

Time runs out on CBMT's Hourglass tonight

Hourglass, the CBMT news and public affairs series which tonight ends its current season, will have a radically different appearance when it returns in September.

None of the three present host-inter-viewers will be back. Brian Stewart is leaving to take an unspecified CBC network job. Dian Cohen, the economic writer and columnist who went on the show as a part-timer at mid-season, understandably refuses to give up any more time with her family for the full-time job the producers want to fill.

Pierre Pascau, certainly the most experienced and probably the best broadcaster of the lot, is being dropped. Despite Pascau's evident qualities as an interviewer these last two seasons, the producers have apparently concluded with some reluctance that he works best alone and has difficulty mixing with other people on the show.

Of the four people who now appear on the current affairs part of Hourglass, only linkman Dave Nichols is expected back in the fall.

As for the host functions, it is expected that the present troika arrangement will be dropped in favor of a principal host setup of the kind used when Peter Desbarats was on the program from its inception as Seven On Six until his departure two years ago.

Paul Wright executive producer, and Mark Blandford, who is in charge of the show's day-to-day production, now acknowledge that the system of three revolving hosts hasn't worked out too well.

They haven't definitely settled on a new host but Harry Elton is tipped as the best available person. It sounds a sensible idea. Elton is an intelligent and thoroughly professional broadcaster who passes virtually unnoticed on CBM radio's Mid-day

TV & Radio

By L. Ian MacDonald



Magazine, which reaches only a fraction of the Hourglass audience.

FINALLY IN COLOR

Whoever appears on the program next fall, the first thing many viewers will notice is that the entire show will at last be done in color and will originate from one studio in the Maison de Radio-Canada.

For much of this season Hourglass has had a schizoid character, with the news coming from a small color studio while the rest of the program, as in previous seasons, was done from a run-down black and white studio in another part of the old Radio-Canada building.

Quite apart from the embarrassing if excusable errors that occurred in linking the two studios, the lack of color facilities has cost Hourglass some of its audience in the last two years. While no figures are available it's thought color television sets are installed in about 40 per cent of English-language homes here, a significant penetration that has caused some anxiety on the Hourglass unit. If nothing else, they'll no longer be able to use this as a crutch for lower ratings.

WON'T HAVE TO

They probably won't have to. There are reliable rumors that the CBC will sink a lot more money into the show next season, with a slight possibility of its time period being

expanded from 60 to 90 minutes.

Regardless of whether the program is expanded, in which case the title Hourglass becomes impossible, it seems likely that its name will be changed next season.

The present title appears to have spent its usefulness after five seasons. For Wright and Blandford and for the news people, who'd like to take the show into an exciting new period after the interregnum of the last two seasons, Hourglass is too much a reminder of the Desbarats years. Chances are the show will be re-named Montreal Tonight.

BRIEFLY: Incidentally, Desbarats has resigned his \$40,000 a year job as The Toronto Star's national columnist based in



BRIAN STEWART
... network job next

Ottawa. For the summer at least, he's moving back to Montreal to finish up a book on René Lévesque. Beyond that, he evidently wants to get back to television, although not at the CBC where the pay scales for journalists don't come up to the level Desbarats now commands. Nor do those of CTV. Only the fledgling Global television is throwing that kind of money around and I've an unsupported hunch Desbarats will end up as their main man in Ottawa . . .

CKGM owner Geoff Stirling has declared a one-for-one split of the management team that re-built his station from the chaos of three years ago to the ratings powerhouse it is today: program director John Mackey is going down to Windsor as general manager of Stirling's AM and FM stations. Mackey's promotion deprives CKGM general manager Jim Sward of the most astute contemporary music programmer in the country. Mackey himself is making the move with some reluctance. "I got married only six weeks ago and we just bought a house on the side of a mountain in Piedmont," he says. Mackey is trading that for a great morning view of Detroit . . .

Sportscaster Jim Bay and CFCF have parted company on ambiguous terms, with CFCF evidently doing most of the parting . . . They've another promising show lined up on CBC Radio's Cross-Country Checkup Sunday afternoon (CBM-940, a 5.10), when Commissioner of Languages Keith Spicer takes calls on the bilingual question. Spicer and host Pierre Pascau will answer calls as they come — in French or English, and there'll be voice-over translation . . . If you want to pick up the show without the translation, it will run as spoken on CBM-FM, 95.1.