

In April 1880, The Bell Telephone Company of Canada was established by Act of Parliament and authorized as the official agent for telephone service in 32 cities and towns across the country. However, it came to be recognized that, in the existing state of the industry, one company could scarcely develop and organize service over so wide an area, and a separate company was set up in British Columbia. The Bell Telephone Company withdrew from the Maritime Provinces in the 1880's and installations in the Prairie Provinces were sold to the respective provincial governments in 1908-09. The seven major telephone systems that developed across Canada worked together to establish long-distance service on a national basis and in 1931 they founded the Trans-Canada Telephone System which now has eight full members. These include both shareholder-owned companies and provincial government systems. They are as follows:—

The Avalon Telephone Company Limited

Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company Limited

The New Brunswick Telephone Company Limited

The Bell Telephone Company of Canada (serving Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and the Northwest Territories)

Manitoba Telephone System

Saskatchewan Government Telephones

Alberta Government Telephones

British Columbia Telephone Company.

These eight systems, together with the Island Telephone Company (P.E.I.), Québec-Téléphone, serving the Lower St. Lawrence area, Ontario Northland Communications and the Okanagan Telephone Company, comprise the Telephone Association of Canada. This organization was established to ensure general co-operation in telephone matters and to provide a means of sharing technical and operating information. Many of the smaller systems have also formed similar groups, such as the Canadian Independent Telephone Association, the Quebec Independent Telephone Association and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Telephone Companies.

Backbone of the Canadian telephone network is the Trans-Canada microwave system. Stretching more than 3,900 miles from the Atlantic to the Pacific, it is the longest single microwave system in the world. In all, the Canadian telephone industry operates more than 10,000 miles of microwave routes, carrying simultaneously many hundreds of long-distance conversations, large volumes of data, and television programs for the CBC and CTV television networks. The Trans-Canada System also supplies the communications facilities linking the more than 200 stations on the CBC French and English radio networks.

The steadily rising demand for local and long-distance service has called not only for general expansion of Canadian telephone systems but for the constant introduction of modern facilities and services. A number of Canadian companies have introduced what is called "Extended Area Service" in many of the communities they serve. This plan eliminates long-distance charges between several larger centres and their suburbs, and between many smaller places with a close community of interest. The cost of this service is included in the monthly charge for local telephone service.

Distance Dialing by both operators and customers enables the industry to provide faster and better long-distance service, while making the most efficient use of manpower and equipment. Direct Distance Dialing now makes it possible for users to dial their own long-distance calls to nearly 6,000,000 telephones in Canada, and more than 80,000,000 in Canada and the United States.

Numerous flexible telephone services are provided for government, business and industry. Special conference circuits can be quickly arranged, enabling businessmen to