

*Government Organization*

One possible change under study is that of the desirability and feasibility of recreating the Post Office as a Crown corporation. In the meantime, no matter what may or may not happen in the future, the mail must still be delivered. The Post Office payroll is 48,000, easily the largest of all civilian departments. In a sense it is the most "national" of all departments: There is a post office in every sizeable community in the country, more than 8,000 in all which is more, I might point out, than all the branches of our nine chartered banks combined. Because of its size, because of its complexity, and because it is undergoing massive change, the Post Office will continue to operate as an autonomous department, responsible to the new Minister of Communications rather than become, at least until its future is defined, one arm of an integrated Department of Communications headed by a single deputy minister.

● (2:20 p.m.)

Between the two departments of Post Office and of Communications there will be the closest possible working relationship. To give one concrete example, the research component of the Department of Communications will undertake, as one of its prime responsibilities, research into the vital area of electronic sorting and distribution equipment. We intend, as I have said before, to consider the Post Office not as an organization in the business of moving mail but as an organization in the business of communications—that is, of print communication as opposed to audio or visual communication as with the telephone and with television—and hence as an integral part of a total national system of communication. All I have said to this point, Mr. Chairman, is essentially explanatory background. I intend, now, to address myself directly to the new Department of Communications.

The operations of the new department will fall into four broad categories: administration, planning, operations and regulation, research and development. The administrative component is identical with that of all government departments so I need say no more about it at this point.

The function of research and development will be headed by an assistant deputy minister, Dr. John Chapman, who was formerly deputy chairman of the Defence Research Board. Under his guidance there will be established a research and development office which will, essentially, generate research policy. It will identify research projects of prime interest, either because of their indus-

[Mr. Kierans.]

trial potential or because of their relationship to actual or planned government communication operations. In other words, it will be concerned about the future. For example, it would direct research into future types of communication satellites, particularly those able to broadcast directly to homes.

The actual research work will be performed at the communications research centre, as well as at other facilities across the country such as the satellite earth station at Mill Village, Nova Scotia, where, I may say for the information of hon. members, I will formally open a new commercial satellite earth terminal in a few week's time.

The Communications Research Centre, to which I have referred, is being formed from the existing defence research telecommunications establishment, a branch of the Defence Research Board. Its staff currently numbers 520 and is composed of five principal laboratories: the national radio propagation laboratory; the national space telecommunications laboratory, which was responsible for the Alouette I, Alouette II and ISIS-A research satellites, the last of which was launched last month; the national communications laboratory and defence telecommunications institute and, finally, the electronics institute which conducts research on a range of electronic systems such as solid state devices and lasers. In terms of broad policies the communications research centre will be mission-oriented, geared to meet the needs of government as well as those of industry. Our resources are limited and to make the most of them we will have to, and we will, work in close co-operation with industry and with universities.

As hon. members will have noted from this broad description of the research programs, the Department of Communications will be concerned both with telecommunications and with satellites. The communications research centre, as the repository of satellite expertise in this country, will assist in the development of our planned communications satellite and, more directly, with our next research satellite, ISIS-B, due to be launched early in 1971 and intended, like its predecessors, to gather information about the ionosphere. In a broader sense, the department will represent Canadian interest in negotiations at INTEL-SAT and other international bodies on such crucial issues as allocation of frequencies and of orbital "parking spaces", and it will be required to co-ordinate any future government telecommunication satellite systems,