

### Mr. MacEachen to visit West Africa

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan J. MacEachen, will visit the West African countries of Nigeria, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Ghana from April 13 to 26.

In addition to senior officials of the Departments of External Affairs and Industry, Trade and Commerce, senior representatives of the Canadian International Development Agency will accompany Mr. MacEachen.

### Fibreglass house

A new type of modular house made of fibreglass, recently appeared on the Quebec market. Although the techniques used in its construction have already been tested elsewhere, notably in Germany and the Soviet Union, the Quebec model was specially designed to suit Canada's climate and needs.

According to its promoters, Enterprises Idu of Granby, Quebec, this type of house has numerous advantages: mass production, low cost, adaptability, thermal and acoustical insulation, low-heating cost, ease of transportation, etc. Every factory-assembled house is equipped with electric heating and air-conditioning systems as well as an electric stove and refrigerator.

The standard unit, which measures 13 by 21 feet, is priced at \$7,400. Several similar units can be joined together to make larger houses.

The moulded parts of the units consist of two fibreglass-reinforced polyester walls, separated by a space filled with polyurethane foam. All the parts are modular and completely prefabricated.

The company claims that as a result of all the above features, this house has a thermal and acoustical insulation rating equivalent to 20 inches of brick. Reinforced polyester is from two to six times stronger than an equal quantity, by weight, of steel; moreover, it is rot-proof, non-corrosive, non-inflammable, airtight, weatherproof and shockproof.

Another interesting aspect is that these units require very little heating — a great advantage in case of fuel shortages.

### Towards a mineral policy for Canada

At the meeting of the Canadian Ministerial Conference on Mineral Policy on December 6, federal and provincial Ministers of Mines agreed to the publication of the document *Towards a Mineral Policy for Canada: Opportunities for Choice*, the second document in a series reflecting the ongoing review of a national mineral policy.

In this policy paper, federal and provincial Ministers of Mines recommend that mineral policy be re-shaped to place greater emphasis on increased diversification and growth of national and regional economies based on minerals. Where further processing of minerals in Canada is not feasible, increased financial returns will be sought from mineral development. In addition, policy will reflect a continuing concern for conservation, and will seek to ensure that Canada's own mineral needs will be met.

*Towards a Mineral Policy for Canada* is a further step in the formulation of a national mineral policy, which seeks to achieve accord between federal and provincial governments on the nature and benefits to be derived from mineral development. The policy thrust outlined in this document will be further developed through federal, provincial and industry discussion on specific policy directives and legislative changes affecting mineral development.

The document highlights the importance of minerals in the Canadian economy, both nationally and regionally, and describes their potential for even greater contributions to the wellbeing of Canadians in the future. Canada's mineral production is forecast to triple by the year 2000 to meet domestic and export needs. This expansion would provide major opportunities for increased income and employment, industrial diversification and social development. Canada will continue, however, to depend on other nations for some mineral commodities that are not available domestically.

Canada's ability to derive increased benefits from minerals will be influenced by such factors as availability of capital and manpower, policies for domestic control, and technological development. Developments in international trade and economics will also be important.

### Apartment vacancy survey

The average vacancy rate for privately-initiated apartments in Canada's 22 metropolitan areas was 1.9 per cent at mid-December, according to surveys undertaken by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The rate for mid-December 1973 was 2.8 per cent.

Regina, at 0.1 per cent, showed the tightest market for rental apartments followed by Saskatoon (0.2); St. John's (0.3); Thunder Bay (P.5); Vancouver (0.6); Edmonton and Victoria (0.8); Calgary, Chicoutimi — Jonquière, Montreal, Quebec, Saint John, Windsor and Winnipeg all reported vacancy rates of below 2.0 per cent.

The highest vacancy level was in Sudbury (5.1 per cent) followed by Kitchener at 5 per cent.

The CMHC semi-annual apartment vacancy survey now covers those privately-owned apartment structures which contain six or more units. Unlike previous surveys, the results relate to all such structures available for renting whether newly constructed or already part of the rental housing stock for some time. Not included in the survey statistics are the vacancy rates of publicly-initiated apartments which primarily furnish government-subsidized accommodation for senior citizens, persons of low-income and the handicapped, and are therefore not part of the general rental market.

### Young musicians in Nova Scotia

The National Youth Orchestra of Canada will make its home in Nova Scotia for the 1975 summer season, A. Garnet Brown, Minister of Recreation for Nova Scotia announced recently. The Canada Council will jointly fund with the province the National Youth Orchestra for its training and performances during August, the Minister said.

Some 100 young musicians between the ages of 14 and 24 are chosen annually through rigid nationally-conducted auditions, for the opportunity to perform with the orchestra. The training program will be centred at the Dalhousie Arts Centre, where the young musicians, representing every province in Canada will be housed on the university campus.