

# The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission REPORTS TO THE PEOPLE IT SERVES

"The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission believes the time has arrived when a public statement should be issued about the progress which has been made in the modernization of its Long Distance Telephone Plant and its plans for the future."

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Commission owns and operates the Long Distance Telephone Circuits connecting the various communities in the North with each other and with other Telephone Systems.

The Commission got into the telephone business more by accident than by design. In the earliest days it owned the only right of way along which a telephone line could be run, and in order to give needed telephone service to the rapidly growing communities, it established Long Distance telephone lines along its railway.

As time went on, long distance exchanges, known technically as Toll Centres were established at strategic points, such as Cobalt, Swastika, Porquis, Cochrane and Noranda. These Toll Centres were located in station buildings and were adequate for the conditions then existing.

## MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

Great advances have been made in recent years in the art of Communications. Older business people will remember the exasperating delays in getting calls through and sometimes the poor reception when connections were finally made. These troubles have to a large degree been eliminated and today your call is completed in a matter of seconds and reception is usually excellent. These improvements did not come about by accident—but in order to make them available to the people every telephone agency must conform to modern standards in order that there shall be continent-wide uniformity. Thus the Ontario Northland adheres to Bell Telephone standards and the Bell Telephone Company in turn conforms to standards set by the great American Telegraph and Telephone Company. Any other policy would lead to chaos.

During the War it was not possible to make much progress in the adoption of these new methods, due to scarcity of men and materials, but about ten years ago it became apparent to the Commission that its plant would have to be completely modernized, if it was to keep pace with developments elsewhere. This decision having been reached it involved among other things (1) the establishment of repeater stations; and (2) the setting up of modern toll and operating centres.

By way of explanation, the use of repeater stations is the reason you now hear Long Distance conversations so clearly. A telephone conversation is carried by a very tiny electric current which, small as it is, tends to weaken with distance. By placing repeater stations at appropriate distances the weak current is given a boost back to its original strength, so that you hear a voice thousands of miles away as clearly as though coming from the next room. These repeater stations must be care-

fully engineered and delicately balanced or they fail to serve the purpose for which designed.

New Toll Centres became absolutely necessary to house the new costly and delicate equipment, and provide proper working conditions for the staff.

This long range programme was embarked upon to comply with modern conditions.

New buildings were erected at Noranda and Cochrane. The Porquis Toll Centre had to be abandoned altogether and transferred to a new and modern building in Timmins. The testing and Regulating Building at Swastika had to be enlarged.

The one Toll Centre remaining in inadequate quarters is in the upper room over the Cobalt Railway station. This plant and its housing must be modernized.

The Commission's Engineers advise that this can be accomplished best by transferring the plant to a new building to be erected at New Liskeard.

The reasons advanced by the Engineers are that the Toll Centre should be as close as possible to the important centre of the system of the Northern Telephone Company at New Liskeard. If located even five miles south of New Liskeard it is the opinion of the Commission's Engineers that the additional cost would be a minimum of \$60,000.00 and might possibly in future reach \$200,000.00.

Every Member of the Commission and the Management preferred retaining the Toll Centre at Cobalt on account of its many years of association with that Community, but no Member of the Commission or Management could face the expenditure of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars to do so.

It was with the keenest regret that the Commission finally agreed that it had no choice but to accept the advice of its technical Officers. Obviously, while this internal debate was going on no public announcement could be made.

## CONCLUSION

The Commission is committed irrevocably to giving the people the most modern Long Distance telephone service. Already our Long Distance Operators can dial directly to many points in North America and the time is surely coming when a subscriber in his office or home will be able himself to dial to other subscribers almost anywhere in North America.

This is the promised land which we see before us but cannot yet enter. When present plans are carried to a conclusion it will be yours to enjoy.

**The Commission Hopes for Your Understanding.  
It Asks for Your Co-Operation. Prays for Your Tolerance.**

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