

## News briefs

A cheque for \$25,000 has been sent by Canada to the League of Red Cross Societies in Geneva for humanitarian aid to victims of hurricane Meli which struck three outer Fijian islands. The hurricane completely destroyed the island of Nayau and caused heavy damage in Kandavu and Ono. The death toll is over 50 and 3,000 islanders are homeless. The Red Cross estimates some 20,000 people will require food aid for at least six months.

Collectively bargained settlements in the first quarter of 1979 provided for a lower average rate of wage increase than those in the fourth quarter of 1978, according to Labour Canada. The 107 major settlements during the first quarter produced average annual increases in base rates of 7.1 per cent in compound terms. The comparable figure for the fourth quarter of 1978 was 7.7 per cent.

Housing starts during April were at a seasonally-adjusted annual rate of 194,000 for all areas, according to preliminary figures issued by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The final rate for March was 203,400.

The Science Council of Canada has recommended tougher more stringent management in all areas of nuclear power. A central regulating agency open to the public should be set up, says the Council, to monitor and rule on all aspects of human exposure to radiation. The Atomic Energy Control Board is the licensing and regulating authority for all aspects of the nuclear industry.

Spar Aerospace Ltd. has received a contract worth \$3.6 million to supply communications equipment to Embratel of Brazil as part of the initial development of that country's satellite system. The contract covers voice channel equipment for earth stations that will provide telephone and Telex services in 13 communities in northern Brazil by 1980.

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

The Manitoba government will contribute \$50,000 from lottery funds towards the Diefenbaker Centre — a national heritage to be established on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan. The centre, designed along the lines of the Truman Centre in Independence, Missouri, will deal with the role of former Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker in history and the events of his time during office. Over \$1 million is reported to have been committed towards the centre so far.

Amoco Petroleum Co. Ltd. of Calgary is studying the feasibility of constructing a natural gas pipeline from Sarnia, Ontario, to Quebec City as an alternative to proposals to extend natural gas pipeline service east from Montreal. A company spokesman said on May 10 that the scheme would involve a \$150-million, 12-inch pipeline. The gas, which might be distributed in some Quebec communities through local pipe distribution facilities, could also be distributed in liquid form in the Atlantic provinces by tanker or truck.

Biomass, biogas and pump-windmill systems, three renewable sources of energy, will be examined by the International Development Centre's recently created renewable energy task force. The three-man task force will provide IDRC with renewable energy information gathered elsewhere, while at the same time making it available to others involved in this field.

Department store sales rose to \$448.7 million in February, an increase of 4.5 per cent from the \$429.4 million recorded in February 1978. Sales were up in 28 of the 40 departments with the largest gains posted by furs (+259.9 per cent), repairs and services (+45.1 per cent), and china and glassware (+34.0 per cent).

The Mercantile Bank of Canada has arranged its first direct Eurodollar loan, a \$10 million (U.S.) eight-year loan to Banco Crefisul de Investimento of São Paulo, Brazil. Terms were not disclosed.

The National Energy Board raised the export charge on light crude oil and condensates by \$1 a barrel to \$8 a barrel on April 1.

The Export Development Corporation has approved loans, surety and export credits insurance totalling \$22.2 million to support prospective export sales of \$25.6 million to Algeria and Iraq. In announcing the approvals, EDC said that export sales which would result if commer-

cial sales were finalized, would create or maintain some 1,000 man-years of employment in Canada and would involve 19 exporters and major suppliers across the country.

Vancouver taxi drivers are attending charm school to learn how to get along better with their customers. The voluntary course has been opened at the Pacific Vocational Institute and will continue throughout the summer. A Yellow Cab Co. spokesman said "a course like this is long overdue, and badly needed in some cases. It will teach some of our drivers an awful lot".

Canadian chief executive officers rank eleventh in a list of 13 countries in terms of remuneration, in U.S. dollars, according to a survey of major industrial nations by the consulting firm of Towers, Perrin, Forster and Crosby of Toronto. Using the average salary of U.S. executives as the base index of 100, Canadians earned 20 percent less, while the highest paid were West Germans at 150 and executives in Belgium and the Netherlands at the 140 level.

Consumer confidence rose in the first quarter of 1979 to 103.8 (1961=100) up from 103.4 in the fourth quarter of 1978, the Conference Board of Canada reports. The rise was the highest in five years.

Canada should diversify its trade relationship with Japan to reflect its position as a "sophisticated industrial society with many special technological skills", Alan Gotlieb, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, told the Conference on Canadian Perspectives on Economic Relations with Japan, at York University. He noted that too many influential Japanese "still see Canada primarily as a supplier of natural resources".

A substantial improvement is predicted in Canada's international travel deficit, at least in the near term, according to the latest issue of the Bank of Montreal's *Business Review*. Cited in the expected improvement were the slower growth of real disposable income and the relatively low value of the Canadian dollar.

Montreal Canadiens won the National Hockey League's coveted Stanley Cup for the fourth consecutive year on May 21. They beat New York Rangers 4-1 in the fifth game of the best-of-seven finals, giving them four wins against Rangers' one. The Canadiens have won the Cup 22 times, ten of which have been in the last 15 years.