, that brief glorious time in its history when it was the dominant media, when it had supplanted newspapers but hadn't yet been eclipsed by television. It had honed its techniques and initiated innovative programs, and although it was still rough at times, it could rightly claim to be an important and influential factor in people's lives.

7

The Changing Scene

RADIO WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF ITS POWER AND INFLUENCE during the forties so it was natural that many individuals and companies would want to enter this lucrative and prestigious business. Post-war prosperity in fact enabled expansion to take place in the larger urban centres of Saskatoon and Regina as well as in rural areas. So quickly did this growth occur that by the end of the fifties there were twice as many stations as there had been at the end of the war. And as the number of commercial stations increased, their demand that the industry be regulated by a body independent of the CBC became more insistent. Two royal commissions were set up during this period, one in 1949 and another in 1956, and from the comments of those presenting briefs it became clear that over the years listeners had become much more critically aware of the medium and its larger cultural implications.

The federal government knew that television, which by the late forties was a fixture in thousands of American homes, would very soon make its appearance in Canada, and to prepare for that day it decided to re-examine its policies on broadcasting—policies which had remained unchanged since 1936, when the CBC was created. It was a sign of Canada's growing cultural maturity that the commission established in 1949 to recommend a new strategy should investigate not only radio, television and film, but archives, libraries, museums, research, exhibitions and "activities generally which are designed to enrich our national life." The Chair of the Royal Commission

on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences was Vincent Massey. One of the other four members was Hilda Neatby, professor of history at the University of Saskatchewan.

The commission spent four days in Saskatchewan—two in Saskatoon and two in Regina—and although many presentations were either from groups requesting more money for their activities or from private broadcasters seeking an independent regulatory authority, there were revealing comments from others that gave an indication of the public attitude towards radio. Soap operas, for example, came in for heavy criticism in both centres, and even when those presenting briefs were pressed, as Mrs. D.W. Ewing was by Hilda Neatby, they stood their ground, having thought the issue through carefully.

Ewing: On an artistic level they [the soap operas] are distinctly inferior to much dramatic work heard over the CBC....

Neatby: Should the majority not have soap operas if they want them, rather than what is often referred to as "cultural tripe"?

Ewing: We shouldn't pander to the lowest tastes....

Neatby: Should the CBC give people what they need rather than what they want?...

Ewing: You can't put it so baldly.... The process should be a gradual one. It shouldn't be expressed as between those two alternatives.

The University Women's Club of Regina, which Mrs. Ewing represented, preferred to hear dramatized classics written and produced by Canadian talent. It also suggested replacing the daily farm dramas, which it felt misrepresented and sometimes caricatured the western farmer, with talks by agricultural specialists on actual situations in which farmers had successfully solved their problems.

The thinking behind these formal statements was consistent with that which informs many of the opinions expressed in newspapers of the time. In 1954, for example, H.M. Rayner from Ituna wrote to *The Leader-Post* registering his concern that people in British Columbia and Newfoundland who listened to W.O. Mitchell's "Jake and the Kid" on CBC might think that Jake was representative of hired men in Saskatchewan. He reminded listeners that Jake was nothing more than an amusing fictional character, "as fictional as Sinbad the sailor or Sarah Binks."

The strongest denunciation of contemporary radio, however, came during the Fowler Commission hearings set up in 1956 to study television and make policy recommendations. Acknowledging radio as a significant cultural force in the country—a vehicle for the expression of Canadian identity and, by extension, a buffer against American cultural encroachment—many presenters were extremely unhappy with programming on private stations. One group said these stations "offer mainly giveaway programs, disc jockey shows, sportscasts, imported canned comedies and variety shows, innumerable crime stories and unbearable quantities of advertising." Radio-Gravelbourg Inc. added, "Today radio too often is used to serve unnecessary causes, second-rate music, senseless songs that often border on indecency and absurd soap operas. Programs on education, literature, folklore and the like are the best antidote against the Americanizing current which relentlessly overwhelms us."

For reasons we'll see in the next chapter, private broadcasters were changing the focus of their programming and relying more and more on music from records. Since there was virtually no recording industry in the country, the music they broadcast was therefore almost exclusively by foreign performers. At the same time they were also slowly disaffiliating themselves from the CBC, which meant they carried very little work by Canadian writers, composers or performers. Lyman Potts, formerly of CHWC and CKCK and later with Standard Broadcasting in Toronto, would in the sixties create the Canadian Talent Library—a collection of broadcast recordings financed by stations throughout the country—which would restore a modest amount of Canadian music on the air. But in the meantime, many of radio's accomplishments from the previous decade were being seriously undermined.

—

The issue here, as before, was Canadian cultural identity. That identity had never been defined, although through much of radio's history it was assumed that it had to do with our national image of ourselves and that everyone subscribed to it. But when some groups, particularly the French, began to use radio to assert and preserve their distinctiveness from the rest of Canadian society, then the term had to be enlarged to include the specific interests of some of those who comprised this large, heterogeneous whole.

The French in Saskatchewan, who had been organized since the early part of the century, felt they were in particular danger of losing their uniqueness through assimilation, since they comprised only six per cent of the province's population. And assimilation for them meant disaster because, as historian André Lalonde points out, their language and culture were inextricably bound up with their faith.

> Francophones see the family as the basic unit of society. All children are a gift from God. With that gift comes a responsibility of assisting that child to earn his salvation. Now, in the mind of the francophones, they're God's chosen people. The best Catholic is a French Canadian Catholic. Thus it becomes crucial that you maintain your language and your culture because you're the ideal, you're the best type of Catholic. The state is there to serve the basic unit of society, the family, which means the francophones see it as a basic right for them to have from government, French Catholic education. And if they can't get it then the government is not responding to their needs and therefore depriving them of their basic rights.
>
> But lo and behold, you now have radio—English radio—penetrating right within the family and undermining, if you wish, the role of the family. And thus it's crucial therefore that the elite intervene immediately, the church and the prominent laymen, to secure French language services through radio. Otherwise, all their efforts in the field of education will go for nought, because if the family crumbles then anything the state offers in the form of educational services becomes useless. Thus it's to solidify the basic unit of French Canadian society that you secure French languages services through radio.

In the twenties and thirties the clergy managed to get a few French programs on CJBR, CJGX and CKCK. Shortly after CBK came on the air, Father Maurice Baudoux from Prud'homme launched a campaign that resulted in the CBC hiring a French announcer and broadcasting in French four hours each week. The constant frustration of having to beg existing English stations to carry their programs, however, finally convinced the French cultural associations in western Canada to unite and build their own stations. They formed Radio-Ouest-Français, raised half a million dollars from across the country, applied unrelenting pressure on politicians, and slowly saw their plans materialize. St. Boniface received a licence for a station in 1946, Edmonton in 1949, and finally, in 1952, two centres in Saskatchewan—CFRG, Gravelbourg, to serve the southern part of the province, and CHBD (later changed to

CFNS), Saskatoon, to serve the north. The original plan had been to locate a station in Prince Albert, but the organizers quickly realized that although Prince Albert might be in the heart of fransaskois country it probably couldn't generate as much commercial revenue as Saskatoon, so they changed sites. None of the province's private broadcasters opposed these licences. "They regarded us benignly," says Raymond Marcotte, former manager in Saskatoon, "because someone like us who wasn't a competitor was better than having another English station who could be dangerous."

Because it was situated next to Gravelbourg's College Mathieu, which was run by priests, CFRG came under greater church influence than CHBD/CFNS. At the same time, however, CFRG also had greater access to student talent for musicals or variety shows. Both stations were supervised by committees set up to ensure they met the cultural needs of francophones in a tasteful and virtuous fashion.

For the first couple of years both stations were on the air eight to ten hours per day. They transcribed English news into French for three regional news programs, reported on francophone activities throughout Saskatchewan, broadcast mass and played carefully selected music. They attracted a few sponsors but not enough to make them financially viable operations, and they relied on contributions from generous donors to keep going. When CFRG and CFNS affiliated with Radio Canada in 1954, they acquired not only quality programs on a regular basis but also received a valuable fee for carrying these programs. This fee turned out to be their principal source of income over the following nineteen years. When Radio Canada offered to purchase the two stations in 1973, they heartily agreed, glad to divest themselves of these tenuous operations in the knowledge that they had achieved their goal of getting full French language services in Saskatchewan. Radio Canada amalgamated the two stations into one and placed it in Regina. The money from this sale was put into a fund with the interest used to sponsor educational and cultural projects for French students.

How much did French radio help to preserve French culture? It's impossible to tell, because so many different factors determine the degree to which a group loses or retains its language, and it would be misleading to attribute the changes in French proficiency to radio alone. But it did provide francophones with an identity. Since it was one institution which

they themselves controlled, they were able to use it exclusively to suit their particular purposes.

—

While French radio was struggling to get a foothold in the province, English entrepreneurs and would-be owners were manoeuvring and negotiating their way into positions that would allow them to get into the broadcast business. By the late thirties, the Siftons, who owned newspapers in Saskatoon and Regina, had assumed control of CKCK and CJRM, two of the province's most influential stations. Disturbed by the concentration of so much media power in the hands of a company that was clearly inimical to the policies of a CCF government, T.C. Douglas desperately wanted a government-run station. When CHAB came up for sale he applied to the federal minister responsible for communications, C.D. Howe, to be allowed to buy it. But Howe said no, maintaining that broadcasting was the sole responsibility of the federal government. With the impending appearance of television and the uncertain direction in which it might take broadcasting, Ottawa wished to retain control of radio.

Howe not only refused Saskatchewan's application (as well as requests by the Quebec and Newfoundland governments to buy stations) but used the occasion to force those provincial governments which owned stations to dispose of them. As a result, the CBC was able to buy CKY, Winnipeg, which had been run by Manitoba Government Telephones since 1923, and make it its prairie regional centre. All production personnel were moved from Watrous to Winnipeg in 1948, and from then until 1954, when the CBC opened studios in Regina, items originating in Saskatchewan for regional or national programs were fed through affiliated private stations.

While these changes were taking place, the first new station to appear in the province in over twenty years, CJNB, opened in North Battleford. Cameron McIntosh, publisher of the *North Battleford News* and Liberal Member of Parliament from 1925-1940, had held the rights to a licence for a station in North Battleford since the late thirties. He probably would have been content to let his option languish indefinitely had Lloyd E. Moffat not applied for a licence in the city at the same time that Moffat's brother, Harry, was opening a Dodge dealership with provision on the top storey for a radio studio. C.D. Howe, who owed McIntosh a few favours, advised the newspaperman that

if he didn't do something about his option, Howe would have to give a licence to the Moffats. McIntosh's decision to open CJNB in January 1947 caused considerable rancour for a while, but the Moffats were soon mollified when the federal government allowed them, and not the CCF, to buy CHAB.

Although many people in the area expressed an interest in CJNB, few were willing to help put up the necessary money to start it. Of the $60,000 collected to begin operations, over two-thirds came from Saskatoon investors. Located in downtown North Battleford, it was ideally situated for people to drop in and send out greetings over the highly popular program "These Are Our Neighbours," conceived in the mould of the "Mail Bag" shows.

E.A. Rawlinson bought the station in 1963 and today it's one of seven stations belonging to Rawlco Communications, a consortium run by Rawlinson's sons, Doug and Gordon. A repeater station, CJNS, was opened in Meadow Lake in 1977, where a staff of five originates six hours of programming each day.

Like McIntosh, the crafty A.A. Murphy had over the years managed to keep the Siftons out of his territory, but there were signs in the late forties that CFQC wouldn't be able to retain its monopoly position indefinitely. Two English groups and one French group applied to the CBC board of governors for a licence in the city in 1949 and were turned down because the CBC believed Saskatoon could not support another outlet. The following year the groups were back again. CFQC naturally opposed these applications at public hearings, claiming that if Saskatoon was big enough for another station then perhaps CFQC could activate a licence it held for CJHC, an idea for a station that had been dormant for several years. The CBC reminded CFQC that there were regulations preventing one company from owning two stations in the same city, and instead it granted a licence to R.A. Hosie, who owned the Empire Hotel.

CKOM opened in 1951. Broadcasting at 250 watts, it had a seventeen-mile range at night and fifty-three mile range during the day. According to Gordon Walburn, CKOM's program director at the time, "CFQC considered us somewhat of an upstart. One of their announcers referred to us as the light bulb station." Its early programming was a carryover from the forties, with numerous religious programs, lots of live music and the highly popular quiz shows.

Since then it has also come into Rawlco's hands.

—

Unlike their predecessors, this second generation of radio owners had direct radio experience. Frustrated or bored with their jobs, seeking new challenges, thinking they could make money by providing a sound not currently available, they set up stations on the basis of what might be considered inadequate research. Yet all succeeded in one form or another, with the majority establishing profitable businesses. A few grew rich.

All of these stations are still in operation, although those in rural areas had the greatest difficulty in getting established. Small town merchants weren't accustomed to advertising on radio, and the people they heard on the air didn't always inspire confidence. When CKSW, Swift Current, for example, signed on in 1956, its staff had a combined experience of three months. In a sense, they were perfectly suited to provide the "family, backyard type of broadcasting" that part-owner Wilfred Gilby tried to institute.

> We covered the first Frontier Days in July, 1956. As a studio we used the back seat of a Buick convertible which was being given away to a lucky ticket holder. Someone had put the top down, nobody knew how to get it back up, we got a regular cloud burst and got rained right out of the back seat.
>
> Later years we used to go out there with a trailer. We'd make what you'd call a contra deal. We'd give one of the dealers a deal on advertising; he'd give us a trailer. We'd go in and set that up as a temporary studio. It got so big we even put teletypes out there because we found people were interested in watching the news come in. And we put a stage outside. We'd have our own acts out there and that was fine until we began drawing bigger crowds than some of the side shows. That didn't sit too well with the manager of Frontier Days who asked us to close down. We had as many as 800 people around, listening to our music.

In Swift Current the music was country and western. But to the east, in Weyburn, it was rock 'n' roll. It may seem unlikely that the first Saskatchewan station to tune in to the world of Elvis Presley and his rockin' peers should be located in a city of less than ten thousand, but CFSL, Weyburn claims that distinction. It started in 1957 to serve an area in the southeastern part of the province that CKCK couldn't reach. Two years later, the

local businessmen who owned it opened CJSL, a repeater station in Estevan.

In Regina, meanwhile, the city's third station, CJME, promised to offer an alternative to top forty radio. Set up in 1959, it called itself "the station that put melody back into music" and it shunned the popular sounds of the day because "rock and roll is on its way out." It even offered to help people listen to classical music. CJME was created by J. Marsh Ellis, a member of the Silvertone Seven who used to broadcast regularly from Regina's Trianon Ballroom in the twenties and thirties. It also belongs to Rawlco now and, ironically, plays many of the songs it wouldn't hear of when they were first popular.

CJME and the other urban stations today operate within defined musical formats. Because there are so many different kinds of music available, and knowing that it's impossible to cater to everyone's interests, they have singled out, "targeted," the age group they wish to attract and then play the songs they think that group wants to hear all day long. People in rural areas, however, appear to have more consistent musical preferences and their stations have adopted a uniformly country and western sound. Programming there is also different from that on urban stations. "The radio we do today," says CJNB manager Harry Dekker, "is more reminiscent of what we did in the early days as opposed to strictly format radio in the city." Agriculture is a high priority; there are numerous syndicated American shows—religious as well as musical; and there is the mandatory phone-in show providing a venue for listeners to buy and sell merchandise. The latter is probably the most popular of all, and telephone lines are constantly jammed by people anxious to barter. Jim Laing, manager of CFSL, says the only people in the country not watching Paul Henderson weave his way towards Tretiak in the 1973 Canada-Russia hockey series were those lining up goats, cars and slightly-used wedding dresses for sale on "Swap Shop."

—

More new stations opened in Saskatchewan in the fifties than in any period since the twenties, and they added their voice to those who for years had been clamouring for a separate regulatory agency. The Massey Commission, which admonished private stations for not making a greater effort to put local talent on the air and for unimaginative, "regrettable"

programs, rejected their request. It said that broadcasting in the country was a public trust rather than an industry as it was in the States. The Fowler Commission upheld this view, saying that such a body would be cumbersome, confusing, inefficient and unworkable. It recommended that both radio and television, public and private, be retained as part of a single system, "of which the private broadcasters are a complementary but necessary part and over which the Corporation, through the Board of Governors, has full jurisdiction and control."

But in 1957, the year the Fowler Commission made its report, the Conservatives defeated the Liberals in a federal election. And the following year, after being re-elected with a massive majority, John Diefenbaker created a new broadcasting act and gave private broadcasters the independent regulatory agency they had been seeking. Both the CBC and commercial stations were now accountable to a separate body, the Board of Broadcast Governors, which in 1967 became the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

Ironically, it would be the CRTC which would force private stations to carry a quota of what was classified as Canadian music in order to ensure a Canadian presence on air. Although commercial broadcasters denounced this regulation, using as their reason the same argument that had been made in the twenties against the creation of a public broadcasting network —that the work of Canadians is by nature inferior—the resulting flourishing of Canadian popular music and its international recognition showed the major effect radio could have when it committed itself—willingly or by coercion—to a cause.

It was through these changes in the structure and configuration of radio in the fifties that the industry as we know it today started to take shape.

8

Thriving in a New Climate

THERE WERE WIDESPREAD PREDICTIONS THAT ONCE television appeared, radio would die. After all, the thinking went, who would possibly want to listen to just sounds when you could also see the images making those sounds? But radio, which over thirty years had developed to the point where it could peacefully and profitably coexist with the newspapers it had once battled, was not to be usurped by its electronic offspring. It was now part of the media establishment, and it had the self-assurance and financial stability it needed to maintain its position.

Not only did radio survive in this province but it actually grew, adding several new AM as well as FM stations. And with changes to advertising regulations designed specifically to enable radio to compete with television, there was now a greater potential profit for both existing and prospective owners. Before 1954 stations could only advertise two minutes per hour and not at all between 7:30 and 11:00 P.M. or on Sundays. After television arrived, the regulations were gradually relaxed so that, by 1959, radio could broadcast four minutes of commercials each fifteen minutes. (All restrictions governing advertising on AM radio were removed in 1986. Stations can now broadcast as many commercials as they wish.) Advertisers didn't flock to television as readily as some expected, for even if they could afford its substantially higher rates, they knew they would get better returns by investing in a medium that was located in their area. Even in those cases where radio

did lose business to television, the consequences were negligible because, with two exceptions, all television stations in the province grew out of radio operations: any temporary decrease in radio revenue was balanced within the same company by an increase in television revenue.

As important as all of these business considerations, however, was the fact that radio gave listeners something that television, despite its exciting images, was unable to supply—a local identity. By taking an active part in community affairs and initiating events to raise money for or heighten awareness of community concerns, radio had built a dedicated constituency—a constituency that was routinely made part of the programming. In contrast, television was still a distant presence. It soon became obvious also that the appearance of a new medium didn't automatically mean an existing one had to disappear—there was, in fact, room for both. Just as reading the newspaper and listening to the radio were not mutually exclusive activities, so too people continued to tune in to the radio even after they had purchased a television set.

It was clear, though, that radio and television would have to do different things. With television taking over the dramas, variety shows and sporting events which had been staples on the radio schedule, radio had to find a new role for itself. It had to adapt; otherwise it would indeed die, if not immediately, then slowly through atrophy. This was a critical time in radio's history, and the measures it took in response to its altered environment became the basis of its present character and sound.

—

Technology brought television into radio's midst, precipitating the need for change, but at the same time it also provided radio with the tools it needed to break free of its old ways. There were three technical developments in the late forties and early fifties—the transistor, the tape recorder and the 45 rpm record—and they in concert with the discovery of a new use for an existing technology—the telephone—helped radio find that new role.

First, the transistor made radio portable. You could now take your programs with you wherever you went and listen to them under almost any circumstance. Unlike television, which was fixed in one spot and which didn't allow you to do other things at the same time, radio could be with you at home, at

work, in the car or in the middle of a field working summer fallow. It became an integral part of daily activity.

The close association that developed between radio and everyday events was reinforced by at least an intuitive recognition of how similar some aspects of this medium were to our lives. Like life, radio was a process that couldn't be halted or reversed; you experienced things once and then they were gone forever. Even if you had access to a program record or tape, which most listeners didn't, the experience couldn't be repeated; it could only be retrieved through memory. Like life, radio was a process that renewed itself each day, that you joined in midstream when you tuned in, and that went on continuously without you after you tuned out. It was always there even if you weren't conscious of it. And as radio moved towards a twenty-four-hour schedule, it devised a pattern that was designed to serve and reflect what we did at certain times of the day: frequent time and temperature checks in the morning while getting ready for work, hog prices at noon when in from the field, news of the day at supper, with music and entertainment to fill the intervening hours. Through its rhythms and its messages radio worked itself into people's consciousness and made itself an indispensable part of their lives.

Second, the tape recorder enabled radio to sound smoother and more polished. Most of what had been broadcast up to the fifties was live. Even programs played from transcription records were in essence live because they had been recorded on a wax disc in one session; if, during this session an actor or musician made a mistake, it usually remained as a noticeable flaw unless it were so bad that the entire recording had to be done again. But with the tape machine, all blunders, however small, could be eliminated. A show could be recorded many times with the best sections from each recording edited together to present as perfect a final product as was possible. With tape there was also the opportunity of layering various sounds on top of one another, creating a richer, more complex whole than had been possible before. Radio, therefore, no longer had to rely on sounds as they appeared or were presented; by mixing, selecting and shaping it could create its own entities.

Some of you who recall the exhilaration of doing live programs in the thirties and forties, who recollect the unique rush you get from knowing you have one chance and one

chance only to get it right, believe that radio, since the advent of the tape recorder, has greatly deteriorated. Endlessly polishing a program may make the final product sound good they say, but it doesn't compensate for the inevitable loss in spontaneity which is essential to this ephemeral medium. Radio may be slick, but for them there's nothing visceral about it any more. It's just a collection of pretty sounds. There are, of course, many factors that have contributed to the sound that radio has today, the most notable being the marketplace which pressures broadcasters to perform in a certain way. And although programmers have used the marvelous technology available for mercantile purposes, it's worth reminding detractors that the machinery in itself is not to blame and that it also enables broadcasters to create complex and imaginative programs never before possible—programs that have not yet accumulated the rosy aura that clings to things done in one's past.

Third, just as radio was exploring the possibilities offered by the newly developed tape recorder, it was at the same time rediscovering an old instrument—the telephone—which more than compensated for any spontaneity lost through a careful attention to perfection. People had always had access to those who appeared on the air, either by writing to them or by dropping into the studio, and programs like the farm forums, the school broadcasts and the "Mail Bag" shows depended on audience participation. But the telephone gave listeners a more tangible connection. By being able to talk directly with the host and to speak with other callers, each member of the radio audience became part of a special radio community—a community that could be as large as a province, a country or even a continent. Radio was moving beyond what Rudolph Arnheim in 1936 described as "one person speaking without hearing and the rest listening without being able to speak," a concept on which the medium had been based. Being able to hear a distant listener's voice confirmed that person's existence much more powerfully than having his or her letter read by an announcer. An observation by communication critic Walter Ong on the nature of the human voice, I think, is relevant here.

> Because in its physical constitution as sound, the spoken word proceeds from the human interior and manifests human beings to one another as conscious interiors, as persons, the spoken word forms human beings into close-knit groups. When a speaker is addressing an audience, the members of the

> audience normally become a unity, with themselves and with the speaker.

With the telephone, radio created the major programming innovation of the early fifties—the open line show—which reportedly premiered in Canada at CKOM ("The Hart Line"). It was followed in succeeding years by similar programs ("Best by Request," "Trader Time," "Swap Shop") which were also based on the concept that listeners who phoned in were not only part of the show; they were the show. Without them nothing happened. The void caused by formal drama moving from radio to television was being partially filled by programs which had all of the elements of drama but which didn't go by that name. Here the audience got to hear actual stories, unwritten and unrehearsed, often as interesting as anything fabricated. Every comment, every musical request, every item put up for sale told something about the person at the other end of the line and fed that insatiable curiosity all of us have about other people's lives. The stories were candid, revealing, even poignant, and one that CKRM's Lorne Harasen recounts is not atypical.

> One of the most riveting experiences I ever had was, I had a funeral director in talking about their profession, ethics, and the need to plan ahead. And I had mentioned something about how we try to deny death in our society. I received a phone call from a man in Saskatoon who told me he was dying, and then for the next fifteen minutes he spoke, without me interrupting about how he had accepted his impending death, how he had sat down with his wife and children, he was a young man, and discussed it. And the fact that they'd had a cry about it and they prepared for this thing. And it was the most moving thing in the world.

A sensitive and open host is able to inspire sufficient trust in listeners to get them to call in with their personal stories, but he or she is invariably aided in creating an intimate atmosphere by the social and psychological associations related to the telephone's use. The telephone is a private device connecting us for the most part with one person and excluding everyone else. It brings that person's essence—his or her voice—into our inner ears and our minds. And when we talk on the phone, we usually do so from our own homes, where we conduct our personal lives. In the sense that the telephone transmits disembodied voices into our personal sphere, it's not unlike radio

itself, and this similarity, I think, accounts for the successful way in which it's been incorporated into broadcasting.

The phone-in programs provided a means for listeners to tell of themselves and to establish a public rapport with others. Ordinary people were given an opportunity to have their views and preferences circulated and to momentarily share the public stage with a community celebrity. Television could offer nothing like that to its passive audience.

The fourth development to benefit radio was the 45 rpm record. Record companies had started replacing the old 78s with the cheaper, lighter and more durable 45 rpm platters in the early fifties so they could get more records into a jukebox. And it was from observing how people listened to jukebox music that two radio men came up with the idea of the hit parade. Todd Storz and Bill Stewart of KWOH, Omaha were sitting in a bar one night in 1955 when they noticed that patrons often played the same songs over and over. Then, when the place began to clear near closing time, the waitresses would replay many of those same songs. Realizing that listeners have a voracious appetite for repetition, Storz and Stewart began repeating the biggest hits over their station several times during the day. From that came the top forty, and radio was on its way to becoming essentially a medium for music. Record companies, which until then had been releasing only a few new songs each month, increased their output to meet the growing demand from radio stations. With more music to chose from, stations didn't have to play the same songs as everyone else; they could now specialize. The present divisions that exist between musical genres came about primarily because stations needed to find a way of distinguishing themselves from their competitors. And so while radio came to depend on the music released by record companies, at the same time it also greatly influenced the kind produced. Today, private stations are classified and issued licences partly on the basis of their musical format.

—

The typical program schedule in the fifties consisted of fifteen- and thirty-minute blocks featuring everything from religious sermons, to organ and vocal recitals, to quiz shows in which listeners who sent in box tops and labels could win a prize. "Radio stations in the fifties were department stores," says CKCK's Doug Alexander. "That's what we called them because

you got pretty much everything." But as radio turned more and more to recorded music, these rigidly defined programs slowly disappeared. The broadcast day became more fluid and continuous. Instead of clear boundaries between shows, there were now subtle shades.

That, at least, was the case on private stations. The CBC was another matter. The corporation's mandate to provide information and entertainment that reflected the different regions of the country to each other and that fostered national unity prevented it from simply becoming a medium for popular music. It had to do more. Prohibited from capitalizing on current trends and unable to come up with meaningful alternatives, it floundered. By the early sixties, all the programs that had previously played such an important role—the dramas, the noon-hour serials—were gone. The Dominion Network, created to carry American shows, was cancelled in 1962 because evening audiences were watching American entertainment on television and because private stations were no longer interested in carrying such material—they were doing very well on their own without CBC programming. Against the current trend, the CBC maintained a schedule of block programs that catered first to one minority group and then to another, with no overriding philosophy linking them together. Shows were often of poor quality and audiences dropped. The government began wondering whether the CBC network should exist at all.

This growing crisis prompted the corporation to commission an internal report to advise it on what should be done, and in 1970 the Meggs/Ward Report was released. Included was the recommendation that CBC create "information radio," programs that give listeners the information they need to make important decisions about their lives. Nationally, this meant the creation of shows like "This Country in the Morning," "As It Happens" and "Sunday Morning"; locally, it meant morning shows dominated by interviews and features, and in Saskatchewan, an afternoon show called "Counterpoint," produced by Murray Dobbin.

> "Counterpoint" was explicitly a program that would delve into political issues. And the philosophy behind it was it wouldn't reflect the status quo. When we interviewed people who had power over other people's lives, we would make them justify their actions. When it came to minority groups, organizations that were far weaker and didn't have that kind of power and

impact; we took a somewhat different tack. They were often not as articulate or experienced with the media as the politicians were so we treated them somewhat differently. We would ensure that they represented who they said they did. We didn't give them an open platform but we gave them a voice; a voice to people who didn't normally have it. We also covered issues that we felt were ignored by other people. That's why we did a lot of stuff on northern Saskatchewan.

One anecdote which reflects the political maturity and imagination of the audience: every once in a while a guest wouldn't show up, which sent terror into the heart of the host, especially, and me. This one day a guest didn't show up so I said, "What we'll do is just talk about democracy." And you should have seen the blood drain from their faces [Larry Marshall, host; John Conway, co-host]. They said, "Murray, no one is going to phone in!" We got 25 calls. Marshall and Conway didn't talk for seven minutes. And people spoke about the philosophy of democracy in Saskatchewan, the history of it, and so on. That was what made the program exciting—good hosts and an audience that had remarkable potential in bringing up and commenting on issues.

It was this kind of brashness, combined with the clearly left-wing ideology which a number of CBC's programmers unabashedly espoused, that prompted some to label the CBC as a haven for "reds" and "commies." Such accusations, customarily the refuge of those intolerant of anything that questions or contradicts what they themselves believe, are common today, even though the CBC isn't nearly as aggressive as it was in the seventies and even though at the same time others periodically accuse the corporation of bending too easily to the wishes of Conservative politicians.

In 1975-76, another internal CBC study, the Arts Report, recommended that music and drama, which had been languishing in an environment preoccupied with political and public affairs, be expanded and that there be regular news about the arts across the country. The creation of the FM network in 1976 to carry this cultural programming coincided with an explosion of artistic activity in Saskatchewan. New theatres, new magazines, new publishing houses and new musical groups suddenly appeared. The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) began pressuring CBC to hire a local arts producer to ensure that Saskatchewan writers, now being recognized nationally for their work, were adequately represented on the national network. ACTRA dogged every step that CBC president Al Johnson, a

Saskatchewan boy, took in the province until finally a new position was created in 1977. In 1983, shortly before his term expired, Johnson also made Saskatchewan a separate region and gave it a new building.

—

When the CBC opened FM transmitters in Regina and Saskatoon in the fall of 1976, there were already three FM stations in the province. The first, CFMC-FM, Saskatoon, had opened in 1964. Although AM stations, before they could get started, often had difficulty raising capital and convincing the licensing authorities that another station was required, stereo had additional problems. It had a limited range. In a province where a small population was dispersed over a large area, its potential audience was therefore necessarily low and concentrated in the two larger cities.

Setting up a private stereo station in the sixties was not unlike setting up a private AM station thirty and forty years earlier. Reg Parker, now a Saskatoon lawyer, describes how he and his partners went about establishing CFMQ-FM in Regina in 1966.

> It was quite a gamble because FM radio in the first place was considered the tail end of the dog of broadcasting. Neither one of the two independent stations I knew of was making money. They had been working on deficits from their inception. But, as young people, we thought we knew all there was to know about broadcasting. We thought we knew the public mind and if we could get our hands on a station we could put something together that the public would just love. And it would be successful.
>
> The market studies we did wouldn't today be considered scientific. But in their own way they were quite accurate. We went out and listened to all the stations and their formats. We did telephone surveys to see if people were happy with what was available to them in Regina, what their preferences were, whether or not they would listen to an FM station. We also surveyed prospective purchasers of time. It wasn't as scientific as today where you'd hire a polling company or market research company to do that for you. We did it ourselves and it was acceptable at the time.
>
> It was an excellent station and we were right in our guess. The kind of programming we put on, people liked. You must remember, only eighteen to twenty per cent of the people had FM sets at that time. Cars didn't have FM radios in those days to any extent. So you are going out to convince sponsors that they

should advertise. You couldn't sell numbers. You had to sell the type of programming. That's what we based our whole thrust on. We wouldn't get the biggest market but we'd get audiences that were mature and wanted something different. On the basis of that we sold sponsors.

Our studio was in the Northgate Mall which was fairly new. We had the bright idea that if we went into the mall and had a window from the mall into the studios people could walk by and see the guy on the air and wave to him. They could see what he was doing with all those buttons and dials. It was excellent public relations.

I left CFMQ in 1969, and gradually it got bought out by the others. We didn't really have the initial capital necessary to keep it going. None of us made any money. I don't think any of us lost a great deal but we all gained immensely from it. It was a marvelous experience.

Saskatchewan's third FM station was located at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. The university's radio directorate had been operating a closed circuit system (similar to what is currently in operation at the University of Regina) since 1944, and in 1965 it decided to support a full broadcasting station. A policy board made up of students, faculty and administration ran the station. The university provided 75 per cent of its operating budget, the student's union, 25 per cent. Disc shows, concerts and discussions were put together by volunteer staff made up mostly of students with a few faculty.

In 1979 it came under the control of the Department of Audio Visual Services so as to link the station's policy more directly with the community relations policy of the university. After that, "student input was negligible," says Jeff Lee, who was associated with CJUS-FM at the time. "That was part of its downfall." A university report delivered in 1982 recommended an expanded role for the station and strongly suggested that it, in conjunction with the Extension Division, offer credit classes by radio. But three years later, without notice or consultation, the university's board of governors decided not to apply for a renewal of the station's licence. The university was under financial pressure and presumably couldn't justify spending money on an operation that did little for the university's image and that had only a small following.

CHSK-FM, as it was now known, went off the air in September 1985. The student's union briefly considered reviving it and running it on their own without university funding, but calculations showed this wasn't possible. Some of those who

had been with the station subsequently formed CRSS—the Community Radio Society of Saskatoon—which broadcasts alternative music, public affairs, and multicultural community programs to cable TV and radio subscribers. Many of its members are former CJUS/CHSK-FM volunteers.

Don Kerr, who chaired the 1982 committee reviewing the station, says:

> I think the most important thing about CJUS-FM, theoretically, was that it was a third model of broadcasting. You've got all kinds of privately owned stations which now broadcast things that I almost never want to hear. And then, of course, you've got a national public network. Well, here was a locally controlled but public broadcasting system. And that third model seems to me as important as either of the other two. Therefore its loss as a model is a great loss.
>
> The great virtue of the thing had always just been music because it would get kids on who had terrific knowledge about a certain kind of music that you couldn't get anywhere else on the air. A lot of its performers had a kind of rough-edged amateur feel to them because they were second-year university students suddenly reading the news and not knowing how to pronounce the big words or reading the liner notes and not knowing how to speak properly. So it always felt like an amateur station, which didn't bother me at all. When you hear so much of the professional tones either on CBC or the awful professional tones on some of the commercial stations, I prefer the sense of someone just talking to you even if they don't know how to do it properly.

Since 1965, five more commercial FM stations have opened in the southern half of the province. Three are affiliated with AM stations: CKIT-FM, Regina (CKCK); CFMM-FM, Prince Albert (CKBI); and CIZL-FM, Regina (CJME). Two are independent: CIMG-FM, Swift Current, and CHSN-FM, Saskatoon. Its unlikely we'll see any more for some time since there aren't enough people in any one centre to make another one feasible.

—

While stereo was establishing itself in urban centres, AM stations continued to grow in rural areas. The biggest problem facing CJVR, Melfort, when it opened in 1966, was breaking the stranglehold CKBI had held in the region for years. Vice-president Marv Chase said they did it through aggressive selling.

> During those years I'd be at a Kinsmen meeting in Hudson Bay tonight, a Chamber of Commerce meeting in Nipawin tomorrow, a remote in Humboldt the next day, shaking hands at a reception in Prince Albert the following night, another remote Saturday night, and then signing on the station Sunday morning.

Begun as an "easy listening" or "good listening" station, CJVR was one of seven companies to switch to a country music format during a ninety-day period in 1980. This happened shortly after the movie *Urban Cowboy*, which incorporated the mythology of the old west into an urban setting, drew public attention to the fact that country music had changed. Twanging guitars and nasal dronings had given way to orchestral arrangements which made the Nashville sound more palatable to a larger audience. Singers like Anne Murray and Kenny Rogers moved freely between the pop and country charts and gently shifted country music in from the outer edges of respectability. Although it still appealed primarily to working class people, it didn't offend doctors or lawyers. It had become respectable.

In 1966, a station on the other side of the province was also in the works. Stan Solberg, partner and sales manager of a Drumheller station, discovered there was an area in central Saskatchewan which Alberta stations didn't reach and which Saskatoon stations didn't seem to care about. So he assembled twenty investors and formed CKKR, Rosetown. With a population of 2800, Rosetown was the smallest city in the province to operate a radio station. Solberg would have preferred to be situated in Kindersley, he says, because it was further removed from CFQC's sphere of influence. But from Kindersley at least half of the station's signal would have been wasted in the sparsely populated area to the west. It didn't really matter, though, where one set up in west central Saskatchewan at that time, since agriculture was in a depressed state. Hotels and implement dealers were boarding up their buildings and there was no extra money available to advertise goods which people couldn't buy. Because the staff at CKKR was willing to forgo wages for a time, and because Saskatoon's radio advertising rates were comparatively high, CKKR weathered the storm. By the mid-seventies the farm economy recovered, as did the station. Ten years later it was able to open a repeater station, CFYM, at Kindersley.

CKKR was the first in Saskatchewan to adopt a country and western music format. But it switched when it found it couldn't compete with the larger stations which followed suit. According to its surveys, 75 per cent of the people in the area were over 35 years old and, in 1984, the same year it changed its call letters to CJYM, it changed its musical format to "MOR" (middle of the road); this was the music of Barbra Streisand, Ray Coniff and Engelbert Humperdinck. It now plays "All Hit Gold."

The main reason CKKR/CJYM switched from country to MOR is because CJWW, Saskatoon, broadcasting on a frequency of 750 kHz and therefore clearly audible in the Rosetown area, had switched from MOR to country. Roy Currie formed CJWW in 1976 because "I was tired of doing the same old safe job as manager of CFQC." He started with an easy listening format but learned that what sounded good to his ears didn't sell advertising. After one year, he changed to country music.

CJWW got its choice 750 kHz frequency because it applied for it at the same time that CJME, Regina, was going for a vacant 760 kHz frequency. The CRTC couldn't grant both requests because there wasn't enough frequency separation between CJWW and CJME to ensure they wouldn't interfere with each other. It had previously granted CJME's owner, Rawlco, the 650 kHz frequency for CKOM, and so decided to accept CJWW's application and reject CJME's.

Like CKRM, Regina, the province's other large country music station, CJWW claims that people who listen to country music are different from other listeners. They are more loyal and more honest, says CJWW's manager, Vic Dubois. "Once turned on, they are totally dedicated. But you better perform or they'll let you know."

There have been no new AM stations since 1976, and there likely won't be any more for some time. The commercial market can probably only support what currently exists and future activity will probably consist of sales and consolidations.

9

Misdeeds

RADIO HAS CHANGED CONSIDERABLY OVER THE YEARS, AS has our attitude towards it. We don't regard it with the same reverence we used to, because it plays a less central role in our lives today than previously, and because we know more about how it works. We no longer believe it can influence the weather or climate, that it can create otherwise inexplicable pregnancies, that announcers can look at us "down the airwaves," that the person talking to us is really inside that little box. We also no longer believe that it'll ruin the recording industry, drive newspapers into bankruptcy, debase the language. These were all opinions and concerns we've had at one time or another and which we can, with hindsight, recollect with amusement. Today we're fairly certain that even with the proliferation of video cassette recorders, cable television and music videos, it'll continue to do what it always has. The main issue now is how well it can come to terms with and redress some of its unsavoury attitudes and actions in the past and be a stimulating and challenging force in the future.

It would be nice to think that radio's notable achievements have come about through a spirit of friendly co-operation and that they've engendered good feelings among everyone involved. Yet, like other men who run their business strictly for profit, Saskatchewan broadcasters have often resorted to regrettable means to achieve their ends. When the number of private stations grew rapidly in the mid-seventies, it was common for some established stations to do anything short of

blackmail to protect their interests. They would lower their advertising rates to the point where it was almost impossible for a new station to compete, and they would threaten reprisals against those businesses considering switching accounts. New stations survived because they had enough capital to outlast these covert sieges, because they managed to convince local merchants to deal with them anyway or because their employees were willing to sacrifice a portion of their salary until things got better.

Even though there's sufficient business around for all current stations to make a decent profit, some owners go to absurd lengths to undermine their opposition. One Saskatoon company reputedly discourages its employees from socializing with employees of other stations in the paranoiac belief that zealously guarded secrets may be inadvertently revealed in a relaxed moment. In Regina, one group is notorious for monitoring its rival's programs and informing the CRTC when the other station isn't living up to the conditions of its licence—that is, by not playing the requisite number of Canadian songs or by playing songs outside its prescribed playlist. Although it isn't a custom in this province to subvert the opposition by hiring away their star announcer, there are other ways in which owners have used announcers to maintain their financial standing. More than once, a former private station employee in the sixties saw the following happen:

> A person in a major market develops quite a following. He is getting good ratings, is talked about, is a headliner, is making lots of money for that station. The competing station who is losing then phones up the manager of another station with mutual ownership and says, look, get this guy off our back, he's killing us. So the announcer will get a job offer from an affiliated station in another market. It'll be a fantastic offer and he'll go for it. And maybe he works out. If he doesn't, they fire him in six months. And the problem is solved.

It wouldn't be fair to leave the impression that all private station owners and managers are scoundrels, exploiting those who work for them. That's not the case. It's just that those unscrupulous operators whose sole purpose is to generate huge profits have been abetted in their enterprise by a system that was, and to some extent still is, highly paternalistic. Not so long ago, if you went in to ask the boss for a raise, chances are he would conspiratorially pull out his account book, open it to

the page that supposedly contained the secret of his station's financial situation and point sadly to a figure on the balance sheet. With a perplexed look he would shake his head and sigh, "I just can't afford to give you a raise right now and still stay in the black." You were then dismissed to worry about his plight as well as yours. If he were magnanimous, however, he might reward you with a Christmas bonus. "The bonus was usually fifty dollars," says one former recipient, "although I had worked my way up to four hundred dollars. But you never knew when it was coming. You just knew it would be sometime. And you sure would never ask. One year it wasn't until two days before Christmas and some families were frantic because they depended on that money to buy Christmas presents and food." Not everyone received that bonus though, adds a colleague. "The little boys in the control room never did. We were told, 'This is special for you. Don't tell anyone.'"

And then there was the loan, the hated loan. Ostensibly, it was a sign of the boss's charity; it was his way of compensating you for a paltry salary. But rather than freeing you from want, it placed you that much more under his complete and utter control. "He would always like to play the role of the great white father," says an announcer of his one-time benefactor.

> He'd sit and chomp on his cigar and say, "If you ever need a loan, come to me. I'm here to look after your welfare." But if you ever took a loan from him you'd be caught, because you couldn't pay it back and therefore you couldn't leave. He'd just keep you on the end of a rein and then tighten it and start to pull you in if you made any motion to move on.

Another announcer relates how, after getting married, he decided to approach his boss for a loan of five hundred dollars so he could buy furniture for his house. After being queried as to the amount and the purpose of the loan, the anxious young man was sent to the owner's bank, where everything would be arranged. Then, after making payments of fifty dollars for ten months, the announcer was informed that the loan had been fully repaid. But wasn't there some mistake? They weren't calculating the interest. "It's okay," said the loan's officer. "It's all been taken care of." No further word about the transaction was ever exchanged between the announcer and the boss. Unlike others, this employee was lucky. He had a benign ruler.

It's a testimony to the power of this paternalistic system that Saskatchewan didn't have a major labour dispute at a radio station until 1975, when the employees at CKBI went on strike. The issue was wages. "I had been at CKBI for nearly ten years," says Larry Christie, "and people putting cans on shelves were getting more than me. We were all working on the promise that if we stayed with the company, then we were taken care of. All we wanted was an increase to cover the increase in the cost of living." Rates at other stations were higher, but whenever anyone agitated for a raise he was informed about the station's salary ceiling and advised to move on. Women received a minimum wage like most everyone else, but even though they had been at the station for fifteen to twenty years, they were not allowed to belong to the pension plan—that was only for men. Disenchantment grew, and when it became obvious that CKBI's owner, E.A. Rawlinson, had no intention of altering his position, the staff decided to form a union. With the help of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, they applied for certification from the Canadian Labour Relations Board. CKBI opposed the application, but its intervention failed and certification was granted. Rather than negotiate with the union, Rawlinson fired everyone who supported it. He knew who those people were because "he told us we could show our allegiance to the station by slipping our union card under his door," says a former employee. "That showed him that at least we weren't interested in a union." The union filed an unfair labour practice charge and the Canadian Labour Relations Board ordered CKBI to reinstate its staff and pay their back wages. While Rawlinson's appeal was being heard by the Supreme Court, he allowed his employees back into the building, but he kept them under close scrutiny. "We were followed wherever we went by someone designated to watch us," says Lorraine Hawksworth. "We weren't allowed to do our old jobs; we just had to sit there. If we wanted to go for coffee or to the bathroom, we had to ask permission." Rawlinson delegated one of his young sons specifically to unnerve the women by staring at them. Unable to endure being intimidated by people they had worked with for many years, a large number of the staff quit.

In the meantime, the union appealed to the federal court asking that Rawlinson be forced to hire people back into their former positions. The judge hearing the case said the reinstatement clause wasn't clear and asked the appeal court for clar-

ification. But the judge and panel that had originally handled the case were no longer at the appeal court. A new panel would have to be set up and the entire process repeated. By this time, most of those who had initiated the strike had left. Only non-union people remained. With no-one prepared to take the matter forth, the issue died. CKBI remained a non-union shop. The strike went on for over three years and reportedly cost Rawlinson half a million dollars, although one source says he received financial support from other private stations who wanted to nip the union bud in Prince Albert. CKBI, of course, didn't mention the strike and nothing much was said about it anywhere until the Prince Albert Labour Council and the Pulp Mill workers supported it. Then local papers were forced to acknowledge it.

It was a nasty event that split up families whose members worked for the station and who were divided in their allegiances. It ruined long-standing relationships. In some cases it was ten years before strikers and anti-strikers would speak to each other when they met on the street. "It was a traumatic experience," says Larry Christie. "Whenever I go back to Prince Albert people still mention it, fifteen years later."

—

Most private stations are financially viable operations. They earn enough to keep shareholders happy and a few earn very tidy profits indeed. But some have had to purchase their success at a very high price. Because the industry is structured in such a way that in order to make money private stations have to devise a musical format that is likely to appeal to the largest number of listeners, and then adhere strictly to that format, private broadcasters are limited in what they can do. No matter how much they dislike their music or the inane chatter that often accompanies it, they have to stick with their formula. It's their key to prosperity. Deviating from it might spell disaster.

In some cases in the past, when announcers, directors or managers reached the point where they could no longer justify what they were doing, they either quit or tried to form a station that reflected their priorities and musical interests. But the marketplace is unkind to anything radically different from what currently exists, and if they wished to stay in the business they had to return to mainstream programming.

More than one manager has confessed to me that he can't

listen to his own station for any length of time, and that if he had his druthers he would do more socially relevant broadcasting. But it simply isn't possible. He must stay with what has been deemed in the station's best interest. It struck me that a few of these men also seemed alienated from the programs they put on the air in a way their predecessors weren't. As staunch and virile defenders of free enterprise, willing to fight unto death any regulations which will inhibit their conduct, they have ironically given up the basic principle of the democratic spirit by which they live—the freedom to choose. They may be making a lot of money, but not all of them see this as a particularly distinctive achievement in itself.

In their pursuit of riches, private broadcasters seldom pay attention to their former arch-foe, the CBC. There are those oldtimers whose face still turns red with indignation and whose veins stick out from their necks when they recall the twisted logic that allowed the CBC to be both their regulator and their competitor. But today things are much calmer. Since the Board of Broadcast Governors, and then the CRTC, relieved the CBC of its regulatory role, private and public broadcasters have had less reason to mistrust and fight each other. They must now justify their policies and actions to an outside body. They no longer glare pugnaciously at each other nor mutter complaints about the other from behind cupped hands because they have other, more pressing things to worry about. Private stations are primarily concerned with private competitors who threaten their revenue, while the CBC seeks ways of carrying out its mandate within a prescribed budget.

Private stations might prefer that CBC have limited local programming since they see this as their prerogative, but they've largely accepted the corporation's presence. They may not like the fact that as taxpayers they help pay for public broadcasting, but as long as the CBC doesn't interfere with what they're doing, things are okay. CBC can keep its snout in the public trough as long as it keeps it out of theirs. In a curious way, private broadcasters actually need the CBC. CBC does programs that fulfill our larger cultural needs and that cater to minority and specialized audiences—programs that could never recoup their costs through advertising, but that we, through our legislators, nevertheless consider essential to our national well-being. If there were no CBC then private stations would have to assume some of this responsibility and how many would be willing to do that? Generally, they're happy

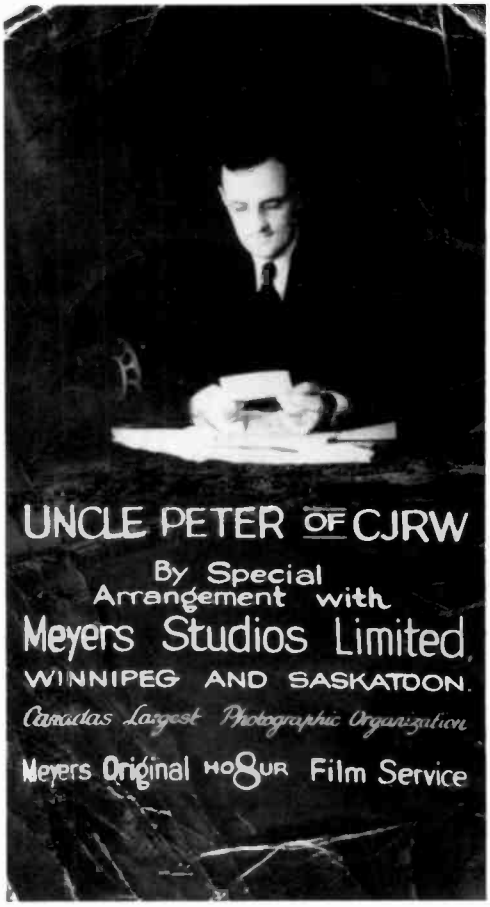
Bert Hooper (above) stands in CKCK's control room, shortly after the Regina station opened in 1922. Among his many listeners in the twenties were the Marriott family of Bateman (below).

Men raise the tower for 10AT, Unity, near Horace Stovin's drugstore in 1923. Stovin (right) would eventually move on to CKCK and from there to the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. In the forties he set up his own radio representative business in eastern Canada.

Martha Bowes became Saskatchewan's first female announcer and worked at CJWC, Saskatoon. One listener wrote to the station to say: "Your studio accoustics [*sic*] or the microphone, whichever is to blame, does not begin to do justice to the voice of your announcer, Miss Bowes. This is clearly demonstrated when broadcasting from the Zenith Café or the Hudson's Bay. Reception from either of the above is superior to that from your studio in that there is a slight rasp or harshness always detectable from the latter place. I do not mean to say that this defect is serious at all as it is not so noticable [*sic*] while music is being broadcast. But since you have asked for constructive criticism that is our opinion. Miss Bowes has a lovely voice and is an exceptional announcer, so is deserving of consideration." Another dedicated listener, when ushered into the studio to meet Miss Bowes for the first time, exclaimed: "Well, well, well—and I always pictured you a rather plump, motherly-looking woman. I imagined you would look like my Aunt Jenny!"

A few weeks after coming second in a province-wide popularity contest in 1928 she moved with her husband to Detroit. She was never heard on air again.

A small building housed CFQC, Saskatcon, in 1923. Art McEwing and "the Haybaylers," "Famous Farmer Fiddlers" broadcast frequently over the station in the twenties.



The only thing left of CJRW, Fleming, today is a fractured foundation, buried in grass. But in the late twenties it carried one of the most popular children's programs in southern Saskatchewan, hosted by D.R.P. "Darby" Coates (left). Besides playing "Uncle Peter" each day, Coates was also manager of CJRM, Moose Jaw, with which CJRW was affiliated.

Early drama.

Moose Jaw's 10AB Players, formed by Helen Tate, drew on published plays for their weekly apperances. "Camera Trails," heard over CKCK, Regina, featured original scripts by the show's sponsor, Dick Bird of Bird Films. From left to right: Kenneth Liddell, Edward Nix, Dick Bird and Peter d'Aoust.

WESTERN BROADCASTING BUREAU

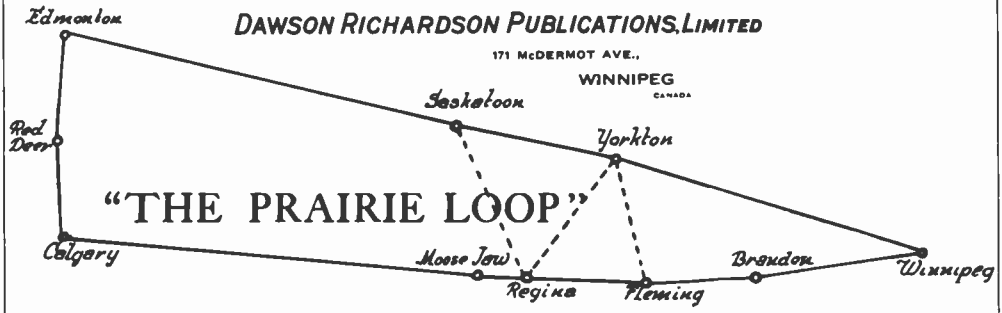
INCORPORATED WITH

DAWSON RICHARDSON PUBLICATIONS, LIMITED

171 McDERMOT AVE.,

WINNIPEG

CANADA



OPEN TIME LISTED AND RATES QUOTED FOR WESTERN CANADA HOOK-UPS OR FOR INDIVIDUAL STATIONS. PROGRAM TALENT ARRANGED FOR.

RADIO STATIONS REPRESENTED:

CKY, WINNIPEG	CJGX, YORKTON	CFQC, SASKATOON	CFAC, CALGARY	CHLC, RED DEER
CKX, BRANDON	CKCK, REGINA	CJRM, MOOSE JAW	CJCJ, CALGARY	CJCA, EDMONTON
CJRW, FLEMING	CHWC, REGINA	CFCN, CALGARY	CJOC, LETHBRIDGE	CNRV, VANCOUVER

Also

CJRX and VE9CL (short wave) WINNIPEG

DAILY (Except Sunday)

7.00 a.m.	Early Risers Club
8.00 "	Sunshine and Good Cheer Programme (Saturdays excepted)
10.00 "	Sacred Programme
10.30 "	National Musical Supply Programme (Saturdays excepted)
12.00 noon	R. H. Williams Luncheon Hour Programme
4.30 p.m.	Capitol Theatre Programme
5.00 "	Radio Floorwalker

SUNDAY

4.00 p.m.	Child & Gower Piano Co. Hour of Fine Music
5.00 "	R. H. Williams Dept. Store Programme of Great Composers
6.00 "	Metropolitan Theatre Organ
7.00 "	Band Concert
8.00 "	C.N.R. Chain
8.30 "	Studio Presentation

MONDAY

5.30 p.m.	CHWC Kiddies Club
6.00 "	Suppertime Melodies
7.00 "	Studio Presentation
7.30 "	Glen Griffith and Assisting Artists
8.00 "	C.N.R. Chain
8.30 "	Len Duke and His Gold Coast Dance Band
9.30 "	Modern Melodies—Grace McMorris and Alma Wagg
10.00 "	The Four Horsemen
10.30 "	Frona Couhoon and Emily Cushing
11.00 "	Bill Bird, Old Time Singer
11.30 "	Midnight Frolic

CHWC NOTES

When the new transmitter of CHWC in Regina goes on the air during the early part of October, it will be one of the most modern stations in West-

By 1931, the schedule on most stations had expanded to cover the entire day (left) and a prairie network had been set up (above). When public broadcasting came into existence in 1932, the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission took over exclusive rights to create networks.

Much of the music in the thirties was performed live and had a country and western flavour. Sixty years later, CJRM's successor, CKRM, Regina, retains this country sound.

Keeping in time and seeking assurance at an "ACT Amateur Hour" show.

Begun in 1939, the Saturday night amateur hours took place in various communities each week during the winter, and were broadcast over a number of different stations. They allowed anyone willing to perform publicly access to the airwaves, exposed listeners to some of the talent in their midst and, by raising over a million dollars in the forties and early fifties, helped eliminate a deadly disease.

Many women made it into radio during World War II, as can be seen in the above photograph, because men were fighting overseas. But when the war ended, they often had to give up their positions to returning soldiers.

Manager of CHAB during the thirties and forties was Carson Buchanan (right).

On location with sportscaster Dale Yoos.

Yoos was the first to regularly broadcast curling games over the radio; the "clock" system, which enables listeners to "see" where the rocks are located, was his idea. In 1947, he called Nipawin's First $10,000 Automobile Bonspiel (above). Two years later, he went out on the golf course to broadcast Waskesui's "Lobstick" final (left).

Godfrey Hudson, news director of CFQC, Saskatoon, received the 1953 trophy for best news operation in North America, presented by the Radio-Television News Directors Association and Northwestern University. It was the first time a Canadian station had won the award. The following year CFQC won it again. (Below) CFQC's newsroom at the time.

"The Jacksons and Their Neighbours," a daily farm drama heard at noon across the prairies, was performed live from a CBC Winnipeg studio (above). In 1953, the producer was Alf Parr (extreme left). Beside him are agriculture commentators, Bob Knowles and Lionel Moore; the cast; and on the extreme right, the sound effects technician. The series was written by Mary Pattison of Saskatoon (left).

Contrasting images and sounds of public and private radio in the sixties.

(Above), CBC's women's commentator, Jean Hinds (right) talks to Alma Bastedo, wife of the then Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan. (Below), Wal 'n Den play with the kind of merchandise that frequently came up for sale on CFQC's "Trader Time."

Dan Worden participates in an April Fool's Day publicity stunt for CKOM in downtown Saskatoon, 1954 (above). CKOM had been in existence for three years and had just increased its power to five thousand watts, but it still posed little threat to the other English language station in the city, CFQC, which was owned by A.A. Murphy (left).

When CBC moved its operations from Watrous to Regina in 1954, it marked the occasion with a concert from Darke Hall featuring the Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Choir and players from the Regina Orchestral Society (above). CFNS, Saskatoon, opened its studios in 1952 with a blessing from Monsignor O. Lacroix (below).

Employees went on strike at CKBI in 1974 (above).

CKBI's owner, E.A. Rawlinson (left) received the Broadcaster of the Year Award from the Western Association of Broadcasters in 1976. In 1989 he received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

Two popular talk show hosts.

CKRM's Lorne Harasen (above) interviews Attorney General Roy Romanow in the seventies. Jack Cennon (right), shown in his younger days, retired from CKBI in 1987 after thirty-nine years in the business.

Radio promotes itself in Saskatoon's Travellers Day Parade, 1980. A stereotyped representation of an Indian on the right represents communications in the past; a scantily clad beauty on the left stands for today. Radio's potency is depicted with sexist and sexually-charged images using thrusting vertical lines.

(Above) A crew gathers material for a series on Louis Riel and the Métis at St. Peter's Mission in Montana. It was here that Gabriel Dumont came in 1884 to persuade Riel to return to Canada and help organize the Métis at Batoche; it was here that the camera and sound crews came a hundred years later to record the historic re-enactment. Donald Sutherland (right) played the white commissioner in the radio series.

Supporting a cause.

The Art Gellert Orchestra (above), on CJGX, Yorkton, during World War II solicites donations so powdered milk could be sent to Britain where dairy farms had been bombed. In 1990, the GX94 Airwaves and the Canora Flames raised three thousand dollars for the continuing medical treatment of a young Mikado, Saskatchewan, girl.

Images of radio today.

Art Wallman of CKSW, Swift Current, received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit in 1989.

"The 'Tractor Line' is something I got the idea for about fifteen years ago. I thought, 'There are a lot of people out there on those tractors. Maybe we should do something to focus our attention towards them.' And for a while I was discouraged. The management and the sales manager said, 'Oh, they've got CB's out there; they haven't got time to listen to a radio.' So I talked to farmers as I went around and they said, 'No, we've got no time for that. We're listening to the radio. That's what keeps us from going crazy out there.' And the more I talked to them the more I found out it was my show they were listening to. So I decided, why not direct programming toward the tractor population. And it has really caught on. People phone in and say hello to somebody seeding, wherever it may be—Rosetown or Kyle or Shaunavon or Maple Creek. It got to be a kind of meeting place."

A provincial task force, set up to advise the government on an arts policy, uses the CBC studio in La Ronge in 1990 to reach northern residents. From left to right: Alan Adams, announcer-operator, CBC, La Ronge, and Gail Bear and Jan Delage of the Arts Strategy Task Force. CBC, La Ronge does occasional broadcasts in aboriginal languages but most native programming in the North is carried out by the Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation, also situated in La Ronge. There are also locally-run stations in Green Lake, Île-á-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, Wollaston Lake, Pelican Narrows and La Loche.

with the CBC because it releases them from meeting greater social obligations.

Even when relations between private and public broadcaster were at their most acrimonious, private stations had a kind of grudging respect for their overseer. Announcers working for affiliated stations which carried CBC fare in the thirties and forties relate how they would jockey for the privilege of introducing a CBC program. Today, private managers profess esteem for CBC Radio's news and documentary programs, and they point with pride to someone who has advanced from their humble establishment to the hallowed halls of this august corporation. Their deference, however, is usually tempered with contempt for CBC's assumed profligacy. Go to a public meeting or press conference, they say, and you'll see five CBC people to every one private broadcaster. And whenever they sense an implied criticism of their type of programming they fall back on their one, unassailable defence—the government doesn't pay their bills.

The CBC, meanwhile, is less inclined to state publicly its opinion of private broadcasters. Its existence is not in any way determined by their actions, and although there's concern in some quarters that during times of budgetary restraint it might be pushed to emulate their example in order to attract more listeners, it so far has nothing to fear from commercial stations. It manages to retain a distinct sound. Some observers note, however, that like its private counterparts, CBC lately has been studiously avoiding anything contentious in pursuit of happy radio. Dennis Gruending, who has worked for the corporation in numerous capacities since the mid-seventies, calls today's CBC, "yuppie radio."

> There has been, I think, an orchestrated move in radio current affairs coming out of headquarters, for the hosts of programs and the voices on the air to be nice, pleasant, chatty people who don't give you controversy or indigestion with your corn flakes. Its difficult to pinpoint that because you don't know where the nudges are coming from, but that is the kind of message that is given out. Very little of what we might call serious commentary—about the environment, politics, poverty—takes place any more. You can talk about recipes and that sort of thing.

CBC does carry serious commentary, but its impact and effectiveness is often less keenly felt today than in the past

because of the corporation's desire to provide an overall balance of opposing opinions. The CBC's *Journalistic Policy*, which governs what programmers put on the air, states:

> CBC programs dealing with matters of public interest in which differing views are held must supplement the exposition of one point of view with an equitable treatment of other relevant points of view. Otherwise, the information given would not be fair and comprehensive.

CBC managers point out that these restrictions are much less severe than those imposed by broadcasting organizations in other countries. And although they don't deny that broadcasters must be allowed to have opinions of their own, they maintain that these opinions must not lead them into "bias and prejudice." Their insistence that journalists remain strictly objective in the above manner has led to a number of unpleasant incidents.

In 1988, CBC Television withdrew an episode of "The Nature of Things" after representatives of the nuclear industry met with senior CBC officials (including the vice-president of English television) to complain that the industry had not received balanced coverage. The program, which had first been broadcast the previous year, raised questions about the wisdom and safety of nuclear power during peacetime. The CBC denied that the government-appointed board of governors had intervened to prevent a repeat broadcast, and it restructured the program to allow for a debate at the end between proponents of both sides of the issue. "If this is a precedent," said David Poch, a spokesperson for the Energy Probe Research Foundation, "what we will now have is broadcast policy by petition—with anybody with any point of view petitioning the president of the CBC."

In a dramatic move two years ago, Roy Bonisteel, host of television's "Man Alive," quit after twenty-two years with the show because he was "fed up" with CBC's constant invocation of journalistic policy whenever he was invited to speak publicly to groups on certain topics. He was quoted as saying:

> I'm not reading the news. . . . I'm doing a show with a point of view. The audience expects me to have an opinion. I'm not an airhead, after all. . . . I have a right, an obligation to tell the audience where I stand, regardless of whether the CBC agrees or not. Otherwise, what the hell am I doing fronting this show?

Also two years ago, Dale Goldhawk, host of "Cross Country Check-Up" was forced to resign as president of ACTRA in order to keep his radio job, because ACTRA had taken a strong stand against free trade during the 1988 federal election campaign. And in Saskatchewan, freelancer John Conway, a sharp critic of the provincial government, was taken off CBC Radio in 1987 because no one could be found to balance his ideological stance.

As the country's national broadcaster, the CBC has a responsibility to provide fair and equal coverage. And like most media in western democracies, it feels it can best fulfill that obligation by becoming a "mirror," reflecting reality but not in any direct way mediating or interfering with the messages it carries. The question some people ask is, exactly what kind of mirror is the CBC and how does it decide what to hold itself up to?

—

Private and public broadcasters have been pursuing their separate aims for several years now. They are on diverging paths and seldom glance sideways to see where the other is at. They may be circumspect about each other, but they also know that each is essential to preserving what is basically a reasonable arrangement. Neither, I think, would like to see anything drastically changed. But as different as they are in their programming and in their goals, there is one fundamental way in which they are similar. Both are run largely by men—a feature that they, in turn, share with broadcasting operations around the world.

Women have typed letters, answered phones, written commercials and hosted the odd show, but they haven't been directly involved in shaping the medium. Neither have they participated in devising regulations to govern the industry. Except for a few years in the fifties, when Lulu Davis assumed ownership of CHAB after her husband's death, no woman has ever owned a station in the province. Not until 1981 did CBC have a woman director of radio in Saskatchewan. And so far there has been only one female station manager. This dearth of women within the ranks of those who control what goes on the air has been matched by an equally low proportion of women announcers. In 1927, a newspaper profile of Martha Bowes declared this "charming young lady who announces everything from weather reports to fourteen syllable names, is the

only lady announcer in Saskatchewan and one of three lady announcers in Canada." When she married, she gave up her career at CJWC and followed her husband to Detroit. Three years later, the *Regina Daily Star* felt it worth mentioning that Ferne Nelles was now the sole female announcer in the province. She was the "CHWC Housewife" on an afternoon show called "Household Hour."

To be an announcer in the early days meant more than just playing music and reading news. It also required repairing and maintaining equipment. Women were obviously not schooled for such work. Nor were Canadian men for that matter, which is why early radio announcers were British technicians trained during the First World War. But in the thirties, when technical expertise was no longer a prerequisite for getting a job on air, and when Canadian accents began appearing more frequently, it was still male voices people heard, not female voices. You were about as likely to find an owner willing to hire a woman as you were of finding a woman who thought it even remotely possible to become an announcer. Most stations were probably not as explicit as CHAB in their hiring practices, but they nevertheless tacitly subscribed to a policy that Carson Buchanan rigidly enforced there—no married woman would be hired into any position, announcer or otherwise. Eileen Bradley Lillico, who as a single woman was permitted to work at CHAB, says it was a policy no one questioned. "We just accepted it. Mr. Buchanan was boss." He, like others, however, had to modify his stand when the Second World War began. With most of the men off fighting in Europe, radio stations could only remain on the air by marshalling women into positions previously denied them. But no matter how proficiently these women sold advertising or hosted programs, they were asked to move on when the war ended to make room for the returning boys.

In subsequent years, women got on the air in greater numbers, but they were always steered clear of weighty subjects like politics or international affairs. Entertainment and leisure were more in their line. CBC Radio had a "women's commentator" who spoke of "women's issues" while on private stations women advised listeners how to get beet juice out of their table cloth. It wasn't until after Jan Tenant began reading news over CBC Television in the mid-seventies that women were entrusted with the same role on radio. And in the eighties a woman could still expect to kiss her career goodbye should she

be unfortunate enough to get pregnant. The view of one Regina manager—"You belong at home with your kids; besides if you come back you'll just get pregnant again and we'll have to go through this one more time"—reflects what many, both inside and outside the radio industry, believe.

CBC has made a concerted effort of late to provide equal opportunity for women. This new resolve began in 1986, shortly after the federal government passed The Employment Equity Act. Figures released in June 1987 showed that of the total number of employees in Saskatchewan, 66.2 per cent were men. Men made up 100 per cent of upper level managers; 87.5 per cent of middle managers; and 64.7 per cent of what are called professional positions. Women, meanwhile, occupied 92.3 per cent of clerical positions. These figures were all roughly equivalent to the national figures. By 1989, according to CBC, 67.2 per cent of Saskatchewan's CBC workforce was male while men held 20 of 36 management positions. Data from other sources indicate that women are routinely paid less than men doing the same work. No statistics are available for private stations although there is ample reason to believe women fare worse there.

I asked several managers why there are so few women in influential positions. Most cited the difficulty of finding women with the necessary experience to carry out managerial duties; very few females have found their way into the stream that leads to the top. And why have there been so few female announcers and hosts? Well, that is changing, of course, but initially it had to do with listeners' complaints. They found women's voices shrill and irritating. "People would phone in and send letters and say, 'get that squeaky woman off the air,'" says a former program director. Owners, therefore, could cite such objections as sufficient justification for not hiring a woman. But there's more than just speech involved here. At best, one might be willing to grant that yes, women's voices are more highly pitched than men's and perhaps more likely to jangle one's nerves if not properly modulated. But we also know that attributing shrillness to a woman is a way of implying she is either shrewish or stupid. And we know from experience that melodious tones alone do not make a competent announcer. If having a pleasant voice were the sole criterion for getting on the air then we should have been spared the likes of Bert Hooper, Peter Gzowski and Clyde Gilmour. None of these hosts had, or has, what we might call a silver

tongue. There are no surviving tapes of Bert Hooper in his heyday, but in an interview taped in 1970 he has a distinctly nasal tone, and he speaks in a halting, jerky fashion. Claude Lewis, who visited the province in 1924 on a fishing trip with his brother, Sinclair Lewis, described Hooper as "a thin little man who does not talk through his nose at all when he talks to you personally, but it always sounds so through the radio." Those who remember listening to Hooper in the twenties and thirties confess being mystified by his popularity, given his flawed manner of speech. Peter Gzowski, meanwhile, doesn't enunciate clearly. He mumbles and stumbles and can't always find the right word or phrase to express what he's thinking. Yet what radio person doesn't crave his reputation? And Clyde Gilmour delivers everything in the same monotonous tone. If you don't listen carefully to what he's saying, you might think him devoid of all emotion. Still, he's been on CBC Radio since 1947—longer than any other person—and his program is consistently one of the most popular on the network. In all three cases there is obviously more at work than superficially meets the ear.

It should be fairly evident that women have been kept off the air for the same reason they've been denied access to important jobs in other institutions. Radio hosts hold a great deal of power. Anyone who speaks over a public medium becomes a public figure and exerts an influence on public attitudes, tastes and values. So far we have been reluctant to place women in such a position.

Women have also been virtually invisible behind the scenes where decisions about what is said on air are made, which is why we are still daily insulted by glaring sexism. CBC is not faultless, but its violations are neither as frequent nor severe as those practised by others in the business.

To cite just one example: May 29, 1986. It was on this day in history, 1814, when Josephine, Napoleon's wife, died. CBC's Robert Johnstone did his regular two and a half minute item in which he sketched out her life in as much detail as time allowed. She was born to a doltish father and married a fatuous man. Frustrated with her marriage, she took a host of lovers, many of whom subsidized her obsessive spending. Eventually she ended up with the Emperor himself, and she lived out the rest of her life in a stormy relationship. Less than thirty minutes later, an announcer on a private station acknowledged the same anniversary in two sentences: Napoleon, he said, irked

Josephine because he insisted on keeping his hand in his pocket; everyone knows she was miffed because this is where a wife's hand belongs. Delighted with this little bit of cleverness, he blithely missed the sexual connotations of the joke, revelling in the time-worn idea of woman as financial pariah. That was May 29, 1986, and that's as far as this broadcaster had progressed since 1964 when the host of a "Mail Bag" show shared his little quote of the day: "A woman who professes to be just arriving at middle age is often making a return trip." And when in 1989 a prominent Regina broadcaster acknowledges that yes, he has had a street named after himself, but then so too has his wife—its called Broad Street—we know how far we still have to go.

Radio is a powerful medium, and those who control it intend on keeping their position.

II QUALITIES

10

A Material World

ALTHOUGH RADIO HAS BEEN WITH US FOR OVER SEVENTY years, and although it forms at least a part of our daily lives, we still know strangely little about the medium. Like our predecessors who heard the first feeble squeaks over their crystal sets, most of us would be hard-pressed to explain how the whole system works—how, for example, sound reaches the receiver in our bedroom from a studio many miles away. And unless we've received the grand tour of the local station, we remain in the dark about how an announcer can just ring someone up on the telephone and talk to that person over the air. Since it's unlikely we would derive any greater satisfaction from our favourite programs if we knew the technical means by which they were assembled and broadcast, few of us take the trouble to learn what there is to know about the subject. Even if we could be convinced there were to be some benefit from knowing more, we would probably shrug our shoulders and say it's too complicated. Like the other technological wonders of our age, radio is really beyond us; we don't have the training or the scientific capacity to understand it. Yet we've come to take it for granted in the same way we accept that men in Houston can talk to a man on the moon. There's nothing unusual about this way of thinking. There are, after all, many things we don't understand but that don't detract from how fully we live.

Contributing to the mystique that surrounds radio's technical workings is the medium's abstract quality. Sounds come to

us magically out of the air. We can't see them or touch them the way we can objects in a room. The closest we come to actual physical contact with a radio program is through the apparatus that brings it into our space. But beyond fulfilling a strictly functional purpose, radio equipment plays no direct part in the relationship that arises between a listener and the sounds that he or she hears. Our listening pleasure may be affected by the quality of the receiver, but this technical hardware remains strictly a means of bringing an intangible, unseen presence to us on command.

The biggest technical problem facing radio in the early days was how to eliminate static interference. New equipment and new delivery systems have resulted in broadcasts that are now the closest we've ever come to pure sound. Other than in naturalistic radio plays, where the intent is to recreate a situation from life, people appearing on the air have been stripped of all their physical characteristics. They exist only as bodiless voices. Floors are carpeted and microphones turned off while a record or tape is playing, so we can't hear people shuffling around the studio. At the top of the hour, therefore, the newscaster materializes from nowhere to tell us his stories. He reads from specially designed paper that doesn't make a noise when it's handled, he sits in a chair of the non-squeaking variety and if he makes any movements at all, they can't be detected. Neither do we hear announcers or anyone else physically handle the records or tapes they play. When they finish speaking they disappear into a void, and a song appears in the spot they had occupied. Exactly where they go or what they do during a song or commercial, we never know.

Sounds just come and go and none of them seem to have any specific connection with each other. They don't depend for their existence on what comes before them, and they seldom refer to anything that follows them. Nor is there any discernible reason for the order in which they proceed. They appear briefly at their appointed time to say what they have to say and then move on to make way for what follows. We're not confused or disturbed by the lack of any inherent logic to this perpetual progression. We've come to accept it as quite normal.

Why?

First, this kind of hearing is consistent with our normal experience. Sounds reach us simultaneously and with no relation to each other all the time. On the street, we'll hear passing

cars, birds, music from a record shop, someone shouting to get our attention, the voice of our walking companion. We constantly make mental adjustments to deal with these shifting sounds, and we react to them according to the unconscious priority we place on them. The relevant ones we note; the rest we dismiss or don't hear.

Second, when sounds are deliberately strung together as they are on radio, we're able to accept them in the same way we accept any other fabricated event. It has to do with our innate ability to make imaginative leaps when required, to "pretend," to "play" along. We can adapt quite readily to the rules or conventions of an activity like radio provided we know there's a purpose to it, that it isn't arbitrary or undirected.

And third, no matter how dissimilar things may be, we'll find connections between them if they're in close physical proximity. The afternoon host on location at a furniture store, the player at ice-level following last night's game, the person selling breath mints, and k.d. lang on tour in Europe are related for no other reason than they come to us through a common speaker. Radio unites these various elements by bringing them into the same space, enabling our minds to create relationships where none in themselves exists.

To some extent our mind deals with radio in the same way it deals with other stimuli and experiences. But what differentiates radio sounds from the sounds that occur naturally and reach our ears haphazardly is the human speaker through which everything on radio is routed. By speaker I mean anyone who speaks over the air—announcer, program host, newsreader, commercial voice and so on. It's the speaker who ultimately gives these disconnected sounds coherence and meaning, because it's only through that person that we gain access to a world we can hear but can't see. Whether it's an interview with a guest in the studio or a comment about a piece of music, everything on radio is directed through the speaker's character and personality. This person doesn't physically manufacture all of the sounds associated with his or her presence, but is still, in a way, perceived as causing them to be on air. Even those who know how radio programs are put together and who know the various functions that radio people perform will forget themselves and, like most listeners, attribute to an announcer a role she did not even remotely perform. "What was the name of the play Lorie Regehr put on 'Ambience' last week?" they will ask blithely, implying that

she single-handedly brought it to air. Producers who have spent days or weeks on a production with actors, writers and technicians usually stifle murderous urges at such slights, and sometimes take small comfort in the fact that this same announcer will in the future be blamed for something for which the producer was responsible. Listeners know from credits given at the end of a show that many people might be involved in its production, but none of these other people really exist. Only the speaker is real. That's who they phone or write to when they wish to express how they feel about something they heard on the air.

Radio is in many ways a modern version of the variety show which used to take place on stage both before and after radio appeared. And the radio speaker is a kind of present-day master of ceremonies. Depending upon when and where it took place, a variety show might have featured an opera singer, an animal impersonator, a tap dancer, a four-piece band. These performers didn't all live in the town or city where the hall in which they performed was located. Many came in from the surrounding area. The master of ceremonies' job was to appear between each act, commenting approvingly on what had just finished, and to generate enthusiasm for what was to come. He was there to ensure the show proceeded smoothly, and to engage in whatever chatter was necessary to put entertainers at ease and the audience in a good mood.

Almost all radio programs, and not just music shows, have a variety-show structure. A centrally-positioned speaker functions as a kind of signpost or indicator, telling us what we're going to hear next, guiding us from one element to another, and consciously or unconsciously affecting all the surrounding sounds. When a program comes to an end, the announcer says goodbye; after a bit of music and a few commercials or program promotions we're into the news. The newsreader begins by telling us in general terms about the day's most important event, then refers us to a reporter who is the present expert on the subject. After revealing a few essential details about what's been going on, the reporter turns us over to one or two of the main characters involved. They give their story. From there it's back to the reporter and, after a few sentences, back to the newsreader, who begins the whole process again. We gradually find our way to the sportsperson (who does much the same thing), the weather person and the voice that wants us to listen to tonight's programs or drink more Pepsi. Finally, we get back

to the announcer we left five minutes ago, or else to his or her successor, who guides us in a similar fashion from commercial to music and other assorted sounds for the next hour or so.

On television, a standard montage of images with superimposed credits and music is sufficient to carry us out of one program and into the next. The only radio speaker that television has retained—apart from the news, weather and sports person—is the play-by-play announcer. Even though it's obvious we can see the men in red and white jerseys skating up and down the ice on our screen, we still want someone to help us experience the event. Since we're not physically a part of the environment in which the action takes place, we require someone to act as our surrogate, through whose presence and emotions we can participate vicariously. A television speaker at a sporting event functions in the same way a laugh track does in a comedy program; both have been created to make us feel part of a communal activity from which we've been excluded. But while the television broadcaster augments and dramatizes what we can see for ourselves, the radio speaker creates it all.

Radio is made up of a multitude of masters of ceremonies who hand us on, one to the other, and who direct our attention from this subject to that one. Their job is to prepare us for what is to follow in as entertaining and informative way as possible. They are there to facilitate our movement between unrelated elements, to orient and, in extreme cases, to coerce us into a particular attitude so we'll be better prepared to accept what has been chosen for us to hear next. Radio speakers are powerful people because they tell us only what they want us to hear, and because they can colour a sentence or a word's meaning by the way they say it. When the newscaster says another load of Tamil refugees has been "dumped" off the coast of Canada, he makes us think of the situation not from their perspective as a tragedy but from our perspective as an inconvenience. The implication is that we now have a problem: what are we going to do with people who have washed up on our shores like garbage?

—

The speaker is central to radio, and by examining some of the characteristics of the medium over which she or he speaks, one can form some tentative conclusions about how we relate to that person.

Most of us use five senses in our daily contact with the world: sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. Radio functions through one sense only—sound. If we wish to represent an object on radio, we must select those sounds that best represent it. A train, for example, is many things, but on radio it can only be known through the clickety-clack of its wheels on the rails, its hoots and whistles, its screeching brakes and the other sounds associated with its movement. All of its other features are lost to us: the smells in the engineer's cabin, the elegant place settings in the dining car, the swaying motion in the tail car and so on. No matter how comprehensive a sound may be, therefore, it can only give us a general idea of the whole from which it is taken. If radio wishes to convey sensations that involve any of the other senses, then it must first translate those sensations into aural terms. Subdued moans and sultry whisperings can mean a passionate embrace; soft and savoury chewing can constitute a delicious radio meal; a full orchestral burst opening up to the skies might indicate a breathtaking view. Radio has to distil and transform the world as we know it into one of the five physical senses by which we perceive the world, for it's only through sound that the message can be transmitted and received. A person given to mechanical analogies might say this process is similar to the technical process whereby sound waves are turned into electrical impulses and back again. Because sound is only a partial representation of the person, object or event from which it's taken, we as listeners cannot expect to do any more than imperfectly reconstitute the original. When radio reduces or transforms a whole into one of its constituent parts, and when we then fashion a new whole from this part, there are bound to be discrepancies between the person or thing that produced the sound and how we visualize that person or thing.

When I was growing up, radio regularly ran contests challenging listeners to guess the identity of an object from the sound it made. The buzzings and whirrings and clatterings were mostly unrecognizable because the objects themselves were unfamiliar. But we were also apprehending them in an atypical way. The steadily growing jackpots, and what I remember as rare winnings, attested to the difficulty people had in piecing together a jigsaw puzzle with four of the five sense-pieces missing. Similarly, there are many stories of how listeners have been disappointed, even dismayed, when coming face to face for the first time with the person they had until then

only heard over the air. Geoffrey Bartlett, who hosted a children's program over CJHS in the twenties, and who filled the time by relating stories of exciting incidents at sea, tells of the day he received an impromptu visit from a couple of his more faithful listeners. These two six-year-olds had come to see Uncle Geoff, but when the short Englishman with the undistinguished face opened the door, they recoiled in undisguised horror. This ordinary little man could never have lived through such adventures. Bill Cameron, who broadcast baseball games over CFQC in the fifties, tells of how people would stare at him incredulously when he introduced himself. He had what a former colleague of mine would have called a tri-testicled voice. Its bass, gravelly tone conjured images of offensive linemen and Sumo wrestlers. But when you met the owner of those remarkable vocal chords, all you got was a five-foot specimen weighing 130 pounds.

It's obvious from experience that when we cannot see an object, hearing it prompts us to come up with what we assume to be a matching visual image. Our senses are interrelated in such a way that sound can compensate for a lack of physical sight by helping us to see the inaccessible object or person in our "mind's eye." So vividly does sound reproduce sight that many people claim radio to be the most visual medium of all, presenting a rich array of images that our external environment can never hope to match. Sound, however, is less adept at conveying taste and smell, and the radio world is almost totally devoid of these senses. How we see things that aren't physically present cannot of course be explained scientifically, and my following hypothesis is based specifically on the way we seem to respond to sounds on radio; it's not based on any experimental evidence.

—

Sound occurs over time. We can't stop it and consider it from a number of different angles as we can a physical object. It comes and is gone. But even though sound operates on a temporal rather than a spatial plane, I think it nevertheless creates the image of space. The lowest frequency we can hear is around 30 kHz, the highest about 18,000 kHz. Everything between is called our range of hearing. There is also a dynamic range between the lowest volume we can detect and the highest volume we can tolerate. Whenever we wish to characterize a voice or sound, we often say it is either "high" or "low." By

using these terms we are locating that sound within a space. We can't say exactly how high or how low because we are dealing with an aural space rather than a real space. Since voices are produced by physical bodies which occupy space, it is natural we should wish to endow that voice with a corporeal substance. In the absence of any other information which might help us to know how this person looks, we can only infer physical traits from vocal qualities. Audible voice and invisible anatomy must be located in the same spot, so it's logical we should be able to infer the one from the other. We don't make a literal transposition, however, by imagining that a person with a low voice is short and one with a high voice tall. Instead, because a low voice seems to fill up more space than a high voice, we conclude it must come from a larger body. The inclination to think of voices in this way overrides what we've learned from experience. We encounter short or slight people with deep voices every day, and yet when we hear a heavy voice on radio, we think large. For years radio plays capitalized on this perceptual tendency. It was a radio convention that villains had burly voices and heroes more pleasant and melodious tones. The assumption was that just as one could deduce stature from voice, so too one could infer moral qualities from speech. (How much are judges similarly affected when they pass judgement and issue sentences in a court of law?) Following a practice that Alfred Hitchcock used in film, today's drama producers are apt to cast actors against their vocal type so as to undermine our expectations. This forces us to abandon our normal criteria for judging people on the air and makes us pay closer attention to the complexities of a character or situation.

Radio depicts space in a number of ways. By having a person speak into a microphone from a distance, monaural radio gives the impression of depth—of here and there. On stereo, space is created by splitting a single sound and feeding one level of it to one speaker and another level to another speaker. Technically, we are hearing that sound over two speakers, but the illusion is that the sound is located somewhere between the two. By changing the proportion of volume sent to each speaker, the sound can be made to move. Stereo, therefore, has width as well as depth. Adding reverberation to a close, intimate voice is radio's way of telling the listener that these are thoughts going on inside a person's head. Radio sees the mind as an enclosed and empty space where thoughts bounce round one

another. To convey the loneliness of a vast and empty terrain, radio might use the plaintive cry of a train whistle—a sound that gets sucked up by the surrounding silence and that consequently makes that empty space seem even larger. Through inflexion and intonation, a radio voice can also conjure space in a way that suggests other meanings as well. If a person says, "I spilled milk aaaaaallllll over the floor," we get an idea of the size of the area covered and, by extension, the severity of the accident.

One of the most vivid examples for me of how effectively radio can exploit this aural space took place a few years ago when I produced a short segment from Rex Deverell's stage play *Righteousness* for "Morningside." The play was currently in production at Regina's Globe Theatre, and the excerpt would be used in connection with an interview between Deverell and Peter Gzowski. The section chosen was the pivotal scene in which Augustine forsakes his previously libertine ways and gives himself over completely to God. It was a seminal point in the saint's life and theatrically a scene of great power. As the spirit of the Lord begins to move through him, Augustine notices strange and yet vaguely familiar sensations. They begin to intensify, first slowly, then more rapidly. He feels himself being pulled into the grip of something larger than himself, something he doesn't understand. He must resist. No, he can't. He is now out of control. He can not...he can not. . . . YES! And in an orgiastic release he embraces God. An integral part of this feverish journey were the searing, mounting sounds from Rob Bryanton's synthesizer. They pierced through Augustine's mind and magnificently simulated his hysteria and rapture. As the scene came to a dramatic climax, in the final few seconds of Augustine's epiphany, these synthesized sounds also released themselves in a moment of ecstatic abandonment.

The tension of the words and music made me feel I was inside Augustine's head as he went through this delirious trial. It hardly seemed possible to keep all this energy confined, and any minute now the whole thing would surely split open and fly apart. I didn't see the play until after I had produced this segment, and when I did I was extremely disappointed. The energy, so compressed by radio, was here dispersed through the large theatre space. Words and music went their own way, and instead of being drawn into Augustine's mind, I viewed him from the outside as just another figure on stage.

We use a person's voice to "see" physical features, but we also use it to assess character and personality. We size up radio speakers (as we do people we meet in everyday circumstances) so we'll know how to relate to them and how to incorporate what they tell us. This character assessment is more subjective than assumptions about height and weight because it's tied so much more closely to our own character and personality.

In judging the speaker, we not only regard the words she uses and how she speaks them, but we also take into account the connection between her and what she is saying. If she speaks words that are not her own—that is, she reads a script clearly prepared by someone else—then we recognize her basically as a messenger. The possibility of establishing an intimate rapport with her will be limited. (The test of a good actor, for example, is how well she convinces the listener that the words she has been given to read are really her own. If she over-enunciates, or self-consciously exhibits a mannerism inconsistent with her role, then she breaks the fictional illusion and draws attention to the fact that she's playing a part.) But if she's given scope to express her views, tastes and values by speaking her own words, then there's more available information on which to base an appraisal of her. If one were to do a survey of listeners' opinions of the various people who speak over the radio, I'm sure they would have fewer and less detailed comments about the person who reads the news than the one who hosts her own show.

Some private stations, wishing to make everyone on the air equally accessible to listeners, have begun to erode the established distinctions that have existed between speakers. It started with the news which, in order to be perceived as the objective truth, generally requires a formal distance between the newsreader and his material, and which has been traditionally delivered in a formal manner. Stations can't eliminate the news altogether because listeners apparently want to hear it at regular intervals, but they have reduced the length of newscasts and lightened their tone. There's no pretence that the news will deal with serious or complex issues. At best, it's a superficial view of tangential events, none of which merits more than four or five sentences. In order to be consistent with the tone of the station's other programs, the newscaster breezily proceeds in a manner that is closer to a top 40 D.J. than Rex Loring. Everything is casual and bubbly. There'll be a clever remark about that final silly story, a bit of light-hearted banter

with the sportscaster about yesterday's game, and a mock-serious injunction against the weather person to get the forecast right. These are folks who make us happy, people we're glad to know.

There are many factors that contribute to the making of a relationship between listener and speaker, and once established in the listener's mind this bond is very real. People who stop radio personalities on the street, or who line up to shake their hand when they come to town, have been known to say things to them one doesn't normally say to strangers. But then the radio speaker is not a stranger. Listeners assume the speaker knows them as well as they know him and that he shares their feeling of mutual friendship. They forget that radio is not a normal, interactive process; that they have become intimately acquainted with him without his specific knowledge. Geoffrey Bartlett relates an incident that illustrates how long this influence can last.

> I was going down the street here one day, it was a terrible day, and I noticed a woman staggering with a load of groceries. So I stopped. I said, "Can I give you a lift? I'm going downtown." She said, "Yes you can, and it's a long time since I've heard your voice." That was twenty-one years after I had retired.

Many of us welcome the opportunity of meeting radio people, because if we can somehow be associated with them in our minds, the public prominence they possess will rub off on us. By calling an open-line show, we not only get to display our knowledge or talents to a multitude of people but we get to be heard with a public person. Even if we don't appear on air ourselves, we can still gain some recognition by knowing the person who is there. Relatives who assiduously followed the "ACT Amateur Hour" and "Mail Bag" shows, and parents who listen to programs not for their content but because their offspring's name will be given at the end, indirectly acquire the public importance radio bestows.

Sometimes we get so attached to our radio creations that we're reluctant to admit evidence which might force us to alter our opinion. A few years ago there were rumours that a much respected radio personality, a pillar of the community, was involved in running a brothel. Whereas some of his followers were willing to accept this possibility, others steadfastly rejected it as absurd. They had invested too much in his charac-

ter, and the prospect of having to reassess him on the basis of this new evidence was unthinkable.

As listeners we demand ambiguous and contradictory things of our speakers. On the one hand we ask that they, like our politicians, display exemplary behaviour and high ideals; that they fulfill expectations we ourselves could probably not meet. We often want them to be superior to us, to speak intelligently and coherently every time they open their mouths, to ask questions and play music we all want to hear, to be models and mentors. But at the same time we want them to be our equals. We want them to keep a tight rein on their superiority, to squelch the arrogance that might naturally arise in a person of their position, to be more like us so we can partake of their magic.

Radio personalities are frequently sent out to participate in community events, to show that the station is a responsible and concerned citizen. And although these people can't physically present themselves as each of their listeners sees them, they must function in accordance with their radio image. "I make it very clear to them that when they are out there, they have to be the person they are on air," says one program director. There are obvious advantages to be gained by circulating a radio host among his admirers. But there is also something to be said for doing the exact opposite—keeping his face out of sight. A few years ago, a Regina station promoted its morning show man without once revealing his face. Billboards showed the luscious red lip print of someone who was wild about Harry, and television ads featured a striking woman with prominent red lips mouthing his name. Some very attractive people were enamoured of this exciting man. But no one would compromise our image of him by imposing theirs. We had our own Harry and he would remain ours.

11

Speakers

RADIO SPEAKERS ARE IDEALIZED BEINGS. WE ONLY SEE ONE aspect of their multi-faceted character—their public side. And unless they cultivate an abrasive personality in order to induce a verbal brawl on air, they're generally on their best behaviour. They keep their domestic situations to themselves, and they effectively hide the foibles that would be so evident if we worked beside them eight hours a day. (Those inane mother-in-law jokes that flourished for years were simply their indirect way of telling us that they did in fact have an existence outside the studio.) They can always be pleasant and in good form because they're with us for no more than a few hours each day.

Because we think of them as ideal, we demand that they perform ideally. "When it's very cold or very hot," says a radio oldtimer, "you must make sure you get the right temperature because if you say it's thirty-six below the phone will ring immediately and someone who bought a ten cent thermometer down at Woolworth's will say: my thermometer says forty below. Why don't you get the temperature right?" Most of the time we can count on our radio speakers to be reliable authorities as well as wellsprings of cheer. Other things may change but they remain the same, bringing joy and enlightenment into our lives.

The tacit and unrelenting demand to meet an audience's expectations, and the tension of working in a medium where every mistake is magnified by the number of people who hear it, has prompted radio speakers to seek release however they

can from the unrealistic burden they are asked to bear. The most common way of dealing with their situation has been to play practical jokes on unsuspecting colleagues and thus shift their discomfort on to someone else. Many of those who were the epitome of propriety when speaking into a microphone, and who in newspaper photographs of the day presented a wholesome picture of goodness, would no sooner be out of the public ear than they turned into hellcats. It's curious that when radio people gather to reminisce about the old days, even if those old days were not so long ago, the things they often remember most clearly are those incidents where they caused another person to "break up" on air. It's as if these stories represent the essence of how they feel about working in radio.

> There were two announcers, Jack Kemp and me. We got to imitating each other's mannerisms and nobody could tell which of us was which. If Jack made a mistake he'd just say, "This is Bill Speers speaking." Some time later we hired an announcer named Charles Bussey. He was a darned good announcer. He could get words off a page like nobody I ever heard. Unfortunately, he didn't know what the words meant. One day I got a piece of his copy and wrote in, using the same typewriter, "This is Fishface Bussey announcing." He read it on the air. (Bill Speers, CHWC)

> We had a sportscaster who would come rushing up and walk in the studio and sit down. We'd have the theme on, we'd introduce him, and off he'd go. And we tried for weeks to get him in just a bit earlier than when the theme had started, because what would happen if he didn't show up? So this day we decided we would teach him a lesson. As soon as we spotted him coming into the hotel where our studio was located we moved our clocks five minutes ahead. When he hit the top floor we put the theme on and waved him frantically on. He rushed into the studio and we introduced him. He just got started reading and one of the girls came in and sat on his lap and started to talk about what a wonderful time they'd had the night before. But Bert never deviated from his script. He just kept pounding away at it. Then about 30 seconds before he went on the air we all came in and laughed and joked. And he said, "Boy, you got me that time." We put the theme on again and all of a sudden it struck him that we might be pulling something on him again. We introduced him, and when he went to the microphone he said, "You dirty rats, you can't fool me again. You're a bunch of so and so's." Then all of a sudden he realized he was on the air. So he picked up his papers, walked out of the room, closed the door, went down the stairs, and never came on the station again. (Sid Boyling, CHAB)

I could hardly wait to get to work in the morning. It was fun. We didn't make much money. But those were depression years—nobody else did either. We were lucky to have jobs.

We had a dear old soul. She had a women's hour program. She was very proper, very knowledgeable, and she must have been the world's greatest sport. She called all the guys in the station, "my boys". She used to give recipes. And when I think of what we did and how cruel we were.... She would give one ingredient and then she'd pause to give the audience a chance to write it down. And we'd reach out, open the studio window, and get a handful of snow, and of course the operator in the control room would be all set. She would say, "two tablespoons full of salt." Then a pause. And we'd lift the back of her dress and stuff a little of this snow down. She would try bravely not to make a sound. And the shrill, trembling sound she'd make in the studio was barely audible. But we'd have her volume up. We'd get phone calls from people asking if she was okay. Was anything wrong. We'd say no, that's just the way she goes on.

(Hugh Trueman, CHSJ, Saint John, New Brunswick)

We always tried to make the other fella look like a jackass. We were always anxious to make him laugh. People would phone up and say, "Well I'm glad you're having a good time, you made me feel better." Somebody else would phone up and say, "What the hell is all that nonsense?" They couldn't see what was going on and that made them more curious.

(Wilf Collier, CKCK)

Earl [Cameron] and Joe Lawlor and Bob Mclean were three announcers we had at that time. And the 10 o'clock news was the big newscast in those days. At that time I was making all the boys stand up to do the news so we had a podium. Bob Mclean was doing the news one night. Joe Lawlor and Earl Cameron waited until he started then walked into the studio, undid Maclean's zipper, took down his pants, and took down his underwear. Maclean never stopped. He went right on reading the news. When he was through and went out everyone laughed. It was a joke. Except it was in the hallway of the hotel and there was a great big window so anybody could see Maclean.

Next week Maclean decided to get even with Cameron. When Earl started reading the news Maclean tiptoed into the studio and went to undo the buttons on Cameron's pants. Earl stopped right in the middle of the news and said, "Maclean, get your hands off me."

(Sid Boyling, CHAB)

Stan Clifton had the habit of when you were on the air he'd cut one. And he had the ability of being able to pucker up his asshole—I've never heard anyone do it since. He'd start off on a

> low note and then come up to a kind of screech. And for a young guy starting off in the business, wow! Is this what it's all about?
>
> Cy Cairns would come up behind you and give you a swat on the back of the head when you were on the air. Or if you were in the studio he would stand up on a table in front of the window, lower his pants, and expose various parts. It took tremendous concentration. (Harry Dekker, CFQC)

> To break the monotony of the long, tedious hours he had to spend sitting in his fetid cell in the bowels of the CBC radio building putting in station calls, he [Allan McFee] used to open his microphone and send his voice out over top of whatever program the CBC happened to be carrying. During the heyday of that atrocious hour of soap serials the CBC used to carry weekday afternoons in the 1950s, listeners would be regularly astounded to hear Ma Perkins offer her saccharine philosophy to Willie or Shuffle and then punctuate it with an incongruously masculine and terribly vulgar throat clearing. Similarly, listeners to broadcasts of the Toronto Symphony must have winced at the sound of a celestial horn passage accompanied by stentorian nose blowing. (Max Ferguson, CBC)

Particularly at a time when the strictures against capricious behaviour on the air were very strong, these antics provided a form of release. By making another person publicly humiliate himself, you could subvert the notion of announcer as model human being—a premise on which radio was based—and you could do so without suffering any of the consequences yourself. It was a way of getting back at a system that made you be what you weren't, that forced you to adopt a public persona and commanded that you keep your private self in check. Radio people who have resorted to such tomfoolery (and almost all have at some time or another) are not unlike the members of a family living under the iron thumb of an oppressive father. They know they are powerless to challenge his authority or change their situation, so they vent their frustration and repressed anger by turning on other family members. Getting a colleague to giggle while she's reading of a brutal murder makes her the unwitting saboteur of a process that is uncompromising in its insistence on prudent behaviour. Pranks, therefore, are used for both revenge and emotional release. Listeners, meanwhile, may have their programs disrupted or their sensibilities offended by such funny business, but at the same time they are getting truly spontaneous and natural radio. They are also receiving formal acknowledgement that there is much more to the medium than meets

the ear; that there is a vibrant world behind the speaker. That listeners are intrigued by this mysterious world is borne out not only by the numbers in which they pass through stations on guided tours to find out what really goes on behind the scenes, but by the avidity with which they buy records and watch television shows that deal with "famous bloopers."

—

Radio is more casual and liberated today and such antics are no longer as common as they used to be. Horseplay that was once concealed so that all an audience heard were the blunders it produced is now happily exposed. Whereas once listeners had to phone the station to find out what was going on, today they're likely to get in on the joke from the start. Station workers may embarrass an announcer by getting his parents to call him in the middle of his show to wish him happy birthday. Or, without telling his family he's going to do this, he himself will call home in the middle of his morning show, ask his young son if mommy is still mad at daddy, and try to make up with his wife for last night's tiff. He may even get his son to give the weather forecast each morning. The medium now protects itself against guerilla attacks by sanctioning, even encouraging, gentle indiscretion. It has co-opted mischief by building it into certain programs. It has disarmed a disruptive force and at the same time invigorated an audience sated on more-than-perfect speakers.

After years of trying to cope with an intractable Allan McFee, CBC finally gave him his own show, "Eclectic Circus," in which outrageousness was the norm and where conventions were to be flouted. Introducing a record, he'd read from a carefully prepared script or from what sounded suspiciously like an album's liner notes. Instead of trying to make the words sound like his own, as if he had written them himself, he went to great pains to separate himself from what he was saying. He spoke in such a way as to underline and mock the pomposity behind his statements, thus ridiculing music specialists who are given to hoity-toity utterances and intense announcers who unquestioningly repeat the dreadful tripe they're often asked to speak. The real Allan McFee, he was saying, doesn't like what the radio Allan McFee is compelled to do; he will therefore undercut his prescribed phoniness. He would begin a segment of his program by delivering an elegantly reasoned assessment of Beethoven's place in the musical history of the

world, then perspicaciously point out that since the great musician was after all going deaf by this time in his career, it was understandable that he should hit the odd clunker now and then, as you can hear if you listen closely to this next piece. Ah, but it was time to quit prevaricating and get on with the performance. Tonight's internationally renowned pianist was becoming impatient, shifting on the piano bench from ham to ham, wishing to get started. So, here it was. . . .

McFee had frequent and unexpected visits from his pet mouse and from clucking chickens who perched in the studio's rafters. They could show up any time, and when they did (usually in the middle of one of his lofty pronouncements) he would gracefully acknowledge them and try to get on with the task at hand. Like his predecessors in the twenties and thirties, McFee had no way of knowing what outside event might interfere with his broadcast, and he certainly had no way of preventing or controlling it. His program, in fact, was carried by an organization that no longer existed—the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission. As for us listeners...well, we didn't exist either. His broadcasts went out into "vacuumland."

"Eclectic Circus" was a monstrous success because it helped us to take CBC's sacred duty a little less reverently than we were expected to. And even though the private attitude McFee revealed may have been a concoction, it nevertheless showed there was another kind of truth possible, a personal truth that provided a refreshing respite from the *truth* he was required to dispense in his public role.

McFee was not the first to challenge the perceived public expectations of announcers. He simply formalized the process on a national scale and carried it to its extreme. For many years before this, announcers throughout the country were saying things that were okay to be spoken privately but really shouldn't be said over the radio. Jack Cennon, who started at CFQC and who later became an institution at CKBI, was renowned for his irreverence. He'd complain bitterly about the music he was forced to play; it was loud, had no melody and just added up to a bunch of noise. For those of us accustomed to a positive or, at worst, neutral introduction to a song from a nice-guy announcer, this was something new. And for those of us under the illusion that announcers select their own music according to their tastes and play it for us because they think we'll enjoy it, this was a revelation. Here was Cennon distancing himself from a sound for which he seemed responsible. In

mock confidence he was saying: someone you can't see is making me do this against my will. By making public his grievances against those behind the scenes, he was defying radio's close-lipped attitude toward its workings and letting us in on a process from which we're normally shut out. We recognized it as play but we were still flattered by his implied trust. Jack Cennon, private man, was bypassing his public persona and talking to us directly, and this bound us even closer to him. Besides, we often felt about his music the way he did, and we were gratified that he was bold enough to object on our behalf.

Cennon's favourite target was his boss, a miserable cheapskate.

> I used to pick on A.A. Murphy who owned half of Saskatoon. I used to say A.A. Murphy really worked hard when he was a boy, carrying up buckets of gold from the basement. People would say, "How can you say that about A.A?" But he loved it. It was the first of that kind of broadcasting. But it wasn't my idea; I stole it from a guy I heard in Chicago, picking on the boss. And I thought that's funny. But you pick on people you love, not people you hate.

At CKBI Cennon would proudly proclaim that he had just received his pay cheque—$1.50—and speculate on how many wonderful things he could buy with it. We knew this to be the sport of a jovial bullshitter, but there was still a titillating sense of hearing what should not be heard publicly, particularly since there was a good chance that the boss himself was listening. Most people, I think, found his assumed audacity amusing and exciting, while I suspect that for him it had a mildly therapeutic value. His purported salary of $1.50 was at least figuratively true. By finding an acceptable way in which to bring his financial circumstances to public attention, he could purge whatever hostility he felt towards his employer.

—

Cennon and McFee admitted us to their radio world by intimating a private self that was at odds with the public role we all knew they were expected to perform. Other announcers, like Peter Gzowski, give us entry in a more straightforward fashion. Instead of splitting his public and private self so one can comment on the other, he keeps them together (or is at least seen to do so) in an integral radio identity. He is who he is,

regardless of what we may think. (Other CBC hosts like Vicki Gabereau and Jack Farr do too but in different ways.) When confronted with a discussion that directly or tangentially involves sex, Gzowski becomes audibly uneasy, and rather than blustering through it with the brouhaha speakers use to cloak their insecurity, he makes no effort to hide his discomfort. Interviewing Lorna Crozier about her book of poetry in which she describes the love life of vegetables, he doesn't immediately and unthinkingly leap to her defence against detractors who are offended or embarrassed by the poems. Part of it may have to do with not pursuing a line that might take the interview in an unintended direction. But it also becomes evident that Gzowski can identify with the Manitoba politician who denounced the poems in the legislature but who chose as his example a fairly innocuous poem because, as Crozier surmises in the interview, he couldn't bring himself to repeat publicly the words of the most scandalous one. Gzowski freely admits that though his private conversation is peppered with swear words, he doesn't like to hear them over the air. He also selectively and judiciously relates other aspects of his life that go on outside the studio, and he frequently brings them forth to illuminate the way he thinks about a subject and to prompt listeners to share their own experiences. He approaches everything he does with an unwavering belief in the dignity of every human, and the relaxed, unthreatening atmosphere he creates is one to which people readily respond. He is someone to whom we can reveal ourselves without fear. Listening to his interviews or reading his *Morningside Papers*, which reprint letters listeners have sent in to be read over the air, is to become aware of the remarkable degree to which people are willing to entrust to him intimate details of their personal lives.

Gzowski's success in eliciting personal testimonies is due primarily to his character and to his skill. But the specific nature of the medium on which he appears also plays a part. Guests in the studio can share their private stories with this sensitive man and a million listeners knowing that no one will intrude.

An example that nicely illustrates the intimacy the medium creates despite, and even precisely because of, the impossibility of direct human contact is a radio play by Kim (Dales) Morrissey, entitled *Peter Gzowski, Peter Gzowski.* An unemployed actress with visions of fame imagines that she is being interviewed by Peter Gzowski. As the real "Mor-

ningside" program gurgles in the background, she cheerfully answers questions about her previous roles and her plans for the future. Suddenly, the doorbell rings, and there stands Peter Gzowski himself. He has come to talk to her. She's flustered, tries to answer his questions, but nothing goes right. She doesn't know what to say and in frustration sends him away. She can't cope with the real person. She is much more comfortable with the one on radio, the one she makes up. No sooner does he leave than she's once again chatting amiably about her life and career.

—

Gzowski has a large following because his image is that of an honest and sincere person, and because he handles delicate subjects with great care. But were he to blurt out one of the swear words he keeps so carefully repressed, there is no doubt that even he would be roundly censured. Radio has always been prudish about cursing and sex. The play-by-play announcer who, in his excitement, shouted, "And he hit the fucking goal post!" or the kids' show host who said when he thought the microphone was dead, "Well, that ought to keep the little bastards happy," paid dearly for their indiscretions. The main reason Carson Buchanan wasn't fired from CHAB for uttering his blasphemies was probably because he owned the station.

Why does radio impose such restraints on those speaking over the air? Or perhaps more to the point, why are we not willing to accept from our public figures what we hear from those around us and what we occasionally utter ourselves? Is it just a matter of hypocrisy or is there something else involved?

A little while ago on our local arts program, "Ambience," I ran a short story by Terry Jordan about the tormented life of a young boy. The boy's father has been brain-damaged in a mining accident and the family is taken into the care of an uncle. This unprincipled uncle and his equally odious son get perverse satisfaction from physically and psychologically torturing anything that comes within their control. In one typical incident, the son ties a rope around a horse's neck, fastens the other end to the bumper of a truck, and shoves the horse over the edge of a cliff. As the horse frantically paws away and slowly strangles to death, he stands by tranquilly relishing the scene. He also devises countless humiliating acts for the boy himself. Uncle and son live by the motto, "It's a hard cow to

fuck but we need the milk." As with many memorable phrases, this one is indiscriminately invoked to describe any situation that even remotely demands a justification for one's action. Through constant usage it has been abbreviated to "It's a hard cow," which sums up their view of life.

I was naturally concerned about running the story because I knew listeners have a low tolerance for the *f* word. But since "fuck" is said only once, and since it's essential to the story, I decided to go ahead. Besides, similar stories in the past had been broadcast without incident. There would be the odd letter or phone call about bad language, but generally "Ambience" listeners were not greatly surprised or shocked by such material. Either they had come to expect it or else there had never been anything offensive enough to prompt them to complain more vociferously. This time, however, there was an eminent objection. A Member of Parliament, acting on behalf of outraged constituents, asked for a copy of the story and vowed to raise the matter in the House of Commons. The CBC machinery which deals with such complaints was set into motion. As for me, I was asked to account for myself. I explained my original misgivings and my reasons for proceeding. And I offered to direct anyone who found the story filthy and disgusting to similar situations that take place in real life around them every day; they could then confirm for themselves the story's accuracy. But accuracy was not the issue. I was told that those who listen to CBC Radio at five o'clock on a Saturday afternoon expect from us exemplary behaviour. That means no *f* words. In an uncontrolled situation, as in an interview, it's impossible to guard against the "ineffable" sneaking through. But in this case there was no excuse. I was told I should have chosen another story from this writer's body of work that was not so gratuitously violent.

The more we talked the more I realized that it wasn't only the word "fuck" or the psychological humiliations the young boy is forced to endure that was making people fidgety. There was also a great deal of discomfort with a scene in which the victim strikes back at his tormentors, a scene the discussion circled round and round but never addressed directly. In it the boy forces his cousin at gunpoint to strip; he then ties him up on the hood of a car. He attaches a rope from the cousin's testicles to the garage door so that when the uncle opens the door he'll unwittingly emasculate his son. I could understand why someone might object to a story which justifies violence by showing

it to be the only logical response to an intolerable situation, and which makes violence acceptable because the one committing it is a good person pushed beyond the limits of his endurance. What we had here, however, as someone pointed out to me, was really a protest over the depiction of men being sexually molested. We're accustomed to hearing of men violating women, but when they do it to other men we get very nervous. Several months earlier I had run a story in which a young girl is accosted by her brother and father, and since no one objected in that instance I had to concede that gender here perhaps was a factor.

In any case, I was severely reprimanded and told to consult the CBC policy book, which governs the broadcast of all programs and which has as one of its basic tenets, "CBC programs should be in good taste."

> The audience for broadcast information is composed of differing groups, and notions of good taste vary substantially between them. The broadcaster therefore cannot expect to enjoy the same complete freedom of expression of vocabulary or of visual presentation as is enjoyed by the book publisher, in live theatre, or in the movie, whose readers and viewers by and large make conscious choices about what they read and see.

The premise here is that radio listeners don't have a choice—a premise that doesn't hold up since every radio has a tuning knob and an on/off switch. The statement instead points to a more basic difference between radio and books, movies and plays, which makes people feel that with the latter three they have more "conscious choices." The most obvious difference between these activities is that in order to read a book or watch a play/movie, we need to interrupt what we're doing and often physically relocate ourselves. Reading is a solitary pursuit. We rarely do it while actively involved with others and preferably not while driving a car. To see a play/movie we need to leave our home and go to a particular place at a specially-appointed time. (Videocassettes are more like books; we use them at our leisure.) Radio, on the other hand, follows us wherever we go, surrounding and enveloping us. Unlike the book which is confined within close-fitting covers or the play/movie which is contained within the walls of the theatre, radio blankets the countryside. You can't escape it and you can't keep it within physically prescribed bounds. Hundreds, even thousands, of other people are hearing these voices at

exactly the same time you are, and for the most part these voices belong to real people, not actors or the made-up characters you'll find in film, on stage or in novels. They're performing in a medium which exists partly to convey information —news, weather, sports, temperature readings, time checks, interviews, background to recording artists, et cetera—and they usually do their job gracefully and tastefully. So when the lone, nearly extinct fictional voice comes along, we demand that it too conform to the rules of propriety that everyone else on radio observes even though it has a different purpose from them. The narrator of "It's a Hard Cow" appears to us from a land of "real" people and must therefore conduct himself according to the stringent rules governing that "natural" place. This is not to say that fictional people operating within a clearly fictional context have always had greater freedom to say what they want, since we have centuries of theatre and book censorship to prove otherwise. It's just that because of radio's pervasiveness, and because it plays at being a real event, we are more aware when it transgresses acceptable behaviour than we are when similar indiscretions occur in the other media. If it portrayed even a small part of what is depicted in books, plays or films, it would be shut down.

Whereas radio is in all ways a public medium, it is also at the same time a very private one. By turning on the switch we can take it almost anywhere we like. It's not something "out there" we can walk away from should it offend us. It's right here in our kitchen, in our car, in the sanctity of our bedroom. In the theatre we are likely to maintain our composure in the midst of a sordid scene because we are accustomed to functioning with a public facade, and because it is no longer socially acceptable to boo, hiss or throw rotten fruit. But in our own home, with children whom we have been trying to teach moral values or with intimate associates who know us better than anyone else, we can't so easily ignore the message of what we hear together. We are forced to acknowledge it openly. We need to take a stance on what is broadcast and, if necessary, follow through on any domestic objections. Those who heard "It's a Hard Cow" at five o'clock on a Saturday afternoon couldn't shirk their duty to their family. They had to live up to their image and their stated convictions. They didn't have the liberty to do what some "Ambience" writers have told me they do on the day their story is broadcast. Not wishing to face family and close friends while they publicly reveal themselves through

their fiction, they retreat to a separate room to hear their story alone. They thus avoid the telling response of those closest to them—a response which might be interpreted as a judgement of more than just what they have written.

—

Radio doesn't enable us to see or touch the person speaking from so many miles away, but it does place us in closer physical proximity to that person than is normal in everyday life. A person in the studio usually speaks into the microphone from a distance of six to eight inches (closer if whispering). Although we hear that voice on a loudspeaker several feet away, we still perceive that voice to be six to eight inches away from our ear. How close we feel to a person, of course, depends on more than just being physically near; it has to do with the nature of our relationship. But because of the way we apprehend voices coming to us over the air, radio can enhance our rapport by bringing the object of our affection right into our lap. Conversely, it can also make an offensive person even more disagreeable.

It's a cliche nowadays to say radio is an intimate medium. (Announcers are repeatedly reminded to think of themselves as talking to one person, not an audience of several thousand.) And it's often amusing to hear the tactics radio speakers employ to offset the built-in intimacy of the medium. When W.O. Mitchell was interviewed in Regina about his novel *Since Daisy Creek*, he told a story of how he and a friend had gone bear hunting. His friend was armed with a high-powered rifle, but Mitchell had only taken along a pencil and a pad of paper. Suddenly they came across the path of a huge she-bear, who was effortlessly hoisting the carcass of a dead animal and who looked like she was prepared to do the same to them. Faced with the prospect of having to defend himself against this beast, Mitchell surmised that the only thing he could have possibly done was to stick his pencil up the bear's ass. Up to this point he had been speaking normally. But as he neared the noxious passage, he lowered his voice to a near whisper. He must have thought that if he spoke softer fewer people would hear. All he accomplished was to draw greater attention to an image he has used without hesitation and without embarrassment in front of a stage audience.

The medium exacts correct behavior from its speakers and most of the time they comply.

12

Other Voices

RADIO SPEAKERS ARE POWERFUL PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY'VE been given a public platform from which to express themselves. They're formally acknowledged to be sufficiently important to have their words heard by a whole province or an entire country. And inevitably, much of what they say is taken as the truth. What is it that makes us want to believe them?

First, they speak over a medium that in our democracy is generally free of overt political interference. A free media is one of the foundations and distinguishing features of our society, an inalienable right that we, and especially the press, guard jealously. We therefore feel confident that, for the most part, radio speakers have no vested interest in what they say other than a desire to inform or entertain to the best of their ability. How freely they really operate is another matter and not something most listeners think about when listening to them.

Second, speakers are trustworthy because most of the time they tell us things that can be verified as the truth. The time really is three fifteen, the temperature is sixteen degrees, the next song really is by Randy Travis, the price of socks at the Bay really is $3.99. These messages can be confirmed.

Third, we believe them because otherwise the whole radio process collapses. They're the only connection we have with the radio world from which they emanate. We have to trust them to tell us what is there because we can't see it for ourselves. We need them to represent it, interpret it for us. We can of

course doubt or disagree with individual speakers, but if we question the speaker's role as a whole then the entire world that radio embodies is under question; it can have no meaning, no validity.

And fourth, if one wishes to probe even deeper for instinctual reasons for our faith in radio voices, one might agree with Murray Schafer, who sees in them the modern equivalent of various mythological beings from the past.

> [Radio] existed long before it was invented. It existed whenever there were invisible voices; in the wind, in thunder, in the dream. Listening back through history, we find that it was the original communication system by which the gods spoke to humanity. It was the means by which voices, free from the phenomenal world, communicated their thoughts and desires to awe-struck mortals. The divine voice, infinitely powerful precisely because of its invisibility, is encountered repeatedly in ancient religions and in folklore. It is the sound of Thor, of Typhoeus, of Mercurious...to name only three of the better known divinities who first spoke to man with invisible voices. It is frequently present in the Bible: "In the dream the angel of God called to me: 'Jacob!' and I answered: 'I am here.'" (Genesis 31:11)....

Radio remained an awe-filled medium even after it was desacralized. There are legends which tell how the ancient kings of Mesopotamia and of China could transmit messages sealed in boxes to governors in distant provinces, who would open the box and hear the commands of the king. In fact, it seems that many emperors deliberately kept themselves hidden from their subjects in order to control them with their voices alone. To have an "audience" with a king implies that one dares not look at him. Audience comes from the Latin *audire* to hear. *Obaudire* in Latin means to hear from below, and it gives us our verb "to obey." Thus, hearing is obeying.

This implied relationship between radio, the spiritual voice of truth and the obligation to obey can, among other things, be used to account for the particular nature of radio news. Unlike newspapers which carry bylines or indicate the source of their story (Canadian Press, Reuter, American Press), radio doesn't identify the person or persons behind the news report. We hear individual reporters but we don't know who directs them, who assigns them, who pulls all of the material together, who decides what's covered, who actually writes the newsreader's words. The news issues from an invisible fountain of truth and

its veracity is underscored by the fact that its source is unknown and unseen. It's fitting that this divine message traditionally has been delivered by a man—a man with a deep, bass voice, one who sounds the way we imagine the omniscient and omnipotent creator himself sounds. We don't usually think of women with their more high-pitched tones as god-like at all, and in the past we've become uncomfortable when they've taken on that role.

—

Our willingness to place our trust in radio people is not confined to "real" speakers in "real" situations. It also extends to "fictional" speakers—those who are clearly playing a role, whether that role consists of convincing listeners to buy a product or convincing them to believe in a contrived dramatic situation. Advertising's success bears out how readily we take to heart what fictional speakers tell us. So strong is the radio speaker's hold on the truth that it's very difficult to create a fictional person who can be generally trusted but who, at the same time, can give us cause to suspect his or her views. Usually, if our idealized speakers don't measure up to our standards we dismiss them outright.

In 1985, when I took on a major series of programs dealing with Louis Riel and the Métis, one of the tasks I set myself was to see how far one could push a speaker's credibility before his persona fell apart. This was done not to satisfy a frivolous curiosity, but to get to the heart of what I then believed was the most important issue surrounding the centenary of the Riel Rebellion (or Métis Uprising as some Métis prefer to call it). Because I was not Métis and therefore could not pretend to speak on their behalf, I needed to find a vehicle that presented the programs from the perspective I myself inevitably brought to bear—that of a white, middle-class male. But at the same time I wanted that perspective to be acknowledged and if possible tested.

Given the racial, political and geographical tensions that came into play in the 1885 conflict and that extended into the present time, one couldn't expect to find a consensus among those who spoke or wrote about Riel and his modern descendants. All had their own political, social and religious biases. Native leaders seeking greater rights and better conditions for their people and politicians who were unprepared to give away the store in order to redress ancient grievances, made

their position clear at the outset. But there were other players in the field whose motives couldn't be readily deciphered. Many were writers who supplied feature stories for magazines and weekend supplements. Most, undoubtedly, subscribed to the principle of journalistic objectively. And yet, here they were barely concealing their support for the Métis cause. Like the prejudiced sportscaster who winces as he replays highlights of a late-game penalty that deprived his team of victory, these writers took open sides in the action they described. More importantly, they didn't seem to be aware of their partiality. If only Dumont had not always deferred to Riel's wishes; if only he could have made Riel see the foolhardiness of encouraging a final stand at Batoche; if only he had been allowed to employ proven guerilla tactics against a vulnerable Canadian militia long before it reached Métis territory; if only, if only... then the Métis would have inflicted sufficient casualties, not to win the war, but at least to secure better conditions once it was all over.

None of these writers was Métis. Like those who wrote the standard histories, they were white, middle-class males. They were related at least racially to the eastern Canadian militiamen who had been brought out to quell the disturbance, yet here they were urging Riel and Dumont to rout the whites. How could this happen? Was the past so remote for them that they had could indulge their fantasies without regard for lives lived? Were they, like the zealous, upstanding citizens who organized crass centenary celebrations, so taken with the exciting mythical past that they had lost touch with what really took place and what it really meant?

The more I studied the subject, the more fascinated I became with how the "myth," the story of Riel and the Métis, had changed from 1885 to the present. For many years after the Battle of Batoche, no one paid much attention to the mutinous Riel and his pernicious followers. Then, after the Second World War and the overthrow of colonial structures in Africa and India as well as the revelations of Nazi horrors, it was common to see the Métis as an oppressed minority. By the rebellious sixties, Riel was a revolutionary hero in the mould of Ché Guevera, and by the liberal seventies it was time to talk of rectifying past injustices. Anyone writing or speaking about Riel and the Métis in the eighties was also operating within a myth. I decided I wanted to find out what that myth was and what it told us about ourselves.

But how does one do that?

I had long been squirming within the straightjacket of conventional radio documentaries in which an "expert" voice explicates a particular position using illustrative quotes from others to substantiate this opinion. No matter how much the internal elements of the program represented differing points of view, there was still a prevailing and unrevealed perspective which controlled the whole. It was there in the choice of subject, the questions asked and not asked, the tone of voice, the overall sound. In this instance I felt I couldn't commit myself to a single truth which the standard documentary requires. When one considers Riel and his place in Canadian and Métis history, and what that means for all Canadians, we are dealing with multiple truths. The Métis woman living on welfare with no support for her three children has a different truth from the person defining military strategy at Batoche or the one demanding a posthumous pardon for Riel.

I wanted to build perspective into the series, to make that perspective its governing principle, and to have that perspective appraised. Instead of simply presenting the final product in its finished form, I wanted to show how that product came to be. I wanted to reveal what is behind the decision to include this point and exclude that one. I wanted listeners to think critically about how the ingredients that make up a program or a myth are processed into an end result. By exposing that process I wanted to show that the result is neither sacrosanct nor immutable; it may apply in this instance under these circumstances but at another time under different conditions it would be different. I wanted us to judge whether the myth presented was one to which we could subscribe or whether it might prompt us to create our own. It wasn't possible to remain neutral or to claim pure objectivity when dealing with Métis issues, and so by reversing the normal way of proceeding (show the making of the thing before showing the thing itself) I hoped to promote a lively analysis about the series' conclusions.

This was all fine in theory but how does one put it into practice?

Originally, I had approached Rex Deverell to work on one of the five hour programs. But once the series became a more integrated entity with loftier aspirations, I realized I needed someone able to write dialogue and create dramatic situations, so I asked him to work with me on all five. After considerable thought and discussion, we finally agreed to do the series as a

commission of inquiry. A public inquiry is a typically Canadian way of getting at the root of a matter and finding solutions to problems. Since we frequently do this through our legislative bodies, then why not on radio? I would organize a public forum to which Métis would be invited to express their views on various topics. Excerpts from those public statements, as well as comments from interviews I conducted, would then be placed into a fictional situation so that it sounded as if these people were directly addressing a commissioner. Rex would create the commissioner after all the material had been assembled. The construct of *The Riel Commission: An Inquiry into the Survival of a People* was therefore fictional, but those appearing before the commission would be real people speaking their own thoughts. The commissioner would consider all kinds of submissions—poems, stories, plays, songs, as well as verbal statements. At the end of five nights of testimony, he would submit a report. Having heard exactly what he has (selected and edited to fit into five hours), we would therefore be able to judge whether his report was fair, accurate or responsible.

Everything went as planned. The programs moved smoothly from present to past to future; they switched freely from this geographical location to that one. The series was a success because, among other things, it managed to make a theory work in practice. It won a major American award for "creative use of the medium." But even though it garnered accolades from many quarters for its innovative and imaginative approach, I was less than euphoric at what it had accomplished. For it wasn't until I was halfway through the production, after I had firmly committed myself to this concept and couldn't turn back, that I realized I had made a basic mistake. By routing natives' opinions through the character of a white, middle-class commissioner, I may have been reflecting the way things have been done in the past and how things are done today, but at the same time I was also perpetuating a way of thinking that was surely out of place in Canada in the 1980s. Instead of being progressive, I had in fact simply found a new way to keep an old attitude and an outmoded approach entrenched.

This, however, was not an understanding I came to on my own. It was forced on me by natives who refused to participate in the series, who refused to play our game. Whites had taken their land, their language, their dignity, they said. Now we wanted their stories as well. But we wouldn't get them. In some

cases this was all they had left of their ancestral selves. My ideas were noble and fine in theory and would probably work very well on the radio, they said. But one fact remained. Here, as always before, whites received the money, the air time, the glory, while natives remained the subjects, the specimens, searching futilely for a forum in which to express their realities on their own terms.

—

Natives have not fared well in the Canadian media. Their stories are seldom told and they are rarely hired. Its only within the last fifteen years that they have actually begun to control their own broadcasting systems. In Saskatchewan, native-operated stations are found only in the northern part of the province. They were begun as community stations, and they receive their money either from the local town or village council, from fees assessed to the cable television service which carries them or more importantly, from radio bingos.

The first native community to have a station was Green Lake. The Green Lake Broadcasting Commission formed CHGL-FM in 1977 to provide local news, community bulletins, interviews and music in both English and Cree. Licensed for 50 watts, it generally only broadcasts on 10 watts because its transmitter isn't capable of producing more power. It has one full-time employee who works three hours per day in the winter and six hours per day the rest of the year.

All of the other native-run stations were created in the early eighties, and most of them use programs produced by the Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation, located in La Ronge. Missinipi was the direct result of a 1983 federal program (the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program), which supplied money to independent native broadcasting societies in order to protect aboriginal languages and culture in northern areas. Missinipi has a staff of twelve and broadcasts twenty hours of Cree and Dene programs per week over CBC transmitters. It also runs a low power community station, CJLR-FM. It trains community radio people from throughout the north and provides tapes of its cultural and current affairs shows to anyone who is interested.

Stations taking Missinippi's programs are:

CJLK-FM, Wollaston Lake, which broadcasts in Dene and which is on the air whenever it can raise enough money through bingo. Local residents of this fly-in community of 750

occasionally come in to play their own records and in the summer students provide programming. "It's hard to keep going," says James McKay, who administers the station.

CIBN, Buffalo Narrows, which has three full-time employees and which broadcasts in both English and Cree. Set up by the local community authority, it receives most of its money from the television service with which it's associated. It also makes a bit of money from advertising. During the day it broadcasts country, light rock and gospel music along with interview programs and interviews; at night it picks up a satellite service from CFMI-FM, Vancouver.

CJAZ-FM, Pelican Narrows, which doesn't have the finances to originate its own programs and which rebroadcasts music from a satellite service. With its 10-watt transmitter, it reaches 784 people in the hamlet and another 1400-1500 in the neighbouring reserve. It also only broadcasts in English. "People from the community don't want to get on the radio and talk Cree; they want to sound like Earl Cameron," says Ernest McKay, chairperson of the committee which runs the station.

CHPN-FM, La Loche, which is part of a combined radio and television operation. It is on the air until noon when it picks up "Keewatin Country," a CBC program from La Ronge; in the afternoon it carries Missinipi programs. The station has one and a half full-time positions and broadcasts in English and Dene.

CILX-FM, Île-á-la-Crosse, which started as a community station and which has since passed into the hands of its former manager, Harold Belanger. Belanger runs the station through his company, Belanger Communications, Inc. He calls himself a private entrepreneur and he envisions running a northern network of private stations which will abandon bingo as their primary source of income and raise money through advertising, membership fees and cable fees. "My first priority is to get into cable; then I want to set up regional production centres and a network," he says."We're seeing a change in broadcasting. By tapping into a potential market of twelve thousand to fifteen thousand people in the area, we could give Missinipi a run for their money."

It took radio almost a decade to recognize and acknowledge a culture other than British. It took until the sixties for a person with a non-Anglo-Saxon name to host a major program—Peter Gzowski and "This Country in the Morning." And it took until the eighties for natives to gain control of stations so they could

hear their own voices, a situation that is unlikely to survive the nineties unless the federal government makes a commitment to restore money drastically cut from native media budgets in early 1990.

13

Making the Links

RADIO HAS DEVELOPED IN SASKATCHEWAN IN MUCH THE same way it has in other parts of the country, and its traits are similar to the traits of radio in any society which shares our basic values and beliefs. Like elsewhere, its history here is characterized by doing whatever is necessary to get accepted and stay in public favour. Occasionally, it has broadcast alternate programming and unusual music, but it's seldom been a revolutionary force questioning the tenets of its culture. Seeking to become part of the establishment, it has supported and maintained the status quo. Now entrenched, its messages rarely challenge or disturb us; they serve to reassure us that no matter how bad things may seem to be, everything will turn out all right in the end. Its aim is to please the greatest number of listeners, so that advertisers will continue to buy time and parliamentarians continue to provide public funds for its operation. Opinion polls show it's succeeding in this goal. In 1985, for example, Gallup found that of 1033 questioned across Canada, 54 per cent were very satisfied and 34 per cent somewhat satisfied with radio programming. These figures are consistent with subsequent findings on radio's acceptability.

It's understandable that such an influential institution should reflect the dominant ideology of its society, because it's only with that society's sanction that it can occupy its privileged position. And so while it might criticize certain attitudes and actions from time to time, it can't be allowed to consistently undermine the fundamentals of its group or pose

an actual threat to its existence. Radio and the culture that produces it, therefore, are in a symbiotic and mutually reflective relationship, a relationship that in the twenties prompted British producer Archie Harding to declare that all broadcasting was propaganda; because it didn't attack the anomalies of the system, he said, it was propaganda in tacit support of them.

But this integrated alliance in itself is insufficient to account for the medium's longevity and continuing influence. There's more to the radio listening experience than just this; there's something about it that fulfills a need greater than ideological gratification and that underlies everything that has been broadcast from the earliest days to the present. That something, I think, is related to the fact that radio is essentially a unifying process. I've already mentioned that the medium operates on the principle of bringing together fragments of a fragmented world, and that in certain programs, such as open-line shows, it connects listeners in an audible way. But there's also a more basic unity at work, one that arises from a large number of people over a wide area experiencing the same event at the same time. Listeners don't know the identity of others who are similarly tuned in at that moment, but there's a bond between them because they all have a common point of reference. Evan Eisenberg says:

> Radio puts its dispersed listeners under the spell of a shared event. The ritual aura of live performance—rhetorical, musical, what have you—is broadcast. This has nothing to do with radio waves or brain waves; it is a simple matter of simultaneity.

Unlike listening to music from your own collection, which no one else hears and which according to Eisenberg "reinforces your invisibility by giving you a private structure of time to set against public time," listening to the radio makes you part of an acknowledged audience. You're not actually visible to others but your presence is implied. Essential to this sense of community with others is radio's liveness. It's taking place now at this very moment. If you catch it, you're part of the process; if you miss it, you're excluded. Unlike the newspaper which people read at any time of day, and unlike television whose schedule is carefully planned and announced and whose programs can be taped for later viewing, radio is unpredictable and operates totally in the present.

Because radio occurs while we're doing other things, it binds us to our activity through the associations our minds conjure. All of us have undoubtedly had the experience of hearing a particular song many, many times under different circumstances, and yet always thinking of it in connection with a specific location or situation. It's easier in some cases than others to understand how or why this happens. For example, when people during the Beatles era inquired, "What were you doing when you first heard 'Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band'?" they were asking us to measure a major musical breakthrough in personal terms. Recollecting the activity made us feel indirectly a part of that accomplishment and it allowed us to relate to others who were similarly affected by the album.

Music has always been an important staple in radio programming, I think, because as an abstract sound it carries few inherent meanings and associations, and thus allows listeners limitless scope to bring their own. The lyrics to songs might make a statement, but once that's done, the words lose their specific significance. After hearing a song several times we usually don't pay conscious attention to the words. Instead, we allow ourselves to be carried along by the beat and the mood of the music. When this happens, our mind tends to wander, flitting and perching wherever it will, seeking associations that have personal significance. Radio capitalizes on this process by carefully programming the kind of music it plays. Madonna's vampish croonings at 7:30 in the morning and 2:30 in the afternoon imbue the day with the tempo and beat of evening activities. The raunchy lyrics and driving rhythms are intended to evoke images from our leisure time and give the working day more colourful hues. The sounds of night have been allied with the activities of the day, making it easier for us to accept unavoidable obligations and heed exhortations to buy.

Many stations in Saskatchewan, as in the rest of the country, have recently changed their formats to appeal to the "baby boomers"—those in their thirties and forties who have the most money to spend. These stations are playing a high ratio of hits from the past in the hopes of rekindling the good feelings people had when they were growing up. They reckon Buddy Holly, The Mamas and the Papas, and the Guess Who can stimulate this now affluent group to buy the products that make this music possible on the radio. So far those stations have been right. Not only are the old familiar tunes successful-

ly reviving memories of budding romances and adolescent high jinks, but they're also reaffirming the success stories of those who have the wealth and influence today. "Remember the high expectations you had those days?" the music says. "Well, it's pretty much turned out as you planned, hasn't it?"

Given radio's ability to re-associate us with our past, one might speculate on the musical future of singers like Alannah Myles, Phil Collins or Michael Jackson. How will they be remembered in 2010 and will they be part of the radio schedule then? Will that, in turn, depend on whether the 1990s lay the foundations for massive unrest and nuclear disintegration or for greater personal fulfillment? As for the mainstream music in the next century, the conventional thinking is that songs will slow down, become gentler, more relaxed, in order to meet the needs of the now aged baby boomers, who'll make up a sizeable proportion of the population and who'll be looking for something more in tune with their sedate present.

—

Music, like everything else on the air, appears in the context of a speaker and becomes a component of that person's "story." And it's through "story," which I think of here in the broad, cultural sense as shared experience, that radio and speakers will continue to connect with listeners.

Most of us are familiar with some of the methods speakers use to bring the various and diverse elements they work with in line with their character and their role so as to make these elements an integral part of their presence. The host of a pop music show, for example, will begin playing a song under his or her introduction to it so that the concurrence of voice and music will induce listeners to think of them as being connected. And the person who reads the news leads us through stories prepared and recorded by a number of different reporters earlier in the day in such a way that these reporters sound as if they too are operating in the present; all appear to have a common purpose. A CBC memo points out how this is most effectively achieved.

> In news stories, the focus is best applied by writing the story in one piece. Lop off the first couple of lines—the ones that arise directly from the first part of the focus. Give them to the announcer. Reporter takes over from there. All of a sudden, announcer and reporter are telling the same story. There's no gap—in time, place or logic—between them.

There have been many masterful storytellers during radio's history and they've come in many guises, but apart from those I've already mentioned, one of the most engaging ones in central Saskatchewan in the sixties and seventies was a man named, appropriately enough, Story. He was Bill Story, agricultural reporter for CFQC. There were few formal stories on the air any more when he first appeared and the techniques he learned from his predecessors enabled him to exert an influence that went far beyond the significance of what he said. Like all the good practitioners of his trade, he had the self-assurance to be who he was and remain true to his conception of himself. By proceeding with implicit self-knowledge, he inspired the confidence listeners needed in order to follow him wherever he took them.

A vigorous proponent of the old ways, he was during the anxious sixties a comforting embodiment of the past. He spoke in an authoritative, clipped manner with a deep, sharp voice that reminded me of an RCMP trainer shaping up raw recruits. Over the years he developed a pattern from which he rarely deviated. On Mondays he would report on the crop conditions he had observed while driving around the countryside during the weekend in his half-ton. Every second or third day he would announce missing livestock; a yearling heifer, all black except for a white triangle on her face and a white stripe down her back, had wandered away from a feedlot three miles south of.... If you've seen her, call.... At least twice a week he would give news of 4-H events in the province, with each report ending with the line, "and 4-H is the biggest thing going on in the world today." Then would follow the two words which ended every broadcast, "Okay? Okay!" You didn't learn very much about agriculture because it was obvious his understanding of the issues seldom went beyond the press release he had received. As for the blatantly promotional interviews he often conducted, they could only be explained as the result of some slick fellow flattering his ego or treating him to a free lunch. Despite his journalistic shortcomings and questionable motives, however, we listened faithfully. Our noon meal wouldn't be the same without him.

He had a big audience and he made the most of his popularity when it seemed fit. I once saw him incite a group of disgruntled farmers into an emotional fervour over the issue of government compensation for cattlemen whose herds had

contracted brucellosis. Those organizing the meeting had succeeded in getting him to air their grievances over his program, and since he was clearly an ally in their struggle, it was only natural that he be part of their continuing attempt to get action. They asked him to come to the meeting, and after everyone else had had their say he was asked to add a few words of his own. His performance was magnificent. He warmed them up with a few comments about insensitive and useless politicians and by the time he had finished with a denunciation of civil servants, unable and unwilling to do a full day's work, there was thunderous applause. It was an act that would have got any other reporter fired. But how much his employers were aware of his extracurricular antics or how much they cared was another matter. If people continued listening to him over the radio in the large numbers they obviously did and advertisers continued to buy time, little else probably mattered. Everything was okay, okay?

—

Broadcasters have used radio's integrative function for laudable purposes, but they've also exploited it for financial gain. Roy Currie, who has spent his entire career with private stations in the province—first as announcer, then as manager and finally as owner—is blunt in his assessment of the degree to which the medium has been perverted.

> Radio today is simply a mechanical contrivance that is nothing more than an advertising medium. Stations exist only to make money. They talk a lot about rights but not about their responsibility. Responsibility is the furthest thing from their minds. And instead of being over-regulated as the industry says it is, I think it's under-regulated. If you want to be a cook, for example, you need to be trained so you don't poison anyone. But right now there's nothing protecting us from being poisoned over the air. We're getting nothing more than high voltage babble carried out by semi-literate high school drop-outs.

Art Wallman of CKSW, Swift Current adds:

> We don't really have time to entertain any more. It's just the dollar sign, that's what it amounts to now. It's one commercial after the other, and if you get a chance, you throw in the odd tune. And in a lot of cases you have to cut them down because you're running out of time. You find yourself picking music that's short. A five-minute tune like Marty Robbin's "El Paso"—you wouldn't have time to play it any more. In today's

> high-pressure, high-energy radio you have to tailor your music, look around and find a tune that's maybe two and a half, three minutes long. It used to be you could maybe say a few things about the artist, give a little trivia, a little anecdote here and there. But now you don't have time for that. A time check maybe and you talk over an intro and get on to the next dollar sign.

Of this contemporary situtation, Murray Schafer says:

> Radio as we have it today is the handmaiden of the mechanical revolution, I would not say of the electric revolution, which flows with continuous currents and knows nothing of the concatenated interlock of the industrial machine. The antecedents for contemporary radio, for better or worse, are to be found in the regimen of the monastery, the army and the slave camp. Had the radio been invented during the Industrial Revolution, I know factory owners would have seized it as a means of securing punctual and efficient service from their workers. No wonder employers welcome it today in banks and shops and offices as a means of improving performance in boring and frequently stupid jobs. This is where radio stands at present. It pulses with society organized for maximum production and consumption.

The more solidly established radio has become, the less attention we have given it. We've relaxed our vigilance and let it go about its business with minimum interference. We've quit thinking about it or discussing it. It's just something that is there, a daily presence we take for granted. Because we usually listen to it while we're doing other things, it has ceased to be at the centre of our cultural consciousness, overtaken by television for which we now reserve our critical comments. Radio provokes neither intense scrutiny nor passionate debate, as it once did.

Any kind of writing having to do with the medium has long since disappeared from newspapers. The most you will find today is the occasional story based on a press release, or else a personality profile. Otherwise, radio writing is found almost exclusively in specialized trade magazines and journals, where it follows the careers of those in the industry and outlines the latest technical innovations and market surveys which can be put to practical use. It is oriented towards those who work in this now big business and who are always looking for ways to improve their operations and maximize their profits. Sometimes an article will also show up in an academic journal.

If newspaper editors were asked why they no longer cover radio on a regular basis, they would probably reply that there's really not much to say about the subject. When radio was the prime vehicle for mass entertainment, one could always write about the stars, the dramas, the orchestras, the programs that drew millions of listeners. But what's the point of talking about "Flea Market," the special hour of golden oldies, the rolling home show, the hockey broadcast? In a way, they might even seem right. But if one thinks of radio as a cultural institution instead of as a collection of individual programs, then such arguments are less compelling.

A radio station is linked more directly and more immediately to its public than most organized activities, including the newspaper and there's an opportunity here to examine ourselves through an event that engages all of us for part of each day, that coerces or cajoles us into acting in a certain way and that helps keep us content with our lot.

Given radio's influence and importance, I think there are at least three current issues that require discussion and possible action in order for the medium to remain a healthy and positive force in the country.

We need to consider the implications of the unprecedented number of outside sounds available to Saskatchewan listeners. People in the north who can't receive southern stations tune into programs from British Columbia and Alberta via satellite. Meanwhile, in the rest of the province, more and more private stations are relying on syndicated programs imported from the United States—everything from the top tunes of the week to talk shows to evangelical hours. These local stations are allowed to make it sound as if they themselves have produced these programs and in many cases they make no special effort to acknowledge that these shows originate in the United States. As a result, Canadians listening to Canadian stations hear Americans talking to Americans about events that are clearly only of interest to Americans. Such programming and the deceptive way in which it is presented threatens to drag us back into our colonial past.

We need to consider the implications of radio's increasing tendency to voluntarily expose its inner workings and to reveal its awareness of itself. Speakers don't camouflage their bodies as much as they used to, and in some cases we can actually hear them move about the studio as they try to cram a group of guests into their constrained space. They are not afraid to

admit their limitations, as when Vicki Gabereau, complimented by her interviewee for possessing an arcane bit of knowledge, says, "Oh, I'm not smart. I got that from my researcher." This draws attention to an important person behind the scenes and at the same time makes us feel good about a host who is comfortable enough with her abilities so as not to have to fake superior knowledge. Even the news is being affected. When CBC's news editor—the person who decides what goes on each newscast—comes in a few minutes each morning to talk about what stories reporters are following that day, the news loses its divine aspect and takes on a more human quality; it shows itself to be governed by the same subjective choices that characterize the rest of our human activities.

And finally, we need to consider ways of strengthening the position of those broadcasters who don't necessarily share the mainstream's values and priorities and who aren't governed by the imperatives of existing public and private stations. In the seventies, for example, CJUS-FM was able to do what no other station was prepared to do—broadcast in their entirety the hearings set up to determine whether a uranium refinery should be built at Warman. Other stations had reports and interpretations of what went on, but only on CJUS-FM could you hear everything that was said during one of the most important political debates to take place in the province that decade. Small, alternate stations need to be recognized as being important in themselves and not just places where aspiring broadcasters can get training for more glorious employment elsewhere.

—

Ideally, critical attention leads to positive action; it gives broadcasters an outside perspective from which to judge what they are doing and motivates them to create stories we remember:

Stories like Bud Dallin's "Saturday Night Barn Dance," heard many years ago over CKBI. Dallin spoke about the Big Red Barn being a few miles out of Prince Albert. But no one acquainted with the area knew exactly where it was. They had never seen it. And still, every Saturday night, Dallin took us there. We'd join a large milling crowd which shouted, "More, more!" every time a song ended. Dallin would ring his cow bell, get another couple to come to the front ("Just over to the right here please") and try to move another couple into a space

near the back wall, just under the flag. Then, when everyone was ready, he would cue the orchestra and we'd be off into the next dance. There was of course no Big Red Barn and Dallin never left the studio. The crowd sounds came from a twenty-four-inch diameter disc and the music from records. We may have guessed this was the case but we could never be sure. Whenever Dallin himself was asked whether there was such a thing as the Big Red Barn, he would smile coyly and say, "Do you believe in Santa Claus?"

Stories like the one by Patrick Lane and Lorna Crozier which profoundly affected Reverend Cam Yates of the First Baptist Church in Regina. He spoke of it in a sermon entitled, "The Gates of Hell Cannot Prevail."

> Now, not too long ago I happened to make reference to evil in a sermon. And I can recall someone saying to me, you know we don't hear much about that. And you're probably wondering, where is Cam, that he's going to be preaching about this again. Well, I'll tell you, its not where I am, it's where I was.
>
> A couple of weeks ago I was in the car driving home Saturday afternoon, and I had the CBC on. And there was a radio commentary on Chile . . . the violation of human rights in this nation. And the two people who had gone down there to do this radio documentary were telling the listening audience, of which I was part at that point, of some of the horror, of the torture, that had taken place.
>
> And as I listened I have to say to you it made me sick. I was paralyzed with a fear like I hadn't understood before. I hadn't felt that before. . . . basically, because what I was hearing as they described what took place, I could not believe that could come from the mind of any one person. And yet it did.
>
> The forms of torture I would not even mention here. And I would not mention them even if you came to me and said, what was it? It was that kind of program, that stuck in my mind so, severely, that I wish I had never heard it. From time to time the image comes back and I remember what I heard. And I wish it would go away.

Stories like the one a Quebec couple heard while passing through Saskatchewan a few years ago. It was Geoffrey Ursell's futuristic radio play *The Great Bridge Plan*, which involved a scheme to drain all water from Saskatchewan and build a bridge over the province because the area wasn't fit for human habitation anyway. The political tone of the piece struck a responsive chord with our eastern visitors and they recounted with Gallic exuberance its intoxicating effect. "We

were so blown away from the humour, inside truths, fantastic script, we had to stop by the roadside to recuperate for close to two hours."

A writer once told me how much he enjoyed a production of his sequence of poems and that after the broadcast his mother confessed, "I didn't know they were that good." Her back-handed compliment implied that actors, music and sound effects had given the poems a quality they didn't possess on their own. That wasn't true of course. We had simply brought out qualities that had been in the poetry all along. For listeners and especially for those involved in a production, there's a joy that comes from hearing words come alive, when inert notations on a page and voices round a microphone are magically transformed into flesh-and-blood people, and when those people consequently make us laugh or shout or cry. When that happens, all the other tribulations associated with the business recede into the background. It's for those special times that I work in radio and why, now that this story is finished, I can return to the studio to start others.

Bibliographic Notes

Several books on radio in Canada have been published in the last twenty-five years, and although they are entertaining and of immense value in understanding how the present system came about, they are virtually silent on what has gone on in this province. Bill McNeil and Morris Wolfe's *Signing On: The Birth of Radio in Canada* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1982), a collection of anecdotes and statements by radio's pioneers (including twelve from Saskatchewan) is the closest we come to hearing about the experiences of those directly involved in the business. The only book to deal exclusively with private broadcasting, T.J. Allard's *Straight Up: Private Broadcasting in Canada: 1918-1958* (Ottawa: Heritage House Publishers, 1979), documents in a plodding way the development and concerns of private stations. Former president of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, the organization representing these stations, Allard unfortunately lacks much of the imaginative flair that private broadcasters themselves display. The most comprehensive books on the major issues in broadcasting are Frank W. Peers's *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting: 1920-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969) and E. Austin Weir's *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965). I have relied on Peers especially for background to the early years. Two other books, Warner Troyer's *The Sound and the Fury: An Anecdotal History of Canadian Broadcasting* (Rexdale, Ontario: John Wiley and Sons, 1980) and Sandy Stewart's *From Coast to Coast: A Personal History of Radio in Canada* (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1985), are exactly what their titles indicate, with neither having anything on Saskatchewan.

In writing this book, I drew on articles from the province's newspapers, of which *The Western Producer* was most valuable, and from materials in the Saskatchewan Archives Board and the University of Saskatchewan Archives. Most importantly, I went to the radio people themselves. I was fortunate to have had access to an important set of interviews Kenneth Bambrick

conducted in 1977, housed at the National Archives in Ottawa (Kenneth Bambrick Collection, 1977-118). The Saskatchewan broadcasters he spoke to, some of whose comments appear here, were H.A. Crittenden, W.V. Chestnut, Fred Usher, Leonard Cozine, Herb Roberts, Lloyd Westmoreland, Sid Boyling, Lyn Hoskins, Wilf Collier, Bill Speers, Walter Dales, Lyman Potts, R.H. Hahn, Andy McDermott and Bert Hooper. A valuable Bert Hooper interview is also located at the provincial archives in Regina. The Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon office, has interviews with Carl O'Brien and Bertram Tash, whom I quote, while CBC Archives in Toronto has short statements by A.A. Murphy and Horace Stovin. Murphy and Stovin were part of a network program called "Assignment," 13 May 1958. I am grateful to all these organizations for making these interviews available and for permission to use them.

Finally, I did many interviews myself, either in person or by long-distance telephone. All those that were taped have been placed with the Saskatchewan Archives Board in Regina. Listed below are those I spoke to:

Chuck Adams, Doug Alexander, Yvette Balkwill, Ian Barrie, Geoffrey Bartlett, Ches Beachell, Harold Belanger, Rody Blancher, Jim Blundell, Louis Bourgeois, Martha Bowes, Sid Boyling, William Clement Budd, Richard Buzik, Bill Cameron, Jack Cennon, Marv Chase, Larry Christie, Herb Clark, Willy Cole, Roy Currie, Bud Dallin, Vern Dallin, H.C. Dane, Terri Daniels, Roberta Davies, Ken Davy, Harry Dekker, Murray Dobbin, George Dobson, Mike Douglas, Vic Dubois, Marsh Ellis, Leonard Enns, Johnny Esaw, Stan Ewert, Randy Fidler, Clarence Fines, Dennis Fisher, Charles Friedrick, Doug Gailey, George Gallagher, Napoleon Gardiner, Laurier Gareau, Gus Gerecke, Wilfred Gilby, Elwood Glover, Lorne Harasen, Ruth Haughn, Lorraine Hawksworth, Godfrey Hudson, Dave Innes, Dick Irvin, Don Kerr, Edna Kinlock, Cy Knight, Bob Knowles, Jim Laing, Ron Laliberte, André Lalonde, "Scoop" Lewry, Eileen Bradley Lillico, Dolores MacFarlane, Irwin McIntosh, Bert McKay, Ernest McKay, Jim McKay, Ricky McKay, Stuart McKay, Raymond Marcotte, Robert Merasty, Spencer Moore, Leigh Morrow, Gertrude Murray, Rhea Naish, Bev Norton, Pete Parker, Reg Parker, Mary Pattison, Kenny Peaker, Irene Pedersen, Merv Pickford, Lyman Potts, Gerry Quinney, Stan Ravndahl, Doug Rawlinson, E.A. Rawlinson,

Don Redmond, Herb Roberts, Roy Romanow, Kay Sadlemyer, Ed Saher, Kim Sather, Jim Scarrow, Marion Sherman, Ron Smith, Stan Solberg, Rhoda Stirling, Bill Stovin, DeLisle Thompson, Vern Traill, Gordon Walburn, Bill Walker, Art Wallman, Don Wanhella, Cecil A. Wheaton, Wax Williams, Don Wright and Dale Yoos.

Notes

Chapter One: Beginnings

p. 1: Film of CKCK's opening made by Dick Bird and held at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina (VTR-1286.5).

p. 4: *The Leader*, Regina, 29 July 1922, p. 1.

p. 6: The Radiotelegraph Act, in *From Spark to Space: The Story of Amateur Radio in Canada* (Saskatoon: Saskatoon Amateur Radio Club VE5AA, 1968), p. 8.

p. 8: Catherine Humphrey Stalker, from a letter to me.

p. 9: Maurice Wheeler, from a letter to me.

Chapter Two: Spirited Growth

p. 14: Wilf Collier, cited in Bill McNeil and Morris Wolfe, *Signing On: The Birth of Radio in Canada*, (Toronto: Doubleday, 1982), p.128.

p. 15: Horace Stovin, interviewed for CBC's "Assignment," 13 May 1958.

p. 15: "...like buying an automobile...." From transcript of Carl O'Brien interview, 1976, in Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

p. 15: Advertising definitions from the Fifty-sixth Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1922-23 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1923), p. 141.

p. 17: A.A. Murphy, interviewed for CBC's "Assignment," 13 May 1958.

pp. 18-19: Mary Vipond, from a letter to me.

p. 19: Saskatoon Board of Trade letter in *The Saskatoon Daily Star*, 9 January 1927, p. 6. W.F. Salter's reply was printed 9 February 1927, p. 3.

p. 19: Author interview with Rhea Naish, 1986.

p. 20: Bachelor, in *The Western Producer*, 15 December 1927, p. 2.

p. 21: Mayor Dunn, in the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*, 17 May 1923, p. 3.

p. 22: 10AB, in *The Western Producer*, 15 December 1927, p. 7.

p. 22: "...amusement to the radio public." From the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, 10 March 1923.

p. 23: Author interview with Geoffrey Bartlett, 1986.

p. 26: Bill Speers cited in *Signing On*, pp. 126-7.

p. 26: Andy McDermott cited in *Signing On*, p. 125.

p. 27: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Bert Hooper, 1976.

p. 28: Doug Alexander, Saskatchewan Archives Board, interview with Bert Hooper.

p. 29: *The Western Producer* contest, 12 January 1928, p. 7.

p. 31: Author interview with Geoffrey Bartlett, 1986.

Chapter Three: Unholy Battles

p. 33: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Wilf Collier, 1986.

pp. 34-35: The statements about CJWC, the Wheat Pool and the Grain Exchange are from letters and articles in *The Western Producer*. CJWC's statement (p. 35) is from 20 January 1928, p. 16.

pp. 36-37: A. Thomson, from "The President's Address to Members of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange," 14 September 1927, p. 13.

p. 37: Author interview with Geoffrey Bartlett, 1986.

p. 37: Reverend Thacker, from *The Leader*, 7 August 1922, p. 8.

pp. 38-39: Immigration/Ku Klux Klan information from several sources: Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); William Calderwood, "Religious Reactions to the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan," *Saskatchewan History* 26 (Autumn, 1973), pp. 103-114; William Calderwood, "The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Regina, 1968; Patrick Kyba, "Ballots and Burning Crosses—the Election of 1929," *Politics in Saskatchewan*, edited by Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (Don Mills, Ontario: Longmans Canada Ltd., 1968), pp. 105-23.

p. 38: Bishop George Exton Lloyd from *The Star-Phoenix*, Saskatoon, 10 October 1928, p. 4 ("good Britisher"); 19 September 1928, p. 4 ("influx"); *The Saskatoon Daily Star*, 15 August 1928, p. 4 ("mongrel").

p. 39: Canon Bird, in *The Western Producer*, 29 September 1927, p. 1.

p. 39: "she-cat," in Kyba, p. 115.

p. 39: Ku Klux Klan poetic credo, in *The Western Producer*, 3 November 1927, p. 4.

pp. 39-40: From transcript of Bertram Tash interview, 1975, in Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

p. 40: P.J.A. Cardin, from House of Commons Debates, 12 April 1928, p. 1951.

pp. 40-41: Rev. Reid, in *The Saskatoon Daily Star*, 23 April 1928, p. 6. *Star* editorial, 7 June 1928, p. 4.

p. 41: "...regulation in the interest...." From *The Saskatoon Daily Star*, 7 June 1928, p. 4.

p. 41: Editorial in *The Western Producer*, 5 April 1928, p. 4.

pp. 41-42: Cardin, p. 1952.

Chapter Four: A National Service

p. 44: Author interview with Herb Roberts, 1986.

p. 44: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Jack Carlyle, 1977.

pp. 44-45: CNR church story, cited in Weir, *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), pp. 11-12.

pp. 45-46: Prime Minister Mackenzie King, cited in Weir, pp. 38-39.

pp. 46-47: Horace Stovin's articles appeared in *The Western Producer*, 28 February-28 March, 1929.

p. 47: Aird hearings, in *The Western Producer*, 29 April 1929, p. 3 and 30 April 1929, p. 7.

p. 48: Aird Report in Roger Bird (ed.), *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988), pp. 41-54.

pp. 48-49: Graham Spry, in *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 22 March 1932, p. 3.

p. 49: F.W. Turnbull from *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Special Committee on the Operations of the Commission*

under the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act, 1932, 16 March 1934, pp. 499-504.

p. 50: Letter from Saskatchewan government from *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 16 March 1934, p. 504.

p. 51: Hector Charlesworth from *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 9 March 1934, pp. 268-269.

p. 55: Andy McDermott cited in *Signing On*, p. 124.

p. 56: Author interview with Pete Parker, 1986.

pp. 56-57: Fred Usher cited in *Signing On*, p. 130.

Chapter Five: A Sound Base

pp. 58-59: Author interview with Vern Dallin, 1986.

p. 59: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Walter Dales, 1976.

p. 59: "self-confessed sinner," Kenneth Bambrick interview with Bill Speers, 1976.

pp. 59-61: Prince Albert Radio Club letter, 31 May 1929, in City of Prince Albert City Clerk Files 905.38; p. 60: Department of Marine and Fisheries response, 11 June 1929 in clerk files; p. 60-61: 10BI petition to Hector Charlesworth, 19 July 1933, in clerk files.

p. 61: Author interview with Ken Davy, 1986, regarding Lloyd Moffat.

p. 61: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Walter Dales, 1976.

p. 62: "ACT Amateur Hour," in CKBI files, reprinted in *The Valley Echo*, August, 1954.

p. 63: Author interview with Wilf Gilby, 1986.

pp. 63-64: John Hayden, CKBI files.

p. 65: Author interview with Elwood Glover, 1986.

p. 65: Author interview with Eileen Bradley Lillico, 1986.

p. 67: Dick Punshon, in *Western People*, 2 August 1979, WP2.

p. 68: Editorial in *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*, 13 May 1938, p. 6.

p. 69: Author interview with Elwood Glover, 1986.

p. 69: Transcript of Carl O'Brien interview, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

pp. 69-70: Transcript of Carl O'Brien interview, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

p. 70: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Lyman Potts, 1976.

p. 70: Author interview with Godfrey Hudson, 1986.

p. 71: Author interview with George Dobson, 1986.

pp. 72-74: J.S. Base columns from the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*: ("Central Avenue," p. 72), 5 March 1934, p. 2; ("stir up," p. 72), 29 January 1934, p. 72; ("piano classics," p. 72), 4 January 1934, p. 2; ("Canadian entertainers," p. 72), 30 January 1934, p. 2; ("sit by your radio," p. 73), 5 January 1934, p. 2; ("U.S. Navy Band," p. 73), 21 January 1934, p. 2; ("scarcity of population," p. 74), 9 February 1934, p. 2.

Chapter Six: Wartime Prominence

p. 75: Author interview with Lyman Potts, 1986.

p. 76: Author interview with Vern Dallin, 1986.

p. 76-77: CBC 1941 report, cited in Warner Troyer, *The Sound and the Fury: An Anecdotal History of Canadian Broadcasting* (Rexdale, Ontario: John Wiley and Sons Limited, 1980), p.89.

p. 77: Author interview with Godfrey Hudson, 1986.

p. 78: Damiano Pietropaolo, "Structuring 'Truth': The Uses of Drama in 'Information' Radio," in *Canadian Theatre Review* 36 (Fall, 1982), p. 54.

p. 79: Author interview with Bill Cameron, 1986.

p. 79: Art Crighton cited in *Signing On*, p. 133.

p. 79: Herbert Whittaker, cited in Weir, *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), pp. 394-95.

pp. 80-81: Mary Pattison, "Three Thousand Visits with 'The Jacksons and Their Neighbours,'" *CBC Times*, X, 50, 6 December 1957, pp. 3-4.

p. 82: Rupert Ramsey, from 17 May 1943 broadcast, in University of Saskatchewan archives, file III.7.

p. 82: Farm forum participant ("singly in their own homes"), in *The Star-Phoenix*, 4 November 1949, p. 4.

p. 83: Author interview with Gertrude Murray, 1986.

p. 84: S.M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, A Study in Political Sociology* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), p. 200.

Chapter Seven: A Changing Scene

pp. 86-87: The Massey Commission, in Roger Bird (Ed.), *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting*, pp. 210-239.

p. 87: Hilda Neatby-Mrs. Ewing exchange, *The Leader-Post*, (Regina), 4 November 1949, p. 1.

p. 87: H.M. Rayner, *The Leader-Post*, 6 March 1954, p. 13.

p. 88: Fowler presenter ("giveway programs"), *The Leader-Post*, 12 May 1956, p. 5.

p. 88: Radio-Gravelbourg to Fowler Commission, *The Leader-Post*, 11 May 1956, p. 5.

p. 89: Author interview with André Lalonde, 1989.

p. 90: Author interview with Raymond Marcotte, 1986.

p. 91: CJRM moved to Regina in the mid-thirties; it was sold to E.A. McCusker in 1940 and renamed CKRM.

p. 92: Author interview with Gordon Walburn, 1986.

p. 93: Author interview with Wilf Gilby, 1986.

p. 93: CKSW also has a repeater station, CJSN, at Shaunavon.

pp. 93-94: CJME ("rock'n'roll is on way out"), *The Leader-Post*, 24 November 1959, p. 36.

p. 94: Author interview with Harry Dekker, 1986.

p. 94: Author interview with Jim Laing, 1987.

pp. 94-95: Fowler Commission report, in Roger Bird (Ed.), *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting*, pp. 251-67.

Chapter Eight: Thriving in a New Climate

p. 99: Rudolph Arnheim, *Radio: An Art of Sound* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), p. 272.

pp. 99-100: Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 74.

p. 100: Author interview with Lorne Harasen, 1989.

p. 101: Todd Storz and Bill Stewart story in Rick Sklar, *Rocking America: How the All-Hit Radio Stations Took Over, An Insider's Story* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p. 26.

pp. 101-2: Author interview with Doug Alexander, 1986.

pp. 102-3: Author interview with Murray Dobbin, 1986.

pp. 104-5: Author interview with Reg Parker, 1986.

p. 105: Jeff Lee, in *The Star-Phoenix*, 3 October 1986, p. 3.

p. 106: Author interview with Don Kerr, 1989.

p. 106: In the early sixties, CJGX opened an office in Melville which later became a station originating some of its own programs.

pp. 106-7: Author interview with Marv Chase, 1986.

p. 107: Author interview with Stan Solberg, 1986.

p. 108: Author interview with Roy Currie, 1986.

p. 108: Author interview with Vic Dubois, 1986.

Chapter Nine: Misdeeds

p. 110: Author interview with Rody Blancher, 1986.

p. 111: All quotes/anecdotes from author interviews.

p. 112: Author interview with Larry Christie, 1986.

p. 112: Author interview with Ruth Haughn, 1986.

p. 112: Author interview with Lorraine Hawksworth, 1986.

p. 113: Author interview with Larry Christie, 1986.

p. 113: According to Statistics Canada figures, after tax profits for AM stations in Saskatchewan were nearly three million dollars in 1987 and slightly over one hundred thousand dollars in 1988. At the same time FM stations showed a loss.

p. 115: Dennis Gruending, from "CBC and Freedom of Speech," a public forum in Regina, 21 June 1989.

p. 116: CBC policy, from *Journalistic Policy*, 1988 p. 7.

p. 116: David Poch, quoted in *The Star-Phoenix*, 22 February 1989, E3.

p. 116: Roy Bonisteel, quoted in *The Globe and Mail*, 27 February 1989, p. C7.

pp. 117-18: Martha Bowes, *The Western Producer*, 3 November 1927, p. 5.

p. 118: Author interview with Eileen Bradley Lillico, 1986.

pp. 118-19: "...kiss her career goodbye..." Author interview with Leigh Morrow, 1986.

p. 119: Numbers of women in CBC, Saskatchewan, from statistics provided by CBC and quotes in *The Star-Phoenix*, 21 July 1989, A8.

p. 119: "squeaky woman" Author interview with Vern Dallin, 1986.

p. 120: Claude Lewis, 15 June 1924, from unpublished diary of the trip.

p. 121: "Mail Bag" show host Tony Klein, CKBI, 29 June 1964.

Chapter Ten: A Material World

p. 129: Author interview with Geoffrey Bartlett,1986.

p. 129: Author interview with Bill Cameron, 1986.

p. 133: Author interview with Geoffrey Bartlett, 1986.

p. 134: Author interview with Willy Cole, 1986.

Chapter Eleven: Speakers

p. 135: Author interview with Vern Dallin, 1986.

p. 136: Bill Speers cited in *Signing On*, p. 126.

p. 136: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Sid Boyling, 1976.

p. 137: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Hugh Trueman, 1976. Hugh Trueman didn't work in Saskatchewan, nor was he heard there, but his was such a telling story I decided to include it.

p. 137: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Wilf Collier, 1976.

p. 137: Kenneth Bambrick interview with Sid Boyling, 1976.

pp. 137-38: Author interview with Harry Dekker, 1986.

p. 138: Max Ferguson, "The Inscrutable Mr. McFee," *Radio Guide*, July 1986, p. 7.

p. 141: Author interview with Jack Cennon, 1986.

pp. 142-43: *Peter Gzowski, Peter Gzowski* by Kim Dales Morrissey is included in *Studio One: Stories Made for Radio*, a collection which I edited for Coteau Books, 1990.

p. 145: CBC policy, from *Journalistic Policy*, 1988, p. 10.

p. 147: W.O. Mitchell interviewed on CBC Regina, 1984.

Chapter Twelve: Other Voices

p. 149: Murray Schafer, "Radical Radio" in *Canadian Forum*, December-January, 1982-83, p. 10.

p. 153: The first program of *The Riel Commission: An Inquiry into the Survival of a People* is printed in *Studio One: Stories Made for Radio*.

p. 155: Author interviews with James McKay, Ernest McKay, Harold Belanger, 1988.

Chapter Thirteen: Making the Links

p. 157: Gallup poll, *The Leader-Post*, 14 December 1985, D17.

p. 158: Archie Harding, cited in Ian Rodger, *Radio Drama* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1982), p. 43.

p. 158: Evan Eisenberg, *The Recording Angel: The Experience of Music from Aristotle to Zappa* (New York: Penguin, 1987), p. 31 and p. 33.

p. 159: "... mind tends to wander." One of the reasons that music videos have taken such a strong hold, I think, is because they simulate in a tangible way what goes on in our mind when we listen to music on the radio. Since videos are made after a song has been recorded, the video maker's job is to create images that are appropriate to the music or that the music conjures. These images, of course, can't duplicate what each of sees when we hear the music, but they are almost always of the same character. Disjointed, incoherent and lacking any connecting logic, they resemble the way our mind moves from subject to subject, alighting only briefly. We are perfectly comfortable with these aimless video scenes because we are accustomed to the disconnected elements of the radio world where we first heard this music.

p. 160: CBC memo, "Words to the Wise" by Bill Cameron, 1 December 1989.

p. 162: Author interview with Roy Currie, 1986.

pp. 162-63: Author interview with Art Wallman, 1990.

p. 163: Murray Schafer, "Radical Radio", p. 11.

pp. 165-6: Author interview with Bud Dallin, 1986.

p. 166: Reverend Cam Yates, sermon manuscript, 25 October 1987.

pp. 166-67: Quebec couple, letter to CBC, 25 May 1980.

p. 167: Writer, Robert Currie.

Bibliography

Allard, T.J. *Straight Up: Private Broadcasting in Canada: 1918-1958*. Ottawa: Heritage House Publishers, 1979.

Anderson, Alan B. "Linguistic Trends Among Saskatchewan Ethnic Groups." *Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education*. Edited by Martin L. Kovacs. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1974.

Arnheim, Rudolph. *Radio: An Art of Sound*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1972.

Bird, Roger (Ed.). *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988.

Calderwood, William. "Religious Reactions to the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan." *Saskatchewan History* 26 (Autumn, 1973), pp. 103-114.

_____. "The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan." Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Regina, 1968.

CBC, *Journalistic Policy*,1988.

CBC, *Ward/Meggs Report*, 1970.

CBC, *The English Radio Development Project Report*, 30 September 1983.

Eisenberg, Evan. *The Recording Angel: The Experience of Music from Aristotle to Zappa*. New York: Penguin, 1987.

Fairbairn, Garry. *From Prairie Roots: The Remarkable Story of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool*. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1984.

Ferguson, Max. "The Inscrutable Mr. McFee," *Radio Guide*. July, 1986, pp. 6-7.

Fifty-sixth Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1922-23. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1923.

Friesen, Gerald. *The Canadian Prairies: A History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.

House of Commons Debates, 12 April 1928.

Kyba, Patrick. "Ballots and Burning Crosses—the Election of

1929." *Politics in Saskatchewan*. Edited by Norman Ward and Duff Spafford. Don Mills, Ontario: Longmans Canada Ltd., 1968, pp. 105-123.

Lapointe, Richard and Lucille Tessier. *The Francophones of Saskatchewan: A History*. Regina: Campion College, University of Regina, 1986.

Lewis, Claude. Unpublished diary of trip to Saskatchewan, 1924.

Lipset, S.M. *Agrarian Socialism: the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, A Study in Political Sociology*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950.

Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Special Committee on the Operations of the Commission under the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act, 1932, 9 and 16 March 1934.

McNeil, Bill and Morris Wolfe. *Signing On: The Birth of Radio in Canada*. Toronto: Doubleday, 1982.

National Farm Radio Forum file III.7, University of Saskatchewan Archives.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Methuen, 1982.

Pattison, Mary. "Three Thousand Visits with 'The Jacksons and Their Neighbours.'" *CBC Times*, X, 50, 6 December 1957, pp. 3-4.

Peers, Frank W. *The Politics of Broadcasting: 1920-1951*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969.

_____. *The Public Eye: Television and the Politics of Canadian Broadcasting: 1952-1968*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979.

Pietropaolo, Damiano. "Structuring 'Truth': The Uses of Drama in 'Information' Radio." *Canadian Theatre Review* 36 (Fall, 1982), pp. 52-56.

Prince Albert City Clerk Files 905.38.

Rodger, Ian. *Radio Drama*. London: The Macmillan Press, 1982.

Saskatchewan Farm Radio Forum, Annual Report: 1957-58.

Saskatoon Amateur Radio Club VE5AA. *From Spark to Space: The Story of Amateur Radio in Canada*. Saskatoon: Saskatoon Amateur Radio Club, 1968.

Schafer, Murray. "Radical Radio." *Canadian Forum*, December-January, 1982-83, pp. 10-13; 32.

Schafer, R. Murray. *The Tuning of the World*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977.

Schmalz, Wayne (Ed.). *Studio One: Stories Made for Radio*. Regina: Coteau Books, 1990.

Sklar, Rick. *Rocking America: How the All-Hit Radio Stations Took Over, An Insider's Story*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984.

Stewart, Sandy. *From Coast to Coast: A Personal History of Radio in Canada*. Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1985.

Thomson, A. "The President's Address to Members of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange," 14 September 1927.

Troyer, Warner. *The Sound and the Fury: An Anecdotal History of Canadian Broadcasting*. Rexdale, Ontario: John Wiley and Sons, 1980.

University of Saskatchewan reports on CJUS-FM: 4 May 1978 and 2 November 1978; report of the committee to review CJUS-FM, 1982.

The Valley Echo, August, 1954.

Weir, E. Austin. *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965.

Western People, 2 August 1979.

Photography Credits

1. Photograph courtesy of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, No. R-A23086.
2. Photograph courtesy of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, No. R-A24447(2).
3. Photograph courtesy of Bill Stovin.
4. Photograph courtesy of Bill Stovin.
5. Photograph courtesy of Eldred Bowes. First quote from a letter by J.R. Grant of Wisetown, SK to CJWC, 10 March 1927. Second quote from *The Western Producer*, 3 November 1927, p. 5.
6. Photograph coutesy of CFQC.
7. Photograph courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library—Local History Room.
8. Photograph courtesy of Bert McKay.
9. Photograph courtesy of Bert McKay.
10. Photograph courtesy of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, No. R-B11645.
11. Photograph courtesy of the Moose Jaw Public Library Archives.
12. *Canadian Radio*, Vol. 1 No. 18, 10 October 1931, p. 28.
13. *Canadian Radio*, Vol. 1 No. 18, 10 October 1931, back cover.
14. Photograph courtesy of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, No. R-A21728.
15. Photograph courtesy of William Clement Budd.
16. Photograph courtesy of CKBI.
17. Photograph courtesy of the Moose Jaw Public Library Archives.
18. Photograph courtesy of Theron Buchanan.
19. Photograph courtesy of Dale Yoos.
20. Photograph courtesy of Dale Yoos.
21. Photograph courtesy of CFQC.
22. Photograph courtesy of CFQC.
23. Photograph courtesy of Pat Whittall.
24. Photograph courtesy of Mary Pattison.
25. Photograph courtesy of CBC.
26. Photograph courtesy of CFQC.
27. Photograph courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library—Local History Room.
28. Photograph courtesy of CFQC.
29. Photograph courtesy of CBC.
30. Photograph courtesy of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, No. R-B9939(1).
31. Photograph courtesy of the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*.
32. Photograph courtesy of CKBI.
33. Photograph courtesy of Lorne Harasen.
34. Photograph courtesy of CKBI.
35. Photograph courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library—Local History Room.
36. Photograph courtesy of CFQC.
37. Photograph courtesy of CBC.
38. Photograph courtesy of Ed Sayer.
39. Photograph courtesy of Gary Lewchuk.
40. Photograph courtesy of CJVR.
41. Photograph courtesy of Magic 94.
42. Photograph courtesy of Art Wallman. Quote from author interview with Art Wallman, 1990.
43. Photograph courtesy of AV Production House.

Wayne Schmalz

Wayne Schmalz's first job "on air" was at CFMC-FM in 1973. This first radio job certainly didn't pay much, but for Wayne it was the realization of his dream to work in broadcasting.

Wayne attended the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon where he received a M.A. in 1974. During the early 1970s, he worked as a reporter for *The Western Producer*. In 1974 Wayne went to England to attend the London Film School, but when that school closed temporarily due to financial problems, he landed a job with the Canadian Forces Network in Lahr, Germany.

Following this European stint, Wayne returned to Canada and worked on CBC Stereo's "Eric Friesen Show" for a few months, then freelanced for radio, television and print. In 1977 he started work with CBC Radio Saskatchewan as radio drama and features producer and he has been there ever since. Wayne produces for both regional and national shows and is responsible for a weekly arts program, "Ambience." Over the years he has established a fine reputation of bringing to air some of the most original and creative pieces heard on radio in Canada. He has commissioned work from individual writers and works closely with them to produce award-winning quality programs. In 1988 Wayne won a Nellie for Best Radio Program of the Year, Public Radio at ACTRA's National Radio Awards for "Chile." This program also received a Certificate of Merit in the Gabriel Awards. Another program that Wayne collaborated on and produced, "The Riel Commission: An Inquiry into the Survival of a People," won the Major Armstrong Award from Columbia University and the National Radio Broadcasters Association, Washington, for "Creative Use of the Medium."

Where was Canada's first "open line" radio phone-in show? Who was the first female radio announcer in Saskatchewan? What radio station was the first to "sign on" in Regina in 1922? Who allegedly broadcast the first hockey game? Find out in *On Air*—a very human history of radio in Saskatchewan. Through amusing anecdotes and reminiscences from radio pioneers and contemporary broadcasters, *On Air* takes you behind the scenes, giving you a glimpse at some of the zany antics and the practical jokes played on co-workers that were typical of radio's earlier days. And you experience first-hand the desperate moments when things don't go quite right on "live" radio.

With over forty historical and contemporary black and white photographs, *On Air* follows the development of Canada's best-loved medium from the earliest studios to modern "high tech" broadcasting. Wayne Walz explores the nature of the medium, its future and the possible new roles radio may play.

From the reverent to the irreverent, tune in to *On Air* for the true story of radio and to find out where radio is headed in the 1990s.

"Prairie radio broadcasting entrepreneurs were among the very first in the world. In Saskatchewan particularly, broadcast development was quicker than in any part of the country. It's a fascinating story, engrossing and sometimes funny. . . . A very good read." Roy Currie, Saskatchewan broadcaster

"*On Air* is meticulously researched and entertainingly written. Most important of all, it's full of interesting people. I suppose there have to be a few nuts, bolts, transistors and transmitters here and there, but Wayne has done an excellent job of making all of this into a people story. *On Air* is a readable, enjoyable book." Bill Cameron, Producer, CBC Radio Saskatchewan

COTEAU BOOKS

$14.95 paper $24.95 cloth

ISBN 1-55050-009-0

9 781550 500097