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# The Administrative Radio Conference

(Geneva, 1959)

As announced in our last issue, the Administrative Radio Conference opened on 17 August 1959 in the *Bâtiment Electoral*, Geneva, and has now been working

for more than a month under the able and stimulating chairmanship of Mr. Charles J. Acton, Head of the Canadian Delegation.



Photo J. Cadoux, Geneva

Charles J. Acton, Chairman of the Conference

Charles J. Acton, Chairman of the 1959 ITU Administrative Radio Conference, was born in England, December 28, 1898, and immigrated with his parents to Canada in 1913, where he completed his education.

His interest in the field of radio developed during the first World War when he actively participated in the establishment and operation of radio communications systems for the Canadian Army. Following this, he spent a number of years with Canadian Government coast radio stations and subsequently has had wide experience in telecommunications problems while occupying administrative posts in the Telecommunications Branch of the Canadian Department of Transport, where he completed forty years of service last August.

Mr. Acton has participated in many international and regional telecommunications conferences, among the most recent being those of Atlantic City (Radio and Plenipotentiary), 1947, Provisional Frequency Board (PFB), Geneva, 1948, Aeronautical Radio, Geneva, 1948-1949, High Frequency Broadcasting, Mexico City, 1948-1949, ITU Region II and Fourth Inter-American, Washington, 1949, Extraordinary Administrative Radio Conference (EARC), Geneva, 1951, Buenos Aires Plenipotentiary, 1952. Also he has represented Canada on the ITU Administrative Council, and was Chairman of the Council for the year 1954.

Readers will be kept informed of the progress of this important conference, one of whose main purposes is the complete revision of the world "Table of Frequency Allocations."

This month we shall simply reproduce below the statements made at the formal opening meeting of the conference.

*Address by the Chairman of the Administrative Council, Mr. A. Langenberger, (Switzerland) formally opening the Conference :*

"On behalf of the Administrative Council of the International Telecommunication Union, I wish you all a hearty welcome to the headquarters of the Union. I hope that you have found the facilities required for your



personal well-being throughout your stay in Geneva, and that Zeus will be kind and give you many more days of sunshine, to make the atmosphere of your meetings as pleasant as possible.

The tasks incumbent upon this Conference are well known to you all. They derive from Article 10 of the International Telecommunication Convention, which says:

Ordinary administrative conferences shall:

- a) revise the Regulations provided for in Article 12, paragraph 2, of this Convention with which they are respectively concerned, i.e., so far as your conference is concerned, the Radio Regulations and the Additional Radio Regulations;
- b) deal with all other matters deemed necessary within the terms of the Convention and the General Regulations and any directives given by the plenipotentiary conference.

In addition, the Ordinary Administrative Radio Conference shall:

- a) elect the members of the International Frequency Registration Board;
- b) review the activities of the Board.

After considering the situation and the progress accomplished in your field, the Administrative Council, in agreement with a very large majority of Administrations, decided to convene the Administrative Radio Conference for mid-summer 1959. It also entrusted the General Secretariat, which since the untimely death of the late Dr. Marco Aurelio Andrada is directed with distinction by Mr. Gerald Connop Gross, Acting Secretary-General, with the organization and faultless running of the Conference. The Administrative Council even gave him instructions to take any steps necessary, within the framework of the Convention, to postpone the opening of the Conference, should any major diplomatic conferences be held in Geneva at the same time. The adjournment of the Foreign Ministers' Conference enabled the arrangements already made to be maintained. We hope that you will be favourably impressed by all that the Acting Secretary-General and his assistants have done to give you the best working conditions possible, both from the point of view of the organization of the Conference, and the offices and technical installations which you will be using. The General Secretariat hopes that nothing has been overlooked to facilitate your work to the utmost.

You have been sent two series of Proposals submitted by the Administrations of Members and Associate Members; the third series was distributed today. The General Secretariat regrets the delay, which was beyond its control, in connection with the latter series.

Let me say here that the Administrative Council has a very special interest in all questions concerning radio-communications. It accomplished diligently and carefully the missions entrusted to it by the Plenipotentiary Conference, Buenos Aires, 1952, and by the Extraordinary Administrative Radio Conference, Geneva, 1951. I do not wish to anticipate your work, but would like to point out that it prepared a special report for your attention, giving the results achieved in the accomplishment of these missions. Fully cognizant of the volume and importance of the tasks incumbent upon the Conference, it had first of all envisaged fixing the duration at five months. However, in view of the unfavourable financial situation of the Union, it became necessary to reduce this to 4 months, with the closing meeting on 16 December, 1959. It also decided, with the consent of the great majority of Administrations, that the Plenipotentiary Conference, which should normally be held every five

years, would take place in Autumn 1959, simultaneously with the second half of the Radio Conference.

There are others more competent than I to sum up the situation as regards the evolution of radiocommunications in general. This evolution is becoming more and more rapid and often in quite different directions. It follows laws of physics which we do not yet know sufficiently well. There is no doubt that the scientific discoveries and the technical progress made have deeply modified some of the data of many radiocommunication problems. There will be still more changes. The Regulations drawn up some twelve years ago must therefore be modified and adapted, bearing in mind what has taken place since that time and the development foreseen in the near and more distant future. International cooperation in the field of telecommunications is becoming more and more essential. All agreements on this subject will contribute to the peace and prosperity towards which all men on earth aspire.

In the presence of 65 delegations of Members and Associate Members of the Union, and referring to paragraph 1, Chapter 1, of the General Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention, I now declare open the 7th Administrative Radio Conference of the International Telecommunication Union. The Administrative Council wishes the Conference complete success in its work, and hopes that it may attain its objectives for the good of international radio-communications and for international telecommunications in general."

*Extract from the reply addressed on behalf of visiting delegations, by Mr. T. A. M. Craven, delegate of the United States, Dean of the Conference:*

The delegate of the United States of America said that he had not realized until a short while before that he was the dean of the Conference. In fact, had he realized this, he would probably have exercised the good judgement demonstrated by many of his contemporaries and remained at home. However, he had felt that this conference would be a great challenge and he was sure that the other delegates felt the same way.

The weather had been mentioned as a good omen, and perhaps the Festival of Geneva which had just taken place could also be considered to augur well for the success of the Conference. The hospitality of the city of Geneva and the beauty of Switzerland made it difficult to concentrate on mundane matters, but the fact remained that the earth had so shrunk under the impact of electronic communications that the problems engendered by this mode of communication had to be met and defeated, or a state of chaos would result which would be difficult to solve.

In view of the fact that they were dealing with a dynamic art having a drastic impact upon the social and economic interests of every nation on the face of the earth; inasmuch as young nations as well as old recognized the value of and the need for electronic aids in this connection; and in the light of the limitations imposed by the radio spectrum, it was obvious to all that the world was rapidly approaching cross-roads in its use of the radio spectrum and the need for cooperation among nations had never been greater.

Delegates attending the Conference were experts in communications and not conversant in political matters; they were professional men versed in modes of operation and technical phases of communications; they were dedicated to the mission of improving the methods of communication between nations. They were not concerned with the contents of the messages transmitted, only with their mode of communication.



The need for cooperation had been mentioned. The delegate of the United States of America was confident that it would be possible for this group of experts to work in close cooperation to accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number.

Differences among proposals were inevitable. Different countries had different requirements and different conditions to be met. But they were all reasonable people and among reasonable people compromises could and must be reached. He knew that all nations, large and small, represented at the Conference shared his view, and were prepared to work in harmony with each other.

Finally, the delegate of the United States of America thanked the Chairman for his very warm welcome.

shall pay an appropriate tribute to them with the traditional minute of silence. However I cannot proceed further without mentioning briefly the tragic death of our past Secretary-General, Dr. Marco Aurelio Andrada, who died suddenly on the 18th of June, 1958, in the service of the Union, and who was known for his outstanding qualities to all of us and was indeed a close personal friend of many of us.

A great deal of preparatory work has been done during those twelve years, not only by the permanent organs of the Union here in Geneva engaged in radio matters (including the CCIR, the IFRB and the General Secretariat of the Union), but by a very considerable number of special conferences both regional and world-wide.



*Bâtiment Electoral — Headquarters of the Conference*

***Statement by Mr. Gerald C. Gross,  
Acting Secretary-General, concerning  
the preparation for and organization  
of the Conference :***

"As our distinguished present Chairman of the Administrative Council has indicated in his opening address, this is one of the most important conferences to be held by the International Telecommunication Union since the end of the war. Some radical changes were made in the international Regulations of radio-communications at the Atlantic City Conference in 1947, which many of you attended, and although normally such conferences are reconvened every five years, it has been found necessary and desirable this time to wait some twelve years before calling the nations of the world together to revise the International Radio Regulations.

Later on during these proceedings there will be read a list of distinguished people in the telecommunication world who are no longer with us, and at that time we

Among these conferences are the various regional broadcasting conferences such as the European Broadcasting Conference at Copenhagen in 1948, the North American Regional Broadcasting Agreement Conference of 1949, the Mexico City and Florence/Rapallo High Frequency Broadcasting Conferences of 1948 and 1950, the European Broadcasting Conference held in Stockholm in 1952; in the field of maritime radio the European Maritime Mobile Conference of Copenhagen in 1948, the Baltic and North Sea Radiotelephone Conference in Göteborg in 1955, the International Maritime VHF Radiotelephone Conference in the Hague in 1957, not to mention the earlier conference held in Paris in 1951 on the subject of maritime radio beacons.

Then of course there have been the various conferences of Region one, Region two and Region three, which, together with the work of the Provisional Frequency Board in 1948 and 1949, led to the decisions of the Extraordinary Administrative Radio Conference which was held here in Geneva in 1951.

I have taken the time to mention these various inter-



national meetings because all of them have in one way or another contributed to the study and to the preparatory work which led to the final preparation of the two very voluminous Books of Proposals which are now before you, as well as the proposals which will be made here in Geneva during the next four months.

These Books of Proposals, prepared for your convenience in loose-leaf form, themselves constitute something of a record as regards volume since, without counting supplements and correction pages, they total some 869 printed pages with more than 4500 separate proposals by our Member governments. The size and complexity of the proposals contained in these two big volumes is an indication of the amount of work that has been done in preparation for this Conference.

A separate report has also been prepared jointly by the CCIR and the General Secretariat, with recommendations from the CCIR which may be suitable for incorporation into the Radio Regulations. This is in accordance with Chapter 18 of the General Regulations, Annex 5 to the Telecommunication Convention.

We are happy to welcome here representatives of our sister specialized agencies in the family of the United Nations, among which I include the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as the distinguished representatives of the United Nations themselves.

The International Civil Aviation Organization particularly has collaborated very closely with the International Telecommunication Union in the study of radio facilities for international civil aviation. Representatives of the two organizations regularly attend each other's meetings on this subject. The importance of this can be seen when we stop to consider that everyone of us who ever leaves the ground as a passenger on a given aircraft has a very personal stake in the safe flight and safe landing of that particular aircraft. Without adequate communications, air traffic, as we know it today, could not exist.

We also extend a special welcome to the representatives of the new Maritime Organization formed in London this year—the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization—which now will have the same general concern for shipping on the high seas that ICAO has for air transportation.

On looking around this room it is evident that while there are many new faces present there are also among our Membership many who have worked with us closely over the years. Among others, I recognize Mr. Gunnar Pedersen of Denmark who has been so active in our Radio Conferences for many years, Mr. van der Toorn of the Netherlands who contributed such a great deal to the Union which he served so successfully as Chairman of the EARC. We are also honoured by having among us some other distinguished personalities who have participated in ITU activities with great success: I notice Mr. Ivan Klovov, Deputy Minister of Communications of the USSR, Mr. Santiago Quijano, former Member of the Administrative Council and now Chairman of the Colombian Delegation, Captain Booth, active leader of the United Kingdom Delegation in so many of our Radio Conferences, and Mr. Henry, of France, who was so active at the Göteborg Conference, among others. Obviously I am not attempting to go down the whole list because it would be almost like calling the roll, but I am trying to single out a few of those who have done so much for our Union and I hope that the many friends and valuable contributors to the ITU whose names I have not mentioned will forgive me since time is a little short.

The basic problems of the Conference of course revolve around the International Table of Frequency Allocations which ever since the 1927 Radio Telegraph Conference of Washington has been the heart of the Radio Regulations.

Incidentally I am happy to recognize in the person of the distinguished Chairman of the American Delegation, Commissioner T.A.M. Craven, an engineer who, on account of his years of service in telecommunications and seniority in international telecommunication conferences, is undoubtedly the Dean of our Conference. I mention Mr. Craven particularly in this connection because he was the original father of the Allocation Table approved as such for the first time at the Washington Conference in 1927. While Commissioner Craven would undoubtedly disclaim paternity for the whole Allocation Table, nevertheless from my personal observation as a very junior member of that conference in 1927, I know that the basic idea was his. Mr. Craven's participation in Telecommunication Conferences goes back to 1920.

Quite apart from the Allocation Table, of course, there are the questions concerning the revision of the entire set of Radio Regulations. These cover definitions; technical characteristics of transmissions; procedure for interference cases; international monitoring; procedures in the mobile services; service documents; notification and registration of frequency assignments and the activities of the IFRB. These, Gentlemen, are very important questions to which, I am convinced, this Conference will find successful solutions.

The vital importance of telecommunication to the public at large and the general ignorance of the public on such matters have thrown greater and greater emphasis on the problem of public relations.

As a result of an initiative taken by Dr. Haakan Sterky, Director General of Telecommunications in Sweden, who so ably chaired the Telegraph and Telephone Conference last year, and to fill a long felt need, the Administrative Council at its last session decided to request the Acting Secretary-General to give particular attention at these important conferences in Geneva this year to Public Relations and Public Information. The Council devoted one whole meeting of its 14th Session, which terminated in June of this year, to a discussion with Dr. Sterky of ways and means of achieving this. Among other things which are being planned are a series of lectures by speakers of worldwide renown. They will be scheduled at the time when both the Radio Conference and the Plenipotentiary Conference will meet simultaneously in Geneva, probably during the month of November.

In addition, I advised the Council that the Council President of ICAO and its Secretary-General had been kind enough to permit the secondment of their distinguished Head of Public Information in ICAO for the duration of the conferences. I am particularly happy about this arrangement because, before his elevation to this important post with ICAO, Mr. Boussard had been the first editor of the *Morning Electron* at the Atlantic City Conference. It is a pleasure to welcome him back among us, and to see the *Morning Electron* rise like a phoenix from the ashes.

There has never been such a need and also such an opportunity for publicizing the deeds, achievements and plans of the oldest and most worldwide of all the international governmental organizations.

Now a word as to physical and administrative arrangements. As I had occasion to tell our Administrative Council last year and this year, and as you can judge for yourselves, I am sorry to say that the physical arrangements for a conference as big and as important as this one are not entirely what they should be. The fact is that there is not available in Geneva a suitable building which could house all of our activities at the same time; consequently, we are divided between the *Bâtiment Electoral* and the *Palais des Expositions* and must depend on a delivery service which we have had to establish from one building to another in order to transport the rather considerable flow of documents which is inevitable in a conference of this technical importance.





*Palais des Expositions, which houses part of the Conference services*

Secondly, in the absence of an Inviting Government the General Secretariat of the Union has had to do the best it could with limited funds with respect to local arrangements, including a Reception Committee for the delegations, functions which are normally those of a host government. Thirdly, until the Foreign Minister's Conference took a formal decision to adjourn on Wednesday the 5th of August, we had no definite indication that this building, which had been used as Press headquarters for the 1700 journalists attending that conference, would be available to us in time. As a consequence there has been some last minute hustle and bustle in getting our services installed, and the premises are not quite as spik and span as we would have liked them.

I say all of this not in a spirit of apology, because we have done the best we could under the circumstances. In case some of the delegations find that the facilities are not quite what they might normally expect, I trust that they will bear with us and understand some of our problems. May I say at this time that I invite constructive suggestions for improvements, and promise you that whenever possible these suggestions will be carried out as rapidly and as efficiently as possible.

Please let me assure you that the whole General Secretariat of the ITU is at your disposal to help you in every possible way. The Members of the IFRB are all here and will have offices in this building; they are at your disposal in helping you to solve the complicated frequency allocation problems which are before you. The Senior Officials of the CCIR are equally at your disposal during this Radio Conference to give any assistance that may be required.

I am sorry that Dr. Metzler, Director of the CCIR, is not here in person. He has asked me to apologize for his absence which I am sorry to say is due to illness. His place will, I know, be ably taken by the Vice-Director, Mr. Hayes.

We have a very busy four months ahead of us, Ladies and Gentlemen, and I assure you that the headquarters staff of the International Telecommunication Union (a service organization created for the sole purpose of serving the Members of the Union) is prepared to expend all efforts toward the achievement of a constructive and thoroughly successful conference. Thank you very much."