

Earth station licensing simplified

Communications Minister Francis Fox has announced changes to the federal government's policies and procedures that will simplify licensing earth stations and make satellite-delivered programming more readily available to Canadians.

First, licensing of satellite television receive-only earth terminals (TVROs) will be through a new, simplified application procedure. It will now also be possible to obtain a licence for a TVRO within 90 days from the date of application. Up until now, the Department of Communications has carried out an extensive and time-consuming check of each application to ensure that the proposed station would be protected from radio interference. This procedure, which typically can take up to 18 months, is being dispensed with, unless the applicant specifically requests such protection.

Second, TVRO licence applications are now being accepted from provincial educational agencies and authorities. They will be permitted to own and operate terminals to receive Canadian-originated educational TV (ETV) and other signals from Canadian satellites. (A policy in effect since February 1979 had until now restricted such licences to broadcasters, common carriers and cable television operators.)

Third, the minister said that licensed TVRO earth terminals would be permitted to receive radio program signals transmitted over the same satellite channel as the TV signal. This change will facilitate the wider distribution of radio programs to remote communities at minimum cost. Radio signals can now be "piggybacked" on the same channel as television programming.

Finally, Mr. Fox announced he is opening a more general review of satellite earth station policy to try and identify ways and instances in which licensing might be even further simplified.

Inviting comment from all interested parties, the minister said the review would include study of the possibility of extending TVRO licensing to certain categories of applicants not now eligible. It would also examine extension of receive-only licensing in such specialized service areas as scientific, navigational and weather satellite systems and distribution of radio program or news service signals via Canadian satellites.

Marshall McLuhan dies

Marshall McLuhan, who rose to international fame as one of the leading social theorists of the electronic age, died of a stroke in Toronto, December 31.

The former University of Toronto English professor suffered a stroke in September 1979, from which he never fully recovered.

Mr. McLuhan became an international celebrity in the 1960s. His books — including *The Mechanical Bride*, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, *Understanding Media* and *The Medium is the Message* — explored the radical changes he saw in society with the rise of television, radio and other electronic media.

He coined the phrase "the medium is the message" to explain his theory that the form of communication is more important than the content.

He also said instant communication was creating a "global village" in which power would be decentralized and the cognitive process reshaped.

Mr. McLuhan was born in Edmonton on July 21, 1911, but was raised in Winnipeg. He received his MA from the University of Manitoba in 1934.

He received his PhD from Cambridge University in England and in 1946 joined the English department of St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. Mr. McLuhan became a full professor there in 1952.

The University of Toronto established the Centre for Culture and Technology



Marshall McLuhan

in 1963, and Mr. McLuhan became its director for the next 17 years.

He received the Governor General's award for critical writing in 1962 for *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and was made a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1970.

Although the university retained Mr. McLuhan past the normal retirement age of 65 because of his accomplishments, he was finally forced to retire last year at 68 after suffering the stroke. The centre was replaced by the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology.

New computerized bank helps workers find jobs

Employment and Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy has announced the opening of a national job bank — a nationwide telephone/computer system that rapidly matches workers and jobs.

The bank stores data on jobs that cannot be filled locally. Through it qualified workers willing to relocate can be put in immediate touch with employers who list such jobs with a Canada Employment Centre.

"The job bank is one of a number of initiatives we are taking to streamline our employment service," says Mr. Axworthy. "It is aimed directly at relieving the supply-demand imbalances that are causing critical skill shortages, notably in the high-skill trades."

The national job bank combines the speed and efficiency of computerization with the coverage of more than 400 Canada Employment Centres (CECs).

Telephone connection

The bank uses direct telephone lines to connect CECs with a computer control centre based in Hull, Quebec, near Ottawa. CEC staff phone in information on jobs that cannot be filled locally, and/or may request job searches on behalf of worker clients. Control centre operators receive and relay data on jobs and conduct job searches. A job entry or search can be done in a matter of minutes — in fact, while a client waits.

Since the bank began operating on a trial basis in March, its inventory has reached a level where some 5,000 jobs are available at any given time. Between 400 and 600 searches a day are being carried out, and some 80 per cent of these result in potentially suitable jobs being identified for workers.