

Building Links to China's Huge Telecom Potential

Economic growth requires effective and efficient telecommunications. To maintain China's economic growth rate, now the highest in the world, the telecommunications infrastructure will have to expand at an incredible pace. From 1986 to 1990, telecommunications traffic grew at 24.4 per cent annually, local subscriber lines 19.7 per cent, toll calls 24.9 per cent and international calls by 51.3 per cent. For the rest of this decade China's Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) is planning to increase the network capacity by 10 million lines per year. By 1995, 30 000 km of fibre trunk line are to be laid and 15 000 km of digital microwave will be added to their network. Chinese industry does not have the capacity to meet these demands.

Shanghai Bell, a manufacturer of digital switches (a joint-venture with Alcatel), is back-ordered until 1995.

The man behind the growth is China's Minister of Post and Telecommunications, Yang Tai Fang. Minister Yang spent 10 days in Canada last September at the invitation of Canada's Minister of Communications, Perrin Beatty. During this time the Chinese Minister had a chance to visit Canadian telecommunications companies and participate in round-table discussions in several Canadian cities. Canadian technology impressed him. At each of the round-table forums, Minister Yang invited the participants to visit China for further discussions with MPT officials and to look for possible joint-venture partners.

On September 21, 1992, in the

presence of the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister of International Trade, Michael Wilson, Minister Beatty and Minister Yang, representatives of DOC and the MPT signed implementing arrangements for the existing Memorandum of Understanding. These arrangements propose that a number of technical missions take place during 1993, including a rural telecommunications mission to China, a mobile communications mission to China and a spectrum management mission to Canada. The MPT would host the missions to China, arranging opportunities for Canadian participants and Chinese officials to exchange ideas on telecommunications technology.

Hanover, Germany

Canada to be a Partner Country at CeBIT '94

Canada has accepted the invitation to be the Partner Country at CeBIT '94, the world's largest regular exhibition of office, information and telecommunications technologies, taking place March 16 to 23, 1994, in Hanover, Germany. CeBIT is expected to attract 6000 exhibitors from 45 countries and more than half a million visitors. A global event, it attracts industry executives, buyers and researchers in this field from around the world.

In inviting Canada to become Partner Country, CeBIT organizers have acknowledged Canada's leadership in world-class information technologies, particularly telecommunications and computer hardware and software. According to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, and Minister for International Trade, Michael Wilson, "CeBIT '94 provides an unparalleled opportunity to raise Canada's profile as a leading developer of information technologies and to encourage investment in this growing industry."

The lead up events during 1993 will be co-ordinated by External Affairs and International Trade Canada, the Department of Communications, Investment Canada,

Industry, Science and Technology Canada, and the Information Technology Association of Canada. In May a cross-country publicity tour will take place, arranged in conjunction with CeBIT organizers, to solicit industry participation.

The federal government, in consultation with industry, the provinces and other players, has begun preparations for Canada's presence at CeBIT. Plans have been set for a Canadian national stand with more than 60 companies exhibiting their products, a "Canada Inc." section promoting Canada as a place to do business, multimedia displays, cultural events for the opening ceremonies and partner country receptions. Canadian speakers will also be featured at the CeBIT Forum seminar program.

Your participation, suggestions and enquiries are welcome—please call EAITC's Advanced Technologies Division (see contacts box).