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Letter to Murray J. Rossant in Criticism and Recommendation for the National News Council Members

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December 7, 1972

Mr. Murray Rossant
President
Twentieth Century Fund
New York City

Dear Murray:

I know it's presumptuous, but I would feel derelict if I did not again press upon you my thoughts about the necessity of selecting a Media Council that brings in men and women of outstanding reputations. I was discussing the subject with my old companion of wars, Vincent Jones, yesterday and he expressed the same view: That a Council without immediate public clout is in for grave difficulties.

The list we were discussing at last Thursday night's dinner struck me as totally inadequate; moreover, some of the names suggested around the table were of lesser lights (or, more properly, as Bob Chandler put it, leaned on the "buddy" system).

If we are to have professionals, please think high. I know he is old and not about to take on active duties, but why not Walter Lippmann as Honorary Chairman? Assuming that Frank Stanton is soon to retire, why not sound him out? My own nominations would include Davis Taylor, Publisher of The Boston Globe; Howard H. Hays, Co-Publisher/Editor of the Riverside (Cal.) Press Enterprise, and who is to be ASNE's President in 1974; Frank Batten, Jr., President of Landmark Communications; Louis Lyons, the famed, retired curator of the Nieman Fellowships (he is even more vigorous than Judge Traynor seems to be).

For public members, my mind works in terms of Sol Linowitz, Joan Cooney (President of the Children's Television Workshop and pioneer of "Sesame Street"), Father Hesburgh, Roy Wilkins, Jesse Jackson, Sidney Weinberg, Jr., of Wall Street, who is also active in Public TV.

I hold that a list of this caliber would (a) immediately impress the general public favorably; (b) have the same kind of impact on Government officials everywhere; (c) make media managements take thoughtful notice; and (d) give potential long-range funders more than adequate reason for serious consideration.

Cordially,

[Signature]

Norman E. Isaacs
Editor in Residence

cc: Alfred Balk

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