

Communications minister meets with his Brazilian counterpart

Minister of Communications Francis Fox visited Brazil, February 3-6, for talks with officials in Brasilia and São Paulo.

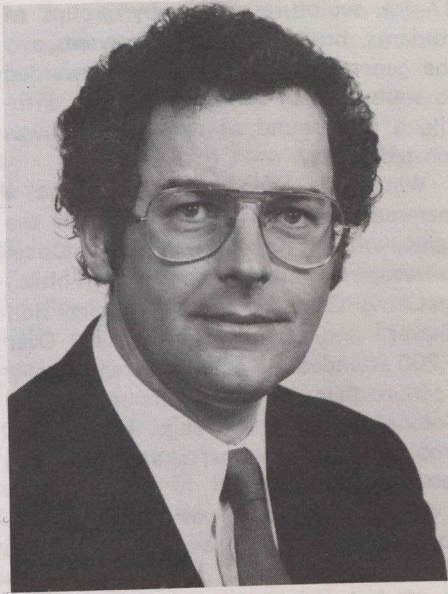
During his stay Mr. Fox met with Brazilian Minister of State for Communications Haroldo Correa de Mattos to discuss matters of common interest in the telecommunications field. They expressed satisfaction with the expansion of telecommunications activities and the contacts which had taken place between the two countries.

The two ministers also discussed a number of multilateral issues concerning future regional and world conferences being convened by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the Inter-American Telecommunications Conference (CITEL). Canada, which had previously held observer status in CITEL, recently became a full member. Mr. Fox and Mr. Mattos agreed that Canadian and Brazilian officials would work together in regional preparations for future ITU conferences.

Domestic satellite system studied

The two ministers reviewed Canada's domestic satellite system and in particular televised health and educational services provided by satellite to remote areas of Canada. Such applications are of interest to Brazil which is proceeding with plans to establish its own domestic satellite system.

During their meeting, Mr. Fox and Mr. Mattos agreed that Brazilian officials would visit Canada to receive briefings and assistance in planning the use of satel-



Communications Minister Francis Fox

lite communications for providing health services and educational programming to underserved areas.

In addition, Mr. Fox said that the Canadian Department of Communications would provide the Brazilian government with the results of Canadian experiments and trials using *Hermes* and *Anik-B* satellites in areas such as direct-to-home broadcasting.

The Canadian government will also send a technical mission to visit the Brazilian Ministry of Communications, the Telebras Research and Development Laboratory and the National Space Institute to arrange for an exchange of Brazilian and Canadian scientists.

Private groups urged to sponsor Polish refugees

Minister of Employment and Immigration Lloyd Axworthy recently called upon private organizations and individuals to assist in the movement of Polish refugees from Austria to Canada.

Although 14,000 government sponsored refugees will have entered Canada by the end of 1982, and many more will arrive here under the special family reunification program, the minister pointed out that many more refugees will still need assistance.

"We have no restrictions on the number of Polish refugees entering Canada under private sponsorships," said Mr. Axworthy. "The Canadian government has signed sponsorship agreements with many

church groups, the Canadian Polish Congress and the Polish Alliance of Canada."

Despite the existence of these agreements, only 169 individuals and families from Eastern Europe were sponsored by private organizations in 1981, Mr. Axworthy added.

To date, more than 5,500 Poles have been helped through the 1981 refugee plan and by the special measures introduced last October by the federal government. Half of these are government assisted refugees and the others are visitors who have applied to stay in Canada; another 1,000 have arrived in Canada from Poland under the family reunification program.

Energy program changed

The federal government has announced changes to its forest industry renewable energy program (FIRE) including increased funding.

FIRE, designed to provide financial incentives to the forest industry to use wood wastes instead of fossil fuels, will have its total program funding increased from \$103 million to \$288 million.

The government has removed its \$4-million contribution limit on individual projects. In addition, projects involving the simultaneous production of two or more types of energy, such as steam and electricity are now eligible under the program.

The program's term has now been extended by two years until March 1986. In 1980, as part of the National Energy Program, the FIRE program was expanded to include industrial, commercial and institutional organizations in all areas of Canada and to include other forms of biomass such as municipal and agricultural waste and peat.

First videotex news service

Canada's first videotex news service will go into operation on March 1.

The news service, produced by journalism students at the University of Western Ontario in London, will provide a package of international, national and provincial news to participants in Manitoba's Project Grassroots, which is testing Telidon, Canada's two-way television technology. The 300 farmers in the Winnipeg area, who have been taking part in the first commercial videotex operation of its type, have until now been able to obtain only consumer information on their screens.

The students will provide information daily for the system, which can be immediately updated. Videotex is a system that can provide pages of information on a home television screen.

University officials approached Infomart, the marketer of Telidon, last fall about setting up the service. Infomart, which is owned by Torstar Corporation and Southam Incorporated compiles the data displayed on the farmer's terminals.

Project Grassroots is the combined project of Infomart, which creates the data base, and the Manitoba Telephone System, which connects the user to the computer.