

NEW CANADA-BRITAIN CABLE

Mr. Eric W. Kierans, Minister of Communications, has announced the signing of an agreement between the Canadian Overseas Telecommunications Corporation and the British Post Office for the construction of a new submarine telephone-cable system of very large capacity between Canada and Britain.

Mr. Kieran's statement to the House of Commons on March 29 follows:

...The decision to build the new cable, CANTAT-2, is based on projections of a 20 percent per annum growth in the market for transatlantic circuits during the next 15 years. This is expected to bring the Canadian demand to a level around 4,600 circuits by 1985. A dynamic element in this pattern of growth has been the increase in direct-dialing between countries on both sides of the Atlantic.

This bilateral project, in which the Canadian investment will be of the order of \$37 million, will provide 1,840 new telephone circuits in the North Atlantic route between Canada, Britain and Europe. As an indication of the size of this project it should be noted that CANTAT-2 will have 400 more circuits than all existing transatlantic cables, whether they originate in this country or in the United States. Cost of the project will be shared equally by COTC and the British Post Office.

The new high-capacity cable which will link Canada, through a point in Nova Scotia, to Europe at a point in Cornwall, is expected to be ready for

services early in 1974.

This new facility will be added to existing satellite and cable circuits used by COTC to provide reliable and economical telecommunications between Canada and Europe.

BENEFITS TO CANADA

This project, which has involved months of negotiations between COTC, officials of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Department of Communications and their British counterparts, involves several significant advantages for Canada. Among these numerous advantages are the following:

This arrangement provides an alternate commercial route to the transatlantic circuits provided by INTELSAT, the international consortium in which COTC is also a shareholder.

It provides technological diversity, which means greater security for our transatlantic communications links.

It provides a system that is compatible with the domestic communications system to be operated by Telesat Canada.

It assures that Canadian systems will continue to serve as the main route for transpacific Commonwealth traffic.

The new cable, therefore, will provide Canadians with more flexibility and reliability in their telecommunications links with Europe.

POSTAL CODE IMPLEMENTED

Canadians had their first close look at the postal code on April 1, when it was implemented in Ottawa.

The code will be a permanent part of every Canadian address by early 1974. It will be introduced in Manitoba in autumn this year, followed by Saskatchewan in the spring of 1972, the Atlantic Provinces in autumn, Alberta at the end of that year, British Columbia, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories in the spring of 1973, and Quebec and the rest of Ontario early in 1974.

The code is alpha-numeric - composed of both letters and numbers - and takes the form of ANA NAM, where "A" represents a letter of the alphabet and "N" a number from 0 to 9. There is a space between the first three and the last three characters - for example K2P OB6.

Enough information is contained in the code to determine a person's address right down to one side of a city street between intersections, and sometimes even further.

The code has been designed for a minimum life-span of 30 years, but it will probably last much longer; it is flexible enough to accommodate growth and shifts in population.

To ensure that the postal code is effectively implemented across Canada, the Post Office is spending some \$60 to \$70 million on equipment over the next five years, in the 15 cities that account for 85 per cent of all mail in Canada - Halifax, Quebec City, Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Windsor, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria.

While coded mail will be sorted by machine, any uncoded mail will continue to be sorted by hand.

AIR PACT WITH LEBANON PROPOSED

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, announced recently that the Government of Canada had expressed its willingness to enter into discussions leading to negotiation of a bilateral air agreement between Canada and Lebanon. Initial discussion of an exploratory nature will take place at a time to be agreed between the Lebanese and Canadian authorities. This agreement in principle to negotiate a bilateral air agreement is a further manifestation of the friendly relations existing between Lebanon and Canada, which embrace a broad range of governmental and other contacts.