

Canada's transatlantic electronic newspaper

PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION SYSTEM

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News from wire service is categorized on index for easier retrieval.

An electronic newspaper was "delivered" recently in Canada and across the Atlantic to readers in Geneva at the same time. Almost as fast as the news was put on the wire in Montreal and Toronto, viewers in Switzerland were able to read it.

The newspaper, which was delivered on Telidon, Canada's advanced two-way television technology, was demonstrated for a week at the federal Communications Department exhibit in the Canadian pavillion at Telecom '79 in Geneva. Telecom '79, held every four years, is an international telecommunications exposition sponsored by the International Telecommunications Union for nations to demonstrate the latest in technology and equipment.

Telidon-equipped television sets delivered news, weather and sports at the exhibition.

Telidon, claimed to be the most technologically advanced videotex system in the world, was developed by the scientists and engineers at the federal Communications Research Centre (CRC), near Ottawa. (See also *Canada Weekly*, dated September 12 and May 16, 1979.) It featured high-quality colour graphics and can be used for a variety of applications such as information retrieval, data processing, text editing and electronic mail.

The four Telidon terminals in Geneva allowed visitors to the exhibit to retrieve

information from a data base stored in a CRC computer in Ottawa. Teleglobe Canada arranged for a two-way circuit via transatlantic telephone cable to be dedicated exclusively to this use. Advanced communications equipment, known as a multiplexer and modem arrangement, provided by Gandalf Communications Ltd. of Ottawa, enabled all four terminals to operate on the one line.

Telidon viewers used a telephone to call up the computer which presented an index of the subjects on a Telidon-equipped TV. To select the "page" or pages of information, the user pushed a few buttons on a key pad, similar to a pocket calculator. Before the news from the wire service is stored in the data base, it is categorized by computer under various headings for easier retrieval.

The Department of Communications exhibit in Geneva also featured a display on fibre optic research and field trials, on technical and social experiments undertaken with the *Anik B* satellite, and a demonstration of the mobile radio data terminals, among the most sophisticated in the world, which were developed by government and industry in Canada and are now being marketed worldwide by International Mobile Data, Inc. of Richmond, British Columbia. Twenty-one Canadian firms and organizations participated in the exhibit.

Military women go North

About 20 women will break the all-male barrier at the remote military post of Alert in the far North next year.

Defence Minister Allan McKinnon says the six-month experiment will start next autumn. The Alert experiment is another step in increasing the role of women in the armed forces.

Barnett Danson, former Defence Minister, announced in January that the military would place women in remote posts on a trial basis. Mr. McKinnon has chosen the Northwest Territories base.

"I have met several of the men...and certainly they are far from unanimous in having women posted in Alert," Mr. McKinnon said after returning from the northern outpost recently.

But he said he later visited Hall Beach, N.W.T., where three civilian women work with about 80 military and civilian men at a Distant Early Warning (DEW) line site. "It seemed to create no calamity," he said.

Alert, is a military communications centre 830 kilometres south of the North Pole. It is on the northern tip of Ellesmere Island, the most northerly inhabited settlement in Canada.

Men are posted to Alert for six months with no leave off the base during their tour of duty. By contrast, men serving with the recently disbanded United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) were allowed two weeks' holiday in Europe mid-way through their six-month posting.

Labour delegation in Sweden

A five-man delegation from the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) returned home recently following a trip to Sweden to study the quality of working life experiments.

The tour included conferences at the Swedish Work Life Centre, which is funded by government through a payroll tax and jointly administered by trade union and employer committees.

The delegation examined Swedish practices in improving working conditions and labour-management relations outside collective agreements.

The federal Department of Labour contributed \$22,000 towards the cost of the two-week trip, which also included visits to Norway and Denmark.