



Save Local News

This campaign has already had an impact on Canwest. We heard about Hamilton and the discussion between the city councilor and the station manager. A couple of weeks ago the GAC Vice-President was called into the Vancouver GM's office and asked about the letters that members in Victoria are writing to MP's and clients.

We have positive press coverage (see "Monday" below) and a petition targeted at MP's is about to be released. Our Facebook group is up and running and the documentary unit is in the works. Results will be on screen at the Media Council in April.

This is important because the current crisis in the communications sector is a familiar one to all of us: Declining employment, consolidation and ultimate sell-off of our resources as the industry is taken over by foreign investment. An unfettered, independent media is crucial to all Canadians in the era of TILMA and the SPP. It is time to take action. We must make the public aware of what is happening and reclaim our ownership of the airwaves.

On December 5th, 2007 in Calgary, CEP, along with ACTRA and the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting released a Decima poll on foreign ownership of Canadian broadcasting and telecommunications. Press coverage included articles by the CBC and the Toronto Star. Noticeably absent was any mention of the poll by Bell Globemedia or Canwest Global press outlets. Diversity and comprehensive coverage has disappeared in Canadian media, two fundamental tenets of the Broadcast Act. While this may pass as business as usual for the broadcasters and the CRTC, it is completely unacceptable to Canadian citizens.

In Calgary, Wendy Sol pointed out that the parliamentary committee on Heritage said in its comprehensive report on Culture; ***"While American conglomerates... would like to see foreign ownership limits either raised or lifted entirely, the Committee is of the view that one wrong move could do irreparable harm to the Canadian system. Once this happens, there will be no turning back."***

And the Broadcast Act is quite clear...

"It is hereby declared as the broadcasting policy for Canada that **the Canadian broadcasting system shall be effectively owned and controlled by Canadians.** The Canadian broadcasting system should serve to **safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada,** and **encourage the development of Canadian expression** by providing a wide range of programming that reflects Canadian attitudes, opinions, ideas, values and artistic creativity and **by offering information and analysis concerning Canada and other countries from a Canadian point of view...** through its programming and **the employment opportunities** arising out of its operations, **serve the needs and interests, and reflect the circumstances and aspirations, of Canadian men, women and children,** including equal rights, the linguistic duality and multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society and the special place of aboriginal peoples within that society... **the programming originated by broadcasting undertakings should be of high standard...** the programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should **be varied and comprehensive, providing a balance of information,** enlightenment and entertainment for men, women and children of all ages, interests and tastes, be drawn from local, regional, national and international sources... **provide a reasonable opportunity for the public to be exposed to the expression of differing views on matters of public concern...**

Watch any newscast and notice that much of the above is simply not happening. We need to remember that a broadcast license is a privilege, not a right. Who can blame us for forgetting? It's not taught in school, written about in the newspaper, mentioned on the radio or seen on TV. Our once cherished broadcast system is eroding before our eyes. Our campaign must overcome this hurdle. We must remind government, the CRTC and the citizens of this country that we own the airwaves.



Click on the banner above to read an article about Canwest's implementation of the broadcast centres titled *"CHEKing In: Will Television Survive the Digital Revolution?"*