Alexander Graham Bell makes a long-distance call.

A Concise History of Canadian Telecommunications

Canada has a long and progressive history of information exchange. In 1846 its first commercial telegraph was strung between Toronto and Niagara, and in 1874 Alexander Graham Bell, at home in Brantford, Ontario, on a visit from Boston, sketched his first diagram of a telephone. Since then things have been moving along:

1876: Bell made the first long-distance call, from Brantford to Paris, Ontario.

1878: The first telephone exchange in Canada was opened in Hamilton, Ontario. In time there would be 2,000 telephone companies in Canada (and there are still 300). The provinces of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan went into the business themselves in 1899, 1908 and 1909.

1886: Canadian Pacific set up a telegraph department which would grow in time to CP Telecom-

munications. Telegraph lines paralleled the tracks and there was a telegrapher at every station.

1901: Guglielmo Marconi received a radio signal from England at St. John's, Newfoundland.

1923: Canadian National Railways established the first coast-to-coast radio network.

1927: Telephone service between Canada and Europe, via New York, was inaugurated, followed by a ship-to-shore service.

1952: Public television service in Canada began.

1956: Canadian Pacific and Canadian National introduced a switched data service called Telex, making it possible for businessmen to send masses of information back and forth across the country quickly. The Trans-Canada Telephone System in-