

Selectovision

Early this fall in the town of Beloeil, Quebec, a marathon of activity drew to a close at cable station BHMO, and most people involved agreed that Selectovision seemed to be a fine, healthy baby. This pilot project represented the first real test of an experimental programming technique born of collaboration between Videographe (the video workshop founded by the National Film Board of Canada) and Videotron, owner of BHMO.

Selectovision is an experimental programming technique which gives the audience the ability to indicate their viewing preference from a list of 80 titles of videotapes produced by citizens of local and surrounding communities. This list of titles was prepared by Yolande Valiquette, coordinator of the project, from the library of Videographe, from the tapes of producers she found in the Quebec area, and from tapes which were submitted to her. Copies of the list were distributed to the viewers of Videotron's BHMO system prior to the ten-day experiment. Those who wanted to indicate a choice were invited to call the station and speak to the on-air announcer. Two channels were utilized in this experiment. The announcer received the calls, compiled requests, and interviewed guests on channel 9, while the tapes which seemed to have the biggest demand were shown on channel 11. The programming began September 22nd 1972 and continued, from 2 pm to 2 am each day, until October 1st.

Aside from the obvious attempt to provide the viewers with a mechanism to indicate their programming preferences, the project also sought to demonstrate to the viewers how citizens like themselves had used the videotape medium. The hope was that these production examples would stimulate those in the audience to express themselves through the same medium. With further development the com-

munity could eventually feed their Selectovision catalogue from local productions of videotapes. This could be called the major aim of Selectovision.

Participation in the show extended into the studio also. As the experiment unfolded, many different kinds of people came into the studio operation. First, there were the regulars; the camera operators, the technicians, announcers, telephone operators, etc. Then there were those who made one or two appearances such as the tape producers, other guests, and spectators who, enthused by the experiment, came to help, talk, or submit video projects. Finally, there were the

