

## Towards fuel efficiency

The federal government will provide five Quebec forestry firms with grants to help increase fuel efficiency in their operations.

The grants, worth more than \$4.1 million, will go towards projects to substitute wood waste for fossil fuels, saving the equivalent of almost half-a-million barrels of oil a year.

The grants bring to \$14.8 million the total Forest Industries Renewable Energy (F.I.R.E.) grants allocated to Quebec since the program began in July 1978. National energy savings under F.I.R.E. are expected to reach the equivalent of 36 million barrels of oil annually by 1986, equal to roughly 80 per cent of the output of an oil sands plant. If all the wood residues currently produced in Canada were used to displace fossil fuels, the equivalent of 119 million barrels of oil would be conserved annually.

The grants are being made to Domtar Incorporated, Consolidated-Bathurst Incorporated, Kruger Incorporated, Maurice Lépine Limitée and Les Entreprises BCP Limitée.

## Radio frequency favoured

Canada will support retention of the current 10 kilohertz (kHz) channel spacing on the AM frequency band at the 1981 Regional Administrative MF (AM) Broadcasting Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Rio de Janeiro, Communications Minister Francis Fox has announced.

The second part of the two-session international conference to establish a frequency assignment plan for the 9,000 AM broadcasting stations in the Americas will be held this November. Countries attending the first session in March 1980 were divided between proponents of 9 kHz spacing and those, like Canada, who favour retention of 10 kHz spacing. It was proposed to defer a decision until the 1981 session.

"I have concluded that it is in Canada's over-all interest to support the retention of the current channel spacing of 10 kHz over the 9 kHz alternative, since the financial costs and operational disruptions that would result from conversion outweigh the benefits," said Mr. Fox.

Reducing the spacing from 10 kHz

would increase the number of channels available in Canada from 197 to 119, allowing three or four additional stations to operate in certain frequency-congested areas. In order to squeeze existing stations closer together, however, about 350 of the 100 Canadian AM stations would have to change their frequencies by a small amount, at an estimated cost of \$5 million for technical changes alone.

Non-technical costs related to advertising and loss of revenue and audiences have been estimated as high as \$32 million by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters.

## Thai foreign minister visits

Thailand's Foreign Minister, Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, met with Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan in Ottawa, April 30-May 2, to discuss multilateral and bilateral issues.

Canada-Thai relations have become closer in the past few years in response to developments in Southeast Asia, in particular the outpouring of refugees from Indochina. Thailand, as the front-line country of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in this situation, has borne the brunt of the security threat posed by the continued occupation of Kampuchea by foreign forces. Thailand has also accepted more than 500,000



Dr. MacGuigan greets Thai Foreign Minister Siddhi.

Indochinese refugees since 1975.

Dr. MacGuigan and Foreign Minister Siddhi discussed plans for a United Nations conference on Kampuchea in July. The ASEAN countries, comprising the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, spearheaded a UN resolution last year demanding the withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea. The resolution, which was backed by Canada and a majority of UN members, also called for an international conference to work out a political solution to the conflict. During their talks, Dr. MacGuigan reaffirmed Canadian support for the conference and for the ASEAN countries in their attempt to find a peaceful solution to the Kampuchean question.

Canada has contributed more than \$20 million to UN programs which have provided humanitarian assistance to Kampuchians in both Kampuchea and Thailand as well as to persons displaced by the refugee influx into Thailand.

The Thai foreign minister expressed his gratitude for Canadian efforts in accepting and assisting Southeast Asian refugees and said he hoped Canada would continue to offer such assistance.

In addition to the Kampuchean question, the two ministers discussed the question of increased Canadian bilateral economic assistance for Thailand. While in Ottawa Mr. Siddhi also held talks with the Department of Employment and Immigration and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

## Forestry pact signed

During the visit, the two foreign ministers signed a memorandum of understanding that would help ASEAN establish a forest seed centre in Thailand.

The seed centre, to be located at Muak Lek in Thailand's Saraburi Province, will be funded about equally by Canada and the ASEAN countries. CIDA will provide a \$1.5-million grant to cover the services of Canadian forestry experts and the cost of post-graduate training of ASEAN forestry staff in Canada, technical training in Canada and within the ASEAN region, and essential workshops, seminars and some equipment.

Thailand will provide land, buildings and staff and will meet the centre's regular operating costs. The other ASEAN countries will contribute staff and will pay the cost of project activities conducted in their own territory, such as seed collection and local studies.