

## News briefs

Justice Minister Ron Basford will not run for office in the next federal election. Mr. Basford, who was first elected to the House of Commons in 1963, says he is quitting politics for personal reasons and that he supports all policies of the Government. He has served in the portfolios of consumer and corporate affairs, urban affairs, revenue and justice.

According to Statistics Canada, retail sales in November totalled \$5.45 billion, seasonally adjusted, a rise of 4.1 per cent from \$5.23 billion in October.

For the twentieth consecutive year, the value of Canadian mineral raw-material production continued its upward trend in 1977, reaching a record \$18.1 billion. Energy Minister Alastair Gillespie said the 1977 value of domestic mineral production exceeded the 1976 value of \$15.4 billion by 17 per cent — 8.7 per cent of the gross national product, which is estimated at \$209.3 billion.

Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada is postponing for three months a vote by policy holders on a plan to move its head office to Toronto from Montreal. The delay will be used to solicit new proxies from qualified policy holders for use at a meeting to be held in Toronto. Company president Thomas Galt said the company had no intention of moving any large proportion of its 1,800 head office staff to Toronto for another two years. He said he would stress the importance of solving the language-of-education issue which Sun Life had cited in early January as the main reason for its planned move. The directors agreed to examine their controversial decision after Prime Minister Trudeau and Finance Minister Jean Chrétien talked with company officials.

France and Canada have agreed to continue existing fisheries-enforcement arrangements for the French islands of St. Pierre-Miquelon while negotiations on a boundary settlement continue.

Bombardier-MLW Limited of Montreal will construct 22 locomotives and 50 coaches worth \$60 million for Via Rail Canada. Construction of the LRC (light-rapid-comfortable) trains will provide more than 1,500 man-years of work for the company and its suppliers. Delivery of the trains should begin in the spring of 1980.

About 275 miners employed at the iron ore operations of Marmoraton Mining Co. Ltd. near Marmorata, Ontario, will lose their jobs in April. Marmoraton, a subsidiary of Bethlehem Steel Corporation of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, plans to shut down its Marmorata open-pit operation on March 31 after more than 20 years' production. The over-all depressed business conditions of the U.S. steel industry has caused a reduction in the company's requirements for iron ore. The mine is also nearing the end of its useful life because of declining ore reserves.

General Motors of Canada Ltd. is raising the price of its cars and trucks by 2.8 per cent.

Minister of Employment and Immigration Bud Cullen announced recently that workers from the Caribbean Islands and Mexico will be allowed to enter Canada temporarily during 1978 to fill jobs in the agricultural industry only if Canadian workers are not available. In 1977 some 4,929 workers entered Canada, compared with 5,455 in 1976.

John Small, former Canadian Ambassador to China and Emeka Anyaoku of Nigeria, an assistant secretary-general of the British Commonwealth, will become new deputy secretary-general in charge of economic and political affairs for the Commonwealth. Mr. Small, whose most recent assignment with the Department of External Affairs has been with the Bureau of Economic Affairs in Ottawa, has had 26 years' service with Canada's commercial and foreign services.

Finance Minister Jean Chrétien announced recently that the instruments of ratification of the Convention between Canada and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income were exchanged at Islamabad on December 15, 1977.

Employment Minister Bud Cullen defended the Government's unemployment-

fighting strategy by referring to the adage from the classic confrontation between the tortoise and the hare. "Slow and steady wins the race," Cullen remarked after release of figures by Statistics Canada showing the unemployment rate in December adjusted for personal variations had hit a post-depression record of 8.5 per cent. Actual unemployment hit 882,000, about 42,000 more than in November and 128,000 more than a year earlier.

Claude Ryan, who has submitted his resignation as editor of Montreal's daily newspaper, *Le Devoir*, has officially announced his intention to run for the leadership of the Quebec Liberal party. Former Quebec Finance Minister Raymond Garneau has also officially declared his interest in the position.

Four Canadian destroyers and a support ship left Halifax, Nova Scotia, January 17 for a two-month naval exercise off Puerto Rico.

On January 5 Canada Post delivered a Christmas card mailed December 22, 1937. The card, mailed with a one-cent King George V stamp in a Vancouver mailbox, took 40 years and two weeks to reach its destination.

Two Canadian athletes recently set new world records at the U.S. National Invitational Indoor Track Meet at College Park, Maryland. Olympic silver medallist Greg Joy, of Vancouver, British Columbia, jumped two metres, 31 centimetres (seven feet, seven inches), breaking the indoor world record for the high jump event. Patty Loverock, also of Vancouver, set a new record for the women's 60-yard dash.

For the second consecutive year (and the second time in the past 21 years) Canadian National Railways has declared a profit. The surplus of more than \$12 million will help finance an expansion in western Canada this year. The company hopes to have its long-term debt of \$808 million converted to equity and to have \$1.5 billion of preferred shares now held by the Government changed to common shares. Parliament is now considering legislation that would make the conversion possible.

The Supreme Court of Canada has ordered Saskatchewan to pay back more than \$500 million collected in oil taxes and royalties. The court, which ruled unconstitutional legislation establishing a mineral income tax and crude oil surcharge, said the money must be returned to producers, with interest.

*Canada Weekly* is published by the Information Services Division, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, K1A 0G2.

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*Cette publication existe également en français sous le titre Hebdo Canada.*

*Algunos números de esta publicación aparecen también en español bajo el título Noticiario de Canadá.*

*Ähnliche Ausgaben dieses Informationsblatts erscheinen auch in deutscher Sprache unter dem Titel Profil Kanada.*