



Bulletin

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FRANCE-QUEBEC EXCHANGE OF LETTERS ON SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, made the following announcement on January 24:

The Canadian Government has noted reports indicating that documents have been signed in Paris by representatives of the French Government and the Government of Quebec dealing with future co-operation in the field of satellite communications.

We were informed by the French Government in advance of its intentions in this regard, but we have not yet seen a text, though we had asked to be informed and consulted in sufficient time before signature.

In such circumstances, the Canadian Government naturally wishes to reserve its position with regard to these documents. It intends to study them carefully to determine whether they come within the framework of agreements concluded by Canada and France.

In any event, these documents in themselves would not constitute international agreements. Moreover, constitutional responsibility in the field of telecommunications devolves upon the Government of Canada, which would mean that every project carried out in this field will involve action on the part of the Canadian Government. It is, therefore, clear that all international co-operation concerning satellite communications requires the concurrence and full co-operation of the Canadian Government.

Canada is in the vanguard in the field of satellite communications, as much from the technical point of view as in the efforts which it is making to give practical expression to the interests of the country, of the provinces and of all Canadians.

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Before the end of 1971, as one of the first in the field, Canada will have an important communications satellite network which it will use in accordance with its policy of promoting bilingualism, to provide Canadians with radio and television broadcasts in both official languages. It intends, thereby, to ensure the expansion of French culture throughout the whole country. The Government is also engaged in exploring and defining possibilities for co-operation in the field of satellite communications both with international organizations and, on a bilateral basis, with other countries including France, with a view to keeping Canada in touch with the mainstream of world culture, including obviously, French culture.

In the course of the past years, we have entered into mutual arrangements in the space field with a number of countries, including France. As far as the French Government is concerned, last year we proposed a programme of co-operation to them designed to expand existing exchange arrangements and, to promote jointly ventures into new areas. Discussions are being pursued. Within the context of