Ericsson chooses Montreal base for cellular R&D

With literally a world of possible locations to choose from, the Swedish telecommunications giant Ericsson has selected Canada as the base for its research in a critical area of cellular telephone technology.

According to Lionel Hurtubise, President of Ericsson Research Canada, the Montreal R&D unit, founded in 1986, has won two world mandates in competition with 30 Ericsson R&D establishments through-

out the world including units in the United States and Mexico.

Under the first global mandate, funded at $178 million over five years, the Montreal centre is responsible for project management and software development to meet cellular telephone communication standards used throughout North America and in 20 other countries.

The Centre has since won a second R&D mandate valued at $95 million over five years.

As a result, Ericsson's staff of engineers has expanded from 100 three years ago to about 600 today.

What tipped the balance in Canada's favour was human resources. "Our advantage was a plentiful supply of trained and creative people, particularly in software development" says Mr. Hurtubise, who adds that

**Lionel Hurtubise,
President of Ericsson Research Canada**

Ericsson's newspaper ads for software positions routinely draw up to 800 responses. "Personnel from the parent company who serve here are consistently amazed at the number of very qualified people to choose from. We hire from virtually all the local institutions, including École Polytechnique, McGill University, the University of

Sherbrooke and Université Laval in Québec City — and also from universities outside Quebec."

Another Canadian asset was Canada's system of tax credits for R&D which, together with competitive labour costs, make Montreal the "third or fourth lowest cost facility in the Ericsson group."

Last but not least, says Hurtubise, Montreal's cosmopolitan atmosphere makes it easy to attract people and keep them. That is reflected, he says, in a "virtually zero" turnover rate at the company. "When you consider that it can take up to six months for an engineer to get trained in a new assignment, that's an important asset."◆

Ericsson headquarters in Montreal