

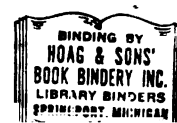
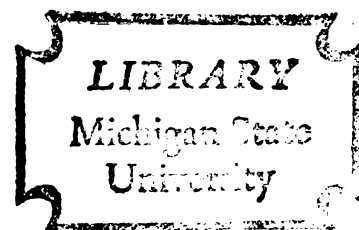
PRESS COUNCILS IN CANADA:
THEIR FOUNDING, FUNCTION
AND FUTURE

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
DAVID BRUCE REDDICK
1976

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ABSTRACT

PRESS COUNCILS IN CANADA: THEIR FOUNDING, FUNCTION AND FUTURE

By

David Bruce Reddick

Press councils in North America are a relatively new phenomenon. They did not make their appearance in Canada until late 1971 so that today there are only four councils operating in that country. Three of them operate on a province-wide basis in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec. The fourth is a community press council in Windsor, Ontario.

This thesis is interested in looking at how these press councils were established and, secondly, how they are perceived by various members of the newspaper fraternity.

Chapter I describes the press council movement in general, and briefly examines some of the councils that exist in the world. Chapter II provides background on the Canadian newspaper environment and explains the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media which, in 1971, recommended that a national press council be established.

Chapter III outlines the events leading up to the formation of the four Canadian press councils and examines some of the complaints they have handled.

Chapter IV presents the results of mailed questionnaires sent to both Canadian newspaper publishers and press council members to get their opinions about the press councils. Of the 115 questionnaires sent to newspaper publishers, sixty-one, or 53.04 percent, were used in the sample. Sixty-eight questionnaires were sent to the press council members and thirty-five, or 51.5 percent, of them were returned and used in the sample.

The survey of the newspaper publishers revealed that while there was some general agreement on the good of press councils, there was no overwhelming desire among the non-press council publishers to either start or belong to a press council. Despite this fact, the non-press council publishers did agree overwhelmingly to cooperate with and publish the decisions of the existing press councils. The answers of the press council members to a series of open-ended questions about their councils showed that they thought their councils were fulfilling a useful function and in some cases had caused editors to reconsider some of their traditional editorial practices.

The final chapter offers a series of observations, conclusions and recommendations based on both the descriptive examination of the press councils and the results to the questionnaires. It observes that both the Ontario and Quebec Press Councils seem to be the most active in terms of both the number of complaints received and their interest in wanting to promote professional standards. It concludes that more work in these areas will have to be done by all the councils if they are to succeed. It also agrees with a series of recommendations

David Bruce Reddick

suggested by the press council members for improving the councils in the future. These include, seeking more media participation, encouraging better complaints, seeking broader representation, better financing, more publicity and strong chairmen.

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Journalism, College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree.


Director of Thesis

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FUNCTION AND FUTURE

By

David Bruce Reddick

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

School of Journalism

1976

Dedicated to the Memory of

JOSEPH P. REDDICK, my father.

...with his nose for the news, he would have
made a helluva reporter!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank several people who helped make this thesis possible.

First, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Maurice R. Cullen, Jr., for his judicious editing and encouragement throughout this entire project. Special thanks should also go to Dr. George A. Hough, III, for his continuous help and friendship.

Secondly, many thanks are in order to the secretaries of the four Canadian press councils; Parker Kent of the Alberta Press Council, Fraser MacDougall of the Ontario Press Council, Jean Baillargeon of the Quebec Press Council and Stuart Laird of the Windsor Press Council, without whose help this project could not have been completed.

I would also like to thank Mr. Didier Guerin of Paris, France, and Larry Goodrich for drafting French versions of my questionnaire. And who could forget my former office mate, Ms. Joan Deppa, who helped keep me at my typewriter working on this project when my thoughts were elsewhere.

I would also like to thank all my other friends and the members of my family who helped me keep my sanity during my master's program.

PREFACE

The fact that there are now four press councils operating in Canada raises the question about their effectiveness and whether this can be measured quantitatively. For this reason, the author has undertaken to measure quantitatively the effectiveness of the Canadian press councils by soliciting the opinions of Canadian newspaper publishers. This group was chosen because it was felt they most likely had represented their respective newspapers before the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media when the subject of press councils first was raised publicly and, secondly, they would most probably be involved directly in any attempts to organize their newspaper into a press council.

The major question underlying this inquiry was whether there was a perceived difference of opinion between those publishers who supported and belonged to press councils and those publishers who did not. And, since most of the press councils in Canada have been operating only since 1971, the author was also interested in measuring quantitatively the perceptions of those people most directly involved in these press councils. For this reason, the opinions of both the professional and lay members of the press councils were sought. The major goal was to discover whether there was a difference of opinion between the perceptions of the two groups.

To measure quantitatively the perceptions of both the newspaper publishers and the press council members, then, a mail questionnaire

was used. The author, with the help of other questionnaires used to measure press council responses in Britain and the United States, eventually constructed a forty-three item questionnaire for the newspaper publishers. The first draft of the questionnaire was sent to a small group of Canadian publishers who were known to the author. They offered some constructive criticisms that helped to refine the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part asked respondents to answer a series of general statements about press councils using a five-point Likert scale. These questions were developed after an exhaustive search of existing literature on press councils and a careful study was made of testimony given before the Davey Committee on the subject of press councils. Once respondents answered these questions, the question was posed to them again, this time asking them to apply the statements to the existing Canadian press councils. A third series of questions dealt with questions about future press councils in the country.

Part II of the questionnaire was comprised of eight questions that were based on recommendations made by the Davey Committee. Part III contained questions that sought some demographic information on the newspapers.

Since Canada has only 115 daily newspapers, it was decided that the questionnaire would be sent to every publisher. Accordingly, the 1974 edition of the Editor and Publisher International Yearbook was consulted for the names and addresses of the publishers. A copy of the questionnaire, with a letter of explanation (see Appendix A) and a self-addressed stamped envelope, were sent to the publishers on

April 7, 1975. Because many of the publishers operated French-speaking newspapers, a French version of the questionnaire and a letter of explanation (see Appendix B) was prepared and sent to them on April 30, 1975. A second mailing (see Appendix C) to newspaper publishers was sent on May 1, 1975. Of the 115 questionnaires sent, sixty-four were returned and sixty-one, or 53.04 percent, were considered complete enough for inclusion in the sample.

The questionnaire prepared for the press council members contained forty items. It was also divided into three parts with Part I containing many of the general statement questions asked of the newspaper publishers. Part II also asked the press council members to respond to a series of questions on the Davey Committee. Part III consisted of a series of open-ended questions which asked the respondents to evaluate their press council experiences.

For the questionnaire to the press council members, the author contacted the secretaries of the various press councils for membership lists and from these a sample universe of sixty-eight names was prepared.

A copy of the questionnaire, with a letter of explanation and a stamped, self-addressed envelope (see Appendix D), was prepared and mailed in two waves on May 5 and May 17, 1975. Because of time and financial constraints, only one mailing was made to the press council members. Of the sixty-eight questionnaires sent, thirty-seven responses were received and thirty-five of these, or 51.5 percent, were used in the survey.

As the questionnaires were returned, they were coded and a frequency distribution was eventually obtained from the Michigan State University Scoring and Testing Office. The author also had computer cards made and a counter sorter was used to further analyze the data.

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CHAPTER I

PRESS COUNCILS: AN OVERVIEW

As Theodore Peterson has noted,¹ the press in the Twentieth Century has been marked by a shift from the traditional libertarian theory to a theory of social responsibility. The libertarian theory, which arose in a period that advocated political democracy, religious freedom, free trade and laissez-faire economics, saw man as a rational being, being able to discern between truth and falsehood and between a better and a worse alternative when faced with conflicting evidence and alternative choices. The press no longer was seen then as an arm of government, but rather as a means by which the public could check on government and make up their minds on policy. Peterson has pointed out that this theory gained wide acceptance during the early part of the century.

The libertarian theory, however, gradually began giving way to "a grafting on of new ideas" that resulted in the social responsibility theory. Peterson credits the Commission on Freedom of the Press in 1947 and William E. Hocking, a commission member, specifically for best articulating this new theory.

¹Theodore Peterson, "The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press," Four Theories of The Press, Fred S. Siebert, et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), pp. 73-103.

The Commission, which was funded by Time-Life publisher, Henry R. Luce, and the Encyclopaedia Britannica, brought together a collection of academics under the chairmanship of Robert M. Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago, to study the press.

The Commission's findings, which became known as the Hutchins Report, strongly advocated a social responsibility theory. It argued that the libertarian theory, which had left the individual free to work out his own destiny, was insufficient and ineffective. The Commission maintained that it was not enough to tell a man he was free to achieve his goals, but that one must also provide him with the appropriate means of achieving those goals. Under the social responsibility theory, the Commission said, the press must assume the following responsibilities:

- (a) Provide a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning;
- (b) Serve as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism;
- (c) Project a representative picture of the constituent groups in society;
- (d) Be responsible for the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of society;
- (e) Provide full access to the day's intelligence.²

One of the recommendations of the Hutchins Report called for the establishment of "a new and independent agency to appraise and report annually upon the performance of the press . . . some agency

²Commission on Freedom of The Press, "A Free and Responsible Press," (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).

which reflects the ambitions of the American people for the purpose of comparing the accomplishments of the press with the aspirations which the people have of it."³ This idea of an independent agency to appraise the press, however, was not peculiar only to the Hutchins Report or the United States, for other countries had by this time advocated similar bodies. Most of these agencies became known as "press councils," and today they exist in one form or another in at least fifty countries around the world.

Most of these press councils came about after an initial governmental report recommended their creation. For the most part, newspaper publishers and journalistic organizations have been responsible for organizing the press councils and have usually shared equal representation on them with members of the public.

Once formed, the major function of the press council is handling complaints brought by the public against a newspaper or broadcast facility. Some councils have tried to create codes of ethics and have done research in other areas of professional development.

Once a complaint has been heard, the press council members issue a decision that is reported by the participating media. The reports of the decision are the sole, authoritative function of the press council. The participating media may exercise the option of deciding whether to publish the decision, and most do. These decisions, which perhaps satisfy the immediate concerns of the complainant, are seen as creating over a period of time a kind of case law that would

³Ibid.

point out the assets and limitations of the media with the goal of raising professional standards.

The first press council⁴ began in Sweden in 1916 when the Publicistklubben (Publicists' Club), Svenska Tidningsutgivareforeningen (The Swedish Newspaper Publishers' Association), and Svenska Journalistforbundet (The Union of Swedish Journalists) formed the "Pressens Opinionsnamnd" (Fair Practices Commission of The Press). The Commission, which became known as the Court of Honor, was funded by contributions from the three organizations and from a filing fee required of all plaintiffs. It was comprised of three members appointed by the three professional associations and a judge of the Swedish High Court, who served as chairman. In 1969, the Commission expanded its membership to include two members of the public. The Commission also expanded its jurisdiction to hear complaints dealing with all newspapers and magazines "published more than four times per year," and began administering fines ranging from \$200 to \$600 (U.S. funds) to offending publications.

In addition to the changes in the Court of Honor, the position of ombudsman was created. The first ombudsman, Lennart Groll, on leave from the Swedish Court of Appeal, described the role⁵ as "a direct intermediary between the public and the authorities." Groll noted that one of the main complaints concerning the Court of Honor was its slowness

⁴Antero Pietila, "A Pioneer: Sweden's Opinion Court," Grassroots Editor, January-February, 1969, p. 9.

⁵Lennart Groll, "The Press Ombudsman in Sweden," Grassroots Editor, May-June, 1973, pp. 13-15.

in processing cases. He helps to speed up the process by providing a personal contact for complainants, while attempting to decrease the number of cases which must go before the Court by performing thorough preliminary investigations.

Perhaps the most publicized press council in the world has been the British Press Council.⁶ It did not appear until February, 1953, when a draft constitution, produced by the Newspaper Proprietor's Association and the Newspaper Society, was accepted.

But talk of a press council had begun seven years earlier when the British House of Commons voted to establish a Royal Commission to inquire into "the growth of monopolistic tendencies in the control of the press."⁷ The report of the Royal Commission, presented in June, 1949, was critical of the political bias of some newspapers and of journalists' disregard for the privacy of people. It recommended a "General Council of the Press."⁸ During the first ten years, the Press Council was fairly inactive, pleading insubstantial funding and lack of power to enforce its decisions.⁹

⁶For a detailed explanation of the workings of the British Press Council see Phillip H. Levy, The Press Council: History, Procedures and Cases (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967) and George Murray, The Press and The Public: The Story of The British Press Council (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972).

⁷Op. cit., Levy, p. 7.

⁸Ibid., p. 9.

⁹Maryanne Culpepper, "Press Councils: An Overview" (paper presented at the annual Association of Education in Journalism Convention, San Diego, California, August, 1974), p. 5.

In 1963, the Shawcross Committee was appointed to re-examine the press council. It reported that the press council "appeared to have devoted itself almost entirely to questions relating to professional standards and had failed to study the long-term development of the press and the economic and social factors which affect it, particularly those tending to produce greater concentration or monopoly."¹⁰ Among the recommendations made by the Shawcross Committee was that the membership of the press council should be reconstituted to include members of the public headed by a lay chairman.

The idea of a British Press Council up to this time had not met with overwhelming approval from the press. Donald Brown, a professor of journalism at Arizona State University, has noted that the idea was "about as popular as smallpox among British newspapermen."¹¹ However, with the constitutional changes in 1963 and the installation of Lord Devlin, a distinguished jurist, as chairman, attitudes of newspapermen began to shift toward approval. As Paul B. Snider has shown,¹² there has been a definite change in the attitude of British newspapermen toward the council. Of ninety-one editors responding to a questionnaire

¹⁰D.R.W. Greenslade, "The Press Council of Great Britain," Grassroots Editor, April, 1965, pp. 5-9.

¹¹Donald E. Brown, "British Journalists Change Their Attitudes Toward Reorganized Press Council," Editor and Publisher, April 17, 1971, p. 22.

¹²Paul B. Snider, "The British Press Council: A Study of Its Role and Performance, 1953-1965," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1968).

Snider sent, fifty-eight percent thought the Council was effective compared to ten percent who thought it ineffective.

The development of press councils in North America really did not begin until the late sixties, although there had been some talk, including the Hutchins Report, of press councils prior to that time. William B. Blankenburg credits Professor Chilton R. Bush of Stanford University with first proposing the idea of a press council in the United States in the 1930s. Bush, in fact, helped establish a press council in Santa Rosa, California in 1951.¹³

In 1946, Houstoun Waring, editor of the Littleton (Colorado) Independent and Arapahoe Herald formed a community advisory council that remained in operation until 1952. It was replaced by a critic's dinner where members of the community were invited to a banquet and given the opportunity to talk on the subject: "What would I do if I were editor." Garrett Ray, new editor of the newspaper, and Waring, now editor emeritus, re-established the press council in 1967.¹⁴

Perhaps the most ambitious press council projects came in 1967 when the Mellett Fund for a Free and Responsible Press provided \$40,000 for the establishment of six experimental community press councils. They were in Bend, Oregon; Redwood City, California; Sparta and Cairo, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri; and Seattle, Washington.

¹³William B. Blankenburg, "Community Press Councils," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1968), p. 15.

¹⁴Houstoun Waring, "The Press Council in Littleton," Grass-roots Editor, March-April, 1968, pp. 18-19.

Each council was organized and guided by a university researcher who was responsible for the final report on the success or failure of the experiment.¹⁵

The results of these press council experiments varied. The Bend and Redwood City councils, organized by William L. Rivers and William B. Blankenburg, evolved into newspaper-community dialogues but most of the participants felt that they had been a worthwhile learning experience.¹⁶ The press council in Sparta agreed to continue on a permanent basis after the one-year experiment ended, but interest fell off after several meetings.¹⁷ The experiences of the Cairo and St. Louis councils were marred by racial strife. As Earl Reeves, the St. Louis council researcher, has noted,¹⁸ the first two meetings degenerated into verbal battles between the black and white members of the council so that at future meetings it was decided that black non-media council members would meet with representatives of only one newspaper or radio/television staff at once. The Seattle Council also operated on the media-minority group basis. At the end of the year's experiment,

¹⁵For a detailed analysis of these press council experiments see William L. Rivers, et. al., Backtalk: Press Councils in America (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972).

¹⁶Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁷Robert Koenig, "Community Press Councils-II," Freedom of Information Center Report No. 331, (University of Missouri School of Journalism, November, 1974), p. 3.

¹⁸Earl Reeves, "Confrontation in St. Louis," in Rivers, et. al., Backtalk: Press Councils in America (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972), pp. 87-107.

the council unanimously agreed to continue and did so for a year until researcher Lawrence Schneider of the University of Washington was unable to continue as moderator.¹⁹

The Honolulu Community-Media Council, a local press council, was formed in 1970 in an attempt to soothe local government-media antagonism. It has thirty-one members, seven of whom are media representatives. The main problem of this council so far has been its inability to secure funding.²⁰

The Minnesota Press Council, a state-wide press council, was formed in 1971 through the initiative of the Minnesota Newspaper Association. It is comprised of eighteen members; nine from the newspaper industry and nine public members. Phillip S. Duff, Jr., president of the association, sees the purpose of the council as twofold: "The newspapers can gain an education on how outsiders view things and the critics of the newspapers can be educated on how the newspapers operate."²¹

The newest community press council was formed in Riverside, California in 1973 through a \$6,000 grant from the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation. The council has a paid consultant, Roger Tartarian, former vice-president of United Press International.²²

¹⁹Lawrence Schneider, "A Media-Black Council: Seattle's 19-Month Experiment," Journalism Quarterly (Autumn, 1970), pp. 439-449.

²⁰Op. cit., Koenig, p. 3.

²¹Op. cit., Culpepper, p. 15.

²²Op. cit., Koenig, p. 4.

But perhaps the most ambitious press council of all in the United States has been the National News Council. The idea for a national press watchdog actually began in 1971 when the board of trustees of the Twentieth Century Fund approved the establishment of a Task Force to study the feasibility of press councils in the United States.²³ After eighteen months of debate, the Task Force released its recommendations on December 1, 1972. The report urged "the establishment of a new national institution designed to serve the public by promoting accurate and fair reporting of the nation's press."²⁴ This meant that the council's jurisdiction would be limited to the national news suppliers. This was to include the Associated Press, United Press International, The Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor, American Broadcasting Company, Columbia Broadcasting Company, National Broadcasting Company, Washington Post/Los Angeles Times News Service, New York Times News Service, Time/Life, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report, Chicago Tribune - New York News Syndicate and other national newspaper syndicates.²⁵

Although the council said its approach would not be unlike that of a journalism review, many of the large news outlets, including The New York Times, did not wish to participate. Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, publisher of the Times, said in a memo to his staff:

²³Twentieth Century Fund Task Force Report, A Free and Responsive Press (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1973).

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

As we view it, we are being asked to accept what we regard as a form of voluntary regulation in the name of enhancing press freedom. We respect the good intention of the Fund, but we believe the operation of such a council would not only fail to achieve its purpose but could actually harm the cause of press freedom in the United States.²⁶

Undaunted by such criticism, the News Council elected its fifteen professional and public members, named its staff and was ready to start taking complaints on August 1, 1973. William B. Arthur, former editor of Look magazine and the council's executive director, has defended the council's actions to date. Commenting on the first anniversary of the council, Arthur said: "This Council, I am convinced, can endure the slings and arrows of criticism. What it cannot endure is the ignominy of neglect."²⁷

Others, like Ralph L. Lowenstein, professor of Journalism at the University of Missouri, have been more critical of the council:

The track record of the National News Council, after one year of operations, is rather lackluster. Established with a good deal of publicity and excellent financial support toward the end of 1973, it has failed to attract the kind of significant cases that could prove the NNC's value to the media and the public.²⁸

The News Council has set a budget of \$400,000 a year and is seeking funding of \$1.2 million for its first three years of

²⁶"New York Times Won't Work With Press Council," Editor and Publisher, January 20, 1973, p. 36.

²⁷Ronald P. Kriss, "The National News Council at Age One," Columbia Journalism Review, November-December, 1974, p. 31.

²⁸Ralph L. Lowenstein, "National News Council Appraised," Freedom of Information Center Report No. 0015 (University of Missouri School of Journalism, December, 1974), p. 1.

operation.²⁹ Besides a \$100,000 commitment from the Twentieth Century Fund, the council has received commitments from eight other foundations.³⁰

Whether the News Council will be able to outgrow its critics and become a worthwhile and respected entity in the eyes of the public remains to be seen, but its mere existence in one of the most democratic countries of the world is encouraging.

The idea of press councils has not been restricted to Sweden, Great Britain or the United States. The development of press councils in Canada really did not begin until after the release of the Special Senate Committee on the Mass Media report in 1970, although there had been some talk of creating press councils prior to the report. Today there are provincial press councils in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec and a community press council in Windsor, Ontario. Press councils or journalistic courts of honor also have been established in Chile, Israel, Turkey, Burma, Pakistan, India, the Philippines, Korea, Taiwan, South Africa and Zambia.³¹

But not all press councils have been set up by unions of journalists and associations of newspaper proprietors. In Sri Lanka

²⁹"Funds are Sought for Press Council; \$400,000 a Year," Editor and Publisher, January 20, 1973, p. 36.

³⁰"News Council to Pursue Nixon's TV News Complaint," Editor and Publisher, December 22, 1973, p. 14.

³¹International Press Institute, Press Councils and Press Codes (Zurich, Switzerland: International Press Institute, 1966).

(Ceylon), for example, the government has instituted a press council which caused Michael Hornsby, a correspondent for The Times of London, to remark:

Ceylon's press, once one of the most lively--not to say scurrilous--in Asia, is now a sadly tamed and cowed shadow of its former self. Physically reduced to no more than four pages on average by the newsprint shortage, the island's major newspapers are a wasteland of Government propaganda almost devoid of independent comment.³²

The next chapter examines the newspaper environment in which the Canadian press councils were created and looks at the Special Senate Committee Report on the Mass Media that recommended a national press council.

³²Michael Hornsby, "A Shackled Press," The Globe and Mail (Toronto), July 25, 1974, p. 41.

CHAPTER II

CANADIAN NEWSPAPERS AND THE DAVEY COMMITTEE

Before one can talk about the development of press councils in Canada, it is important to understand some of the general characteristics of Canadian newspapers. The best source for providing a historical perspective of Canadian journalism is W. H. Kesterton's A History of Journalism in Canada.³³ Kesterton, a professor of journalism at Carleton University in Ottawa, divides Canada's journalistic history into four periods, the first press period beginning on March 23, 1752, when John Bushell printed the first issue of his Halifax Gazette. Actually Bartholomew Green, Jr., grandson of the Boston News Letter's first printer, was Canada's first newspaperman. He had brought a press from Boston in August, 1751 and set up a printing shop, but before he could establish a newspaper he died leaving his assets to his partner, Bushell. Kesterton has characterized this first period as a time when the printer-editors supplemented their modest incomes by acting as King's Printers.³⁴

³³W. H. Kesterton, A History of Journalism in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967).

³⁴Ibid., pp. 1-9.

The second press period, 1807 to 1858, was marked by the migration of settlers into Upper Canada (Quebec and Ontario) where the growth of new industries provided the economic basis for a non-government press financed by subscriptions and advertising. At the beginning of this period, there was one paper in Upper Canada and five in Lower Canada (the Maritime provinces), but by the end of this period 291 papers were being published in the provinces then constituting British North America.³⁵

During the third press period, 1858 to 1900, the press followed the migration of people in search of gold along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers in British Columbia. By 1900, 1,227 newspapers existed in Canada.³⁶

This marked the beginning of the final press period and also the shift, as Kesterton claims, from the "personal" editor of the Nineteenth Century to the publisher-capitalists of the Twentieth Century.

Prior to World War I, the number of daily newspapers continued to soar, largely due to the influx of new immigrants. But as the population began to stabilize, the complexion of daily newspapers began to change to the point that today fewer dailies serve a population about four times as great as it was in 1901.³⁷

According to Kesterton, the Twentieth Century newspaper has also developed another characteristic:

³⁵Ibid., pp. 10-26.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 27-63.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 64-83.

During the Twentieth Century the characteristic daily has captured all or nearly all of its community's readership by trying to reflect majority opinion and refusing to offend minority opinion. As a result, some critics feel, dailies have to become bland, undoctrinaire, unlikely to disturb the status quo.³⁸

A similar view has been voiced by Carlton McNaught, whose 1939 look at how Canada gets its news is a landmark study in the scientific approach to the newspaper industry. He argues that the publisher's need to capture all aspects of his community's readership has caused publishers to "produce something for everybody" which has prevented the emergence of class papers.³⁹

McNaught's study, which was part of an international research series, also was concerned with how Canada gets its news, particularly from foreign countries. After analyzing the contents of several Canadian newspapers for a one-week period, McNaught concluded that while Canadian daily newspapers, on the whole, provided a larger proportion of foreign news than even some of the foremost British and U.S. newspapers, the large bulk of this news came from foreign-owned news agencies.

This fact led McNaught to the following conclusion:

It is apparent that the significant fact about foreign news in Canada is its origin in sources which are beyond the control of Canadian newspapers. Its defects are to a large extent inherent in these sources; that is, in the agency method of gathering news. In its travels it is exposed to

³⁸Wilfred H. Kesterton, "The Growth of the Newspaper in Canada," Communications in Canadian Society, ed. Benjamin D. Singer (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1972), p. 15.

³⁹Carlton McNaught, Canada Gets The News (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1940), pp. 14-35.

censorship and propaganda which Canadian publishers and editors have no power to deflect, and it bears the impress of personalities and points of view which are not Canadian.⁴⁰

In stating this point, McNaught also was quick to point out that this reliance on agency-produced news is due, in part, to the restricted field in which Canadian newspapers operate--the comparatively small and scattered population in an immense territory, with few large cities.⁴¹

A later, almost identical study⁴² done by a U.S. professor of journalism was concerned with the flow of news between the United States and Canada. Jim Hart's examination of four Canadian and four U.S. newspapers showed that in the Canadian papers, U.S. news accounted for 13.6 percent of the available news space and 55.7 percent of the foreign news printed during the study period. In contrast, the four U.S. papers surveyed devoted 0.5 percent of their news space to Canada and 5.8 percent of their foreign news to Canada. It also was noted that 32.3 percent of the U.S. news used by the Canadian newspapers came from the two major U.S. news agencies, the Associated Press and United Press International. Syndicated features from the United States provided 23.8 percent of the total, and other U.S.-owned news services accounted for another nine percent.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 258.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 258.

⁴²Jim A. Hart, "The Flow of News Between the United States and Canada," Journalism Quarterly (Winter, 1963), pp. 70-74.

This overabundance of U.S.-produced news coming into Canada is not restricted to newspapers. As Canadian journalism professor Earle Beattie pointed out in a 1967 article, "The American ways of life and ideas are evident in all mass media in Canada." Beattie noted the influx of U.S.-produced television shows, movies and magazines, in particular Time and Reader's Digest. Beattie said a survey done of sixty-six freshmen at eleven Canadian universities revealed that the average score among the respondents on a quiz of U.S. events was higher than the students' knowledge of Canadian events.⁴³

While Canadian newspapers have traditionally relied upon U.S. sources for a large proportion of their news, sociologist John Porter has noted that ownership of Canadian newspapers has been exclusively Canadian. In fact, Porter states that the ownership of Canadian newspapers has been held closely within families and continued through generations. He suggests that "newspaper families see their newspapers as performing important public functions and are reluctant to let them pass out of family control."⁴⁴

The major exception to this family-controlled ownership of newspapers has been Roy Thomson (now a British peer). He started his career at a small newspaper in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, and amassed a fortune buying and selling newspapers. Today he owns almost one-third

⁴³Earle Beattie, "In Canada's Centennial Year, U.S. Mass Media Influence Probed," Journalism Quarterly (Winter, 1967), pp. 667-672.

⁴⁴John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 482.

of all the daily newspapers in Canada in addition to other newspaper interests around the world.⁴⁵

Porter argues that the existing pattern of newspaper ownership forms a specialized social role that interacts with other social groups in society in the maintenance of social cohesion and a value system. Porter calls this process the ideological function and says that because newspaper owners are a part of it, their newspapers tend to be "conservative, supporting the status quo over a wide range of social and economic policy."⁴⁶

Another Canadian sociologist, Wallace Clement, has taken Porter's hypothesis that newspaper owners form a specialized social group or elite and carried it a step further. Unlike Porter, who saw elites as specialized and their power separated, Clement analyzed the corporate directorships of the fifteen dominant media complexes in Canada and concluded that they were so closely linked that their power interests were unified.⁴⁷ Whether one subscribes to Porter's idea of plural elites in society or to Clement's "conspiratorial-type" theory of a single Canadian corporate elite, one should be aware of some present day characteristics of Canadian newspapers.

The 1974 edition of the Editor and Publisher International Year Book lists 115 Canadian dailies, of which fifty-five, or 47.8

⁴⁵For a detailed account of Lord Thomson's life, see Russell Braddon, Roy Thomson of Fleet Street (London: Collins, 1965).

⁴⁶Op. cit., Porter, pp. 457-490.

⁴⁷Wallace Clement, The Canadian Corporate Elite: An Analysis of Economic Power (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1975), pp. 287-343.

percent are owned by Canada's three largest newspaper chains, Thomson Newspapers Limited, Southam Press Limited and F. P. Publications. Thomson is the largest chain with thirty newspapers in six of Canada's ten provinces. The newspapers tend to be small in circulation and are located in one-newspaper cities. The Southam chain, which evolved from a family operation, owns sixteen dailies, nearly all of them located in medium-sized cities in Ontario. F. P. Publications, which was formed in the Sixties by the Sifton family and Calgary financier Max Bell, owns nine newspapers, all of which are located in major cities.

When Canada's 115 dailies are examined province-by-province, we see that Ontario, with the largest population in Canada, has the most newspapers, forty-seven, while Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island have the least, three each. By circulation, forty-three of Canada's dailies have a circulation of under 10,000 subscribers. There are only fifteen newspapers with circulations over 100,000, and nearly half of these are in Montreal where, in addition to the large English and French dailies, there are a number of large weekly tabloid newspapers.⁴⁸

It was this type of background that greeted the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media in 1969.

⁴⁸Editor and Publisher, 1974 Editor and Publisher International Year Book (New York: Editor and Publisher, 1974).

The Special Senate Committee
on Mass Media

On March 18, 1969, the Senate of Canada announced the creation of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media* and named Senator Keith Davey as its chairman.

Peter John Flemington, who has examined the reasons behind creation of the committee, credits Senator Davey for the committee's formation and says his reasons were twofold. First, Flemington argues, the senator's motivation was due partially to his lifelong interest in the media. Flemington recounts how the senator spent his early childhood collecting scrapbooks of newspaper headlines and how in his adult life the senator had careers as a radio time salesman and later as a public relation's consultant.⁴⁹ It also has been noted that the senator's family enjoyed close ties with Joseph Atkinson, founder of The Toronto Star.⁵⁰ Davey's second reason for the committee, Flemington argues, might have been due to his recent appointment to the Senate.

The Canadian Senate, unlike its U.S. counterpart, is a body appointed by the Prime Minister to consider and approve all legislation

*The Special Senate Committee on Mass Media will hereafter be referred to as the Davey Report.

⁴⁹Peter John Flemington, "The Davey Committee as Raindance: Symbolic Aspects of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media (Canada, 1970)" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1971), p. 26.

⁵⁰Senator Davey's father was production manager of The Toronto Star and is known to have consulted Atkinson about his son's education. See, Alexander Ross, "Three Months With Coach Davey," Content Magazine, December-January, 1971, p. 13.

put before Parliament. Although, in theory, the Senate is an independent legislative body, it has become largely a rubber stamp for the House of Commons, the elected body. As a result, critics of the Senate note that appointments to this senior chamber are made usually by the elected party in power in the House of Commons as a means of rewarding party faithful. The Senate, therefore, tends to be dominated by older statesmen whose chief preoccupation seems to be waiting out retirement at age seventy-five, whereupon they then can collect a healthy retirement check from the government.

Flemington argues that it was partly because of this negative image of the Senate that Senator Davey, who was elected to the Senate at age forty-four, saw the special committee as an opportunity to change the Senate's image.⁵¹

The committee, which examined both the print and broadcast media, had three prime concerns: (1) the increasing concentration of mass media ownership; (2) the Americanization of the mass media in Canada; and (3) the poor quality of a great deal of Canada's media output. The committee, comprised of fifteen senators, held public hearings from December 9, 1969 to April 24, 1970. During that time, the committee received more than 500 briefs from interested citizens and heard oral presentations from 125 owners and representatives of various mass media enterprises. In addition, the committee made extensive use of existing records and collected statistical data and commissioned its

⁵¹Op. cit., Flemington, p. 30.

own research and surveys of the Canadian public to investigate their opinions and usage patterns of the mass media. The Report has been estimated to have cost more than \$600,000.

On the question of the concentration of ownership, the Davey Committee noted that 66.4 percent of Canada's daily newspapers were owned or partially controlled by groups; that 48.6 percent of Canada's television stations were managed by multi-media interests; and that groups ran 47.7 percent of the country's radio stations.⁵² While pointing out that chain ownership had saved several daily newspapers from becoming weeklies or going out of business, the Davey Report concluded:

What matters is the fact that control of the media is passing into fewer and fewer hands, and that the experts agree this trend is likely to continue and perhaps accelerate. . . . If the trend towards ownership concentration is allowed to continue unabated, sooner or later it must reach the point where it collides with the public interest. The Committee believes it to be in the national interest to ensure that that point is not reached.⁵³

The Committee recommended that a Press Ownership Review Board be created with the power "to approve or disapprove mergers between, or acquisitions of, newspapers and periodicals." To help fledgling publications, the Committee recommended that the federal

⁵²T. C. Seacrest, "The Davey Report: Main Findings and Recommendations," Communications in Canadian Society, ed. Benjamin D. Singer (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 162-170.

⁵³Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, Vol. I, The Uncertain Mirror, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), p. 6.

government establish a Publications Development Loan Fund to provide financial help to new Canadian publishing concerns.⁵⁴

On the Americanization of the Canadian media, the Committee noted that two American magazines, Time and Reader's Digest, together shared fifty-six percent of the total advertising revenue spent in Canada on major consumer magazines. This is due in part to a section of the Canadian Income Tax Act that allows Canadian businesses to deduct expenses for advertising in Time and Reader's Digest. The Committee recommended that this exemption be removed.⁵⁵ (The federal government has since indicated that it plans to introduce legislation to remove this exemption.)

The Committee's principal standard for judging the quality of the Canadian press was on how successfully a newspaper, or broadcasting station, was preparing its audience for social change. The Committee pointed out the lack of editorial excellence and high-quality programming in most Canadian media--a particularly disturbing fact given the high profits of the industry.⁵⁶

One way the senators proposed to improve the media was to establish press councils and to this suggestion they received a variety of opinions from newspaper executives appearing before the Committee. Some, like Michael Sifton, president of Armadale Company Limited,

⁵⁴Op. cit., Seacrest.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

publishers of the Regina Leader-Post and Saskatoon Star Phoenix, saw press councils as an erosion of press freedom and responsibility:

I personally feel that the main thing that is involved here is the substitution of a press council--it is tantamount to the substitution of direct access to the people who are responsible. That I find undesirable. That is substitution for responsibility.⁵⁷

Others opposed to press councils felt they were unnecessary because the public now had ample access to newspaper publishers for the purposes of complaining. Such a view was expressed by St. Clair McCabe, executive president and managing director of Thomson Newspapers, who remarked:

Look, I have been involved all my life in the smaller newspaper cities. The publishers of our newspapers have an open door literally, and there is a telephone, and they are available to their subscribers at any time, and believe me--they hear from them.⁵⁸

Those newspaper executives who favored press councils tended to see them as a means for newspapers to handle some of the complaints from the public and as a way of protecting the newspaper industry from possible government interference. Such an opinion was perhaps best expressed by St. Clair Balfour, president and director of Southam Press Limited, who told the senators:

Generally I think that a press council would serve a useful purpose. I think a court of appeal would take the heat off newspapers. I think in rare circumstances it might have to deal with a complaint and issue censure. Generally speaking,

⁵⁷Proceedings of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969), Vol. 3, December 11, 1969, p. 61.

⁵⁸Ibid., Vol. 7, December 18, 1969, p. 43.

I think it would justify the position taken by the individual newspapers. I also think it has a second major value and that is in the defense of the freedom of the press against the Government at all levels.⁵⁹

Not all the representation to the Davey Committee could be characterized as either for or against press councils. Many publishers seemed to say that they wanted more time and more press council examples before passing judgment. Such a view could be interpreted from the statements made by Ralph Costello, president and publisher of the Saint John Telegraph-Journal, who remarked:

What is my personal objection? I do not have a personal one. I think perhaps my greatest objection at this moment are that I do not think it would work. I think it is difficult enough to publish a newspaper and I think the responsibility of publishing that newspaper rests with the publisher. I think he should stand on what goes into the newspaper and stand behind it. Again, this may not stand up six months or a year or five years from now. I may feel very strongly that we should have a press council, but this is my feeling at the moment.⁶⁰

Having collected its briefs, the Committee spent the summer and fall of 1970 digesting the material it had gathered. In December, it released the fruits of its 22-month inquiry in a three-volume report. Among the Committee's recommendations was one calling for the creation of a national press council. The Committee said:

We think many of the problems of the press that this report documents could be alleviated by the existence of a watchdog organization that would monitor the press the way the press monitors society. Public confidence in the press is declining; a press council could help arrest this trend. The media's tendency toward monopoly threatens to restrict the public's access to diverse and antagonistic sources of

⁵⁹Ibid., Vol. 13, January 27, 1970, p. 40.

⁶⁰Ibid., Vol. 5, December 16, 1969, p. 43.

information; a press council could meet this threat by helping to ensure that media monopolies don't act as though they own the news. Finally, a press council could help to foster a sense of professionalism, and help to develop a set of standards, in an occupation that badly needs them. Even if a press council did nothing whatever, we'd still like to see one set up; because the very act of setting one up would force journalists and publishers, for the first time, to come together on an organized basis to think about what they're doing, how well they're doing it, and why.⁶¹

The Davey Report said the first step for creating a national press council should come at the next meeting of the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association. At the CDNPA meeting in May, 1971, the topic of press councils was discussed and a variety of opinions were offered.

A. R. Williams, publisher of the Winnipeg Tribune, said publishers knew they were doing a good job but the public remained to be convinced. "If we establish a press council we can persuade them (the public) that we are not as bad as they think," Williams said. A contrary view was taken by James L. Cooper, then publisher of The Globe and Mail in Toronto. He argued that the idea of a press council had been a failure in Britain and the failure of a press council in Canada would open the door to government interference:

We can all improve. The best press council in the world is for each publisher to try to give the other guy's point of view and to admit it when he is wrong. That is far better than publishers sitting in judgment of one another.⁶²

⁶¹The Uncertain Mirror, p. 111.

⁶²"Canadians Reject Press Review Board," Editor and Publisher, May 8, 1971, p. 21.

The publishers did form a committee to study the question of press councils and report back to the general meeting. At the 1972 CDNPA meeting, the committee decided that while it would not oppose the principle of press councils, it was against a national press council because the idea was both "impractical and unworkable at this time."⁶³

The issue of press councils was also discussed at Media '71, the first-ever national assembly of journalists, held in Ottawa. Although few resolutions were passed by the 330 journalists in attendance, resolutions passed by the conference's six workshops were read into the record. Two of these resolutions concerned press councils and said:

Resolved that a national convention of management and workers in news media be held within a year to form a press council and a national association of media participants, and, if not included in either of the above, to establish means to lobby against all forms of censorship, legal and non-legal.

Be it resolved that regional press associations be encouraged across Canada as grass-roots instruments to study the problems of working journalists and to make recommendations to be considered by a national press council or association.⁶⁴

Those newspaper executives and journalists who had expressed an interest in press councils prior to the Davey Report or became interested during the committee hearings did continue in their efforts to establish press councils. The next chapter examines the four press councils that now exist in Canada.

⁶³"National Press Council Vetoed By Canadians," Editor and Publisher, April 29, 1972, p. 50B.

⁶⁴"Be It Resolved," Content Magazine, May, 1971, p. 20.

CHAPTER III

A PROFILE ON PRESS COUNCILS IN CANADA

The Alberta Press Council

Much of the credit for the formation of the Alberta Press Council must go to R. Ross Munro, publisher of the Edmonton Journal. But Munro, also a director of Southam Press Limited, did not seem totally convinced of the need for a press council when he appeared before the Davey Committee:

I would not be unhappy about a Western Press Council. It could wear a hair shirt for us all and we would take our lumps if and when we deserved them. There is a lingering question on how practical it would be. Would the public be any better protected and would they get better newspapers?⁶⁵

Munro told Senator Douglas D. Everett that he thought "the people in our business have to do an awful lot more talking about it (press councils). They only started to talk about this thing within the past year or year and a half to any degree."⁶⁶

Alberta publishers, however, did hold discussions on the subject of press councils in 1971 and the final steps to establish a council were taken in the spring of 1972. An official announcement of the

⁶⁵Proceedings of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media,
Vol. 13, January 27, 1970, p. 39.

⁶⁶Ibid.

Alberta Press Council's formation and composition, along with a statement of aims and procedures, was published on May 19, 1972.

The aims of the press council are:

- 1) To consider complaints from the public about the conduct of the press or about the conduct of persons and organizations towards the press; to deal with these complaints in whatever manner may seem practical and appropriate and to report publicly on conclusions reached.
- 2) To keep under review developments likely to restrict the supply of information of public interest and importance.
- 3) To make representations on behalf of the Press Council to governments and other bodies on matters relating to the objects of the Press Council.
- 4) To preserve the established freedom and independence of the press.
- 5) To serve as a medium of understanding between the public and the press.
- 6) To encourage the highest ethical, professional and commercial standards of journalism.
- 7) To publish periodic reports recording the work of the Press Council.⁶⁷

Five of the province's eight daily newspapers are members of the council. They include the Edmonton Journal, Calgary Herald, Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune, Red Deer Advocate and Medicine Hat News. The Fort McMurray Today, a daily newspaper started in October, 1974, has expressed an interest in joining the Press Council. The Calgary Albertan and Lethbridge Herald, both owned by FP Publications, the largest newspaper chain in Canada, do not belong to the council.

⁶⁷The Alberta Press Council, mimeographed press release, January, 1973.

Cleo Mowers, publisher of the Lethbridge Herald, has stated publicly his displeasure with press councils. He claims that implicit in the movement toward press councils is the assumption that the press is doing the best job it knows how, and to do even better it ought to be subject to an independent tribunal that would adjudicate the public's grievances. He opposes that system:

Newspapers must cope as best they can with public dissatisfaction. They must listen to all complaints against themselves, and correct those that appear to be justified and firmly and patiently reject the others. That is all that can be done. To set up a Press Council to deal with those not previously and otherwise resolved is to promise more than can be delivered.⁶⁸

The publishers of the member newspapers chose two persons from their communities, a public member and one from their newspapers, to serve on the council. The eleventh member, the chairman, was chosen from a list of names discussed by the publishers of the Edmonton Journal and Calgary Herald.⁶⁹

The original professional members included three editors, a reporter, and an advertising manager. The public members included a retired banker, retired chief city commissioner, the chairman of the board of a community college, the president of the Alberta Federation of Labor and a rancher.

The chairman, C. C. McLaurin, is a retired chief justice of the Alberta Supreme Court Trial Division and former chancellor of the

⁶⁸Cleo Mowers, "Press Councils, In Spite of Sen. Davey, Are No Answer," Canada Month, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1972, p. 7.

⁶⁹Parker Kent, personal letter, April 2, 1975.

University of Calgary. Parker Kent, the council's executive secretary, is a retired associate editor of the Calgary Herald. He does not have a vote.

The Press Council held its first organizational meeting in Calgary on June 7, 1972, and became fully operational to hear complaints on September 1, 1972. By mid-1975, the Alberta Press Council had adjudicated eight cases, three of which involved Mayor Rod Sykes of Calgary.

Even before the Press Council became fully operational, it had received its first complaint about Mayor Sykes. The complaint actually came from members of the Calgary City Council who had become upset over an apparent discrepancy between a Calgary Herald article of June 14, 1972, quoting the mayor and a memo sent by the mayor the following day to the city's aldermen.

The newspaper had quoted the mayor as being critical of the entire council for not carrying out civic responsibilities. The mayor's memo differed from the newspaper article in that it directed its criticism of shirking civic responsibilities at only some aldermen, not all of them. Unable to get the mayor to release the names of the unfaithful aldermen, Calgary City Council passed a motion asking the Alberta Press Council for a "clear public report."

The Press Council, with the Herald's representative abstaining, agreed unanimously that in all circumstances the paper was responsible in its reporting of the issue.⁷⁰

⁷⁰Ibid.

Mayor Sykes next complained to the Press Council about an editor's note on theater advertising standards and theater advertisements which had both appeared in the Calgary Herald on December 15, 1972. The Press Council found that the newspaper misled the public in its editor's note setting forth its theater advertising standards while, in the same issue, it printed two theater advertisements containing obscene phrases. The Press Council decision said:

Every reader of contemporary newspapers must be impressed with the unparalleled volume of advertising and should be cautioned that caveat emptor, let the buyer beware, still has legal application. "Puffing" must be accepted, but sanctions prevail for fraudulent advertisements. Then there are advertisements which offend good taste and may even be obscene.⁷¹

The third complaint involving the mayor, again against the Calgary Herald, concerned an article which the mayor said gave a "false impression" of his position.

The article, which appeared in the newspaper's weekend magazine section, quoted Mayor Sykes as being opposed to a plan to "twin" the city of Calgary with the city of Jaipur, India, under a program sponsored by the local branch of the World City Society.

The Press Council, in dismissing the complaint, noted that the editor-in-chief of the Herald had invited the mayor to issue a statement in response to the article and the mayor had declined. Under the terms of reference of the Alberta Press Council, persons filing complaints with the Press Council must first demonstrate that they

⁷¹Ibid.

have failed to get redress for the grievance from the newspaper involved.⁷²

Of the other five complaints handled by the Press Council, only two complaints were upheld.

The one case involved Eddie Keen, news editor of Radio Station CHED in Edmonton, who complained that the Edmonton Journal had not published his letter in reply to a news story in the newspaper on June 13, 1973.

The story had reported that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had been quietly investigating the used car business and the tampering with car odometers. The article claimed the investigation might have been hampered because a radio station prematurely released the story to the public.

Although Radio Station CHED was not mentioned in the newspaper story specifically, Keen argued that it was obvious to many which radio station was being alluded to and he wanted an opportunity to give his side of the story.

The Press Council ruled that although a newspaper editor has the right to reject any letter submitted, the newspaper should have printed the letter in this case.⁷³

The latest case up to this writing involved Roger R. Rickwood, a university professor, who complained that the Lethbridge Herald, a non-press council member, refused to publish his letter to the editor

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

criticizing a Lethbridge television station. His letter was returned to him and he was advised to take his complaint directly to the station.

Since the Herald is not a member of the Alberta Press Council, it was under no obligation to consider the complaint, but it did agree to cooperate with the Press Council.

In upholding Rickwood's complaint, the Press Council agreed, as it did in the Keen case, that a newspaper editor has a right to reject any letters to the editor, but, in this case, the council felt that Rickwood's letter "represented fair comment on a matter of community interest and should have been published."⁷⁴

The editor of the Herald, while admitting that the decision to reject Rickwood's letter had been made in his absence and may not have been right, was critical of the way the Press Council handled the complaint.

"We had no notification that they would hear the complaint and were not invited to submit a defense of our action," Mowers said. "They had some excuses which didn't impress me one little bit."⁷⁵

Mowers said that while his paper published the decision of the Press Council, as agreed, it also published a report of the Press Council's handling of the case. From this experience, Mowers concluded: "That's why I have no respect for the Press Council system as it operates

⁷⁴Parker Kent, personal letter, July 21, 1975.

⁷⁵Cleo Mowers, personal letter, July 17, 1975.

in Alberta. And of course I am still opposed to the 'philosophy' of the Press Councils."⁷⁶

The other complaints brought before the Alberta Press Council concerned an editorial written in the Calgary Herald and two cases of the Herald and Edmonton Journal refusing to accept story material submitted by members of the public. The ruling was similar in all of these cases. The Press Council said that newspapers have the right to choose what they print and they had not been unfair in refusing the material being offered.⁷⁷

The Ontario Press Council

In 1968, an Ontario Royal Commission inquiry into civil rights under Chief Justice McRuer officially recommended the establishment of a press council in the province. The recommendation, in a section of the report dealing with the publication of crime stories, read:

A self-governing council should be established in Ontario to control and discipline the press and other news media with respect to the publication of news and comments that may tend to prejudice the fair trial of an accused should a charge later be laid, unless it is shown that publication is in the public interest.⁷⁸

Beland H. Honderich, president and publisher of the Toronto Star, the largest newspaper in Canada, was the first publisher to take up on the recommendation of the inquiry. He told a Western Ontario

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Op. cit., Kent, April 2, 1975.

⁷⁸Fraser MacDougall, personal letter, February 4, 1974.

Newspaper Awards banquet in Kitchener on April 27, 1968 that a press council, patterned after the British model, should be established and not solely to hear complaints about crime news. Honderich outlined what he thought the aims of such a press council should be:

I suggest that a press council consisting of newspapermen and representatives of the public could do much to clarify misunderstanding . . . and also act as a public watchdog in guarding against infringements on legitimate press freedom . . . In my experience, the greatest threat to freedom of the press in Canada comes from within and not without. We are not always as diligent as we should be in searching out the significant news and reporting it to the public. The second object of an Ontario press council would be to maintain the character of the press in accordance with the highest professional and commercial standards.⁷⁹

And Mark Farrell, then publisher of the Windsor Star, told a service club luncheon in 1969 that "a press council was desirable if for no other reason than that publishers wield power and some publishers wield absolute power."⁸⁰

Honderich's Kitchener speech in 1968 had attracted a lot of attention from newspaper publishers but meetings proved inconclusive. However, Honderich and others kept urging fellow publishers in private talks to join in the project. Finally, a meeting was called by Honderich in late 1971 and it was decided to go ahead with the Press Council. Honderich says R. W. Southam, publisher of the Ottawa Citizen, "must

⁷⁹Beland H. Honderich, "We Need A Press Council," in Politics: Canada, third edition, ed. Paul W. Fox (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada Ltd., 1970), pp. 186-192.

⁸⁰"Editors Split on Plans for Press Council," Editor and Publisher, June 21, 1969, p. 26.

get much of the credit" since "he felt we should proceed even though we could not interest a majority of the papers."⁸¹

By June, 1972, the eight Ontario dailies who had agreed to become members of the council, had approved a constitution patterned after the British Press Council. The aims included:

- 1) To preserve the established freedom of the press;
- 2) To serve as a medium of understanding between the public and the press;
- 3) To encourage the highest ethical, professional, and commercial standards of journalism;
- 4) To consider complaints from the public about the conduct of the press in the gathering and publication of news, opinion and advertising; to consider complaints from members of the press about the conduct of individuals and organizations toward the press; and to report publicly on action taken;
- 5) To review and report on attempts to restrict access to information of public interest;
- 6) To make representations to governments and other bodies on matters relating to the objects of the Ontario Press Council;
- 7) To publish periodic reports recording the work of the Council.⁸²

That 1972 meeting was the time when the ten professional members of the Council were appointed. They included two publishers (Honderich and Southam), three editors, a women's editor, assistant financial editor, an advertising director, assistant advertising manager and a reporter.

⁸¹"Background," Ontario Press Council, mimeographed press release, March 14, 1973.

⁸²Ontario Press Council, Second Annual Report 1974, pp. 22-23.

The founding newspapers, the Ottawa Citizen, Toronto Star, Hamilton Spectator, Brantford Expositor, Kitchener-Waterloo Record, London Free Press, Windsor Star and Owen Sound Sun-Times, then appointed their staff. Davidson Dunton, former president of both the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Carleton University in Ottawa, became chairman. Fraser MacDougall, former Ottawa bureau chief for Canadian Press, became the executive secretary.

By mid-August, 1972, the Press Council had opened an office in Ottawa and the chairman and ten professional members were selecting the ten public members from a long list of nominees. Their selections included a woman lawyer, women member of the provincial human rights commission, a member of the provincial education commission, a county warden, housewife, chiropractor, retired minister, the former chairman of General Electric of Canada Limited, a professional engineer and a steelworkers union president.

In September, 1972, the entire Press Council met in an organizational session and appointed a five-member inquiry committee, comprised of three public and two professional members, to study complaints from the public and make recommendations to the full council.

At its first meeting in mid-November, the inquiry committee studied twenty-three complaints, of which two were sent on to the full council which met for the first time on December 15.⁸³

⁸³Op. cit., "Background," The Ontario Press Council.

By the end of 1974, the Ontario Press Council had received 163 letters of complaint and had announced formal decisions in seventeen cases.

Dunton, noting the number of complaints settled to the satisfaction of the complainant before reaching the formal inquiry and adjudication stage, commented that "it is clear that the activity of the Council has stimulated editors and publishers to reconsider first responses in some cases and voluntarily to provide redress."⁸⁴

The seventeen adjudications covered a wide variety of areas, including headlines, letters to the editor, misrepresentation, bias in news coverage and misleading reporting.

Six of the complaints dealt with discrimination by newspapers in not accepting certain advertisements. The Press Council reached the same decision in each of three cases. It read:

A publisher has the right to determine the acceptability for publication of any advertisement, and decisions may be based on many different considerations. In this case the Council feels there was discrimination in the refusal to publish a simple advertisement for a (periodical, religious organization, bookshop).*

As Council member David Black notes, these decisions have prompted the Press Council's General Purposes Committee to conduct a study of discrimination in advertising. Member newspapers have been asked to provide an outline of their advertising acceptability

⁸⁴Ontario Press Council, First Annual Report 1972-73, p. 2.

*"Advertising Complaints to Press Council, 1972-74," Ontario Press Council, mimeographed press release, January 29, 1975.

standards and practices, including those covering opinions and ideas as well as goods and services. Black said once these opinions are gathered it will then be decided whether to publish a pamphlet.⁸⁵

The Ontario Press Council has already published one pamphlet dealing with another issue, the publishing of persons' names involved in minor offenses.

The question was first raised in a letter the Press Council received from Richard P. Wagman of Downsview, Ontario, in the autumn of 1972. He complained that the present newspaper practice of naming persons charged with lesser offenses was both unnecessary and harmful.

The Press Council agreed that the issue raised by Wagman was larger than any single case and could not be handled in the manner of an ordinary complaint. Thus, a sub-committee composed of Gordon Bullock, managing editor of the Hamilton Spectator, Robert Hull, editor of the Owen Sound Sun-Times and Dr. Lita-Rose Betcherman of Toronto, who is active in the field of civil liberties and human rights, were chosen. The sub-committee polled each of the member newspapers and found a great diversity of opinion on the use of names in reporting court proceedings. As Dr. Betcherman notes, the sub-committee also looked for other opinions:

We went to the legal profession, to organizations that work with offenders, and to civil and human rights agencies for guidance. Not only did we not find a consensus--we were

⁸⁵"Discrimination in Advertising," Ontario Press Council, mimeographed press release, received April 17, 1975.

confronted with conflicting opinions even from related organizations like the Elizabeth Fry and John Howard Societies.⁸⁶

Since the opinions proved to be equally divided, the Press Council decided to present the arguments both for and against published names in a thirty-page pamphlet in September, 1974. MacDougall reports that more than 3,000 of the pamphlets have since been distributed to the general public and interested newspaper persons across Canada.⁸⁷

Perhaps ironically, the Press Council's latest adjudication concerned the publishing of names of persons involved in minor offenses.

The complaint was brought by Dr. John Baglow of Ottawa who complained that the Ottawa Citizen had published in its December 16, 1974 edition the names, ages and addresses of women arrested on bawdy-house charged in raids on massage parlors. Dr. Baglow claimed such identification represented an open invitation to rapists. While rejecting the complaint because the claims were not substantiated, the Press Council did say:

On the broader question of whether newspapers should publish the names of individuals charged with offenses until the matter comes to trial, the Council believes decisions should be made with careful consideration to all the circumstances involved.⁸⁸

⁸⁶"To Name Or Not To Name?" Ontario Press Council pamphlet, September, 1974, passim.

⁸⁷Fraser MacDougall, personal interview at Ontario Press Council office, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, April 17, 1975.

⁸⁸Ontario Press Council, mimeographed press release, March 12, 1975.

The newspaper said its reporting of arrests and trials is based on news value of the case. In the body-rub arrests, the Citizen said its decision to publish was justified by the public controversy and concern generated in Ottawa by the sudden growth and multiplication of such establishments.⁸⁹

One of the objects of the Ontario Press Council is to consider complaints from member newspapers about the conduct of individuals and organizations toward the press. Such a complaint was brought by the Ottawa Citizen against the Ottawa-Carleton regional planning committee in June, 1973, for drafting the official plan for the region in secret. The Press Council heard oral evidence at a public hearing in Ottawa on June 22, 1973, and reached its decision at a second meeting on June 28 in Toronto.

Citizen editor Christopher Young argued at the public hearing that it was dangerous and harmful for the public and reporters to be barred during the drafting process.

Dr. Grant Carman, planning committee chairman, replied that his committee had held public meetings before the drafting job and planned meetings after this stage in the development. However, he felt that the actual drafting should be done in private because of land speculation possibilities.

Young quoted supporting letters from the mayor of Ottawa and from Eric F. V. Robinson, secretary of the Ottawa Federation of Citizens

⁸⁹Ibid.

Association, supporting his stand. He agreed, however, that meetings should be closed during discussion of matters that might affect land speculation.

The Press Council's adjudication said:

The Council commends the planning committee of the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton for its program of involving the public in discussion of the official plan for the region before and after drafting. The Council, however, feels that elected representatives having properly and laudably heard public representations, should also carry out their discussions and reach their conclusions to the greatest possible extent at meetings where members of the public and press can observe. It believed indeed that there are strong arguments for holding all such discussions in public, even when they involve questions of land use. In this case the Council upholds the complaint of the Citizen in finding that the meetings should be held in public except where obvious opportunities for land speculation exists.⁹⁰

The Quebec Press Council

Although the Quebec Press Council did not officially begin until July, 1973, talk of a press council among the Quebec media had been going on for nearly sixteen years.⁹¹ In fact, David Waters, one of the journalist members of the council, claims that the Quebec Press Council was really Canada's first press council because the agreement between the various Quebec newspapers and professional journalist organizations, who make up the Council, was first signed on February 1, 1971.

⁹⁰Op. cit., First Annual Report, 1972-73, p. 12.

⁹¹David Waters, "Quebec Creates Canada's First Press Council," Content Magazine, February, 1971, p. 13.

As Waters notes, however, the Council's protracted mis-enscene was due in part to a delay caused by the strike at La Presse in Montreal which preoccupied journalists and news media executives who had been negotiating the selection of a president for the Press Council.⁹²

Waters also notes:

The social dynamics of Quebec precluded an exclusively owner-appointed council such as those in Ontario or Alberta or even one along the lines of the British model--though such council patterns would have been easier and quicker to set up.⁹³

Like the other press councils in Canada, the Quebec Press Council has been largely modeled after the British Press Council, but with one noticeable exception. The Press Council, like the Finland Press Council, includes the broadcast media within its jurisdiction. Membership for both newspapers and broadcast outlets is on a voluntary basis.

The Quebec Press Council has nineteen members, six of whom are chosen among the management of newspaper, radio and television enterprises. These people belong to the following organizations: Les Quotidiens du Quebec Inc., Les Hebdo du Canada Inc., L'Association Canadienne des Radiodiffuseurs et Tele diffuseurs Langue Francaise Inc., and Radio-Canada.

Six journalists are chosen from la Federation Professionnelle des Journalistes du Quebec. Seven members, including the council president, come from various groups representing the public.

⁹²David Waters, "Toward A Responsible Media," Content Magazine, July, 1973, p. 8.

⁹³Ibid.

The Quebec Press Council sees as its primary and most important task the protection and reinforcement of the right of the public (individuals, corporations, associations, private and public institutions) to know or to obtain from the media true and complete information concerning events, facts and institutions which are of public interest. To this end, the Press Council aims to:

- 1) work out guidelines to be followed by the Press in order to perform its duty in a responsible manner;
- 2) urge the media and journalists to comply with these guidelines;
- 3) to make known, on its own initiative or upon request, any serious violation of the ethical norms of the press;
- 4) after examination or inquiry, blame either privately or publicly, as the case may be, any media, any journalist or any other person having something to do with information, who has departed from these norms, or even any person, group or institution threatening the right of the public to information.⁹⁴

The Council also sees as a major concern the safeguarding of the freedom of the press and the opposition of any abuses against the press.

The Quebec Press Council has other unique organizational aspects that merit attention. Unlike the other Canadian press councils where the publishers decided who the council chairman would be, the Quebec Press Council chairman or president must be a joint decision made unanimously by the owners and journalists. The Press Council's first full-time president is Jean-Marie Martin, former chairman of the

⁹⁴Quebec Press Council pamphlet, issued in 1974.

social science department at Laval University in Montreal. Jean Baillargeon is the full-time secretary.

Martin's position is somewhat more powerful than that of his Canadian counterparts in that the Quebec Press Council constitution allows him to select the six public council members. The president, therefore, could have simply nominated his choices and submitted their names for either approval or rejection. Martin chose, however, to work with a mixed committee of journalists and owners to examine potential candidates.

As Waters notes, this committee screened sixty prospects and from a list of nearly twenty whose qualifications were deemed appropriate, the president made his final selection. His choices were unanimously ratified by the existing council members even though the constitution provides that only a two-thirds majority is needed.⁹⁵

Waters says that the selection of the public members of the Quebec Press Council is really a cornerstone to the success of the Council:

Ideally, the council's moral impact will come not primarily from the moral acceptance it receives from the media, but from the moral and financial support the public gives it. That is a fundamental and not simply a nuanced distinction. Its success in this regard will depend to a very considerable extent on the quality, contribution and representativity of its public members. In selecting them, an attempt was made to ensure that they were as representative as possible of geographical regions, social backgrounds and local involvements.⁹⁶

⁹⁵Op. cit., Waters, "Toward A Responsible Media."

⁹⁶Ibid.

The other unique organizational aspect of the Quebec Press Council is the way in which it is financed. Unlike the other Canadian press councils which rely on the generosity of their member newspapers, the Quebec Press Council decided not to depend upon the noblesse-oblige of either the media owners or journalists. During 1974, a six-member Foundation for the Quebec Press Council was set up to find financial assistance for the Press Council. The Foundation has its own charter from the Quebec Government and is a corporation entirely distinct and independent from the Press Council. It is also recognized as a charitable organization by the federal and provincial income tax departments.

The Quebec Press Council's budget for 1975 is about \$100,000. The Council's financial year extends from April 1 to March 31.⁹⁷

The Press Council also holds a yearly general assembly at the Council's headquarters in Quebec City at least seventy days after the end of their financial year. It is open to the public and requires a quorum of ten people, including at least two members from each of the three groups.

The regular business of the Press Council is handled by the Conseil d' Administration which comprises the entire nineteen-member council. The full council is then divided into two sub-committees; the comite permanent du programme (permanent program committee) and the comite permanent des cas (permanent cases committee). The permanent program committee has nine members (three from each group) and decides on the council's work. This can include anything from setting up a

⁹⁷Ibid.

research program to acting as a liaison organ of the council with the governments, federal institutions and semi-federal institutions on matters regarding the press.⁹⁸

It was in this area that the Quebec Press Council issued its first major statement of principle in December, 1973.

The report, which was prompted by the possible sale of Le Soleil in Quebec City, called on the government to "create without delay a body to supervise the transfer of title-deeds of news media defined as 'mass media' or entrust this duty to an existing body, while clearly stipulating that . . . it would have no control over news content." The report, which was endorsed by fifteen of the nineteen council members, mentioned the proposed sale of Le Soleil to a group headed by Paul Desmarais, who owns La Presse in Montreal and controls several other French-language dailies in Quebec.

The proposed sale, which was under a provincial government imposed suspension, would have given Desmarais interests control of seventy percent of the French-language dailies in Quebec. The sale of the newspaper still has not been resolved.

The Press Council report said the proposed sale posed "both a conflict of interest and a threat to the balance of power necessary to the existence and normal functioning of a democratic society."⁹⁹

⁹⁸Jean Baillargeon, personal interview at Sheraton-Mount Royal Hotel, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, April 18, 1975.

⁹⁹"Press Council Wants Media Sales Regulated," Editor and Publisher, December 22, 1973, p. 40.

Two Press Council members issued a minority report. They said they were opposed to any government regulation of the print media and they called for further study of the monopoly ownership issue.

The Press Council's latest complaint is unique in that it took only two or three days to be decided and it was critical of a federal cabinet minister.

The issue involved the federal government's refusal to advertise legal notices in the Montreal publication, Le Jour, because of political reasons. The Press Council ruled that such a refusal constituted an attack on the liberty of the press and set a "menacing precedent" to the organs of information.

As Baillargeon has noted, the issue in this case was clear and because of this he was able to get the reaction of the various Press Council members by conducting a series of telephone conversations. Baillargeon admits this is unique but not always possible or desirable a procedure to follow in cases where a more complete inquiry is required before rendering a decision.¹⁰⁰

The Press Council's other complaints have dealt with such questions as hidden advertisements, discrimination in headlines, bias in news and the question of closed meetings of public bodies.

Besides hearing complaints and issuing decisions, the Quebec Press Council is interested in raising the professional standards of journalists. In this area the Press Council plans to issue press identity cards to Quebec journalists. Baillargeon explains that these

¹⁰⁰Baillargeon, personal interview.

cards, which will be similar to normal press cards, will help to standardize press cards throughout the province and avoid the problem some journalists have faced in the past of not being allowed access to certain meetings because their cards were not recognized.

Baillargeon said that competence will not be a condition of the cards but that the card can be revoked if the holder ceases to be a journalist, if the card is used for any undue reasons or if the card is loaned to someone other than the journalist to whom it is assigned.¹⁰¹

The Quebec Press Council is also considering the drafting of a code of ethics.

The Windsor Press Council

The Windsor Star has always been a responsible newspaper. The Herman and Graybiel families who ran the newspaper for many years saw that it was always printed on the best quality newsprint available. The newspaper had a reputation in the community for being fair and honest. And, for years, it was considered an excellent training ground for journeymen journalists.

The Davey Report made note of some of these attributes when it said of the Windsor Star:

Some newspapers dig. Some newspapers are a constant embarrassment to the powerful. Some manage to be entertaining, provocative, and fair at the same time. There are a few such newspapers in Canada. The Vancouver Sun, the three Toronto dailies, Le Devoir, the Montreal Star, the Windsor Star, La Presse, the Edmonton Journal, and a handful of others. There should be more.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² The Uncertain Mirror, p. 85.

It was this kind of tradition that Mark Farrell inherited when he became publisher of the Windsor Star in January, 1969. Farrell, an innovator, had an extensive newspaper background in Montreal. He revolutionized the appearance of the paper with a new horizontal makeup, complete with a new name plate. This brought near revolution from a large part of the community which had become much attached to the paper's old format.

Farrell also began a study into the feasibility of setting up a community press council. He says he has always been a believer in press councils because "its mere existence makes any publisher, if not more responsible, more careful."¹⁰³

Farrell had originally hoped to establish his press council before the Davey Report made its recommendations, but labor disputes at the Star delayed its appearance until September, 1971.

On September 27, the Star ran a front page story announcing the formation of the Press Council and a full page of biographies on the council members.

The Press Council was originally comprised of seventeen members: an independent chairman, who was a county judge, five Star representatives and eleven public members. The public members included a law professor, high school student, insurance saleswoman, engineer, lawyer, plant manager, store manager, doctor, union president and two

¹⁰³Mark Farrell, personal letter, January 21, 1974.

housewives. The Star representatives included Farrell, the editor, managing editor, city editor and a reporter.¹⁰⁴

However, as Press Council Secretary Stuart Laird notes, the Star now has only two representatives on the council. Another public member has been added.¹⁰⁵

This change in membership seems to be in keeping with earlier statements made by J. Patrick O'Callaghan, Farrell's successor, who said "the Press Council should be a ward of the public, not an obedient offspring of the newspaper (though the Star has no intention of cutting off its parental support payments)."¹⁰⁶

The procedures which the Press Council first used to hear complaints were adopted from the British Press Council model. During 1974, the Press Council enacted a new constitution in addition to the memorandum of procedures. The constitution lists the objectives of the Press Council which are:

- 1) To preserve the established freedom of the press.
- 2) To serve as a medium of understanding between the public and the press.
- 3) To promote the highest standards of professional ethics in the gathering and dissemination of news.

¹⁰⁴"Windsor Press Council Starts In October," Windsor Star, September 27, 1971, p. 25.

¹⁰⁵Stuart Laird, "Other Press Councils," Ontario Press Council, mimeographed press release, received April 17, 1975.

¹⁰⁶J. Patrick O'Callaghan, "Press Council: Alive and Well Two Years After Its Founding," Windsor Star, November 7, 1973, p. 14.

- 4) To encourage the highest ethical and professional standards of journalism and advertising practices.
- 5) To consider complaints from the public about the conduct of the press in the gathering and publication of news, opinions and advertising; to consider complaints from members of the press about the conduct of individuals and organizations towards the press; and to report publicly on action taken.
- 6) To review and report on attempts to restrict access to information of public interest.
- 7) To make representations to governments and other bodies on matters relating to the objects of the Windsor Press Council.
- 8) To make any representations it deems fit to whom it may concern.
- 9) To publish periodic reports recording the work of the Council.¹⁰⁷

The Press Council has handed down four decisions, three of which have been complaints against the newspaper.

The first decision, on January 18, 1972, came at the Press Council's initial meeting. It involved John Luck, a Windsor resident, who had attempted to have a classified advertisement inserted in the personal section of the newspaper's classified advertising pages. Luck's advertisement ran in one edition of the paper and was removed from two subsequent editions. The advertisement involved a type of building scheme which the Star felt was not in the interest of the public. The Press Council ruled in favor of the Star.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷Stuart Laird, personal letter, May 6, 1975.

¹⁰⁸"Press Council Rules On Its First Complaint," Windsor Star, January 19, 1972, p. 3.

The second decision involved a Windsor woman, June Code, who had been submitting stories to the Star over a four-year period on the subject, "Spirit and Reality." In her brief to the Press Council, the woman called her stories "Nobel Prize material" and said the Star should have published them. The Press Council ruled in favor of the paper, saying it was the "editorial prerogative of the newspaper to determine newsworthiness or otherwise."¹⁰⁹

The third Press Council ruling came on September 27, 1973, and involved the refusal of the Star to accept an advertisement from Windsor Gay Unity for a homosexual dance. The Press Council ruled that while the publisher of a newspaper has the right to decide the acceptability of advertisements, in this particular incident there was unfair discrimination in the refusal to publish a simple advertisement for a social event.

O'Callaghan said of the decision:

While I respect the decision of the Press Council, I can't accept that it is discriminatory to exercise judgment in a taste or propriety sense on any material that appears in the editorial or advertising columns of the Star. I am glad the Press Council made it clear in its ruling that it recognizes the right of a newspaper to decide what it shall and shall not print. We have no intention of lowering our standards on good taste.¹¹⁰

Jim Davies, one of the Windsor Gay Unity members, who lodged the complaint against the Star, said of the decision:

¹⁰⁹"Press Council Upholds Decision By The Star," Windsor Star, July 27, 1973, p. 3.

¹¹⁰"Press Council Rules Against The Star," Windsor Star, September 27, 1973, p. 3.

Since Mr. O'Callaghan has not changed his mind after the ruling, the lesson that can be learned is that such rulings are meaningless under the present power structure. As a result, an important medium such as the Star reflects not the need and desire of all aspects of the community, but rather the prejudices and interests of one group of men, such as the controllers of the Star.¹¹¹

The fourth complaint came during 1974 and involved a complaint by the Star against Hotel Dieu of St. Joseph Hospital for holding hospital board meetings in camera.

After a hearing on December 17, 1974, the Press Council determined that the media generally should have the right to be present at meetings of the hospital board.¹¹²

The Windsor Star is also a member of the Ontario Press Council.

Other press councils

Besides the one community and three provincial press councils already in existence in Canada, there has been some isolated talk of starting others in at least three other provinces.

For example, in 1971, an eleven-member provincial task force report on social development in New Brunswick recommended the establishment of a press council in that province. The report was critical of the "little continuity of reporting or interpretative comment" made by the province's dailies while the task force was holding hearings throughout the province.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Laird, press release.

The report said that too often the media dismissed important social policies with a news story and perhaps an editorial comment. There was too little reporting-in-depth to provide the public with an informed basis on which it could make opinions and judgments, the report added.

It said that a press council should be composed of representatives of media owners, the working press and the public. It emphasized that government involvement should be "kept at a minimum."¹¹³

In Saskatchewan, Attorney-General Roy Romanow suggested in 1972 that press councils be organized in that province. The politician's suggestion came shortly after the federal election that year and was aimed principally at his hometown newspaper, the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, for its handling of stories about a Romanian tractor plant which Saskatoon wanted and finally got despite provincial government objections that the plant should be established in Moose Jaw.

A report of the attorney-general's concern said that he saw legislation being drafted before the 1973 fall session although he wasn't sure how strong the legislation must be or what would happen if the media owners did not appoint members to the councils.¹¹⁴

And in British Columbia, at least two politicians have recommended that a press council be established in that province. The first, Victoria Mayor Peter Pollen, urged in 1973 that a press council

¹¹³"N. B. task force urges watchdog body for media," The Globe and Mail, September 28, 1971, passim.

¹¹⁴Ned Powers, "Watchdog on media needed?" The Globe and Mail, November 25, 1972, passim.

be formed to protect the public from the possible detrimental effects of an "inordinate concentration of newspapers in large corporations in B.C." The mayor referred to the fact that three of the four publishers of daily newspapers in Victoria and Vancouver, the province's largest cities, work for one chain--FP Publications.

The mayor agreed that press coverage had been accurate and fair in Victoria, but the growing concentration of media control in large corporations made it necessary to take certain measures to assure continuation of responsible and adequate news coverage.

"As I see it (the press council) it would be a self-governing, self-monitoring body, similar to those in the medical and legal profession," the mayor added.¹¹⁵

The Victoria mayor's suggestion was subsequently picked up by the province's Attorney-General, Alex MacDonald, who urged in February, 1974, that the media establish a voluntary press council.¹¹⁶

Although there has been talk about establishing a press council in each of the provinces mentioned above, there are no press councils in these places today.

The next chapter analyzes the results of the questionnaires sent to both newspaper publishers and press council members.

¹¹⁵"B.C. should establish a press council," The Globe and Mail, January 24, 1973, passim.

¹¹⁶Nick Russell, "A Press Council for B.C." British Columbia Library Quarterly, Vol. 37, No. 3, Winter, 1974, pp. 6-17.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

As explained earlier, the first six questions in both questionnaires asked the newspaper publishers and press council members for their opinions on what press councils were or should do. These questions were drawn not only from the experience of other press council surveys, but from the Davey Report which went to great lengths to explain what it thought a press council should accomplish. Later, in both questionnaires, these six questions appeared again, with the respondents being asked to apply the questions to the experiences of the press councils in Canada.

Communications gap

One of the major contentions of the Davey Report was that there was a widening gap between the press and the public and one of the best ways of closing it would be the creation of press councils. The first question, therefore, asked respondents if they believed press councils filled the communications gap which is supposed to exist between the public and the press.

As can be seen from Table 1, respondents were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly. The first column in the table indicates the answers of the

Table 1. QUESTION: Press councils act to fill in the communications gap which exists between the public and the press.

	Non Press Council Publishers (n=43)				Press Council Publishers (n=18)		Professional Press Council Members (n=17)		Lay Press Council Members (n=18)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly	2.33%	4.65%	11.11%	27.77%	11.76%	23.52%	16.66%	5.55%		
Agree	30.23	18.60	77.77	44.44	64.71	41.18	61.11	55.55		
Neutral	20.93	30.23	5.55	16.66	0.00	23.52	5.55	22.22		
Disagree	27.91	34.88	0.00	5.55	17.65	5.88	22.22	11.11		
Disagree Strongly	18.60	13.95	5.55	0.00	5.88	0.00	0.00	0.00		

various groups to the first question. The answers in the second column are the groups' replies to the question: "Canadian press councils have acted to fill in the communications gap which exists between the public and the press."

As can be seen from column I of Table 1, all respondents, with the exception of the non-press council publishers, agreed overwhelmingly that press councils do fill a communications gap. The responses of the non-press council publishers would seem to indicate that they are somewhat divided on this question, with slightly more disagreeing with the statement.

Column II of Table 1 shows that there was a shift in the responses when the question of whether Canadian press councils have filled a communications gap was asked. All four groups showed increases in the number of neutral answers. This would seem to indicate that all four groups are not prepared to pass judgment on the Canadian press councils, due, perhaps, to the fact that they have only been in existence since 1971.

Press threat

One of the common arguments heard before the Davey Committee was that press councils represented a threat to the freedom of newspapers and therefore should be avoided. With this in mind, the second question asked respondents whether they thought press councils were a threat to press freedom.

As can be seen from the responses in the first column of Table 2, all of the respondents agreed that press councils were not a

Table 2. QUESTION: Press councils are a threat to press freedom.

	Non Press Council Publishers (n=43)		Press Council Publishers (n=18)		Professional Press Council Members (n=17)		Lay Press Council Members (n=18)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly	9.30%	6.98%*	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Agree	13.95	9.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.55	*
Neutral	20.93	23.25	0.00	0.00	5.88	5.88	0.00	0.00
Disagree	44.86	53.48	33.33	27.77	29.41	35.29	16.66	33.33
Disagree Strongly	11.63	4.65	66.66	72.22	64.71	58.82	77.77	61.11

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

threat to press freedom, with the strongest denouncement coming, as predicted, from the three groups (press council publishers, professional press council members and lay press council members) most acquainted with press councils.

When the question was asked again, the responses were generally the same. The only real difference appeared in the responses of the non-press council publishers but these shifts were so slight that they probably cannot be considered as being representative of any major shift within that group.

Journalistic ethics

The Davey Committee was concerned that Canadian newspaper people, as a group, lacked any kind of professional ethics to guide them in their work. The committee saw in the creation of press councils an opportunity for the evolution of professional standards or ethics.

As can be seen from the responses in the first column of Table 3, all respondents agreed that press councils generally are a way of developing a sense of journalistic ethics. However, the respondents disagreed when the same question was asked in relation to the press councils in Canada. The biggest shifts seemed to be with the non-press council publishers, where fifty-one percent agreed the first time but only twenty-three percent the second time, and the professional press council members, where 52.94 percent agreed first but only 29.41 percent agreed to the second question.

The fact that the neutral responses of all four groups increased the second time would seem to indicate, as with the previous

Table 3. QUESTION: Press councils can help to develop a sense of journalistic ethics.

	Non Press Council Publishers (n=43)				Press Council Publishers (n=18)		Professional Press Council Members (n=17)		Lay Press Council Members (n=18)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly	2.33%	*	27.77%	11.11%	35.29%	17.65%*	27.77%	16.66%		
Agree	51.16	23.25	66.66	61.11	52.94	29.41	66.66	55.55		
Neutral	11.63	27.91	5.55	22.22		29.41	5.55	22.22		
Disagree	27.91	37.21		5.55	5.88	17.65				
Disagree Strongly	6.97	9.30			5.88					

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

question on the communications gap, that the groups are not prepared to pass judgment on the Canadian press councils after such a short time in existence.

In analyzing the results of the survey, two other variables, geographical location and circulation, were employed in looking at the responses of the largest group, the non-press council publishers. When the responses of this group were broken down by geographical location, the shift of opinion was noticeable. It should be noted that Table 3-A does not contain responses from Quebec because all the newspapers in that province belong to the Quebec Press Council on a voluntary basis and, therefore, were all assigned to the press council publishers' group.

As can be seen from Table 3-A, the biggest shift in agreement came from the Maritime respondents who shifted from 100 percent agreement with the first question to 28.57 percent the second time. The results of the Maritime respondents, which included newspaper publishers in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, is interesting because it was this area of the country that received the sharpest criticism from the Davey Committee about its lack of professionalism.

The shift in the neutral answers of the British Columbia respondents from 12.5 percent to 62.5 percent is interesting too because it might suggest that because they do not have a provincial press council and are, therefore, removed from the others, the respondents are not familiar with existing press councils.

When the responses of the non-press council publishers were broken down by circulation, they showed a shift in the responses of

Table 3-A. Breakdown by geographical location of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of press councils promoting a sense of ethics.

	Maritimes (N=7)		Ontario (N=19)		Prairies (N=9)		British Columbia (N=8)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly		*			11.11%			
Agree	100.00	28.57	47.37	31.58	22.22	22.22	50.00	
Neutral		28.57	10.51	15.79	22.22	22.22	12.50	62.50
Disagree		28.57	36.84	42.11	33.33	44.44	25.00	25.00
Disagree Strongly			5.26	10.53	11.11	11.11	12.50	12.50

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Table 3-B. Breakdown by circulation of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of press councils promoting a sense of ethics.

	Under 10,000 (N=16)						10,000 to 24,999 (N=11)						25,000 to 49,999 (N=8)						Over 50,000 (N=8)					
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly																								
Agree	68.75	25.00	*	9.09%			54.55	54.55		54.55			25.00	25.00		37.50								
Neutral		25.00			18.18	9.09							25.00	25.00		12.50								
Disagree	18.75	31.25			18.18	36.36							37.50	37.50		50.00								
Disagree Strongly	12.50	12.50											12.50	12.50		12.50								

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

newspapers with a circulation of under 10,000. Where 68.75 percent agreed the first time that press councils promote a sense of journalistic ethics, only twenty-five percent agreed with the statement a second time. This is interesting that this group is most critical. Most of the newspapers that belong to press councils in Canada have circulations in excess of 50,000.

The fact that the smaller newspapers are critical on this question might be interpreted as meaning that they see little value in the direction that the present press councils are taking. This could be one reason why they have been reluctant to join in any press council movement.

It would be interesting to take these results by circulation and break them down further by examining circulation groups within each geographical area. Unfortunately, the size of the sample is such that this seems impractical despite the perceived benefits of such an analysis.

Research

As with journalism ethics, the members of the Davey Committee believed that press councils should be used to undertake research on matters of professional interest and in this way help to make journalism more of a profession.

As can be seen from the first column of Table 4, there was a clear difference among the publishers with the non-press council publishers disagreeing more than the press council publishers who agreed with the statement. However, when the question was asked again, all the respondents, except the lay members, agreed that the Canadian press

Table 4. QUESTION: Press councils should undertake research on matters of professional interest to the newspaper industry.

	Non Press Council Publishers (n=43)		Press Council Publishers (n=18)		Professional Press Council Members (n=17)		Lay Press Council Members (n=18)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly		*	16.66%	5.55%	17.65%	(3*)%	11.11%	11.11%
Agree	20.93	4.65	50.00	44.44	47.06	35.29	33.33	27.77
Neutral	27.91	25.58	16.66	16.66	17.65	11.76	33.33	44.44
Disagree	34.88	51.16	5.55	33.33	5.88	35.29	16.66	11.11
Disagree Strongly	16.28	16.28	11.11		5.88		5.55	5.55

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

(3*) Denotes that three respondents did not answer the question.

councils have not undertaken sufficient research on matters of interest to the newspaper industry. The most critical, as predicted, is the non-press council publishers. Their opposition falls into a definite pattern when their responses are broken down by geographical location and circulation.

As can be seen from Table 4-A, the most critical group of the non-press council publishers was in Ontario where the number of those who agreed shifted from 31.58 percent to 10.53 percent, and the number of those who disagreed increased from 26.32 percent to 57.89 percent.

When the responses were broken down by circulation, the most critical sub-group, as with the question on journalistic ethics, was the publishers with circulation under 10,000. They showed a shift in agreement from twenty-five percent to zero percent and an increase in disagreement from twenty-five to fifty percent.

Press councils as lobbies

To those publishers who were afraid that press councils were perhaps a threat to press freedom, the Davey Committee was quick to counter with the argument that if governments were to infringe upon a newspaper's rights, a press council could act as a lobby against such interference.

Respondents were asked if they saw press councils acting as a lobby before governments and, predictably, there was a distinct difference of opinion between the groups. The non-press council publishers generally opposed the idea while the press council groups were slightly in favor.

Table 4-A. Breakdown by geographical location of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of press councils undertaking research.

	Maritimes (n=7)		Ontario (n=19)		Prairies (n=9)		British Columbia (n=8)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly		*						
Agree	14.29%		31.58%	10.53%	11.11%		12.50%	
Neutral	28.57	28.57	31.58	21.06	11.11	33.33	37.50	25.00
Disagree	42.86	42.86	26.32	57.89	55.55	33.33	25.00	62.50
Disagree Strongly	14.29	14.29	10.53	10.53	22.22	33.33	25.00	12.50

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Table 4-B. Breakdown by circulation of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of press councils undertaking research.

	Income							
	Under 10,000 (N=16)		10,000 to 24,999 (N=11)		25,000 to 49,999 (N=8)		Over 50,000 (N=8)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly		*						
Agree	25.00 %		27.27%	18.18 %			25.00 %	
Neutral	31.25	31.25	36.36	27.27	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00
Disagree	25.00	50.00	36.36	36.36	62.50	62.50	25.00	62.50
Disagree Strongly	18.75	12.50		18.18	25.00	25.00	25.00	12.50

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Table 5. QUESTION: Press councils act as a powerful lobby before governments when press freedom is threatened.

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)		Press Council Publishers (N=18)		Professional Press Council Members (N=17)		Lay Press Council Members (N=18)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly		*	27.77%	5.55%	5.88%*	(2)%*		*
Agree	20.93	4.65	33.33	22.22	41.18	11.76	27.77	11.11
Neutral	23.26	23.26	16.66	27.77	29.41	41.18	38.88	22.22
Disagree	39.53	53.49	22.22	38.88	17.65	29.41	27.77	50.00
Disagree Strongly	16.28	16.28				5.88	5.55	11.11

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.
(2)* Denotes that two respondents did not answer the question.

When the respondents were asked the question a second time in relation to the Canadian press councils, they all agreed, however, that the press councils had not acted as a lobby before the government.

The most critical were the non-press council publishers who shifted in their agreement from 20.93 percent to 4.65 percent and increased their disagreement from 39.53 percent to 53.49 percent. Those publishers who belong to the press councils, professional and lay council members, showed similar shifts but not as drastic as the non-press council publishers. The fact that these two latter groups should be similar in their opinion of this question proves rather convincingly that the Canadian press councils have not been lobbies.

When the responses of the non-press council publishers are broken down by geographical location (Table 5-A), Ontario respondents again appear to be the most critical as suggested by the change in those agreeing, from 21.05 percent to 10.53 percent and the increase in the number, 42.11 percent to 57.89 percent, who disagreed.

Similarly, when the responses of the non-press council publishers were broken down by circulation, the newspapers in the under-10,000 category again appeared to be the most critical with a change in the number agreeing with the statement, from 18.75 percent to zero percent and an increase in the number who disagreed, from 45.45 percent to 54.54 percent.

Table 5-A. Breakdown by geographical location of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of whether press councils act as lobbies.

	Maritimes (N=7)		Ontario (N=19)		Prairies (N=9)		British Columbia (N=8)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly		*						
Agree	28.57%		21.05%	10.53%	22.22%		12.5%	
Neutral	28.57	14.29	21.05	21.05	11.11	33.33	37.5	25.00
Disagree	42.86	57.14	42.11	57.89	33.33	33.33	37.5	62.50
Disagree Strongly		14.28	15.49	10.53	33.33	33.33	12.5	12.50

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Table 5-B. Breakdown by circulation of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of whether press councils act as lobbies.

	Under 10,000 (N=16)		10,000 to 24,999 (N=11)		25,000 to 49,999 (N=8)		Over 50,000 (N=8)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly	*							
Agree	18.75%		34.36%	9.09%	25.00%	12.50%		
Neutral	31.25	25.00	9.09	27.27	12.50	12.50	37.50	25.00
Disagree	31.25	50.00	45.45	54.54	50.00	50.00	37.50	62.50
Disagree Strongly	18.75	18.75	9.09	9.09	12.50	25.00	25.00	12.50

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Press councils do nothing

The question, "press councils are nothing more than do-nothing committees," was asked to begin to determine what value, if any, publishers had with press councils.

As can be seen from Table 6, all respondents disagreed that press councils were do-nothing committees although the non-press council publishers did show some respondents who agreed with the statement.

The interesting statistics with this question are the results when it was asked a second time about the Canadian press councils. While the answers of those most directly associated with the press councils remained the same, there was a shift in the responses of the non-press council publishers. There was a change in those who disagreed from 37.21 to 20.93 percent. This change seems to be reflected in the increase in the number of neutral responses.

As with some of the other questions in this series, the interpretation that could be taken from this result is that respondents can not honestly pass judgment on the Canadian press councils, either because they know little of what they have accomplished or because they feel the councils need to be in existence for a longer period of time before a more definite answer can be given. When the responses of the non-press council publishers were broken down by geographical location and circulation, there was no appreciable change across categories.

Hypothetical questions about press councils

The next series of questions sought to gain some insights, particularly from non-press council publishers, on whether they would

Table 6. QUESTION: Press councils are nothing more than do-nothing committees.

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)		Press Council Publishers (N=18)		Professional Press Council Members (N=17)		Lay Press Council Members (N=18)	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Agree Strongly	9.30%	9.30%*						*
Agree	16.28	16.28						5.55
Neutral	30.23	41.86			5.88	5.88	5.55	
Disagree	37.21	20.93	50.00	61.11	52.94	58.82	44.44	38.85
Disagree Strongly	6.98	6.98	50.00	38.88	41.18	35.29	50.00	50.00

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

become members of a press council in the future or whether they would cooperate if one were established.

Since there are two types of press councils in Canada, local and provincial, it was decided that the questions should concern both types. Besides asking respondents whether they would be interested in starting a press council either in their community or province, they were asked if they would respond to requests for information about a story they had in their newspapers. And, secondly, they were asked whether they would publish the results of a press council inquiry even if the council's findings were critical of their newspaper. These questions were based on a five-point scale ranging from definitely through definitely not and don't know.

Not unexpectedly, most of the non-press council publishers are not interested in starting a press council in their community with the largest percentage, eighteen or 41.86 percent, indicating that they definitely would not start a press council in their community (see Table 7). The largest opposition came from the Ontario newspapers where 57.89 percent said they would definitely not start a press council. It is interesting that 44.44 percent of the Prairie newspapers (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta) were either definitely or probably interested in starting a press council in their community.

Of those definitely not interested in a community press council, the largest group, by circulation, opposed to the idea was the 25,000 to 49,999 category where 62.5 percent were opposed. The next largest group opposed were the newspapers with over 50,000 circulations where fifty percent were opposed.

Table 7. QUESTION: Would you be interested in starting a press council in your community?

	Non Press Council (N=43)	Maritimes (N=7)	Ontario (N=19)	Prairies (N=9)	British Columbia (N=8)	Under 10,000 (N=16)	10,000 to 24,999 (N=11)	25,000 to 49,999 (N=8)	Over 50,000 (N=8)
Definitely	5	28.57%		33.33%		18.75%	9.09%		12.50%
Probably So	3		5.26	11.11	12.50	12.50	9.09		
Probably Not	15	57.14	26.22	11.11	62.50	25.00	45.45	37.50	37.50
Definitely Not	18	14.29	57.89	44.44	25.00	37.50	27.27	62.50	50.00
Don't Know			10.53			6.25	9.09		

These findings, while not really startling, do suggest at least that the opposition to a community press council seems equally distributed across the country with the strongest opposition coming from Ontario. Similarly, when examined across circulation groups, the opposition seems equally spread with the largest opposition coming at the high end of the circulation spectrum.

While the respondents seemed overwhelmingly opposed to a press council in their community, their responses to the second follow-up question were more surprising.

As can be seen from Table 8, most of the respondents would definitely or probably respond to any requests for information. When these responses are broken down by both geographical location and circulation, we see that more than half of the respondents in each of these categories would cooperate.

Like the previous question, the majority of the non-press council respondents would be willing to definitely or probably publish the findings of a press council in their community even if the findings were critical of their newspaper (see Table 9). This support seems equally spread across geographical and circulation categories.

The results of these two questions would seem to indicate that while these respondents are not really interested in a press council in their community, they do see it as their responsibility to cooperate either by giving out information or by publishing the findings of the press council.

This same series of questions were asked again, this time asking respondents about a press council in their province.

Table 9. QUESTION: If a press council was established in your community, would you publish its findings, including those critical of your paper?

	Non Press Council (N=43)	Maritimes (N=7)	Ontario (N=19)	Pratides (N=9)	British Columbia (N=8)	Under 10,000 (N=16)	10,000 to 24,999 (N=11)	25,000 to 49,999 (N=8)	Over 50,000 (N=8)
Definitely	18	42.86%	42.11%	44.44%	37.50%	43.75%	36.36%	37.50%	50.00%
Probably So	14	57.14	21.05	22.22	50.00	31.25	27.27	50.00	25.00
Probably Not	8		26.32	22.22	12.50	12.50	27.27	12.50	25.00
Definitely Not	2		5.26	11.11		12.50			
Don't Know	1		5.26				9.09		

As can be seen from Table 10, the non-press council respondents were equally adamant in their opposition to a provincial press council as they had been about establishing a local press council. The only real difference with this question is that twelve, or 27.91 percent, of the respondents appeared more favorable to a provincial press council. Of these, the Prairie newspapers seemed most favorable, with 44.44 percent showing support.

As can be seen from Tables 11 and 12, the respondents, as they did with the similar questions on local press councils, generally agreed to both respond to requests for information and publish the findings of press council activities if they were established in their provinces. The results of the Ontario respondents are particularly interesting since there already is a press council in that province. Such a finding might be of interest to the Ontario Press Council in the future when they are confronted with a complaint about a non-press council newspaper.

Support for press councils

This next series of questions asked respondents specifically whether they supported the idea of press councils at the local, provincial or national level.

While support or non-support for these councils could be implied from the previous questions, it was felt a clear-cut expression of support or objections was needed. The questions, based on a five-point scale ranging from favor strongly to oppose strongly, was asked of the four groups studied.

Table 10. QUESTION: Would you be interested in starting a press council in your province?

	Non Press Council (N=43)	Maritimes (N=7)	Ontario (N=19)	Prairies (N=9)	British Columbia (N=8)	Under 10,000 (N=16)	10,000 to 24,999 (N=11)	25,000 to 49,999 (N=8)	Over 50,000 (N=8)
Definitely	5	28.57%	5.26%	22.22%	25.00	18.75%	18.18%	12.50	25.00
Probably So	7		15.79	22.22	25.00	12.50	18.18	12.50	25.00
Probably Not	11	28.57	21.05	11.11	50.00	31.25	27.27	12.50	25.00
Definitely Not	18	28.57	52.63	44.44	25.00	37.50	27.27	62.50	50.00
Don't Know	2	14.29	14.29				9.09	12.50	

Table 11. QUESTION: If a press council was established in your province, would you respond to requests for information on how you handled a story?

	Non Press Council (N=43)	Maritimes (N=7)	Ontario (N=19)	Prairies (N=9)	British Columbia (N=8)	Under 10,000 (N=16)	10,000 to 24,999 (N=11)	25,000 to 49,999 (N=8)	Over 50,000 (N=8)
Definitely	10	28.57%	26.32%	33.33%		18.75%	36.36%		37.50%
Probably So	17	57.14	31.58	22.22	62.50	43.75	36.36		25.00
Probably Not	7		15.79	33.33	12.50	12.50	18.18	12.50	25.00
Definitely Not	8		26.32	11.11	25.00	18.75	9.09	37.50	
Don't Know	1	14.29				6.25			

Table 12. QUESTION: If a press council was established in your province, would you publish its findings, including those critical of your paper?

	Non Press Council (N=43)	Maritimes (N=7)	Ontario (N=19)	Prairies (N=9)	British Columbia (N=8)	Under 10,000 (N=16)	10,000 to 24,999 (N=11)	25,000 to 49,999 (N=8)	Over 50,000 (N=8)
Definitely	19	16.66%	36.89%	44.44%	62.50%	50.00%	36.36%	37.50%	50.00%
Probably So	14	57.14	31.58	22.22	25.00	25.00	36.36	50.00	25.00
Probably Not	5		15.79	22.22		6.25	18.18		25.00
Definitely Not	3		10.53	11.11		18.75			
Don't Know	2		5.26		12.50		9.09	12.50	

In supporting the idea of press councils, the Davey Committee recommended that publishers create a national press council. The committee suggested that such an initiative should come from the Canadian Daily Newspapers Publishers Association. As we have seen, this group did discuss the subject at its next annual meeting and decided a year later that a national press council was both "impractical and unworkable" at that time.

Predictably, Table 13 shows little support for a national press council from among three groups: the non-press council publishers, press council publishers and professional press council members. The only support came from the lay press council members.

This finding would seem to indicate that newspaper people in Canada still think a national press council is not practical. The fact that lay press council members hold an opposite view is not too surprising and really confirms the notion that the public doesn't know about some of the restrictions (too many small papers, no national press) which make a national press council impractical.

When the responses of the non-press council publishers is broken down, we see that the largest percentage of opposition to a national press council comes from Ontario where 68.42 percent of the respondents either opposed or opposed strongly the idea. The responses of the Prairie publishers are interesting for while they show that 55.55 percent of them are opposed to the idea, one-third of them support the idea. The other area of support seems to be in the Maritimes where 42.86 percent of the respondents favor a national press council.

Table 13. QUESTION: Do you favor the creation of a national press council?

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)	Professional Press Council Members (N=17)	Lay Press Council Members (N=18)
Favor Strongly	4.65%	11.11%	23.52%	38.88%
Favor	13.95	11.11	23.52	27.77
Neutral	25.58	27.77	11.76	22.22
Oppose	25.58	27.77	29.41	11.11
Oppose Strongly	30.23	22.22	11.75	

Table 13-A. Breakdown by circulation of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of whether they support a national press council.

	Maritimes (N=7)	Ontario (N=19)	Prairies (N=9)	British Columbia (N=8)
Favor Strongly			22.22%	
Favor	42.86	10.53	11.11	
Neutral	28.57	21.05	11.11	50.00
Oppose	14.29	36.84	11.11	25.00
Oppose Strongly	14.29	31.58	44.44	25.00

Table 14. QUESTION: Do you favor the creation of a provincial press council?

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)	Professional Press Council Members (N=17)	Lay Press Council Members (N=18)
Favor Strongly	11.63%	66.66%	35.29%	50.00%
Favor	13.95	33.33	52.94	44.44
Neutral	25.58		11.76	5.55
Oppose	23.26			
Oppose Strongly	25.58			

When analyzed by circulation, opposition to that national press council seemed fairly uniform across the circulation categories.

Provincial press council

The next question asked respondents about their support for a provincial press council. Predictably, those groups associated with the existing three provincial press councils all agreed in favor of them while the non-press council publishers were almost fifty percent opposed. But because about a quarter of the respondents favored the provincial press council and another quarter were neutral on the question, it was decided to look at the breakdown by geographical location and circulation in a slightly different way.

As can be seen from Table 14-A, the responses by circulation this time have been identified by geographical location in order to provide a better idea of where support and opposition to a provincial press council lies.

Of those eleven respondents who favored such a press council, it can be seen that six of them were from Ontario, three from the Prairies and two from the Maritimes.

Of the eleven respondents who gave a neutral response to this question, five of them are from British Columbia. This is interesting because this represents 62.5 percent of the eight B.C. respondents in the sample and would seem to indicate that the B.C. respondents, who do not have a press council in their province, have reserved judgment on the question.

Table 14-A. Breakdown by geographical location and circulation of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of whether they favor a provincial press council.

	Under 10,000	10,000 to 24,999	25,000 to 49,999	Over 50,000
Favor Strongly	PMM	P0		
Favor	P	000	0	0
Neutral	BBB00M	0M	B	BP
Oppose	P0M	0	00M	B00
Oppose Strongly	P0M	P00	BBP	B0

M = Maritimes, 0 = Ontario, P = Prairies, B = British Columbia.

The responses of those opposed to the provincial press council shows that this opposition is fairly equally spread across both circulation and geographical locations.

Local press councils

As can be seen from Table 15, the non-press council and press council respondents were opposed to the idea of local press councils or committees, while the professional press council members were equally divided on the question. Only the lay press council members showed a slight edge in favor of local press councils. This could be explained, in part, by the fact that some of the respondents in the sample are members of the local Windsor Press Council and probably see a greater value in such a council than do the other groups.

When the responses of the non-press council publishers were broken down by geographical location and circulation, they showed the responses were fairly equally spread across all categories.

The broadcast media in press councils

When the Davey Committee made its recommendation for a press council, it suggested that the broadcast media should be included. There was some opposition from those who felt that the broadcast media was already sufficiently regulated through the Canadian Radio-Television Commission. However, as Table 16 would seem to indicate, both non-press council and press council publishers are agreed that broadcast media should be included in any press council. At present, only Quebec includes the broadcast media within its jurisdiction.

Table 15. QUESTION: Do you favor the creation of local press councils/committees?

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)	Professional Press Council Members (N=17)	Lay Press Council Members (N=18)
Favor Strongly	6.98%		17.65%*	22.22%
Favor	11.63	16.66	17.65	22.22
Neutral	16.28	27.77	23.53	16.66
Oppose	44.19	27.77	29.41	33.33
Oppose Strongly	20.93	27.77	5.88	5.55

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Table 16. QUESTION: Would you like to see the broadcast media included as part of a press council?

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)
Definitely	23.26%(4)*	50.00%(1)*
Probably So	25.58	22.22
Probably Not	11.63	16.66
Definitely Not	11.63	5.55
Don't Know	18.60	

(4)* Denotes four respondents did not answer the question.

(1)* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

How publishers feel about press councils

The last question in this series of questions asked respondents to evaluate how they thought other newspaper publishers felt about press councils. As can be seen from Table 17, the respondents seemed about equally divided on this question.

The press council respondents were almost equally divided, with 38.88 percent of the respondents believing that other publishers approved of press councils. The most interesting statistic of this group is the fact that six of the respondents did not answer the question.

The non-press council respondents were also almost equally divided, however, slightly more respondents, 34.88 percent, believed

Table 17. QUESTION: How do you think Canadian daily newspaper publishers feel about press councils?

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)
Agree Strongly	(3)*	11.11%(6)*
Agree Somewhat	23.26	27.77
Neutral	34.88	
Disagree Somewhat	30.23	27.77
Disagree Strongly	4.65	

(3)* Denotes that three respondents did not answer the question.

(6)* Denotes that six respondents did not answer the question.

that other publishers disapproved of press councils. The most interesting finding of this group would be that 34.88 percent of the respondents remained neutral on this question. The breakdown of the non-press council respondents showed a fairly even distribution across all categories for support either for or in opposition to the question.

The Davey Committee questions

The next series of questions, while not dealing specifically with press councils, were drawn from the comments and recommendations of the Davey Committee. It was felt that these questions might provide some further insights into the philosophy of Canadian newspapers as

expressed by their publishers and this might somehow indirectly explain publishers' attitudes toward press councils. The questions were also asked of the press council members to see how other newspaper employees, the professional press council members, and the public, expressed through the lay press council members, received these questions. Admittedly, such perceptions are restricted by the small sample size, but it might provide some interesting insights nonetheless. All questions were based on a five-point scale ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly.

Best medium

As can be seen from Table 18, all respondents agreed that Canadian newspapers are the best medium for detailed information.

Papers not as good as they could be

One of the recurring criticisms running throughout the Davey Report was the fact that while Canadian newspapers were becoming more profitable every year the quality of the newspapers was declining.

As can be seen from Table 19, there appears to be unanimity of agreement among all the respondents that newspapers could afford to be better.

When the responses of the non-press council publishers were broken down by geographical location and circulation, the responses were equally spread across all categories.

Table 18. QUESTION: Newspapers are regarded by Canadians as the best medium for detailed information.

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)	Professional Press Council Members (N=17)	Lay Press Council Members (N=18)
Agree Strongly	25.58%	50.00%	29.41%*	16.66%
Agree	72.09	44.44	52.94	72.22
Neutral			11.76	11.11
Disagree		5.55		
Disagree Strongly	2.33			

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Table 19. QUESTION: Many Canadian newspapers are not as good as they could afford to be.

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)	Professional Press Council Members (N=17)	Lay Press Council Members (N=18)
Agree Strongly	6.98%	27.77%*	11.76%	11.11%
Agree	62.79	50.00	64.71	55.55
Neutral	9.30	16.66		22.22
Disagree	16.28		11.76	11.11
Disagree Strongly			11.76	

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Newspaper obligations

The next two questions sought respondents' replies to two concerns of the Davey Committee; the Americanization of the Canadian media and the need for the media to be an instrument of social change by alerting the public to such changes.

The first question, no doubt part of the increasing sense of nationalism which was prevailing in Canada during the late Sixties, was a plea to papers to begin to recognize Canada's uniqueness in the North American context.

As can be seen from Table 20, both groups of publishers tended to favor this question along with the lay press council members. The professional press council members were equally divided.

As can be seen from Table 21, there is a great deal of divided opinion on the question of whether newspapers should be preparing their readers for social change. This question is probably among the most important in the questionnaire because response to it would tend to suggest the kind of philosophy of publishing of the different respondents.

The non-press council and professional press council members are both two-to-one against the question, while the press council publishers and lay press council members are almost equally divided on the question.

When the responses of the non-press council publishers are broken down in Table 21-A, we see that support for this question comes from the Maritimes and Prairies. There wasn't any clear support among any of the circulation groups.

Table 20. QUESTION: "Canadian newspapers have an obligation to promote the country's apartness from the American reality."

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)	Professional Press Council Members (N=17)	Lay Press Council Members (N=18)
Agree Strongly	4.65%	33.33%	5.88%*	11.11%*
Agree	34.88	33.33	35.29	44.44
Neutral	27.91	16.66	11.76	16.66
Disagree	23.26	16.66	35.29	16.66
Disagree Strongly	16.28		5.88	5.55

* Denotes that one of the respondents did not answer the question.

Table 20-A. Breakdown by geographical location of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of promoting the country's apartness from the American reality.

	Maritimes (N=7)	Ontario (N=19)	Prairies (N=9)	British Columbia (N=8)
Agree Strongly	14.29%	5.26%		
Agree	28.57	42.11	33.33	25.00
Neutral	14.29	36.84	11.11	37.50
Disagree	28.57	5.26	44.44	37.50
Disagree Strongly	14.29	10.53	11.11	

Table 20-B. Breakdown by circulation of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of promoting the country's apartness from the American reality.

	Under 10,000	10,000 to 24,999	25,000 to 49,999	Over 50,000
Agree Strongly	6.25%			12.50%
Agree	18.75	63.64	37.50	25.00
Neutral	31.25	18.18	37.50	25.00
Disagree	25.00	9.09	25.00	37.50
Disagree Strongly	18.75	9.09		

Table 21. QUESTION: "Canadian newspapers are not adequately preparing their readers for social change."

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)	Professional Press Council Members (N=17)	Lay Press Council Members (N=18)
Agree Strongly	2.33% (1)*		5.88% (2)*	11.11%
Agree	25.58	44.44	17.65	27.77
Neutral	13.95	16.66	17.65	27.77
Disagree	48.84	33.33	41.18	27.77
Disagree Strongly	6.98	5.55	5.88	5.55

(1)* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

(2)* Denotes that two respondents did not answer the question.

Table 21-A. Breakdown by geographical location of non-press council publishers' responses to the question of newspapers preparing readers for social change.

	Maritimes (N=7)	Ontario (N=19)	Prairies (N=9)	British Columbia (N=8)
Agree Strongly	14.29%		*	
Agree	42.86	10.53	44.44	25.00
Neutral	28.57	10.53	22.22	
Disagree	14.29	68.42	22.22	62.50
Disagree Strongly		10.53		12.50

* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

News services

In its call for the de-Americanization of the media, the Davey Committee expressed its concern that too many Canadian newspapers were relying upon the American wire services with its American point of view which was not always in the best interests of Canada or good in promoting Canada's own identity. As a remedy, the committee recommended that Canadian Press, the co-operative news agency, begin providing more Canadian correspondents aboard who could begin to give the Canadian point of view on world news events.

As can be seen from Table 22, there seems to be unanimity among three groups, non-press council, lay and professional press council members, who disagree with the statement, while the press council publishers are shown to slightly favor the question.

The non-press council publishers are overwhelmingly opposed to this statement and when these responses are broken down, the opposition seems equally divided across both geographical and circulation categories.

But as can be seen from Table 23, when respondents were asked whether they thought Canadian Press should provide more correspondents aboard, there was a shift in the opinion of the response groups.

The non-press council respondents, who had so overwhelmingly disagreed that Canadian newspapers used too much American wire services, responded favorably to this question as did the other groups.

The largest number of the lay press council members answered neutral to this question. This would seem to indicate that the

Table 22. QUESTION: Canadian newspapers rely too heavily on news produced by American-owned news services.

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)	Professional Press Council Members (N=17)	Lay Press Council Members (N=18)
Agree Strongly		5.55%	5.88%	11.11%
Agree	16.28	38.88	11.76	16.66
Neutral	9.30	16.66	35.29	38.88
Disagree	53.49	33.33	41.18	27.77
Disagree Strongly	20.93	5.55	5.88	5.55

Table 23. QUESTION: Canadian Press should be encouraged to provide more correspondents aboard.

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)	Professional Press Council Members (N=17)	Lay Press Council Members (N=18)
Agree Strongly	4.65%		11.76%	22.22%
Agree	39.53	55.55	52.94	33.33
Neutral	30.23	11.11	29.41	38.88
Disagree	20.93	33.33	5.88	5.55
Disagree Strongly	4.65			

respondents are not that familiar with the CP service and declined to give a more specific answer.

When the responses of the non-press council publishers were broken down, support for this question was fairly equally divided across both geographical location and circulation categories.

Satisfaction questions

The last series of questions asked the respondents to evaluate their relationship with their readers. It was felt that such questions might provide some further insights into the respondents and how they run their newspapers.

Accuracy

The first question asked publishers to evaluate how accurate they thought their newspapers were. As can be seen from Table 24, both the non-press council and press council publishers seemed about equally divided on this question with the non-press council group slightly more in favor.

When the responses of the non-press council publishers were broken down, support for this question was fairly equally divided across both geographical location and circulation categories.

Fairness

The second question asked the publishers to evaluate the fairness of their newspapers. As can be seen from Table 25, both the non-press council and press council publishers are both agreed that their

Table 24. QUESTION: How satisfied are you with the accuracy of your newspaper?

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)
Very Satisfied	16.28% (3)*	11.11% (1)*
Somewhat Satisfied	34.88	33.33
Neutral	6.98	11.11
Somewhat Dissatisfied	32.56	38.88
Very Dissatisfied	2.33	11.11

(3)* Denotes that three respondents did not answer the question.

(1)* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Table 25. QUESTION: How satisfied are you with the fairness of your newspaper?

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)
Very Satisfied	39.53% (4)*	22.22% (1)*
Somewhat Satisfied	41.86	44.44
Neutral	2.33	11.11
Somewhat Dissatisfied	6.98	16.66
Very Dissatisfied		

(4)* Denotes that four respondents did not answer the question.

(1)* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

publications are fair. And when the responses of the non-press council respondents were broken down, they showed favorable responses across all categories.

Relationship

The final question asked the publishers how satisfied they were with the relationship of their newspapers and the community. As with the other questions, both the non-press council and press council publishers generally were satisfied with their relationship with their communities, as can be seen from Table 26. And when the non-press council respondents were broken down, the favorable reaction was seen across all categories.

Table 26. QUESTION: How satisfied are you with the relationship of your publication with its readers and the public in your community?

	Non Press Council Publishers (N=43)	Press Council Publishers (N=18)
Very Satisfied	16.28% (3)*	(1)*
Somewhat Satisfied	46.51	44.44
Neutral	4.65	33.33
Somewhat Dissatisfied	25.58	16.66
Very Dissatisfied		

(3)* Denotes that three respondents did not answer the question.

(1)* Denotes that one respondent did not answer the question.

Other comments

Besides the structured questions, there was a space where respondents were invited to make any additional comments about press councils. Many of the publishers did comment and in order to analyze them the author undertook to categorize them as being either favorable, neutral or unfavorable.

Generally, those respondents who were opposed to press councils tended to view them as a substitute to the responsibilities of a newspaper and on this point they based their objection. Such a view was voiced in this response:

We do not belong to our provincial press council because I feel it is intended only to be a sop to the public. Nothing can take the place of newsroom integrity and responsibility. Most papers can do better than they are doing, and should not need the instrument of a press council to be pressured into doing better. Our own paper has many inadequacies that we know about (and few that we don't know about) and no press council is likely to impress them on us.

Many of those who responded felt that there was a sufficient mechanism built into their newspaper operations to insure that any complaint from the public was handled properly. Typical of such a view was this comment:

Our newspaper makes every effort to satisfy a complainant and if the complaint is justified we try to do something about it. If the complaint warrants publication of a correction or a retraction, we do so. We know we are not infallible and do not pretend to be. We publish letters criticizing the paper and often add an editor's note explaining our side of the story. We feel we have a very good relationship with the vast majority of our readers. They trust us and if we make a mistake, we admit it . . . not against press councils, but do not see need for them here.

And at least one publisher saw press councils as interest groups:

A newspaper is responsible only to the courts and its readers. Press councils are invariably formed by interest groups. My telephone number and all the editors are in the phone book.

Many of the comments were classified as neutral because there was not a clear indication of the answer either being in favor or against press councils in Canada. However, these comments are interesting because they do provide some insight into the thinking which publishers have used in weighing the pros and cons of press councils.

Typical of these comments was the following:

I'm no great admirer of the press councils that now function in Canada. However, they could be a force for good. My basic feeling is that the reading public polices its newspapers effectively, and that publishers are capable of coping with government relations in informal concert if need be. Press councils sometimes cloak hasslers with credibility beyond reason and foster the notion that journalists and advertisers are dedicated to gulling readers. This I think is an insult to most readers' intelligence, and a slur on newspaper people.

Some of the respondents, while seeing some merit in press councils, seemed troubled by the fact that the press councils now functioning in Canada had not been particularly active. Such a comment was the following:

This paper would be willing to participate if all media are represented. Press councils in Canada have not been active but the mere fact that they are there is, I think, good. A problem is to keep such a council intact. Because of the lack of complaints they tend to drift apart.

Or as some respondents felt, the press councils have not evoked a strong reaction from the public:

If answers on press councils seem a bit nebulous, it is because they have not yet proved themselves; there is a strong indication that public responses is lukewarm and many of the issues raised plain silly. We are not hostile to press councils but feel they are vastly time-consuming for the value thus far displayed.

Those responses that were judged to be relatively favorable to the press council movement commented on the establishment of a national press council:

The effectiveness of a national press council would depend entirely on its makeup. Certainly the objectives requiring action are already clear. The lacklustre job of too many newspapers has unfortunately over-ridden the good job of the few which at least try to perform professionally.

At least one respondent who appeared favorable to press councils at the provincial level was quick to point out the problems that might be associated with the other levels of press councils:

A national press council poses (in Canada and the United States) too many transportation problems both for the council and those who wish to appear before it. It's too unwieldy. In Britain, fine. Local press councils are ineffective. It's virtually impossible to get people who can examine a local issue objectively. Someone is going to use the council to grind an axe, sooner or later. I would not want to have to work with a local press council at all. A regional press council makes transportation relatively easy; provides a non-local detachment; yet, if based on a state or other government organization, provides a regional identity . . . and the OPC (Ontario Press Council) works well.

But perhaps the best of the comments expressing support for the press council movement was provided by the following publisher:

Press councils are no panacea. But they can be helpful, in that they convey a sense of fairness on the part of newspapers and let readers know they can if they want take their complaints to a particular independent body.

Responses of press council members

In addition to questions similar to those of the newspaper publishers, the press council members were asked to answer a series of open-ended questions. It was felt that the answers from these questions might provide some real insights into the operation of the existing press councils and since it was not possible to interview all the press council members, it was felt that this method would be most informative. The answers to each of these open-ended questions were noted and a subjective measure was assigned to each response, indicating one's agreement or disagreement with the statement. This was done in an attempt to show the differences, if any, that exist among these individuals.

Press council meetings

The first question asked respondents: "Generally speaking, how would you describe the press council meetings you have attended?" The responses were broken up by either professional or lay members. Of the seventeen professional members in the sample, twelve responded favorably to this question, with only one respondent judged to be unfavorable. There were two neutral answers and two who did not answer the question.

Most of the professional members responded with positive, descriptive adjectives in describing the press council meetings. Typical of their comments: "Excellent. Well organized, good discussions . . . excellent input from all members has resulted in well-thought-out decisions." Or another comment: "Very satisfactory--in terms of spirit of cooperation, frankness and true 'representative.' But--too heavily

loaded with discussions at administrative and organic problems of the Council itself. At least in first two years."

The unfavorable comment came from one respondent who said: "Tended to wander and digress; there was a problem of adequate chairmanship."

Of the eighteen lay press council respondents in the sample, fifteen responded favorably to the question, one was unfavorable and two respondents were judged to have neutral answers.

Like the professional press council members, the lay members were equally flattering in their comments about the press council meetings. Typical of their comments:

Excellent! Free swinging, generally stimulating sessions where the pompous reactionaires (we have some) usually get their come-uppance. Over the long haul though I have been terribly impressed by people's sense of justice.

The unfavorable comment suggested some of the problems that person felt was wrong with press councils:

Not enough complaints--Council poorly representative in terms of appointments although structure good, i.e., one newspaper rep and one public rep for each newspaper in five cities. Two newspapers not participating. Both from same chain.

One of the neutral responses was also similar in its views: "Not very controversial but members anxious to do an effective job."

Polarization

The next question: "Generally speaking, do you feel press council discussions become polarized between the professional and lay members?" was an attempt to see if the members felt that the various factions would take sides on issues.

But such doesn't seem to be the case judging by the answers. Fourteen of the seventeen professional press council members answered no to this question, while two said yes and one gave an answer which was judged as being somewhat. The responses of the lay press council members were similar with only one of the eighteen respondents believing that there was some polarization. The rest disagreed.

Most of the respondents simply answered no on their questionnaires, but some did write longer answers. Typical of these answers was this one from a professional member:

It was a surprise to find just the opposite. If there is any alignment it is liberals from both press and public to the conservatives from press and public. Even this is not hard line.

The respondent who was less than firm about the polarization of press councils expressed his views this way:

Polarize is too strong a word. There is an experimental gap. Professional journalists on the Council expect more from the journalistic industry than either management or members of the public.

The responses of the lay press council members were similar to those of the professional members as evidenced by this comment from one of the respondents:

No. I have found all to be interested in fair decisions. I expected this to be the case when I first joined the council, but to my pleasant surprise it is not the way the press council functions.

Press council views

The next question asked respondents, "Have your views toward the Press changed appreciably since you began serving on the Press

Council?" This question was intended to elicit answers that might suggest clues to whether the press council has been successful in achieving its goals.

As expected, both groups of respondents said their views about the press had not changed since the press councils had been formed. This view was not entirely unexpected given the fact that the press councils have been in existence for only a short time and hardly have had time to establish themselves.

Of the seventeen professional press council respondents, ten said their views about the press had not changed, three answered yes, three somewhat and one did not answer the question. Nine of the eighteen lay press council respondents answered no to the question, while eight answered yes and one was somewhat.

Of the ten professional members to respond to this question, only two offered further comment beyond a "no" to this question. They said: "Long-held convictions have been reinforced and intensified," and "No. Confirmed feelings that there's a lot of improvement needed."

The three professional respondents who answered yes to this question all offered explanations for their answer. Probably the best of these was the following:

Yes. I was dubious regarding the need for a press council. Newspapermen tend to resent criticism and think they have the answers about their own business. This "closed" approach benefits from examination by unbelligent outsiders.

Four of the nine lay members who responded no to this question offered explanations for their answers. Their basic concern here was reader response and the terms of reference of the press council.

The following answer probably best summarizes the feelings of these respondents:

No. Our terms of reference are too narrow, have always thought it should be broader. Shouldn't have to wait for complaint. Should instigate suggestions for better reporting, better coverage and better presentation.

The following responses probably best summarize the feelings of the eight lay members who responded yes to this question:

Yes. Originally I had great concern over the lack of "power" possessed by the press council. It looked so futile. I now feel quite differently. We do listen. We are fair. We do care. Those who have made their cases before us are aware of those things. I feel we are doing something important and worthwhile.

The future:

The next question asked respondents what they felt the future held for the press councils. The answers were judged to be either positive, negative or neutral.

As expected, both groups overwhelmingly felt that the press councils had bright futures. Of the seventeen professional respondents, ten answered positively, three negatively, two answers were neutral and two did not answer the question. Twelve of the eighteen lay press council members responded favorably, three answers were negative, two neutral and one respondent did not answer the question.

Most of those professional members who responded favorably to this question saw press councils growing and expanding in the future. Typical of this feeling was the following comment:

I can see where more and more papers will finally realize the importance of joining . . . there's, I see, a real need for press councils in years to come!

Of the three negative professional responses, this response perhaps best summarizes the feelings of the group:

Because the public is disinterested and uninformed about the role of press councils, I'm afraid they will slide into limbo. Perhaps the newspapers which are members of press councils should do a better job of explaining and inviting work for the councils.

Similarly, those lay members who responded positively felt that to be successful the press councils needed to sell the concept to the public. Typical of this feeling was the following comment:

Future effectiveness will, I believe, depend much on the public. Many people criticize the press in private conversation; few seem ready to take their criticism or complaint to a press council. The machinery for dealing with complaints in a thorough, objective way is well established. We need more members of the public who will go to the trouble of formally raising questions about the performance of the press in specific instances, even though the individuals are not themselves directly affected.

Likewise, those lay press council members who expressed negative feelings about the future of the press councils said that unless the councils receive more complaints they might go out of existence. Such a comment was offered in this response:

Questionable future as public interest is minimal. Standard of newspapers in this area (Alberta) is exceptionally high so comparatively few complaints from general public.

Changes

The next two questions asked the respondents first what changes they had seen in the press councils since their beginning and a second question asked what changes they thought had to be made in the future to strengthen the press councils.

In order to arrive at some common areas for change in these questions, a content analysis was done of the answers. Of the first question: "Can you briefly cite any changes in the actions of any newspapers which were brought about as a direct result of press council decisions?" nine of the seventeen professional press council members responded with answers. Of these responses, it was found that they fell into two broad categories: accountability and advertising changes.

Seven of the nine respondents had answers that fit into the accountability category. These answers were similar in that they all stressed that they felt there was a greater awareness among those newspapers about readers' complaints since the formation of the press councils. Typical of the answers was this comment:

While there may not have been any spectacular changes or shifts in policy, I believe there is an "awareness" near the top that makes some people a little more careful of what they are doing and why in crunch situations.

Like the professional press council members, six of the fourteen lay members who responded to this question felt that the newspapers involved with the press councils had become more responsive to reader complaints. Typical of this feeling was the following comment:

We have observed a marked increase in the readiness of editors and publishers to consider complaints from readers, and to think at least a second time before refusing to provide redress.

However, unlike the professional members, the lay members were more critical about the changes that have occurred with the press councils. At least four respondents felt that there had been no significant changes since the formation of the councils. The underlying feeling

of these comments was that the decisions seemed to go unnoticed by the newspaper executive. The following comment perhaps best expressed that feeling:

Unfortunately on the one occasion when we found contrary to the will of the publisher, our rulmination was ignored.

Two other respondents remarked that the only change they had perceived was that the newspaper was publishing the results of the press council. The other changes cited by the lay members included: a new policy on publishing death notices, concern about denying space to controversial advertisers and concern about the publishing of people charged with minor offenses.

The second question asked what changes the press council member would suggest to strengthen the press councils. On this question, both groups were in agreement that the chief priority had to be the expansion of media participation. Four of twelve professional members who responded to the question gave this reply, and six of the eighteen lay members who answered the question.

The second most frequent answer of the professional members was time. Other suggestions included a greater commitment on the part of the members, financing, and promotion.

As with the first question, the answers of the lay members seemed more pointed and specific about what had to be changed. This could be inferred from the second most frequent answers received which were that there be broader representation on the press councils and that they have more clout. Examples:

Make them more representative of the population: re: workers. Nationalize them. The printers and other non-editorial staff should be represented on the council.

I can't think of any specific ones but agree that something has to be done to give the councils more clout. I feel that in principle the press councils are a good thing; unfortunately in practice they tend not to be too effective.

Other suggestions listed by the lay members included: more participation by lay members, public meetings, better financing, more publicity, limit professional members, identify government restraints at meetings, more work, more research and a strong chairman.

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation of the four press councils in Canada is really a two-step process. First, from the descriptive examination of the factors surrounding the creation of the press councils and their first complaints, one can make some general observations on their success or lack of it to this point. Secondly, the results of the mailed questionnaires sent to the newspaper publishers and press council members provides an opportunity not only to make some general conclusions about the operations of these press councils but also about their future.

From the descriptive analysis, therefore, these following general observations may be made:

1) Acceptance: The analysis would tend to support the observation that these press councils have been accepted but not overwhelmingly so by either other newspapers or the public. The lack of support from other newspapers seems in keeping with Professor Brown's observation in the first chapter about the lack of initial interest by newspapermen in the British Press Council. The same observation could be made about the National News Council in the United States where many of the large news outlets have strongly resisted an invitation to join the council. Such observations would lead one to the conclusion that those who establish press councils must be prepared to endure a certain

gestation period before other members of the media give their support to it. Public acceptance of the press councils has not been overwhelming either, judging from the number of complaints received so far by the press councils. Only two of the four press councils, the Ontario and Quebec Press Councils, have seen a steady increase in the number of complaints lodged with them. In the case of the Alberta and Windsor Press Councils, the number of complaints has decreased from their first year of operation. This can be interpreted in two ways: first, the lack of complaints may be due to the fact that the public is satisfied that the newspapers are doing such a good job that complaints are not necessary. However, another reason may be that the public still lacks knowledge about the press councils and what they do.

2) Nature of the complaints: The success and acceptance of any press council would seem closely correlated with the public's satisfaction with the handling of the complaints brought before it. An examination of the complaints handled by the four Canadian press councils so far raises some observations: first, the most observable fact would be that many of the complaints have been minor in nature. Such a criticism is similar to that of Professor Lowenstein in the first chapter about the National News Council. He noted that the Council had failed to attract the kind of significant cases that could prove of value to both the media and the public. Such an observation leads to another observation: that the general public has a lack of knowledge about how a newspaper functions and what is news. There appears some need for better educating the public about how a newspaper operates.

A second observation about the complaints received by the press councils, at least the Alberta Press Council, is that some of them have come from politicians who are using the press council as a springboard for personal attacks on particular newspapers. While one would resist any suggestion that such complaints be ignored, it should be clear to those associated with the press councils that some agreement between politicians and newspapers needs to be reached so that the press council doesn't always have to be an arbitrator in such disputes.

The constitutions of all the press councils stress that complaints from the press about the public will be welcomed, yet an examination of the press councils indicates that really only the Quebec Press Council has been active in this area. Their complaints about the sale of Le Soleil and the federal government's mistreatment of Le Jour should act as examples to the other press councils of the need to be ever vigilant of attacks on press freedom.

3) Other activities: All of the constitutions of the press councils indicate that in addition to hearing complaints, they are interested in helping to raise professional standards. An examination of the press councils so far, however, indicates that such activity has occurred with only two of the press councils, the Ontario and Quebec Press Councils. Of the two, the Ontario Press Council seems to have been the most active so far. Their pamphlet on the naming of people involved in minor offenses appears to represent a new sensitivity for changing societal attitudes which may necessitate a re-examination of the traditional definition of news. The Ontario Press Council's

examination of discrimination in advertising is an important step because it shows that the council does not intend to merely hear complaints and hand down a decision, but desires to see changes made where injustices exist. The Quebec Press Council, perhaps bogged down initially in organizational procedures, also appears to be making a concerted effort to raise journalistic standards through their plans for a code of ethics and the press identity cards. To some, the issuance of the identity cards might appear as an infringement on journalists, but if one is familiar with the police harassment of journalists during the Quebec crisis in 1970, the cards are a way of insuring that journalists holding them will have the full support of the press council should they become involved with any law enforcement agency.

The analysis of the questionnaires sent to the newspaper publishers press council members would seem to lend to the following general conclusion: the four Canadian press councils have gained a certain degree of acceptance, although not overwhelming, but they still have a long way to go in proving themselves and living up to their full potential.

Such a conclusion can be reached from the analysis of the first six questions asked both the newspaper publishers and press council members. All of the respondents seemed in agreement that press councils were not a threat to press freedom and were something more than do-nothing committees. Even with the question of press councils acting to fill in the communications gap between the public and the press, nearly one-third of the non-press council publishers agreed with the statement.

Perhaps the most interesting result of these first six questions was the answers to the question of press councils developing a sense of journalistic ethics. All the respondents agreed overwhelmingly to this statement the first time and were equally in disagreement or neutrality the second time when the question was applied to the existing press councils. Such a shift in opinion leads one to the conclusion that all the groups are in agreement that the existing press councils have not yet proved themselves in undertaking to develop journalistic ethics.

The answers of the non-press council publishers is even more interesting when they are examined in relation to the other two questions in this series. On these questions of press councils undertaking research and acting as lobbies before governments, the non-press council publishers were in strong disagreement with these statements.

A conclusion that could be reached from this would be that those publishers who do not belong to the press councils appear to see and accept press councils as hearing complaints and perhaps developing journalistic ethics, but not acting further in trying to answer other issues in the newspaper industry or acting against any government encroachment. Such a conclusion can only be viewed as tentative at this point because of the general nature of the questions asked, but the result does suggest the need for further research in this area to help better define the two sets of "philosophies" that appear to exist among Canadian newspaper publishers.

The breakdown by circulation and geographical location of the non-press council publishers' responses to these first six questions

should also be viewed with some interest. The results showed that the most critical sub-group by geographical location was Ontario where most of the respondents were either independent or Thomson-owned newspapers. Such a result should make it clear to the Ontario Press Council the tremendous amount of work needed to gain converts.

The fact that the most critical sub-group by circulation was the under-10,000 category is interesting because it suggests that these publishers feel that a press council is not necessary in their communities because there may already be sufficient public access to the paper. A further justification for these publishers may be that the majority of the complaints that have been received by the press councils have been against the larger, metropolitan newspapers.

The results of the hypothetical questions about supporting press councils show that while the majority of the non-press council publishers are opposed to either provincial or local press councils, they do see a need to cooperate with such press councils in providing both information and publishing press council decisions. This result should be encouraging to the existing press councils in knowing that they can expect cooperation from most of these non-press council newspapers should a complaint ever be received against one of them.

The results of the question about press councils including the broadcasting media should prove the need for including them. At present, only the Quebec Press Council includes the broadcasting industry in its jurisdiction.

The results of the satisfaction questions, while they did not deal specifically with press councils, should be interesting because

they tend to show that the majority of the non-press council publishers feel their newspapers are accurate, fair and have a good relationship with their respective communities. It would seem that if a newspaper held such a belief it would not necessarily see the need for establishing or belonging to a press council. Therefore , it would seem that if the existing press councils are to expand, they will have to convince these newspapers of the importance of press councils in not only hearing complaints, but in promoting more professionalism within the industry.

The answers of the press council members to the open-ended questions show rather conclusively that press council meetings can be worthwhile and do not become polarized between the professional and lay members.

Such an evaluation of the Canadian press councils would not be complete without some recommendations for the future. The following recommendations are based on both the descriptive and qualitative evaluations of the existing press councils and are offered not as concrete solutions to particular problems but as helpful suggestions for at least some degree of future discussion.

1) Increase acceptance: This should really be a two-pronged attack on the part of the press councils. The first area of attack should be the other members of the newspaper industry. The results of the mailed questionnaire should make it clear that newspaper publishers generally accept the concept of press councils and are willing to co-operate with them even though they do not particularly wish to belong to them. This disinterest in joining may be attributed to the fact

that the majority of these publishers feel that they already have a good relationship with their communities. If press councils are to grow and expand, it would seem that existing press councils are going to have to sell these non-press council publishers on the other benefits that press councils can provide. There does appear to be some interest among these non-press council publishers about journalistic ethics and perhaps greater efforts should be made by the press councils in this area. The questionnaire also showed rather conclusively that the broadcast industry should be a part of the press councils. The press councils should make a concerted effort to involve them. The press councils also should make an effort to involve other journalistic organizations. At present, only the Quebec Press Council has a representative from a journalist's organization, la Federation Professionnelle des Journalistes du Quebec. The press councils should actively solicit the support of the newspaper guild and other professional journalists' groups. It is only through a combined effort can such professionalizing measures like creating codes of ethics be achieved.

In increasing the public's interest in press councils, the press councils should see from the initial complaints that there is a lack of knowledge on the public's part about the function and definition of news. The press councils should undertake a public education campaign to better inform the public about what newspapers are and try to do. This could be done by encouraging groups to tour newspapers, by having press council members speak to citizens' groups, etc. The press councils also need to keep their complaints process as simple as possible so as not to discourage anyone who might want to complain.

2) Complaints: The press councils need to encourage more complaints along the lines of the one received by the Ontario Press Council about the publishing of names of people involved in minor offenses. These kinds of complaints get right at the contemporary issues facing the press and give the press more credibility in the eyes of the public if an honest attempt is made at answering them. The press councils should also not shy away from complaints brought by newspapers against the public or government. Canadian newspapers do not have explicitly spelled out First Amendment rights as do their United States counterpart and, for that reason alone, they should be ever vigilant to encroachments on their freedom by government.

3) Other activities: The press councils should take to heart the recommendations for change suggested by their press council members. They should encourage more media participation, encourage better complaints, seek broader representation, better financing, more publicity, and strong chairmen.

It appears that the groundwork for these press councils has been laid. Only time will tell how successful they will become.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO
ENGLISH-SPEAKING NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS

Press councils in Canada are a relatively new phenomenon and perhaps this explains, in part, why little has been written on what newspaper publishers, like yourself, think about them.

It's true that many publishers made their views on press councils known to the Davey Committee five years ago, but that was before any of the four Canadian press councils were officially operating.

As a Canadian newspaperman for seven years, I am vitally interested in learning more about our country's press--even from the vantage point of an American university. I feel that too often ivory tower generalizations are made about our press without a working newsman's perspective on the problems that face the press each day.

I wonder if you could take a few minutes of your time to fill out the enclosed questionnaire. It will be used with those of other publishers to compile an updated look at press councils.

Your answers will be held in strict confidence. Under no circumstances will responses be linked to specific newspapers in academic or public reports of the questionnaire.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your reply.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

David Reddick
Project Director

PART I

THE FOLLOWING SECTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ASKS YOUR RESPONSE TO STATEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE ABOUT PRESS COUNCILS. PLEASE RESPOND BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Press councils act to fill in the communications gap which exists between the public and the press. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 2. Press councils are a threat to press freedom. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 3. Press councils can help to develop a sense of journalistic ethics. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 4. Press councils should undertake research on matters of professional interest to the newspaper industry. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 5. Press councils act as a powerful lobby before governments when press freedom is threatened. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 6. Press councils are nothing more than do-nothing committees. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 7. Do you favor the creation of a national press council? | (1) Favor Strongly
(2) Favor
(3) Neutral
(4) Oppose
(5) Oppose Strongly |

- | | |
|--|---|
| 8. Do you favor the creation of provincial press councils? | (5) Oppose Strongly
(4) Oppose
(3) Neutral
(2) Favor
(1) Favor Strongly |
| 9. Do you favor the creation of local press councils/committees? | (1) Favor Strongly
(2) Favor
(3) Neutral
(4) Oppose
(5) Oppose Strongly |

THIS SECTION DEALS WITH LOCAL-PROVINCIAL PRESS COUNCILS IN CANADA:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 10. Canadian local-provincial press councils have acted to fill in the communications gap which exists between the public and the press. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 11. Canadian local-provincial press councils are a threat to press freedom. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 12. Canadian local-provincial press councils have helped to develop a sense of journalistic ethics. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 13. Canadian local-provincial press councils have done useful research on matters of professional interest to the newspaper industry. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 14. Canadian local-provincial press councils have acted as powerful lobbies before governments when press freedom was threatened. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |

- | | |
|---|---|
| 15. Canadian local-provincial press councils are do-nothing committees. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
|---|---|

THIS SECTION ASKS YOU ABOUT SUPPORT FOR NEW PRESS COUNCILS AND/OR CHANGES IN EXISTING PRESS COUNCILS.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 16. Would you be interested in starting a press council in your community? | (1) Definitely
(2) Probably So
(3) Probably Not
(4) Definitely Not
(5) Don't Know |
| 17. If a press council was established in your community, would you respond to requests for information on how you handled a story? | (5) Don't Know
(4) Definitely Not
(3) Probably Not
(2) Probably So
(1) Definitely |
| 18. If a press council was established in your community, would you publish its findings, including those critical of your paper? | (1) Definitely
(2) Probably So
(3) Probably Not
(4) Definitely Not
(5) Don't Know |
| 19. Would you be interested in starting a province-wide press council? | (5) Don't Know
(4) Definitely Not
(3) Probably Not
(2) Probably So
(1) Definitely |
| 20. If a press council was established in your province, would you respond to requests for information on how you handled a story? | (1) Definitely
(2) Probably So
(3) Probably Not
(4) Definitely Not
(5) Don't Know |
| 21. If a press council was established in your province, would you publish its findings, including those critical of your paper? | (5) Don't Know
(4) Definitely Not
(3) Probably Not
(2) Probably So
(1) Definitely |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 22. Would you like to see the broadcast media included as part of a press council? | (1) Definitely
(2) Probably So
(3) Probably Not
(4) Definitely Not
(5) Don't Know |
| 23. How do you think Canadian daily newspaper publishers feel about press councils? | (1) Approve Strongly
(2) Approve Somewhat
(3) Neither Approve/
Disapprove
(4) Disapprove Somewhat
(5) Disapprove Strongly |

PART II

THIS SECTION ASKS YOUR RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE DAVEY COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE CANADIAN MEDIA IN 1970. PLEASE RESPOND BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. "Canadian newspapers have an obligation to promote the country's apartness from the American reality." | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 2. Newspapers are regarded by Canadians as the best medium for detailed information. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 3. "Canadian newspapers are not adequately preparing their readers for social change." | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 4. Canadian newspapers rely too heavily on news produced by American-owned news services. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 5. Many Canadian newspapers are not as good as they could afford to be. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |

- | | |
|--|---|
| 6. Canadian Press should be encouraged to provide more correspondents abroad. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 7. Newspaper salaries have generally improved over the past five years. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 8. The caliber of newspaper employees has generally improved over the past five years. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |

PART III

THE PUBLISHER AND HIS NEWSPAPER.

1. Is your newspaper (1) group-owned (2) independent
2. How many persons make up your reporting and editing staff? _____
3. Which staff member is most likely to handle a complaint about news coverage?

(1) Publisher	(2) Editor	(3) Managing Editor
(4) News Editor	(5) City Editor	(6) Reporter
(7) A Secretary	(8) Other (please specify) _____	
4. What channels in your community are effective in keeping you in touch with reader sentiment?

(1) Staff	(2) Staff Wives	(3) Public Opinion Polls
(4) Service Clubs	(5) Ethnic Groups	(6) Government Officials
(7) School Groups	(8) Labor Groups	(9) Colleges/Universities
(10) Consumer Groups	(11) Women's Groups	(12) Other (specify) _____
5. Is your staff instructed to bring public criticism of your newspaper to the attention of top management?

(1) Yes	(2) No
---------	--------

6. Does your newspaper have an action-line type column where the public can ask for help?

_____ (1) Yes

(2) No _____

If yes, how long has it been in existence? _____

How often does it appear? _____

How many full-time staffers does it employ? _____

7. Does your newspaper have an ombudsman where the public can lodge complaints?

_____ (1) Yes

(2) No

If yes, how long has he performed these duties? _____

Are the complaints handled through a column? (1) Yes (2) No

If yes, how often does the column appear? _____

8. On the average, how many letters to the editor does your newspaper receive in a week? _____
9. On the average, how many letters to the editor does your newspaper publish in a week? _____
10. How satisfied are you with the relationship of your publication with its readers and the public in your community?
- (1) Very Satisfied
 - (2) Somewhat Satisfied
 - (3) Neither Satisfied/Dissatisfied
 - (4) Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - (5) Very Dissatisfied
11. How satisfied are you with the accuracy of your newspaper?
- (5) Very Dissatisfied
 - (4) Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - (3) Neither Satisfied/Dissatisfied
 - (2) Somewhat Satisfied
 - (1) Very Satisfied
12. How satisfied are you with the fairness of your newspaper?
- (1) Very Satisfied
 - (2) Somewhat Satisfied
 - (3) Neither Satisfied/Dissatisfied
 - (4) Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - (5) Very Dissatisfied

THANK YOU. PLEASE MAKE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BELOW.

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO
FRENCH-SPEAKING NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS

Les conseils de presse au Canada constituent un phénomène relativement nouveau et c'est peut-être pour cela que le sentiment des éditeurs des journaux, comme vous-même, est mal connu.

Il est vrai que beaucoup d'éditeurs ont exprimé leurs opinions sur les conseils de presse au cours de la Commission Davey il y a cinq ans, mais cela était bien avant la constitution des quatre conseils de presse du Canada.

En tant que journaliste canadien depuis sept années, je m'intéresse particulièrement à apprendre davantage au sujet de la presse de notre pays--même si mon poste d'observation est une université américaine. Je pense que trop souvent notre presse est l'objet de généralisations banales au sujet des problèmes qu'elle rencontre chaque jour et cela sans la perspective professionnelle d'un journaliste concerné par son milieu.

J'aimerais que vous consacriez quelques minutes pour remplir le questionnaire suivant. Le document sera utilisé en association avec les réponses d'autres éditeurs canadiens pour une approche récente des conseils de presse.

Vos réponses resteront strictement confidentielles. Les réponses ne seront en aucun cas liées avec des journaux spécifiques dans les rapports académiques ou publiques du questionnaire.

Un enveloppe timbrée et adressée est incluse pour votre réponse.

Je vous serai reconnaissant de votre concours à cette étude et vous prie de croire à l'expression de mes sentiments les meilleurs,

David Reddick
Directeur du projet

PREMIERE PARTIE

LA PREMIERE PARTIE DE CE QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNE VOTRE POSITION SUR DES JUGEMENTS EMIS À PROPOS DES CONSEILS DE PRESSE. INDIQUEZ VOTRE REPONSE EN ENTOURANT LE NOMBRE APPROPRIE.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Les conseils de presse agissent dans le but de résoudre le manque de communication qui existe entre le public et la presse. | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |
| 2. Les conseils de presse menacent la liberté de la presse. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |
| 3. Les conseils de presse peuvent aider à développer un sens d'éthique journalistique. | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |
| 4. Les conseils de presse devraient entreprendre des recherches sur des sujets ayant un intérêt professionnel pour l'industrie de la presse écrite. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |
| 5. Les conseils de presse agissent comme un groupe puissant en face du gouvernement lorsque la liberté de la presse est menacée. | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |
| 6. Les conseils de presse passent leur temps à ne rien faire. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |
| 7. Etes-vous favorable à la création d'un conseil de presse national? | (1) Fortement favorable
(2) Favorable
(3) Neutre
(4) Défavorable
(5) Fortement défavorable |

- | | |
|--|--|
| 8. Etes-vous favorable à la création de conseils de presse provinciaux? | (5) Fortement défavorable
(4) Défavorable
(3) Neutre
(2) Favorable
(1) Fortement favorable |
| 9. Etes-vous favorable à la création de conseils de presse/comités locaux? | (1) Fortement favorable
(2) Favorable
(3) Neutre
(4) Défavorable
(5) Fortement défavorable |

CETTE SECTION CONCERNE LES CONSEILS DE PRESSE LOCAUX-PROVINCIAUX AU CANADA.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 10. Les conseils de presse locaux-provinciaux du Canada ont agi dans le but de résoudre le manque de communication qui existe entre le public et la presse. | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |
| 11. Les conseils de presse locaux-provinciaux de Canada sont une menace pour la liberté de la presse. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |
| 12. Les Conseils de presse locaux-provinciaux du Canada ont aidé à développer un sens d'éthique journalistique. | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |
| 13. Les conseils de presse locaux-provinciaux du Canada ont entrepris d'utiles recherches ayant un intérêt professionnel pour l'industrie de la presse écrite. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |
| 14. Les conseils de presse locaux-provinciaux du Canada ont agi comme un groupe puissant en face du gouvernement lorsque la liberté de la presse était menacée. | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 15. Les conseils de presse locaux-provinciaux du Canada passent leur temps à ne rien faire. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |
|---|--|

CETTE SECTION CONCERNE VOTRE POSITION SUR LES NOUVEAUX CONSEILS DE PRESSE ET/OU LES CHANGEMENTS POSSIBLES POUR LES ACTUELS CONSEILS DE PRESSE.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 16. Voudriez-vous participer au lancement d'un conseil de presse dans votre communauté? | (1) Absolument
(2) Probablement
(3) Probablement pas
(4) Absolument pas
(5) je ne sais pas |
| 17. Si un conseil de presse était constitué dans votre communauté, seriez-vous disposé à répondre aux demandes d'information concernant la façon dont vous avez préparé un article? | (5) Je ne sais pas
(4) Absolument pas
(3) Probablement pas
(2) Probablement
(1) Absolument |
| 18. Si un conseil de presse était constitué dans votre communauté, seriez-vous disposé à publier ses conclusions, y-compris celles critiquant votre journal? | (1) Absolument
(2) Probablement
(3) Probablement pas
(4) Absolument pas
(5) Je ne sais pas |
| 19. Voudriez-vous participer au lancement d'un conseil de presse à compétence provinciale? | (5) Je ne sais pas
(4) Absolument pas
(3) Probablement pas
(2) Probablement
(1) Absolument |
| 20. Si un conseil de presse était constitué dans votre province, seriez-vous disposé à répondre aux demandes d'information concernant la façon don't vous avez préparé un article? | (1) Absolument
(2) Probablement
(3) Probablement pas
(4) Absolument pas
(5) Je ne sais pas |
| 21. Si un conseil de presse était constitué dans votre province, seriez-vous dispose à publier ses conclusions, y-compris celles critiquant votre journal? | (5) Je ne sais pas
(4) Absolument pas
(3) Probablement pas
(2) Probablement
(1) Absolument |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 22. Voudriez-vous voir les media audio-visuels intégrés dans un conseil de presse. | (1) Absolument
(2) Probablement
(3) Probablement pas
(4) Absolument pas
(5) Je ne sais pas |
| 23. Quel est à votre avis le sentiment des éditeurs de journaux quotidiens du Canada au sujet des conseils de presse? | (1) Fortement favorable
(2) Quelque peu favorable
(3) Neutre
(4) Quelque peu defavorable
(5) Fortement defavorable |

DEUXIEME PARTIE

CETTE SECTION APPELLE VOS REPONSES AUX QUESTIONS SOULEVEES PAR LE RAPPORT DE LA COMMISSION DAVEY SUR LES MEDIA CANADIENS EN 1970. INDIQUEZ VOTRE REPONSE EN ENTOURANT LE NOMBRE APPROPRIE.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. "Les journaux canadiens ont une obligation de promouvoir l'identification du pays de la realite américaine." | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |
| 2. Les journaux sont considérés par la plupart des Canadiens comme le meilleur medium pour l'information détaillée. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |
| 3. "Les journaux canadiens ne préparent pas suffisamment leurs lecteurs aux changements sociaux." | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |
| 4. Les journaux canadiens se reportent trop sur des informations provenant de services de presse dirigés par les Américains. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |
| 5. Beaucoup de journaux canadiens ne sont pas aussi bons qu'ils pourraient l'être. | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6. La presse canadienne devrait être encouragée à envoyer plus de correspondants à l'étranger. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |
| 7. Les salaires des journaux se sont généralement améliorés durant les cinq dernières années. | (1) Approuve fortement
(2) Approuve
(3) Neutre
(4) Désapprouve
(5) Désapprouve fortement |
| 8. La capacité des employés de journaux s'est généralement améliorée durant les cinq dernières années. | (5) Désapprouve fortement
(4) Désapprouve
(3) Neutre
(2) Approuve
(1) Approuve fortement |

TROISIEME PARTIE

L'EDITEUR ET SON JOURNAL.

1. Votre journal fait-il partie d'une chaîne? (1) Oui (2) Non
2. Combien de personnes composent votre rédaction (reporters/rédacteurs)? _____
3. Quel membre de votre personnel est le plus enclin à recevoir et à s'occuper d'une plainte concernant le reportage d'une nouvelle?

(1) Editeur	(2) Rédacteur-en-chef	(3) Rédacteur-gérant
(4) Rédacteur	(5) Rédacteur (ville)	(6) Un reporter
(Info. gales.)	(8) Autre (specifiez): _____	
(7) Une secrétaire		
4. Quelles sont les filières efficaces de votre communauté qui vous permettent de rester en contact avec le sentiment du lecteur?

(1) Le personnel	(2) Les femmes du personnel
(3) Les sondages d'opinion publique	(4) Les sociétés philanthropiques
(5) Les groupes ethniques	(6) Les personnalités officielles
(7) Les groupements scolaires	(8) Les groupements professionnels
(9) Les colleges/universités	(10) Les groupements de consommateurs
(11) Les groupements féminins	(12) Autre (specifiez): _____

5. Votre personnel a-t-il reçu des instructions pour attirer l'attention de la direction sur les critiques du public concernant votre journal?

(1) Oui (2) Non

6. Votre journal dispose-t-il d'un genre de colonne "ligne d' action" (action-line column) où le public peut réclamer une aide quelconque?

↓ (1) Oui (2) Non

Si oui, depuis quand? _____

Quelle est sa régularité de publication? _____

Combien d'employés à temps complet occupe-t-elle? _____

7. Votre journal dispose-t-il d'un ombudsman auprès duquel le public peut porter plainte?

↓ (1) Oui (2) Non

Si oui, depuis quand? _____

Les plaintes font-elles l'objet d'une publication dans le journal?

(1) Oui (2) Non

Si, oui, avec quelle régularité de publication? _____

8. En moyenne, combien de lettres à la rédaction (letters to the editor) votre journal reçoit-il par semaine? _____

9. En moyenne, combien de lettres (letters to the editor) votre journal public-t-il par semaine? _____

10. Etes-vous content de la relation de votre journal avec ses lecteurs et le public de votre communauté?
- (1) Très content
(2) Assez content
(3) Ni content, ni mécontent
(4) Assez mécontent
(5) Très mécontent

11. Etes-vous content du degré d'exactitude de votre journal?
- (5) Très mécontent
(4) Assez mécontent
(3) Ni content, ni mécontent
(2) Assez content
(1) Très content

12. Etes-vous content du degré
d'impartialité de votre journal?
- (1) Très content
 - (2) Assez content
 - (3) Ni content, ni mécontent
 - (4) Assez mécontent
 - (5) Tres mécontent

CETTE DERNIERE SECTION EST UNE DEMANDE D'INFORMATION SUR VOUS PERSONNELLEMENT.

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTERS USED IN SECOND MAILING TO ENGLISH
AND FRENCH-SPEAKING NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS

My first managing editor used to tell me, "Kid, if you're going to be a reporter and be any good at it you have to learn that you can't take no for an answer."

That's why I'm writing again. I recognize that my first questionnaire may have arrived at an inopportune moment when you had no time to fill it out. So I've enclosed another copy of it and wonder if you could spare a few minutes to circle the appropriate answers.

I received many replies the first time but not enough to provide a clear consensus, one way or the other, on the whole issue of press councils in Canada.

As I also mentioned before, your answers will be held in strict confidence.

And for your convenience, I'm enclosing a self-addressed envelope with the last of my Canadian stamps.

Thanks again for your time and interest.

Sincerely,

David Reddick
Project Director

Mon premier rédacteur me disait, "Mon ami, si vous voulez être un reporter, un bon reporter, vous devrez apprendre à ne jamais accepter la réponse 'non.'"

C'est bien pour cela que je vous écris de nouveau. Je reconnais que mon premier questionnaire aurait pu arriver à un moment inopportun où vous n'aviez pas assez de temps pour le remplir. Donc je vous envoie un autre exemplaire et je serais très reconnaissant si vous pourriez donner quelques minutes pour indiquer les réponses appropriées.

J'ai reçu beaucoup de réponses la première fois, mais pas assez pour établir un consensus clair, d'un côté ou de l'autre, au sujet des conseils de presse au Canada.

Comme je l'ai mentionné la dernière fois, la confidence de vos réponses sera strictement gardée.

Et, pour votre commodité, veuillez trouver ci-incluse une enveloppe adressée à moi-même, munie de mes derniers timbres canadiens.

Je vous remercie encore pour votre temps et votre intérêt.

Veuillez agréer à l'expression de mes sentiments distingués,

David Reddick
Directeur du projet

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE SENT
TO PRESS COUNCIL MEMBERS

Press councils in Canada are a relatively new phenomenon and perhaps this explains, in part, why little has been written on how press council members, like yourself, think about them.

As a Canadian newspaperman for seven years, I am vitally interested in learning more about our country's press--even from the vantage point of an American university.

I wonder if you could take a few minutes of your time to fill out the enclosed questionnaire. It will be used with those of other press council members in compiling opinions on press councils. A similar questionnaire has already been sent to newspaper publishers across Canada.

Your answers will be held in strict confidence. Under no circumstances will responses be linked to specific newspapers in academic or public reports of the questionnaire.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your reply.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

David Reddick
Project Director

PART I

THE FOLLOWING SECTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ASKS YOUR RESPONSE TO STATEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE ABOUT PRESS COUNCILS. PLEASE RESPOND BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Press councils act to fill in the communications gap which exists between the public and the press. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 2. Press councils are a threat to press freedom. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 3. Press councils can help to develop a sense of journalistic ethics. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 4. Press councils should undertake research on matters of professional interest to the newspaper industry. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 5. Press councils act as a powerful lobby before governments when press freedom is threatened. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 6. Press councils are nothing more than do-nothing committees. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 7. Do you favor the creation of a national press council? | (1) Favor Strongly
(2) Favor
(3) Neutral
(4) Oppose
(5) Oppose Strongly |

- | | |
|--|---|
| 8. Do you favor the creation of provincial press councils? | (5) Oppose Strongly
(4) Oppose
(3) Neutral
(2) Favor
(1) Favor Strongly |
| 9. Do you favor the creation of local press councils/committees? | (1) Favor Strongly
(2) Favor
(3) Neutral
(4) Oppose
(5) Oppose Strongly |

THIS SECTION DEALS WITH LOCAL-PROVINCIAL PRESS COUNCILS IN CANADA.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 10. Canadian local-provincial press councils have acted to fill in the communications gap which exists between the public and the press. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 11. Canadian local-provincial press councils are a threat to press freedom. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 12. Canadian local-provincial press councils have helped to develop a sense of journalistic ethics. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 13. Canadian local-provincial press councils have done useful research on matters of professional interest to the newspaper industry. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 14. Canadian local-provincial press councils have acted as powerful lobbies before governments when press freedom was threatened. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 15. Canadian local-provincial press councils are do-nothing committees. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |

THIS SECTION ASKS QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU AS A NEWSPAPER READER.

1. On the average, how many newspapers do you read each day? _____
2. On the average, how much time do you spend each day reading these newspapers? _____
3. Do you think newspapers should have an action-line column where the public can ask for help?
(1) Yes (2) No
4. Do you think newspapers should have an ombudsman where the public can lodge complaints?
(1) Yes (2) No
5. Do you think newspapers publish enough letters to the editor?
(1) Yes (2) No
6. How satisfied are you with the newspapers you read and their relationship with their readers?
(1) Very Satisfied
(2) Somewhat Satisfied
(3) Neither Satisfied/Dissatisfied
(4) Somewhat Dissatisfied
(5) Very Dissatisfied
7. How satisfied are you with the accuracy of the newspapers you read?
(5) Very Dissatisfied
(4) Somewhat Dissatisfied
(3) Neither Satisfied/Dissatisfied
(2) Somewhat Satisfied
(1) Very Satisfied
8. How satisfied are you with the fairness of the newspapers you read?
(1) Very Satisfied
(2) Somewhat Satisfied
(3) Neither Satisfied/Dissatisfied
(4) Somewhat Dissatisfied
(5) Very Dissatisfied

PART II

THIS SECTION ASKS YOUR RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE DAVEY COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE CANADIAN MEDIA IN 1970. PLEASE RESPOND BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. "Canadian newspapers have an obligation to promote the country's apartness from the American reality." | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 2. Newspapers are regarded by Canadians as the best medium for detailed information. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 3. "Canadian newspapers are not adequately preparing their readers for social change." | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 4. Canadian newspapers rely too heavily on news produced by American-owned news services. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 5. Many Canadian newspapers are not as good as they could afford to be. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |
| 6. Canadian Press should be encouraged to provide more correspondents abroad. | (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly |
| 7. Newspaper salaries have generally improved over the past five years. | (1) Agree Strongly
(2) Agree
(3) Neutral
(4) Disagree
(5) Disagree Strongly |

8. The caliber of newspaper employees has generally improved over the past five years.
- (5) Disagree Strongly
(4) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(2) Agree
(1) Agree Strongly

PART III

THESE QUESTIONS SEEK INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES AS A PRESS COUNCIL MEMBER.

1. What is your occupation? _____
2. What are your major club, fraternal, or professional memberships?
3. How long have you been a press council member? _____
4. Generally speaking, how would you describe the press council meetings you have attended?
5. Generally speaking, do you feel press council discussions become polarized between the professional and lay members?
6. Have your views toward the Press changed appreciably since you began serving on the Press Council?

7. In your opinion, what does the future hold for the Press Council?

8. Can you briefly cite any changes in the actions of any newspapers which were brought about as a direct result of Press Council decisions?

9. What changes would you suggest to strengthen the Press Council?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INTEREST. PLEASE MAKE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BELOW.



**Typed and Printed in the U.S.A.
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