

Government Organization

such as those which might be used for surveying earth resources, for meteorology, or a satellite able to broadcast directly into the homes of Canada.

[Translation]

The Operations and Regulation section will also be headed by an Assistant Deputy Minister. Mr. Gilles Bergeron is the designated official, and many will recall him from his work on the Centennial Commission. The bulk of the staff of this section of the department—some 630—have moved over from what was formerly the Telecommunications Policy and Administration Bureau of the Department of Transport. They will continue to administer the Radio Act, that is the technical regulation of radio-frequencies and the licensing of users, whether these be for taxi radios, microwave relays, telephone systems or television broadcasting transmitters. In addition, as I shall explain more fully later, this branch of the department will be deeply involved in a far-reaching review of telecommunications legislation and regulation.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, there is the area of planning. Planning must start with the acquisition of comprehensive information about the national communications industry, and we will have to work fast in a field that is in a state of constant and rapid change. We will, shortly, be appointing a Director General of Policy and Plans who will in turn report directly to the Deputy Minister, a post for which the designated official is Mr. Alan Gottlieb, formerly Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs. The purpose of planning will not be regulation for regulation's sake but regulation, where and when needed, for the public good. We intend to evolve a national communications plan and a national communications policy to integrate and rationalize all systems of communications whether those of today such as telephones, microwave relays, telex, TWX, telegraph and the Post Office, or those of tomorrow: communication satellites; sophisticated information retrieval systems linking computers which exchange and store information of all kinds; waveguides; lasers, and on up to the 'wired city' of tomorrow.

All of this is what the department will be doing. I intend now to describe what it is doing.

Our largest single current project, as everyone knows, is the development of a domestic communications satellite system to go into operation by 1971-72. Legislation to set

up a mixed, public-private, satellite corporation will shortly come before this house and hence I cannot, at this time, add anything useful to what is already public knowledge. It would be, Mr. Chairman, a mixed satellite corporation. Full information, I can assure my hon. colleagues, will be provided at the appropriate time.

However, I can perhaps usefully define the three essential objectives of this major project. We intend to use it as a means to promote Canada's scientific know-how and industrial potential in the vital field of communications. We intend to use it to bring the North and the under-developed parts of this country closer to the mainstream of Canadian life by means of instant telecommunications and by live television—a northern vision of the 1970's, and I deliberately use that phrase in acknowledgement of the foresight of the great parliamentarian who first coined it. Finally, Mr. Chairman, we intend to use the system to place in space above us a satellite that will speak both French and English to all Canadians, no matter where they live. Confederation was built upon the mile upon mile of steel rails laid across this country; Confederation will be renewed, as the Prime Minister put it so well yesterday, by a communications system that meets the needs of all Canadians and which provides them with the go into operation 1971-72. Legislation to set means to fulfil their talents.

• (2:30 p.m.)

[English]

A second project under way, our interest in which is reflected in the joint study with Sweden carried out for the United Nations committee on the peaceful uses of outer space, is on the feasibility and implications, technical, political, cultural, sociological and diplomatic, of direct broadcasting by communication satellites. I have already tabled in the house the first paper to be produced as a result of this study. It represents a significant and imaginative initiative by Canada and Sweden. Direct broadcasting communication satellites are some seven to ten years away from economic use, but that point will be progressively reached as the signals emitted by satellites become more powerful and the necessary earth stations become smaller and, most important of all, cheaper.

[Translation]

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I regret to interrupt the minister, but the time allotted to