B.2.3.3 Packet networks

Public packet networks are available across Canada and around the world in virtually all developed countries and most "developing" countries. Most of these networks provide connections at low and medium speeds (1200 to 64K bps) at relatively low cost compared to dial or dedicated facilities. Most packet networks charge a fixed monthly amount for a physical connection, plus a charge based on volume of use (number of packets, number of logical channels, etc.). This makes them ideal for many applications with light or variable volumes of data. In addition, international gateways exist to allow transfer of data between virtually any combination of endpoints.

In order to connect to a packet network, a computer would have to be equipped with a suitable communications port and software. This could range in price from $2,500.00 for a single line on a PC to $10,000 to $15,000 for a communications server. It is also possible to configure some LAN routers with X.25 ports.

Private packet networks may be built by installing X.25 switching equipment and leasing dedicated telecommunication links between switches. For purposes of the Passport Office, it is probably not economically feasible to implement an entire network dedicated solely to their own use, however, the possibility of connecting foreign posts via External's MITNET in some way should be investigated.

B.2.4 Network Management

Regardless of the network facilities eventually installed, a means to manage the resulting network will be an absolute necessity. Assuming some kind of LAN or WAN is installed in multiple sites, it will be highly desirable to manage the system from a central location in Ottawa, with few or no technical personnel in remote offices. A network management system must be chosen in conjunction with other network facilities in order to ensure that remote equipment is capable of being controlled by the management system. The entire network, including the

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