

In 1958, at a conference of Commonwealth representatives in London, plans were drawn up for a new Commonwealth round-the-world cable network, based upon a tentative ten-year programme with costs to be shared by the partners. Canadian participation was announced at the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference held in Montreal in September 1958.

The trans-Atlantic cable opened in 1956 (TAT-I) and the new Canada-United Kingdom cable now under construction (CANTAT) will be initial links in the new system. Canada and the United Kingdom share ownership of these cables. During 1960 four of the Commonwealth countries concerned in the project—Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom—approved plans for the second stage, a trans-Pacific cable from Vancouver to New Zealand and Australia. Canada will own outright the section from Vancouver to a point just beyond Hawaii. Construction of the Pacific cable should be completed by 1964. Additional conferences will have to be held to discuss the routing, construction and cost allocation of the remaining sections of the round-the-world system.

In February an air agreement between Canada and Italy was signed in Rome, providing for direct air services between the two countries as well as to certain intermediate points and points beyond Montreal and Rome. The two designated carriers, Canadian Pacific Airlines and Alitalia, began direct air services between Rome and Montreal in March.

In February a Canadian delegation visited Turkey, and later Pakistan, to negotiate bilateral air agreements. These negotiations led to the conclusion of an air agreement with Turkey, which was signed in Ankara in May, and one with Pakistan, signed in Karachi in December. The agreements provide for the establishment of scheduled international air services between Canada and Turkey and between Canada and Pakistan by air lines of the three countries. Both agreements represent long-range planning and any routes to be operated by designated air lines will be agreed upon between Canada and each of the other two countries at some later date.

In September an exchange of notes took place in Ottawa amending the Canada-United Kingdom agreement of August 19, 1949. The amendment provided additional points to be serviced by the designated air lines of the two countries.

During the autumn, the United Kingdom Minister of Aviation, Mr. Peter Thorneycroft, visited Ottawa for discussions with members of the Canadian Cabinet, during which he outlined the views of the United Kingdom Government on the possibility of European and Commonwealth countries co-operating in a programme, based on the U.K. "Blue Streak" rocket, for the launching of satellites for scientific and other purposes, including communications.

Canadian ministers expressed a desire to learn more about the project as it developed. After his visit to Ottawa, Mr. Thorneycroft had discussions with a number of European governments, but, by the end of the year, no decisions concerning participation by European countries, on which the development of the United Kingdom programme depended, had been taken. Consequently the United Kingdom Government was not yet in a position to place firm proposals before the Canadian and other interested Commonwealth governments.