

COMMONWEALTH TRADE AND ECONOMIC
CONFERENCE

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1,000 Commonwealth scholars and fellows will be studying in other Commonwealth countries at any one time. The United Kingdom undertook to assume responsibility for half the programme and Canada assumed responsibility for a further 25 per cent. The details of this scheme will be worked out at a special Commonwealth educational conference to be held early next year in London, which will also consider what might be done to expand and improve mutual assistance in this field between Commonwealth countries with special reference to the supply and training of teachers.

Australia announced an increase of 150 in the number of places it is making available for education and training under the Colombo Plan.

All countries recognized the importance of reliable communications in strengthening the Commonwealth.

It was agreed in principle to construct a Commonwealth coaxial cable which would provide the first round-the-world telephone service. It was expected that this system would be completed in stages over some ten years.

The Conference acknowledged the value of existing arrangements for economic consultation and agreed to co-ordinate these under the name of Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council. The Conference welcomed the generous offer made by the United Kingdom Government to provide a Commonwealth House in London to be available for the constituent bodies of the Council and for other Commonwealth meetings.

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HMCS ST. CROIX COMMISSIONED

Mr. Paul Comtois, Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys, was guest of honour at the commissioning of HMCS St. Croix at Sorel, Quebec on October 4. The St. Croix is the second of the Royal Canadian Navy's Restigouche class destroyer escorts to go into service and follows HMCS Restigouche, prototype of the class, which was commissioned at Montreal on June 7. Both ships are improved versions of the St. Laurent class of which seven are now in service.

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CBC REPORT

The annual report of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, just released, discloses some interesting facts.

Television, which was first brought to Canadians in the autumn of 1952, is now used by an estimated number of more than three million households - 71 per cent of the population.

The establishment, on the recommendation of the Board of Governors, of six new privately-

owned stations during the year raised coverage to the point that about 82 per cent of the population was within reach of good television service. At the end of the year, 39 stations, including 6 CBC and 31 privately-owned, were carrying English language service, and seven stations, two CBC and five privately-owned, were carrying French language service to the different areas of the country.

Direct microwave connections were established during the year to stations in the Maritime provinces, and the connection to Winnipeg was extended through the Prairie Provinces. CBC and private stations in these regions began to receive for the first time, live simultaneous national service, largely replacing the previous method of supply through telecordings and film.

The Canadian proportion in English network programming was maintained at more than 55 per cent of the schedule during 1957-58 and audiences showed a growing acceptance of Canadian programmes.

While Toronto and Montreal remained the main production centres, other centres, notably Vancouver and the Maritimes Region, contributed important items.

Eighteen half-hour dramas were sold to the British Broadcasting Corporation, nine of them being part of a contract for 26 shows to be completed this year. The BBC also bought nine one hour and one hour-and-a-half plays. The Australian Broadcasting Commission purchased fourteen half-hour dramas. Punch called Arthur Hailey's new play "Seeds of Power", "this Canadian TV spellbinder".

The French television network this year extended to seven of Canada's 46 stations and served more than 85 per cent of the French-speaking population. Since relatively few programmes in the French language are available for import, most of the programmes must be produced in Canada and CBC Montreal has become the largest French language TV production centre in the world.

Despite the sustained rise of interest in television, the Canadian public continued to be keen radio listeners, as indicated by the increased sale of radios. The Corporation took care to adjust its radio programmes to television viewing.

A new series, University of the Air, marked CBC's first venture into formal adult education at the university level. Mail response was encouraging. The use of the Trans-Atlantic cable underlined the new flexibility of radio in bringing together listeners and events in all parts of the world.

The Corporation continued to meet its particular challenge: great distances and relatively small population; two services in two languages, and competition from imported programmes available at a fraction of the cost of the home productions.