

Submarine Cables.—Sixteen transoceanic cables have termini in Canada—fourteen of them on the Atlantic Coast and two on the Pacific. In addition, there are eight cables between Atlantic coastal stations in Canada and the United States. The year in which the cable was first demonstrated to be of commercial value was 1866, and up to the present its use has greatly increased. The Atlantic cables are controlled by English and United States interests. The Pacific cable, from Canada to Australia and New Zealand, has been in operation since 1902, and was owned by a partnership of the Governments of Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. As a result of the recommendation of the Imperial Wireless and Cable Conference of 1928, in view of increased wireless competition, it was decided to dispose of the Pacific and West Indian Islands cable systems to the Imperial and International Communication Co., a company formed to take over all Empire-owned cables and lease the Empire-owned beam wireless systems. The necessary legislation was passed by the United Kingdom in February, 1929, and by Canada in June, 1929.

Section 2.—Telephones

A brief historical account of the early development of telephones in Canada is given at p. 781 of the 1934-35 Year Book.

Subsection 1.—Systems and Equipment

Telephone Systems.—The 3,212 telephone systems existing in 1939 included the three large provincial systems in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and a smaller governmental system in Ontario, together with the system operated by the National Parks of Canada, Department of Mines and Resources. There were also 144 municipal systems, the largest operated by the cities of Edmonton, Fort William and Port Arthur. Out of the 2,282 co-operative telephone companies, no fewer than 1,152 were in Saskatchewan alone, 793 in Alberta and 211 in Nova Scotia. The largest among the 541 stock companies operating telephone systems in 1939 were the Bell Telephone Co., and the British Columbia Telephone Co. Over 58 p.c. of the total telephone investment in Canada belongs to the Bell Telephone Co., and their telephones in Quebec and Ontario constitute 56 p.c. of the total for Canada.

Telephone Equipment.—In telephones per 100 population Canada ranks fourth with 12·35, the three leading countries being the United States with 15·37 Sweden with 12·73, and New Zealand with 12·69.

Out of a total of 916,394 telephones in 51 largest cities of Canada 658,496 were operated from automatic switchboards. The remainder, or 257,898, were operated from manual switchboards. Automatic switchboards have completely displaced manual switchboards in the principal cities of the Prairie Provinces and are displacing them in the other provinces.