Editorial Notes:

Butterworths to Publish Books by Canadians on Communication

The “take-off point” for Communication studies in Canada seems to have arrived this year with these three or four converging events:

1. The founding conference of the Canadian Communication Association held in Montreal May 31-June 1, 1980 with a surprising number in attendance—about 250.

2. Establishment of new or prospective programmes in media and communication at several universities, e.g. York and the Regina campus of the University of Saskatchewan.

3. Announcement by the world-wide educational and professional publishers, Butterworths, that they will publish a list of books in Canadian communication studies specifically. A press release by the company dated Sept. 29 reads:

   “Butterworths has decided to publish a list of books in Canadian communication and mass media studies. The decision results from discussions this Spring and Summer in Toronto between David Hogg, Managing Editor of the company’s academic division, and Earle Beattie, professor in communications at Atkinson College, York University. Mr. Beattie has been named consulting editor for Butterworths.

   “We intend to publish a list of books, rather than a series,” Mr. Hogg said. Essentially that means we will publish whatever we can find in this area and that has a substantial enough market to support a reasonable press run.

   “Three or four authors in various regions of Canada have been interviewed to date on possible titles and contracts. Others will be contacted by Prof. Beattie or Mr. Hogg for additional titles to be published in the following year. Butterworths has offered to publish the CCA’s 1980 Conference Book as a starter.

   “The books will include “Readers,” texts and outlines dealing with theory, policy, development, information technology, law, international news flow, news processing, history, economics, politics, culture and society. Interpersonal and mediated communication, message-making, audience and social effects are involved. Individually-authored books will be relatively short—between 150 and 200 pages—in standard 6 by 9 inch format.
"Most importantly, they will be written for a readership at the level of first and second year university and community college students. Reasonably non-technical in approach and written as basic introductory course material, they will be nonetheless academic.

"Communication studies are a relatively new social science developing out of public concern for the propaganda effects of demagogues before and during World War II, and out of research conducted during the 1950's. The humanistic science of communication or rhetoric has been taught much longer and bears little resemblance to the social science which developed later in Britain, Europe and the Western Hemisphere. In Canada, Harold Innis, economic-historian at the University of Toronto, centred on transportation and communication in much of his scholarship. His ideas inspired Marshall McLuhan who attained international fame in this field. The "emerging discipline" of communication as a field of study likewise drew attention."

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The item above concerning Butterworths is stated rather matter-of-factly, but we consider it a dynamic breakthrough. An emerging discipline of communication, such as ours, must be founded and buoyed along by its literature. Several academics responded to a questionnaire sent out by David Hogg. "This venture in publishing communication textbooks is desperately needed!" wrote one. Similar replies were: "I know only too well the frustration of having a book come out with an American publisher because no one in Canada is yet serving the market in the area of communication" and "We need such a series" or "there is very little indigenous literature available in the field."

Scholars and writers in Canada have long been treated as an appendage of the U.S. market. A book might be published if it could be "Americanized" with U.S. media and examples, even U.S. place names substituted for those in Canada. And the reverse was sometimes the case where a U.S. textbook already published would be revised with Canadian examples for the Canadian "market". This "Canadianization" band-aid activity, hack work at best, was intellectually dishonest and deceptive to readers, especially students. Not that many American texts were inferior per se—some of them were of superb scholarship and seminal quality—but they did not develop indigenous material. We got a little tired of the Kate Smith war bond drive as an example of "communication situation" media effect and of the U.N. publicity blitz in Cincinnati as a no-effect example. There were of course many Canadian cases, but no one was conducting research into them as there were no rewards, no encouragement.

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The Canadian Journal of Communication and its predecessor has taken as its raison d'être, two objectives: (1) publication of scholarly articles, largely by Canadians, in the field of communications and mass media; (2) promotion of a Canadian communication association. To date we believe we have accomplished both these aims in large measure. Although a few academic purists or opportunists have inveighed against the odd article published, most have agreed that the Journal has performed a notable service, especially considering the paucity of institutional aid. One of our critics, in voting against a grant, nonetheless conceded that "...the Journal has made a contribution to a relatively young and growing field in Canada simply by its very existence...it provides a means of uniting these isolated elements of the communications community, gives them sustenance and a sense of belonging to a wider community of interest and provides them with an outlet...." We believe that the thousand-name list of academics, government and industry people interested in communications studies that the Journal provided for the Montreal meetings played no small part in ensuring the numerical success of the founding. Liora Salter's work in organizing the conference, of course, was pivotal. Now she is about to publish a Conference book of some twelve papers from more than fifty papers at the Conference. Our efforts are indeed going forward and we hope that they will be cooperative. Authors of the papers will always be eligible for publication in our quarterly and those who think one or the other must be exclusive are diminishing the communicative effort. A paper may well start in the Journal, go to the Conference Report and then to a Reader. With this issue, the Journal changes from magazine-size format to traditional university size—namely 6 by 9 inches with hard cover. Typesetting and printing has also undergone a "sea change". Our Managing editor, Frank Zingrone, has been particularly active in effecting the change. It was felt that many in the Association wanted it this way and were rather uneasy about the popular-style format for various reasons. Indeed we were in fact more a magazine than journal when we published as Media Probe. The old Probe organization has made way for an entirely academic journal with consequent changes in our mast-head this issue.

Stephen Kline, our book review editor, has returned from a year's sabbatical. He reports that a small grant has been received from Environment Science, York, to finance the organization of book reviewing for the Journal.

— The editor