

## "Fathers of Telidon" establish new company

The two engineers who were instrumental in developing Telidon, the two-way information technology, have started their own company to get Canadians to use Telidon and make it a commercial success.

Herb Bown and Douglas O'Brien, who both left executive positions at Kanata's Norpak Ltd. last November, said IDON Corp., the new company they started recently, will not compete with Norpak but could be a valuable source of new business for the company.

Herb Bown and Douglas O'Brien will act as "information brokers" for businesses, educational institutions and individuals who are interested in a Telidon-based information system but do not know where to start or how to put it together.

"One of our strengths is obviously our knowledge of the technology, and we want to share that knowledge with Canadian companies and help them use the technology," said Mr. Bown.

Telidon is Canada's version of videotex technology, a two-way information system carried into the home through telephone lines and fed through a decoder hooked up to a television set or a special Telidon terminal. It links users with information and services such as news, banking and shopping.

Herb Bown, known in the industry as the "father of Telidon", and Douglas O'Brien were part of the communications department research team that developed Telidon in the early 1970s.



Douglas O'Brien (left) and Herb Bown, creators of a new company to promote Telidon, Canada's two-way information system.

Once the basic technology was established and the industry had started hammering out a North American standard for the technology, they both moved to Norpak, which manufactures videotex decoders, in mid-1981.

Mr. Bown and Mr. O'Brien believe the best immediate applications of Telidon are in small, closed systems for business and educational uses. For example, a doctor or dentist could use the technology to store patient records, complete with full-colour graphics to clarify the information. A real estate company could use videotex for pictures and information about house listings.

But there has never been an impartial source where individuals or companies could go to find out the best way to set up a videotex system or what equipment to buy.

IDON will take on consulting jobs, design systems and put users in touch with the manufacturers and information providers best suited to their needs.

They will also help companies by putting them in touch with potential buyers for their products.

"Our motto is 'strength through co-operation,'" said Mr. Bown. "There has to be more co-operation in this industry, and we hope to bring together the strengths of several companies — but always with the user in mind."

*For further information, please contact IDON Corp., P.O. Box 3728, Station C, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. K1Y 4J8.*

## Romanian nuclear project

Work will begin immediately on contracts worth a total of \$70 million to supply steam generators, heat exchangers and calandrias to the Cernavoda nuclear power facility in Romania.

Two Canadian firms, Babcock and Wilcox Canada from Cambridge, Ontario and Versatile Vickers from Montreal have signed contracts with Romenergo, the Foreign Trade Organization responsible for the Cernavoda project, at the end of 1983 for this equipment. Their contracts became effective in mid-January 1984 when they received downpayments.

The Export Development Corporation is financing these sales under a \$680-million (US) loan granted to the Romanian Bank for Foreign Trade which covers the sales of two CANDU nuclear power stations by Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.

The two projects are scheduled to be completed during 1986.

## Task force to probe water issues

In an effort to "forestall a water crisis" Environment Minister Charles Caccia has appointed a three-member task force on water issues to look at pollution, supply projections, flooding and drainage, and the idea of exporting water to the United States.

Called the Advisory Committee on Federal Water Strategies, the task force will be headed by Vancouver resource economist Peter Pearse. It will hold hearings across the country and recommend a federal water strategy within 18 months.

"No longer can we be confident about the continuing availability of fresh, unpolluted and useable water," Mr. Caccia warned. "Our children will not be able to take clean water for granted," unless the country can "reverse the tide of toxic chemicals" and allocate water among many potential users, he said.

The minister compared the water situation to that of oil before the energy crisis, but he added that, "we do not need to have a water crisis", if adequate plans are made now.

The commission has a budget of \$1.5 million. Its job is to advise the federal government what it should do within its limited constitutional powers to cope with emerging water issues, but Mr. Caccia said he hoped to arrive at "a well-thought-out strategy that is supported across the nation".