

MAIL-TRANSPORTATION SERVICES MERGE

Urban mail-transportation services will be integrated in the major areas of Canada before the end of 1972. In a statement to the House of Commons on November 23, the Postmaster General, Mr. Jean-Pierre Côté, said that the aim of the Post Office was to help stabilize mail transportation in those centres where the continued operation was essential to the maintenance of a national postal network. When the new system is implemented, intra-urban mail transportation, previously carried out by private contractors, will be undertaken by the Post Office:

Part of Mr. Côté's statement follows:

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In announcing this major change, I would like to point out that among the major postal administrations of the world, Canada is the only country which does not now have integrated transportation services in its urban centres.

The decision to implement an integration of urban mail-transportation services comes after a series of studies by the Post Office Department. As a result of these studies, integration was successfully undertaken in sections of Montreal and Vancouver as early as 1967.

As a further consideration, in 1968, Section 31 of the Post Office Act was revised. This revision provided that following the invitation to tender, no contract should be entered into for a term of more than five years. At that time the Department knew it would eventually integrate all its major urban transportation services. The Vancouver and Montreal experiments of 1967 were undertaken to test the feasibility of this course of action.

In order to carry out integration of these services, the Post Office will require personnel, vehicles and support equipment. All those full-time contractors' employees who are working in functions related to postal work will be offered positions with the Post Office. The Post Office is conscious of its obligation to these men and is most desirous that they will elect to enter the public service. Many of these workers, after providing service to the Post Office for so many years, already regard the Post Office as their real employer. The Canadian public, too, has come to regard them as Post Office employees.

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Two criteria were used to define the centres that would qualify for inclusion in the program. Both criteria are based on mail volumes and are:

1. Those centres which account for 1 per cent or more of the national total of originating first class mail; or

2. Those centres which account for 10 per cent or more of the total of a postal region's originating volume.

These criteria define the cities and areas that are vital to the postal system in national terms. Not only are they important in their own right as major centres but many of them are main in-transit or transfer points for the movement of mail originating elsewhere.

CITIES AFFECTED

Application of the national and regional criteria result in the inclusion of the following metropolitan cities in the program: Vancouver; Victoria; Edmonton; Calgary; Regina; Saskatoon; Winnipeg; London; Metro Toronto; Hamilton; Windsor; Kitchener-Waterloo; Ottawa-Hull; Metro Montreal; Quebec City; Saint John, New Brunswick; Moncton, Halifax-Dartmouth; St. John's, Newfoundland. Of these 19 cities, four - Montreal, Quebec City, Windsor and part of Vancouver - are already wholly or partially integrated. The 15 new centres include satellite postal operations in urban communities adjacent to metropolitan areas. The total number of urban centres to be brought into the program, therefore, will be 42.

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OF TIME AND THE ATOM

The National Research Council of Canada advises that 1972 will arrive one-tenth of a second late. "But don't panic," they say, because to compensate, 1972 will have a "leap second", as Canada joins other countries in switching to Atomic Time.

The leap second - a 61-second minute - is to make up for a resulting annual drift of one second a year in the change to Atomic Time. It will be introduced into Atomic Time in the last minute of either June 30 or December 31 of each year in order to bring Atomic Time into step with Mean Solar Time. In 1972 it is expected that the leap second will occur on June 30.

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT

The shift to Atomic Time, giving a slightly tardy 1972 and a "leap second" every year thereafter, is the result of an international agreement; NRC played an important role in studies and negotiations for this change.

The adoption of Atomic Time means that Canadians have turned their attention from the heavens to the atom to measure time. In the past, the reference-point was based on the time for the earth's rotation on its axis. However, this time varies and a unit of time derived from it cannot be used for scientific purposes. A further reference was the motion of the earth about the sun, i.e. the solar year, which was uniform but awkward as a reference.

In 1967, the International Bureau of Weights and Measures, after calibrating the atomic clock against the astronomical clock, abandoned the astronomical unit of time in favour of a clock based on the cesium