



Photo: RCI

Pierre A. Labelle hosts "Manège" and "Canada à la carte," which RCI broadcasts to the Middle East and Asia-Pacific regions.

Xian transmitters, a move that will ensure better reception in Japan. Xian will also serve as one of two relays for English programming to Asia and the Pacific; as a result, listeners in India will receive a clearer and more reliable signal. English and French broadcasts are also relayed via Radio Japan's transmitters at Yamata.

The opening of the Commonwealth of Learning Agency marks an important milestone in the development of distance education. From left to right: H.E. Sir Shridath S. Ramphal, Commonwealth Secretary General; the Hon. Pat Carney, then President of Treasury Board Canada; and the Hon. William Vander Zalm, Premier of British Columbia.

As well as the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region, RCI broadcasts to Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and the United States in 12 languages. For a free program schedule, please write to RCI at P.O. Box 6000, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 3A8.

## Toward a Commonwealth of Learning

Educating the people of a country is no mean feat — especially in a time of rising costs and in nations with scattered, isolated populations.

Innovative approaches and expertise are needed. And these are what the recently formed Commonwealth of Learning Agency in Vancouver hopes to provide to member countries.

The agency — the first official Commonwealth organization located outside Great Britain — will help Commonwealth countries co-ordinate "distance-education" as a way to meet the pressing problems threatening sustained development in some member countries.

Distance-education relies on techniques such as correspondence courses, educational broadcasting, and on-campus use of telecommunications and computer technology, rather than direct access to a teacher.

Because of its vast size, population distribution and expertise in telecommunications, Canada has become a

leader in developing distance-education. The country will contribute its expertise and \$12 million to support the new agency, which has \$32 million available for its first five years of operation.

The agency will work with regional universities of the South Pacific and West Indies. Its information service will be based at Britain's Open University, and both India and Nigeria have offered to host regional centres. Commonwealth countries will be able to share techniques, course materials and technological infrastructures dealing with distance-education.

The agency's governing board comprises government appointees from nine member countries as well as five independent experts in education, distance-education, broadcasting and communications.

The agency was set up just one year after the 1987 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting with the goal of making education more accessible, thus promoting social and economic progress.



Photo: Govt. of B.C.