

AID FOR INDIA: The Department of External Affairs announced on January 11 that representatives of the Governments of India and Canada had completed an exchange of notes in New Delhi providing for the allocation of \$3.3 million of Canadian Colombo Plan aid to a proposed hydro-electric scheme on the Umtru River in Assam.

The project is designed to hasten economic progress in the Indian State of Assam. The new power to be generated will in part be used for irrigation and drainage thus allowing new land to be brought under cultivation. Some of the new power will also be used in existing small industries, while it is hoped that the growth of new industries, which will supplement the low income of the local people, will be stimulated.

Part of the contribution of the Canadian Government will take the form of engineering services and hydraulic, electric and other equipment costing approximately \$1.2 million. The Government of Canada will also help to meet the local costs of labour and materials to the extent of \$2.1 million in counterpart funds derived from the sale by the Indian authorities of industrial raw materials provided by Canada under the Colombo Plan. The project will be carried out by the appropriate authorities of the State of Assam in consultation with Canadian engineers appointed by the Government of Canada.

About \$100 million has been made available by Canada for economic development assistance to South and South-East Asia in the first four years of the Colombo Plan. Agreement on the Umtru project brings the total so far allocated to India to about \$49 million.

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CONSUMER CREDIT: Retail cash, charge and instalment sales in the third quarter of 1954 showed seasonal declines from the preceding three-month period, according to the Bureau's quarterly report on retail consumer credit. Comparisons with 1953's third-quarter indicate an increase of 4.3% in instalment sales, a decrease of 1.6% in cash sales and a drop of 4.5% in charge sales.

Third-quarter cash sales totalled \$2,072,200,000 versus \$2,126,300,000 in the preceding quarter and \$2,105,900,000 in the 1953 third quarter. Instalment sales in the third quarter of 1954 were \$329,600,000 versus \$372,200,000 in the April-June period and \$316,100,000 a year earlier. Charge sales in the 1954 third quarter totalled \$543,000,000 versus \$584,200,000 in the second quarter and \$568,500,000 in the July-September period of 1953.

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As estimated 55% of the households in Canada have automobiles, according to a sample survey taken last September by DBS. Of these, 178,000 or 9% have two or more cars - about 5% of all the homes in the country.

ARCTIC OCEAN RESEARCH: Canadian and United States scientists penetrated far inside the Arctic Circle in 1954 in a joint effort to learn more of the secrets locked in the great water areas north of the Canadian mainland.

According to the annual report of the Canadian Joint Committee on Oceanography, presented at the annual meeting of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada in Ottawa last week oceanographic surveys were made for the first time of the lonely ice-strewn waters around the northern shores of islands comprising the District of Franklin.

The information obtained on water temperatures, salinities, currents and other physical features of the sea-scapes, when analysed and added to previously-obtained data in other areas, will make an important contribution to the rapid growing fund of knowledge being accumulated on Canada's far north.

The Royal Canadian Navy's modern icebreaker and research ship "Labrador" and two United States vessels "Burton Island" and "Northwind" were used. The "Labrador" ventured into Baffin Bay as far north as Smith Sound, 800 miles from the North Pole, to obtain oceanographic data and then made the historic northwest passage to return to her base via Bering Strait, the Pacific Ocean and the Panama Canal.

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STORE SALES RISE: Canadian department stores sold an estimated \$119,231,000 worth of merchandise in November, 5.7% more than the \$112,794,000 worth sold in the same month in 1953, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reports.

Store sales were higher in November 1953 in all but two regions. In British Columbia sales rose 10.8% to \$18,466,000 from \$16,666,000, in Quebec 10.6% to \$21,431,000 from \$19,377,000, in the Atlantic Provinces 9.9% to \$9,821,000 from \$8,936,000, in Ontario 7.2% to \$41,844,000 from \$39,034,000, and in Manitoba 0.7% to \$11,011,000 from \$10,935,000. Sales in Saskatchewan fell 15% to \$5,866,000 from \$6,901,000, and sales in Alberta 1.4% to \$10,792,000 from \$10,945,000.

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AUTO PRODUCTION DROPS: Production of motor vehicles in the year 1954 totalled 350,068 units, according to advance figures released by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This was a drop of 28% from the 1953 output of 484,594 units. December production dropped 27% to 26,065 units from 35,483 in the same month of 1953.

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An estimated 820,000 Canadian homes had TV sets last September, or about 22% of the country's households. There were some in every province, but the bulk were in Ontario (478,000) and Quebec (266,000).