



(January 5, 1972)

"I know everything goes by air . . . what puzzles me is how do you get your airplanes to stay in the air at five miles an hour?"

surprising suggestion since Canada was the only major Western nation without one.

Mr. Fultz, then Director of Special Projects, and Robert Rapley, Director of Systems, flew to Great Britain and West Germany to study the systems there. Fultz says the trips were well worth the time and money. "We saved millions of dollars," he said, "because people told us what they wouldn't do again." For example, the United States had irrevocably adopted the five-digit Zip Code, a system limited in focus to a single large section of a city. On Fultz' and Rapley's recommendation Canada adopted a six-unit combination of letters and numbers — for example, R6B 4B0. The first letter designates a province, the next two a city, the next three a very small part of that city, perhaps one side of a single block, perhaps a single office building, perhaps even a single suite. The Post Office then sponsored an advertising campaign to persuade everyone to memorize their own six-unit combination as soon as possible by fitting a sentence to the sequence — it was suggested that R6B 4B0, for example, could be rendered as "Remember Six-

pence Buys Four Big Oranges," or the west side of Beliveau St. in Ottawa, K2E 5L3, could be sweetly changed into "Kisses 2¢ Each, 5 Lollipops for 3."

Utilization of the Postal Code depends, of course, on the installation of electronic sorting devices. Under the hand sorting system still in use in most of Canada, each sorter gets a stack of 600 letters at a time and throws them into appropriate pigeon holes. A good sorter can average forty a minute, and the Post Office sets a thirty a minute minimum. At Ottawa, where mechanization is well underway, a "coding desk" operator reads the printed or handwritten Postal Code on an envelope and punches a corresponding series of faint yellow bars beside it. An electronic scanner then reads the bar code and drops the letter in one of eight to sixteen pre-sorting slots. It is then further sorted into one of 288 slots. The Post Office has ordered \$12 million worth of other machines (Optical Character Readers) which will read the codes directly, eliminating the keypuncher.

After all twenty-six major Canadian cities have been

