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Discussion following the Remarks of Mr. Gherson and Mr. Strang Proceedings of the Canada-United States Law Institute Conference on Multiple Actors in Canada-U.S. Relations: The Role of the Media and Public Perceptions

Discussion

DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE REMARKS OF MR. GHERSON AND MR. STRANG

MR. CRANE: I think we've had two terrific presentations. It sort of worries me a bit that we have so much coverage of Canada, and yet we have the resulting Canadian views on what it's like to live in the United States, which makes me wonder about the stories we're actually running.

But I think that having heard two very interesting presentations. Why don't we have some discussion? And the first hand I saw belonged, I think, to Henry King.

PROFESSOR KING: I had a question for Mr. Strang. It seems that I listened to your presentation, and it seems that there is a Herd psychology in the newspaper field, we don't do it because others don't do it.

And, also, there are many people who feel, for instance, Canada doesn't get much coverage in the Plain Dealer that, say, Cleveland could be the gateway to Canada, and it's right across the lake.

Can you dare to be different in this world or do you all have to do the same thing? And, in other words, isn't the function of newspapers to investigate and educate? Are you doing your job? That's what I'm saying. And I don't know the answer, but maybe you could enlighten us on this.

MR. CRANE: Jim would love to answer that question, Henry, and he's glad you asked it.

MR. STRANG: I can scarce wait. Well, yes, there is a Herd –

MR. CRANE: Thank you, Jim.

MR. STRANG: There is a Herd mentality to a point in the American press, but it is a mentality driven in part by what we perceive that the people are looking for in the paper.

For instance, recently here in the U.S., you must all be familiar with the Drudge website, Matt Drudge, the internet muckraker. A few months ago, he put up an interesting non-story. It was that major news organizations were examining John Kerry's background because word was he had an intern problem, as in Bill Clinton's intern problem.

Well, Drudge never said he had an intern problem. He said major news organizations were looking into this, which, in fact, they were. But the story came out on Drudge, and in the news profession, hemorrhages started happening in editors' throats. You know, my God, this is out there. And a few years before, Drudge had broken the story of the blue dress and the Lewinsky scandal with the Clinton Administration, which he had run for several days before any of the news organizations got into it.

So the great hair-puller in newsrooms became "what do we do about this Kerry story?" What we did was to report that the Drudge site was reporting

this, and other sites were looking into it, but it could not be ascertained by anyone connected, it was not being spoken to by any one of the principals.

So, for us, the sum and substance of that story was about 8 inches inside on a weekday. And then the story went away after it was strongly denied by everyone involved, and the major news organizations which had been looking into it determined that there was nothing there for them to print.

All that to say this. There is a herd mentality out there. You don't want to be last if a story is going to have legs, but on the same token, you don't want to be first if it will have no legs.

There is an awareness at the Plain Dealer, and perhaps I didn't emphasize that enough, of the importance of Canada, both on its Editorial Pages where for more than 15 years I have been the link with Canada, and in its business operations, Tom Gerdel for one.

We have written several times of a proposed physical gateway to Canada, the ferry service that's been talked about between London and Cleveland, which would be wonderful in the summertime for the Shakespeare Festival up there, but not so good in January.

But there is an awareness, but the things that constrain us is not the fear of doing something totally different, but, again, the demand for a very limited news hole for things that seem to weigh more heavily. This is especially in the main section, the hard, the national, international news section.

Inside we have more. We had the series as I have mentioned. We've done several things business-wise with Canada considering that the auto industry is still alive and rolling somewhat in Cleveland. But, yes, there's a Herd, and it would be nice if we could be the breakthrough.

MR. CRANE: Giles, did you want to say anything?

MR. GHERSON: I think that Jim answered it very well. I think there is, you know, there is a Herd mentality. All of us in journalism know it.

Part of it is, I think, on the print side is that we're well aware of our circulation. How shall I put this? It's not rising hugely. In fact, if you look - when I went to the Edmonton Journal, it's not a - it's actually almost a classic case of a newspaper that was - that had the circulation of actually about 40,000 more about twenty years ago. And it has a slow decline.

But if you look across North America, you see exactly the same thing with most metropolitan dailies. I don't know what the situation is here, but it's been a steady erosion of readership for newspapers as other forms of media have come to compete.

And part of the erosion, it's not just an erosion issue; it's a demographic issue as you find that the average age of your readers has been rising. And you know where the younger folks are, they're on the internet, or they're watching television, or getting the news from television. And I wasn't being overly facetious when I talked about Leno and Letterman as being a source,

and Saturday Night Live, as being, in a sense, a source for news for a lot of people.

And that is info-tainment in a lot of ways. And it's very hard to compete with that. We're businesses, and we're not public utilities, and so we have to stay alive. And so I think the Herd mentality emerges a little bit from those kinds of pressures.

MR. CRANE: I think there was a good example of Herd mentality in Canada immediately after the terrible events of September 11th when it seemed that every media outlook was trying to find some way to show that the terrorists had somehow had a Canadian connection. And so there was a lot of, what I would call rumors or unsubstantiated - another way of saying unsubstantiated possibilities which were presented almost as facts.

And you got the impression at one point that it was almost a wish to find some evidence and to be the first to report this. And so that was a very disturbing kind of activity.

But it is, as Giles said, in a competitive environment, everybody wants to be first for something new. And news, rather than commentary, is still what sells in the end, I think. I think you'd both agree with that.

Let's have another question or comment.

MR. de BOER: Two things, I've long time noticed in the Wall Street Journal on the weather page that Ottawa is the one major Canadian city that is never listed as Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg. Ottawa, it's not there. Just a funny thing that they would ignore Ottawa, the national capital of the country.

The question I wanted to ask you, essentially, is the importance of meaningful stories which are not shock stories. For instance, I think one of the most critical issues for the United States probably is the energy supply relationship of Canada to the United States long-term, the Oil Sands emerging, where it's becoming $25 a barrel of classic oil.

None of those stories are running anywhere. And I think that's a very gut issue in the long-term for both continental security and U.S.-Canada relations. And I find it very funny that the American press doesn't have any interest in running that story. And, again, I would think that would be extremely important.

PROFESSOR KING: It's a major story.

MR. de BOER: And a longstanding one, I think, and I don't know why they don't.

MR. STRANG: I don't, either. Within a newspaper, as Giles will support, I would imagine, there are domains. The Editorial Page is the church of the church/state relationship. And out there in the states, the business operation is a state unto itself, and that's the area where that would fall.

Now, our Business Department has done yeoman work in reporting on that power shortage, power outage of last August, which if you don't know

it, occurred about fifteen miles south of where you're sitting, you know, where the lines dipped down and touched the trees and shut us all out.

And it was a lovely August evening. I sat out in my yard and watched the stars I hadn't seen forever, smoked a good cigar, and had a wonderful evening, but that was my own pleasure.

But, no, you are right, the energy story that is not being told about Canada and the United States is a massive one, and it is not being told by us. And I don't know that it has been told by any of the majors.

MR. GHERSON: Well, I mean, it's interesting, having been at the Edmonton Journal for the last 3 ½ years, there's a huge story, obviously, in Edmonton, which is really the collector point for the - and a lot of the refining goes on there of the oils and - oil of what's extracted at Fort McMurray, which is just a couple of hundred kilometers north. Huge story there. Huge story throughout Alberta, obviously, because it derives so much of its revenue from energy, from oil and gas.

But I think it's fair to say that in Toronto it's not a huge story at all. So, in a sense, it's not that much different from, I think, what you find here south of the border. People take it for granted. You know, Alberta produces energy, don't really - you know, spare me the details, but keep it coming.

But in Alberta, it is a huge story because the terms and conditions on which that oil is delivered, you know, is very important to the people who live there. But it's become a very regional story.

Now, you know, I think central Canadians will catch onto it when the pipeline negotiations start in earnest, because there are going to be huge issues around the route, for one thing, the - whether Alberta will extract some natural gas liquids from the, you know, from the natural gas that comes down from Alaska, if that happens, in order to fuel petro-chemical facilities in Alberta.

And I think Canadians across the country will be interested in that, you know, whether we're going to be able to benefit in production terms, petrochemical terms, from that energy coming down, or whether we're not. So there are going to be issues around the terms and conditions, which will light a fire, you know, in Ontario, but probably not here.

MR. de BOER: Even the fact, Giles, that two months ago Alberta closed down 600 gas wells, I think, 6 or 800 gas wells, conventional, up there because of all the gas they use in the Oil Sands?

MR. GHERSON: That's right. I mean, the Oil Sands consume an enormous amount of natural gas.

MR. de BOER: If they draw it out conventional, then the new steam process is not going to work as well because most of the fluids will go - I mean, to Texas that's big news, and yet again, it doesn't get much play. I find it very interesting. That's one of the key importances of Canada to the

United States. They'll put up with a lot of nonsense if some of these good, solid, important issues that make us work together were a higher profile.

MR. CRANE: A lot of these issues are regional. And so that, I mean, that I saw when I was, as I say, in New Mexico for most of this week, that there was intensive discussion of cross border electricity issues, the potential of the Oil Sands. Premier Klein was talking about the Oil Sands down in Albuquerque.

And Gary Doer, the Premier of Manitoba, was talking about the Manitoba hydro potential, and they were talking about cross border research and development initiatives, their plans for a Pacific coast hydrogen highway now with California making a decision to build 200 hydrogen refueling stations during the B.C. border to Whistler, and now the states in Washington and Oregon looking to link up so you could have hydrogen. So lots of stuff going on.

Where I would be more critical in the way is I still think newspapers have an obligation to give people basic facts, and not to be vehicles for hype. And I think just to use the example of the Oil Sands, and what this can mean for U.S. oil requirements in the future, a lot of emphasis is put on the fact that, just to use this example, the Oil Sands have something like 175 billion barrels of proven oil. And you get up over 300 billion on probables. And this makes us the next; at least it makes Alberta the next Saudi Arabia.

Yet, there are - obviously, Oil Sands output is going to increase. The base case of the Canadian Energy Research Institute is, I think, 2.7 billion barrels a day by 2017, or it's 2.2, I can't remember the number. But the United States this year is importing 11½, over 11½ billion barrels a day, so that no matter what you do in Alberta, that's not going to solve the American oil problem, by any means. And yet there is, I found, in - among the western governors was the perception that there was this cornucopia up there that was going to exist.

On the Ontario side, we have a serious problem as part of the energy bill in the United States, which was reinforced by the Outage Task Force, the need to make sure that the reliability standards are mandatory, enforceable, and there are penalties for noncompliance. That is being held up in U.S. Congress. To what extent can Canada integrate itself more deeply into a U.S. electric power grid that the United States is not prepared to have mandatory, enforceable standards with penalties for noncompliance?

And so we have a job just to explain these kinds of issues, which I think we could do in a better way. And to explain to people that in the case of natural gas, even if you build the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, with the continued decline in conventional basin - western sedimentary basin, that the net addition to the United States supply is still going to be quite small overall, and not to deal in hype, but to deal in reality, and this kind of thing. So I think that's something where we can do a better job. It's just to get perspective.

The other thing is, as I said, I think there is more - there are a lot of regional issues that get good coverage regionally. Look at - there's a whole Cascadia of things I think we're going to hear about tomorrow, a lot of things going on between Vancouver and the State of Washington, and there's a Northeastern Economic - Northwestern Economic Region Development with some of the western provinces, this kind of thing.

Alberta has very interesting relationships with Colorado and some of the other states. And here in Ontario, I think what we will see is with the new provincial government, we're going to see more collaboration with Michigan and New York, and perhaps Illinois and Ohio, and on technology development and infrastructure, and things of that sort.

Anyway, I shouldn't have interrupted this discussion. Let's have another hand, another comment.

A SPEAKER: To expand on that, have you done an analysis at all along the areas where the U.S. and Canadian borders meet in terms of the press coverage and perhaps how that's affected economic and other relationships?

In other words, when you look at Vancouver and Washington, or even look at the coverage in the Detroit News, I mean, you know, unless they do build that bridge across the lake, you know, we're not going to go to Canada to buy our groceries in the morning, or whatever it is, but you can do that in a lot of other locations, in Buffalo and in Detroit, and along the borders in Maine and Minnesota. And is there a difference in coverage, in increasing coverage there?

Also, I have a second question, if I might, and that is cross border ownership of newspapers, does that, in fact, affect coverage? There's been a lot of coverage of Lord Black and his problems. Has that affected coverage in the Chicago Sun Times or any other papers that you know?
Thank you.

MR. CRANE: I don't know how you answer that last question, but anyway, let's try the others.

MR. GHERSON: Well, you don't really, don't have much cross border ownership of newspapers. In fact, you don't have any. Although, you do have, I mean, the Sun Times is owned by Hollinger International which is based in New York. Although, the larger shareholder in Hollinger International is Hollinger, Inc., in Toronto, or at least it is up until this moment, but that won't last very long.

Although, it is interesting that the Sun Times has both a publisher and an editor who are Canadian, interestingly, but I don't think - you know, you look at the Sun Times, and it's in a very competitive media market against the Tribune and all the suburban dailies there. And I don't think you get a sense that - in fact, it would be quite interesting, you probably see no more Canadian news in the Sun Times, not least because it's a tabloid, but you

wouldn't see anymore Canadian news, I don't think, in the Sun Times than the Tribune. But, you know, both countries have restrictions on ownership.

MR. STRANG: As far as circulations and coverage, that's interesting, but I have no idea, no handle on that. I would imagine Buffalo and Detroit papers do routine crime stories and things in Canada, but whether their coverage of political stories or more involved stories are anymore so than ours would be, I have no idea.

A SPEAKER: Does the Detroit News, for example, have a reporter in Windsor, or the Buffalo paper has somebody on the other side?

MR. STRANG: I don't know.

MR. CRANE: Probably the Detroit reporter would prefer to pay American taxes, so he'd come across to write his stories, then go back home again.

I'm not aware of that, and I'm not sure if either of our panelists have any actual data on that. Though, the travails of Lord Black, or Conrad Black, or what is it, Cross Harbor –

MR. STRANG: Lord Black of Cross Harbor.

MR. CRANE: I knew he was big on titles, so I never quite memorized it, but that was an international story. I was at a breakfast at the World Economic Forum in Davos put on by Goldman Sachs, and all anybody wanted to talk about was what was going to happen to Conrad Black. So he's sort of in a class of his own.

PROFESSOR KING: David, wasn't the fact that the income taxes were so high in Canada, which forced American newspapers to stop having correspondents there?

MR. CRANE: That was a fact, yes. And I think some countries, I'm not - I remember delving into this a bit at the time, but it's sort of in the back brain cells now, but my recollection was that some countries make special tax arrangements. I think, Giles, you may know this, if we send a correspondent to London, that they can sort of claim the Jersey Islands as their residence and get a lower tax?

MR. GHERSON: Well, maybe you used to. I mean, I think everybody now finds you send a correspondent to London, it costs a huge amount. Usually, the organization ends up paying the Inland Revenue Service in the U.K. because the tax rate is so high. So, in fact, what happens is - and what happened in the case of the New York Times was that the package that the, compensation package that the Times correspondent had made it favorable to pay U.S. taxes.

While a resident in Canada, Revenue Canada essentially didn't acknowledge that, and said, well, you're a resident of Canada, you should pay Canadian taxes. And since no deal was worked out, the poor fellow faced double taxation. And that became, yes, very high taxes. Since then, a deal has been worked out.

Now, you know, David's point is well taken, most Canadian correspondents in Washington or New York or L.A., far prefer, and I certainly in my case, I would much rather pay American taxes, and did. And that takes care of that. You have low taxation.

MR. STRANG: There's one other point to that I would like to toss out. It is that there is a certain pride in sending your person to another place to report. But I wonder how vital that remains over a period of years.

For instance, in our own case, we have a Washington Bureau. We have three people in it now. We've had as many as five. But those people after they have been in Washington for a year or two are no longer Clevelanders in Washington. They are Washingtonians. They are part of the Washington press corps.

They work for and are paid by the Plain Dealer, and the papers that send people to Washington. But there is no differentiating them from the regular Washington press corps by any reasonable amount of means, so –

MR. CRANE: They make tougher editors.

MR. HAGE: Bob Hage. Mr. Strang, you concluded your remarks by talking about sort of a brave new world that is coming to develop better connections between Canada and the United States. And I'm going to ask you my Glidden House question, which I asked last year, as well. We're all pleased to be staying at a very nice hotel. And it's got 80 channels on the television. Not one of them is from Canada.

Am I alone in thinking that's a bit odd, and that for a border state not to at least have one out of 80 is a sign of total indifference on the part of the population here to your neighbor to the north? And maybe the Plain Dealer can start a campaign to get one out of 80 as sort of a symbolic effort to –

MR. CRANE: It would be a good editorial campaign.

MR. STRANG: That would be interesting. I know I have a satellite system at home, and I have one Canadian news station on my satellite system, which I find very interesting, actually, but that's another example.

Now, the cable system here in Cleveland - well, it's probably most cable systems, has shortcomings. But you raised an excellent point. The whole idea of the vast multiplicity of choice was that you could truly get choice, not just fourteen different home shopping networks, but something that gives you actually valid alternative viewpoints. And I think you raised a good point.

MR. GHERSON: Just, actually, there is a beacon of light, or has been in the wave of indifference that you referred to, and that is NPR, National Public Radio, for years has broadcast as it happens. Usually, later in the evening, it comes on in Canada at 6:00, but I think it's at 8:00 on NPR across the U.S. So there are a lot of, I mean, I don't know how - I mean, NPR isn't vastly listened to, but it does have a pretty good audience.

MR. CRANE: I think Canadian documentaries get on to PBS, news documentaries and these kinds of things.

MR. de BOER: We have three stations in Buffalo. We get three Canadian stations on the radio.

MR. CRANE: As a biological aside, I'm told there's no such thing as a buffalo in North America. That they should be called bison. So you should see about renaming the city.

Do we have another question now, comment?

MR. SHANKER: This may be the last comment. It will be very parochial. I'm Morris Shanker, right here from Cleveland, lived here all my life, member of the faculty here. We have seen another wonderful presentation of this institute. We've seen them for twenty years. Why hasn't the Plain Dealer ever covered them, except for a short period of time when Marc Gleisser would show up here for a couple of hours?

You've had here some wonderful discussions by not only capable people, but well-known people. Start off with the former Premier of Ontario discussing some - the problem between Canada and America with the former Ambassador from the United States to Canada. That would have been a great story, I would think.

For twenty years, Henry is too modest to complain, but this conference which has been so capable, so well done, involving so many top notch people, both intellectually and in distinct position, why doesn't the Plain Dealer ever cover it?

MR. STRANG: If I had my druthers, I'd put the press release in what I thought to be the proper hands. I would refer you back to my answer a couple of questions ago about church, state and the division of states.

The areas wherein this would have most likely received coverage simply did not assign to it. For that, I cannot offer explanation. But if those of you who are interested were to make your interests known to the editor, his name is Doug Clifton, dclifton@plaind.com. He also has a blog on the Cleveland.com website. He would probably be amenable to hearing what you have to say.

PROFESSOR KING: Well, we've done that, you know. I think it's old hat, but I think it's an important conference, and I'm glad we talked about the present, the future, the distant future here. And this is the gateway to Canada. That's what many people believe, and I'm not presently absent from the PD. And I don't think there's any explanation. I think that what type of stuff are you covering that's so important that precedes what we have.

MR. STRANG: Who is it that said don't shoot the messenger? I am the Plain Dealer that is here.

MR. CRANE: Well, anymore questions or comments? Here's one over here. Sorry, we have two more.

MR. PHILLIPS: Let me make a quick observation. Peter Phillips from Saskatchewan. My father was an editor and publisher of a newspaper. And

the one lesson he taught me is that a newspaper is a business. You do what you make money at.

And as much as we might like the public good aspect of newspapers, they're a business. And so if people don't perceive value from what you publish, you won't sell papers. You won't sell advertising. The advertising is more important than the papers.

And I think there's a perception in North America that papers are a public good institution. They're not. They're run by people who want to make money, Mr. Black, Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, and every one of the individual chains. And I think that's one thing we lose in this, is we think that what we talk about is important. And it is important in one sense, but we have other ways of informing the people that really are interested in what we say.

But at the end of the day, the people who are reading the newspapers aren't us. They're a far different audience than us. They have far more plebeian interest in what they get in a paper. They read the ads. They read the first three sentences of the average article. They don't get to the 45th paragraph.

MR. CRANE: Well, they sometimes do judging by the e-mails I get.

MR. STRANG: To which I'd add, fortunately sometimes –

MR. CRANE: They talk about the grammatical errors in the last paragraph.

MR. STRANG: Fortunately, sometimes the interest in selling soap and selling news corresponds.

MR. GHERSON: I think, you know, I agree with that. I mean, I do make the comment that they are businesses and not public utilities. I think people tend to think of them as public utilities. That said, I do think that there is a certain malaise in the world of newspapers increasingly. That's not totally divorced from the world of commerce, in general, which is that if you look across North America, you find that there's been a fair bit of concentration of ownership.

Newspapers are owned by large conglomerates, by and large, and the people that own those conglomerates, the shareholders, but the controlling shareholders, they tend to have controlling shareholders, rather than widely held, are looking for a very large, I think, you know, large rate of return. Partly so that they can then sell those assets at, you know, when the time is right.

I don't think you have as much as you used to have, maybe the Toronto Star is a bit of an exception, but I don't think you have the way you used to have, you know, independent newspaper companies with ownership that was really dedicated to the dissemination of news. You know, as a worthy thing, as a good and worthy thing.

I think increasingly you get these large corporations. It's quite amazing. Now, I did work for one for a number of years, where really it was a bit troubling that, the lack of investment in the business. In fact, I would say there was a favor of disinvestment in most newspapers across North America as the revenues are squeezed out as earnings and not put back in.

And I think that has hindered the ability to - I mean, for example, most newspapers have shrunk. They're not as big as they used to be, so the news hole is smaller, which means that conferences like this do get squeezed out because there's just less space for all kinds of news. There's less diversity of news than I think there once was.

PROFESSOR KING: We were told we couldn't have any coverage of the conference in terms of an announcement, that it's a matter of paying for coverage. And I guess what I was concerned about was whether newspapers don't have some public responsibility; that it just, you know, are they makers of chewing gum or candy or McDonald's. Is there an additional dimension in terms of education?

MR. GHERSON: Well, Henry, I mean, I'm not disagreeing. I think you're right, but the fact is the owners now of a large number of newspaper organizations are called media organizations because mostly they have ownership in print and electronic, they view the product much as like a piece of gum. I mean, they don't view - it's a consumer good. It's not - they don't view it in the way that, you know, maybe your father did, by and large. And, you know, I think that's very troubling. I think we have to really give some serious consideration to the quality of the media. It's become, and the problem with cross ownership as well, television and print, is you do get this poisoning, I would almost call it, of the entertainment, you know, the entertainment thrust into what used to be news. And, again, that does back out conferences like this.

PROFESSOR KING: Well, I think the local media are very important. I don't think we all should be dependent on the New York Times for education. I think that - I like them. I'm supporting you. I mean, I used to own part of the paper. I think it's very important that they keep that vision in mind so that they do perform this additional function.

MR. CRANE: I think there are still many newspapers - and, in fact, all newspapers I've ever worked for do have a set of editorial principles they adhere to. They do stand for something. And the Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star would stand for certain things which are quite similar and some things that are quite different. And I think people understand what those similarities and differences are. So I think that is one thing.

And I think most regular newspapers also have certain quite high standards of the kind of performance they expect of their people, and the kinds of things they should be doing with the space they have.

The Toronto Star is in a special category because it's a locally owned newspaper, and its share structure is set up to prevent it being taken over from a chain, because all of the voting shares are held by a handful of families who have a shareholder agreement, that if one wants to exit the other families have a right of first refusal. And so that it's very hard for it to be a takeover target.

And, also, the paper has been based on a set of principles called the Atkinson Principles, which set up what its editorial purpose is. And anybody who is hired as an Editor in Chief, an Editorial Page Editor, a Publisher, or a Managing Editor has to be very comfortable with those basic principles. That's a condition of employment.

And so that those things do happen. But I think if you look at the New York Times, I think you'd find that the owners of the New York Times, to use that example, obviously want to make money, but they also want to put out a newspaper which they feel proud to have their name attached to. And I think that would apply to the owners of the Globe and Mail. I think they don't want to put out a shoddy product.

MR. GHERSON: I think you're right, David, but I think, you know, what's striking to, I think, a lot of Canadians even, is when you travel the length and the breadth of the U.S. now, and you look at papers that were once great, like the Atlanta Constitution or the Chicago Tribune or the L.A. Times, you know, these papers have really shrunk, and they're really shadows of their former selves, and they don't really exhibit the kinds of things that you're talking about.

I think the Canadian newspapers have held the line remarkably well, but we've also had an enormous amount of disinvestment.

MR. CRANE: You know, competition helps in a way. We have 4 daily newspapers in Toronto. And that helps.

A SPEAKER: I'll ask the last question, Giles commented about great newspaper. What constitutes a great newspaper?

MR. GHERSON: Well, I think part of what David was saying, I mean, I think - I don't think - I mean, you know, different newspapers will have different editorial policies, but I think a great newspaper is one that really does have the resources to cover the news as it sees it. And most, you know, I think most editors and newsroom managers have a good sense of what it is they ought to be covering. What they lack is the space and the resources necessary to cover it.

The other thing is that in our business, in the newspaper business, I don't know if Jim would agree with me, but, you know, I think in our business, it's a performance type of business. You need, you almost need fresh blood, you need fresh eyes, you need fresh insight all the time. You have to be constantly renewing, because you have to report with a certain sense - you need wisdom, but you also need a certain amount of enthusiasm. Do you write

with, you know, or cynicism? I mean, the reader is going to pick that up pretty quickly. And that's a real recipe for decline in circulation and readership.

One of the things that we've all faced in this - even as newspapers have made a fair bit of money, but have had declining resources allocated to their newsroom budgets is the inability to hire. And we've all had hiring freezes over the last twenty years. We haven't had the kind of infusion of fresh blood that we ought to have had.

And the real shame about that is that the new generation of journalists in the last 10 years, far more highly educated than people who went before, are really bright, really, I mean, just the most tremendous set of people I've ever seen, you know, and yet can't get jobs. And, instead, you have a graying newsroom full of people who in some cases would be better off not being there. And newsroom managers have to make - have to use those people even though the person says, you know, I've done that story twenty times. And so a great newspaper is one that is enthusiastic and curious.

MR. CRANE: The only consolation we have is we can't be offshore to China.

MR. de BOER: The question, without mentioning names, but there's one major U.S. newspaper that's pretty much with a high reputation, it's pretty much getting the reputation that it's creating and slanting the news rather than objectively reporting it, coupled with the instances at the Times and the USA where you have these two major reporters that were fabricating, not just plagiarizing, but fabricating. What do you think about the quality, why that stuff isn't caught early in some of these major names? USA Today and Times are pretty high profile papers.

MR. CRANE: Thank you. I think, Henry, this is probably a good moment to thank our two panelists, who I think have done a - we owe them a lot. And I hope that one comment in tonight's discussion is at least a better understanding of how things –

PROFESSOR KING: Yeah. Also, I want to make it clear that any remarks that were made with regard to the PD were not directed at Jim Strang. I think he did a wonderful job tonight, and, you know, I think he gave it the way he believed it. But I think inevitably we get to the issues that we came to. I think that's the, you know, it may be different later on. And, Giles, you did a wonderful job, too.

MR. CRANE: One last joke for you, Henry, because you like jokes. And you're going home to bed now. This is a Canadian joke. The question is, and it's more of a country question than a city question, but why did the chicken cross the road? To show raccoons it could be done.

(Seminar concluded)