Audience members asked questions on whether Le Jour could be considered an elite paper or an activist paper, about its relationship with Le Devoir, with the Canadian National Trade Union (CNTU) structure and about the federal government's removal of advertising. Asked if he had been over-ruled by his colleagues on Page One placement of news, M. Michaud replied that he had on two occasions. One was for placing a picture of the Queen on a Page One layout. "The editorial board told me to put her picture on page 24. We publish 16 pages."

The other panellist, Robert Starr, Manitoba Telecommunications, described some of his province's plans for cable television in which remote regions of Manitoba would be served.

PANEL "D" - THE SQUEEZE: PRESSURES ON THE MEDIA

Jean-Marie Martin, president of the Quebec Press Council, was in the chair. Panel members were Jean-Raymond Saint-Cyr, manager of the French-language station CJBC in Toronto; Fernand Rochon, chief, Radio and TV news for CJBC and CBLT, Toronto; and Allan Hutsak, bureau chief for CTV news, Edmonton.

M. Martin viewed the press "not as opposition party outside the House but as vigilant with the newsman squeezed between public attitudes and politicians." He said, "Sometimes the press must become investigative. It is wonderful when people are made aware." A Montreal reporter in the audience interjected that "you can write but you don't always get published."

M. Martin criticized the "journalist who acts like a loud-speaker, who simply passes on a text rather than informing people." Turning to the proposed Quebec "Press Law", he said that M. Lalonde, the Quebec minister, is now preparing this bill and had given out bits of it in a Toronto interview. It has also been discussed at a study meeting of the Liberal party. There were four aspects that challenged press freedom: (1) A proposal that a permit be obtained from the provincial government before operation of a medium (2) Subsidies for some media (3) Declaration of assets and liabilities by newsmen, and (4) Formulation of a Code of Ethics. Additionally, the press law would probably deal with the concentration of media ownership in Quebec to counteract powerful owners.

M. Saint-Cyr spoke on public attitudes toward exposed stories, saying "We are Don Quixote tilting uselessly at social ills. The public re-elects the same politicians we have exposed." M. Rochon spoke on the progress being made toward televising House of Commons debates. He had been in Ottawa recently to discuss the question with officials and said that "a firm commitment to consult media people had been obtained."
Mr. Hutsak described how television in the Alberta legislature had been set up in such a way as to favor the government benches. The cameras, installed four years ago, were in a fixed position to face the Conservative M.L.A.'s but could only pick up back views of opposition members. News management included confinement of the televisioned question period to 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and then film was rushed to the lab, leaving little or no air time for the opposition. Premier Lougheed came off as a "cool image", the NDP were cool, others were hot."

Members of the audience asked a wide range of questions of all panellists. Sally York observed that "the media were attacking all the time. It is an adversary system."

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The social role of the media

Media 75 Introductory Remarks

The Social Responsibility of the Media: a personal view.

Obviously, the prime responsibility is to reflect accurately what is going on in society so that the individual who is being informed will have a relatively true picture as to what is happening, or at least be provided the opportunity to get such a picture. That's the essence of what the media can and must do in a democracy.

Going along with that is the hell raising role. Scandals and incompetence in high places continue to occur and it's the public's right to know what is going on. Muckraking isn't dead and there's no reason it should be.

Beyond that, the media should always be wary of large, strong institutions, public or private. Without there being an eternally hostile or adversary approach, there must always be a willingness to criticize!

In Canadian terms, the media have a duty to inform Canadians about each other. And in a regionalized society where a good deal of misunderstanding exists, there's no reason why such information shouldn't be as sympathetic as possible. (That doesn't mean it need be boring.)

One problem in the media approach to Canadian identity is the overwhelming use of foreign sources for world news. This may be inevitable, but it needs to be discussed.

There are other areas of activity where we sense a conflict between responsibilities; for example, the public's right-to-know vs. the right of an accused person to a fair trial. Stuck as we are, somewhere between the British and American systems, there's no easy answer.

In the case of the fight against governmental secrecy, however, the answer seems clear: the press has every right to fight government pressure and drag things out into the open.

This doesn't absolve the press from its major role: to interpret, analyze and present public information in the most palatable way. And in so doing, it must realize that it isn't just dealing with one public. It is dealing with many different ones, each with its own interests, but all within a general Canadian context.

— Tom Sloan
Carleton University
Ottawa

Some questions to be raised:

1. Is there a short definition of social responsibility?
2. What about scandal mongering?
3. Should the press be hostile to government? to business? to labor?
4. What happens when reality is distorted?
5. Are there any special responsibilities for media in Canada?
6. What is Newfoundland more than?
7. Are foreign news sources enough?
8. Are the media violating the right to privacy?
9. What about government secrecy?
10. Is it enough for the media to give the public what it wants?
11. What is "the public"?
12. Does the public have any responsibility to the media?