

Acid rain study planned

A Canadian microbiologist will undertake a new two-year study to determine what damage acid rain is doing to Canada's forests.

Dr. Gloria Delisle of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario said that heavily forested areas are sensitive to acid rain because of their soil content. She said there have only been four or five studies in this area so far.

And agricultural soil may also be in danger, said Dr. Delisle. It had been thought that fertilizers could counter the problem in agricultural soils, but now there is evidence that farm soils are suffering permanent damage.

She said the acid rain problem is compounded by deposition of pollutants not carried in rainfall.

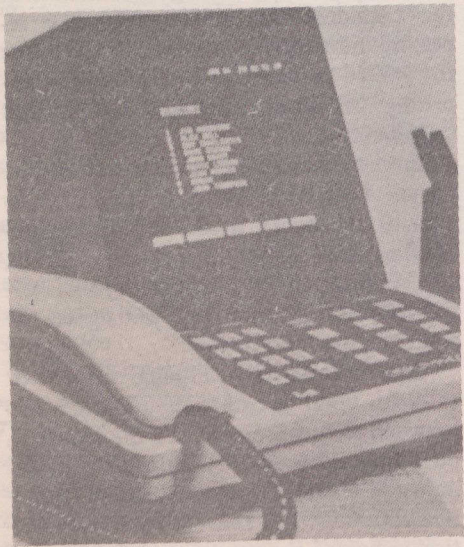
Acid rain, falling in significant amounts on the northeastern areas of Canada and the United States, results from coal combustion producing sulphur and nitrogen oxides that can be transported thousands of kilometres and deposited in rainfall.

Delisle will study two areas — one near the Batchawana River, north of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and the other, north of Quebec City.

Telephone marvel

Bell Canada has introduced a new telephone computer terminal called the Displayphone.

The Displayphone is a data communications set designed initially for executive



Futuristic telephone

use. It consists of a telephone receiver and push-button dial with a video display screen and letter keyboard. Bell's newest phone displays messages, electronic mail and information on a video screen, acts as a built-in calculator and dials up to 81 telephone numbers automatically.

The set will allow a businessman in Ottawa to call a co-worker in Toronto and discuss reports and figures they can both see on their telephone screens.

The Displayphone's screen is just seven inches wide, although a 12-inch version is being developed. Along with the messages and reports that can be displayed there, it also shows the time of day and the length of each call.

Company officials said that subject to success in the marketing trial, the Displayphone will be produced by Bell Canada's Northern Telecom Limited subsidiary as early as next year.

Weather forecasting uses radar

A revolutionary weather forecasting system that uses both radar and data processing is being introduced onto the international market.

Developed by the Research Council of Alberta, the Digital Radar Data Processing System presents data in graphic form.

The equipment is being manufactured and marketed by Athabasca Research Corporation, an Alberta company specializing in meteorological and electronic instruments.

"The Canadian government is considering buying five systems, and we have 36 other potential customers, from countries such as Germany, Italy and Argentina," said Ed Adams, president of Athabasca Research. One of the systems, sold last year to a Brazilian technical college, is already in operation.

The instrument can produce the same information as 25,000 rain gauges. There are other uses that make the system very advantageous. A more accurate prediction of severe storms can, for example, improve the efficiency of hydroelectric power stations or warn of an impending flood.

Although there are other similar systems, this is the only one that can provide graphic representations of cloud formations, useful in studying the movement of precipitation and storms as well as in predicting water levels.

Residence helps doubly disabled

A residence which will be exclusively for the visually handicapped who also suffer from a second disability, physical or mental, will open its doors in Ottawa during the summer, reports *Le Droit*.

The first of its kind in Canada, the TELCI residence (Therapeutic and Educational Living Centres Incorporated) is an initiative of a group of ten Ottawa-area volunteers interested in improving the welfare of the visually handicapped and helping them become more fully a part of the community.

The president of the group, Barbara Reesor, explained that the centre would attempt to recreate a family atmosphere. For this reason the centre will accommodate only eight persons at a time.

Preferably 18 years of age and over, the members of the TELCI family will be allowed to live in their new home as long as they wish. "Just as in a real family, the time will come for each that he or she will want to leave. Others will come in, however, so that we can help them in their turn to achieve their full potential," said Mrs. Reesor.

The TELCI home will be purchased or built through a fund being contributed by the community. Ongoing staffing and operating expenses will be financed by Ontario government subsidies and residents will pay their food costs.

The founding group has received help from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and Cheshire Homes of Ontario.

Group attacks back pain

A charitable foundation has been established to help the 16 million Canadians who suffer from back pain.

The Back Association of Canada (BAC), whose chairman is Barnett Danson, president of Dash-Air Incorporated and former federal defence minister, will promote preventive back care education and the financing of research into the causes and control of back pain.

"Back pain is a problem of immense proportions," said the association's vice president Dr. Hamilton Hall.

Association officials are planning to go into schools and universities with educational programs, and they hope to convince industry and commerce of the value of taking preventive back care measures.