

### Telecommunications exhibition

Historic recordings and television tapes dating from the beginning of broadcasting in Canada, as well as photographs, documents and pictures, are on display at the Public Archives in Ottawa in an exhibition entitled "Telecommunications: The Canadian Experience". The exhibition, which closes in January, also includes various instruments of communication from the first telephones to satellites.

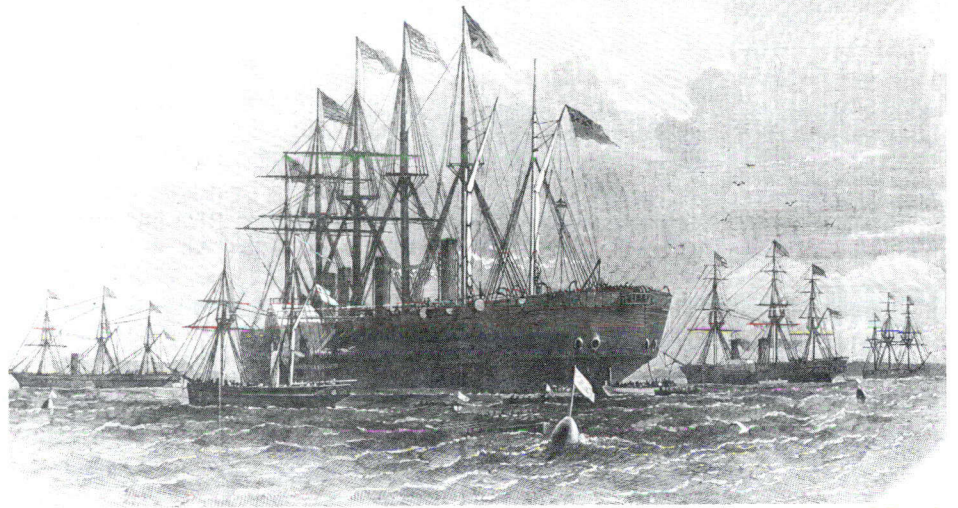
A series of letters elicit the adventure and competition of the fur trade days. One, written in 1816, from a Mr. A.N. McLeod in Fort William, tells his North West Company messenger to intercept a Hudson Bay agent heading for the Red River settlement.

Transportation by sleigh on the St. Lawrence River on a canvas by Smythe Coke, painted in 1840, demonstrates that a ride with prancing horses on a frozen river was a lot more exhilarating than a drive on a freeway.

Transatlantic communications  
Morse's invention of the telegraph in 1842 was the beginning of modern

On September 8, 1866 a new era in communications between Europe and North America began when the *Great Eastern*, one of the largest ships of her day, brought the shore end of the

Atlantic cable to the tiny hamlet of Heart's Content Bay in Newfoundland. This old sketch of the event by an artist for the *London Illustrated News* is in the Public Archives exhibit.



Photos Public Archives of Canada

communications. The electric telegraph caught on fast in Canada and by 1866 the first Atlantic cable linking Europe and North America arrived in Heart's Content Bay in eastern Newfoundland.

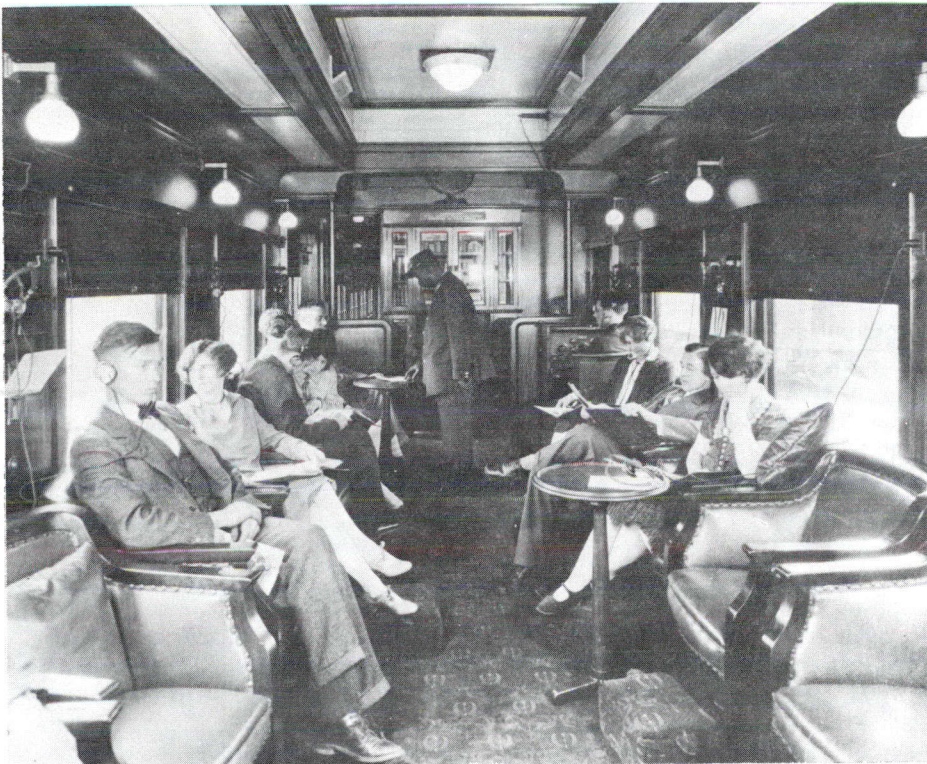
A sketch by an artist for the *London Illustrated News* shows the laying of the cable from the stern of the four-stacked steamer, the *Great Eastern*.

A prominent part of the exhibit is devoted to Alexander Graham Bell who, a century ago in Brantford, Ontario, developed the principle of the telephone.

### First radio

Marconi's pioneering work in radio in Newfoundland and in Cape Breton is depicted as well as the inventions of Reginald Aubrey Fessenden, a scientific historian.

Fessenden, who was born in Bolton East, Quebec, received his early education in small Ontario towns and as a young man went to the United States, where he worked with Thomas Edison. He became a prominent physicist and eventually developed an entirely new system of wireless distinct from and based on a different principle from that of Marconi — which principle eventually proved to be the correct one. A photograph in the exhibition shows the site of the first radio studio in Brant Rock, Massachusetts, from which Fessenden made the first radio broadcast in 1906. He had equipped a number of ships in the North Atlantic with his receivers and on Christmas Eve that year made the first broadcast — a recording of Handel's *Largo* and Gounod's *O Holy Night*.



It wasn't stereo but Canadians travelling by train between 1924 and 1931 could don ear phones and tune in to radio broadcasts while travelling across the country. This photograph

appears in a Public Archives of Canada exhibition entitled "Telecommunications: The Canadian Experience", which depicts the history of the telegraph, radio, TV and satellites.