

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 the United Kingdom, 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 3,174 telephone systems existing in 1944 included the three large provincial systems in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and smaller governmental systems in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, together with the system operated by the Dominion Department of Public Works and National Parks of Canada, Department of Mines and Resources. They also included 26 municipal systems, the largest operated by the cities of Edmonton, Fort William and Port Arthur. Of the 2,375 co-operative telephone companies no fewer than 1,123 were in Saskatchewan alone, 788 in Alberta and 212 in Nova Scotia. The largest among the 535 stock companies operating telephone systems in 1944 were the Bell Telephone Co., and the British Columbia Telephone Co. Over 59 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.—During the years 1934-44 there has been an increase of over half a million (554,894) in the number of telephones in use, representing an increase in telephones per 100 population of 31·5 p.c.

Of the 1,751,923 telephones in Canada in 1944, 989,103 or 56 p.c. were operated from automatic switchboards. The remainder 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. The increase in automatic or dial telephones was greatly reduced in 1943 and 1944 due to shortage of material and labour.