

First Ministers (Cont'd from P. 2)

Mr. Clark proposed an increase in the excise tax on gasoline by up to 30 cents a gallon, from the present seven cents, to promote conservation and to raise money for the federal treasury. Mr. Davis strongly opposed such an increase, calling it inflationary and an unjustifiable additional burden on consumers. Mr. Lougheed neither supported nor opposed the rise as long as the excise tax did not diminish provincial revenues.

Substantial agreement

In a statement to the House of Commons following the First Ministers' conference, Mr. Clark said that the meeting had yielded "substantial agreement" on the need to make Canada self-sufficient in energy by 1990 through increased domestic production, conservation and substitution of alternative sources to replace oil. He flew to Alberta and Saskatchewan to meet with Mr. Lougheed and Saskatchewan Premier Allan Blakeney the same week, to negotiate a rise in the domestic price of oil from its present level towards the world level, probably following the formula amounting to a \$4-a-barrel increase each year. He also discussed the proposal to levy a special tax on industry profits over the authorized level to be used for energy-related programs.

News briefs

The Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority and Gulf Canada Resources Inc. plan to spend up to \$90 million to test a new method of recovering oil from oil sands, says *Canada Report*. The authority and Gulf have signed a letter of intent to test a new drilling system involving the use of horizontal wells. A two-year, \$8-million engineering study

is to be carried out initially to determine the feasibility of the project. If a decision is made to go ahead, an additional \$82 million will be spent on a seven-year field test.

The University of Victoria has become the first university in British Columbia to offer credit courses *via* satellite. The program links students to instructors through two-way audio hookups while viewing lectures on TV monitors in five locations in B.C. The two-way audio hookup allows the students to directly question the course instructor during the lecture, creating a sense of class participation, says Dr. Martin. About 60 students, most of them high school principals and school board officials, are participating in the program, a course on supervision being beamed to Prince George, Port Alberni, Dawson Creek, Cranbrook and Terrace *via* the *Anik-B* satellite. Whitehorse in the Yukon is also able to receive the satellite transmission.

Food prices rose at a slower rate from September to October, helped by lower prices for fresh and processed fruit and poultry, Agriculture Canada recently announced. The department's monthly food-at-home index increased by 0.2 per cent from September 14 to October 19 and is 13 percent higher than it was a year ago. The cost of a diet to meet the nutritional requirements of a family of four was \$61.12 a week in October, a drop of 24 cents from the September figure.

Consolidated-Bathurst Inc. is the first company to receive a grant under a Canada-Quebec program designed to help modernize the pulp and paper industry. The \$5.5-million grant will be used to help build a \$24.7-million pulp mill at the company's Laurentide division in Grand'Mère, Quebec. The company said that when the plant was completed in the spring of 1980, it would produce sulphite pulp used in the manufacture of newsprint. (Source: *Canada Report*.)

A huge ethylene-manufacturing plant was opened recently on a 150-acre site in Joffre, Alberta. Built at a cost of \$370 million by Alberta Gas Ethylene Co. Ltd. of Calgary, the plant has been in operation since early August. It has a manufacturing capacity of 544,000 metric tons or 1.2 billion pounds of ethylene a year.

The Montreal *Star* closed down on September 25 after 110 years of publication. The *Star*, an afternoon English-language daily, lost the seven-and-a-

half-month "war" with the morning *Gazette* that began February 12, when the *Star* resumed publication after an eight-month strike.

The Export Development Corporation (EDC) and the Bank of Montreal have concluded a \$5.1-million financing agreement to support the sale of steel rails by Sydney Steel Corporation, Sydney, Nova Scotia, to Mexico. The loan, to Nacional Financiera S.A. (Nafinsa), supports the sale of 12,500 tonnes of steel rails and related accessories to two state-owned railways, Ferrocarril de Chihuahua al Pacifico S.A. de C.V. and Ferrocarriles Unidos del Sureste S.A. de C.V. The rails will be used for the rehabilitation of existing track as part of the upgrading of the Mexican railway system. Nafinsa is the Mexican national development bank. The EDC said the sale would generate some 260 man-years of employment in Canada.

At least 108 narwhals had to be killed on Baffin Island recently, after a wall of ice suddenly formed and trapped them as they were feeding in Agu Bay on Baffin Island. The whales would have slowly starved to death or suffocated under the ice, said a Federal fisheries officer.

Projects involving 163 senior citizens groups across Canada will receive federal contributions totalling \$839,999, Health and Welfare Minister David Crombie has announced. The funds are made available through the department's New Horizons program.

British Columbia ended the past fiscal year March 31 with a surplus of more than \$200 million, according to provincial finance minister Evan Wolfe. Mr. Wolfe said a 104 percent increase in forest revenue left the provincial government with a surplus of \$213 million.

What a difference a comma and three zeros can make. Adele Coutts of Toronto, who has never won anything in her life, checked her winning Wintario lottery ticket and thought she had won \$10. "I was thrilled," she said. "I always knew I'd win something." She showed the three numbers to her ticket agent, collected her prize and bought a blouse with her winnings. A few days later a Wintario official telephoned and said their computer had caught a mistake. Mrs. Coutts's ticket had contained five of the winning numbers. That meant she had just won \$10,000. Mrs. Coutts was asked to give back the \$10 she'd originally collected before she received her \$10,000 cheque. Mrs. Coutts said she did not mind at all.

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