

Federal/provincial finance meeting

Federal and provincial finance ministers ended a two-day meeting in Ottawa on December 7 without reaching agreement on proposals to reform shared-cost arrangements for financing government services.

The main cause of contention is the system of tax transfers – revenue guarantees – paid by the Federal Government to provinces whose revenues were reduced by federal tax reforms in 1972 and which ends on March 31. Federal Finance Minister Donald Macdonald said this program, first brought in for three years and then extended by two to March 31, had never been intended to be more than a transitional program to enable the provinces to adjust their tax systems.

The unresolved business from the finance ministers' meeting was referred to the meeting between Prime Minister Trudeau and the provincial premiers scheduled for December 13 and 14.

Bravery decorations

John Albert Mahon, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, has been awarded the Star of Courage for rescuing a child from a burning house.

Last February, Mr. Mahon responded to a call for help from the mother of the child after the mother had been driven back by dense smoke and heat which followed an explosion in her home. Mr. Mahon raised a ladder to a second storey window, entered the house and groped his way through the smoke until he found two-year-old Matthew Lavers in his crib. He handed the child to his mother and then collapsed in the room. He was revived moments later by firemen who arrived with oxygen.

Mr. Mahon is one of ten Canadians who have been awarded decorations for acts of bravery. The other nine receive the Medal of Bravery.

Three Canadian decorations for bravery, created in 1972, are: the Cross of Valour, the highest decoration; the Star of Courage and the Medal of Bravery.

Those receiving the Medal of Bravery on the present list are: Pamela Anne Switzer, Surrey, British Columbia; Constable André Dubuc, Ste-Thérèse-

en-Haut, Quebec; James David Dean Piecowye, Ajax, Ontario; Master Corporal Alexander John Sheppard, Borden, Ontario; James Alfred Coe, Penticton, British Columbia; Dean Sarell, Oliver, British Columbia; Master Corporal Paul Wayne Graham, Ottawa, Ontario; Private Gregory Brent Lewis, Oromocto, New Brunswick and Captain John Joseph Goodall Connors, Ottawa, Ontario.

Pamela Switzer, aged 17, saved nine-year-old Todd Nelson who fell off a dock on his bicycle at Port Edward, B.C. Although a poor swimmer she plunged into the cold water and struggled 30 feet against a strong undertow to reach the boy and towed him to the dock. Both were exhausted.

Combined effort

James Coe and 15-year-old Dean Sarell rescued a young climber David Beveridge, who was stranded on a shallow mountain ledge several hundred feet above ground at Oliver, B.C.

Because of poor visibility air-rescue operations had to be abandoned in favour of climbing the mountain. Mr. Coe set out with a fellow-mountaineer and local youths including Dean Sarell, who was familiar with the rugged terrain. They found their way by flashlight and, under Mr. Coe's direction, overcame loose shale and moss-covered rock.

About three hours later, Beveridge was found on a ledge that was almost inaccessible. At the risk of serious injury, Dean snaked his way to a point above Beveridge and fastened a rope. Mr. Coe then manoeuvred to an overhang from which he lowered both young men.

Visitors from Spain

Foreign Minister Marcelino Oreja Aguirre and Mrs. Oreja of Spain visited Ottawa on November 22-23, during which Mr. Oreja and Secretary of State for External Affairs Don Jamieson signed an agreement between the two countries on double taxation.

Discussions between the two foreign ministers covered bilateral relations and multilateral questions of mutual interest. Mr. Oreja also met with other Canadian ministers, including Industry, Trade and Commerce Minister Jean Chrétien and Regional Economic

Expansion Minister Marcel Lessard.

The visitors were the guests of honour at a dinner given by Mr. and Mrs. Jamieson.

Canadian exports to Spain in 1975 totalled some \$113.4 million in aircraft parts, asbestos, wood pulp, iron ore and newsprint, while imports from Spain – tires, fabrics, footwear, clothing, olives and tomatoes – amounted to \$101.9 million.

The yearly average of Canadian tourists to Spain is about 150,000 and the population of Spanish origin in Canada is approximately 30,000.

Fruit and vegetable production

Canadian farmers grow 60 per cent of all fresh vegetables consumed domestically. They also produce 90 per cent of canned vegetables, 95 per cent of frozen vegetables, 30 per cent of fruit juices, 40 per cent of fresh fruit, 70 per cent of canned fruit and 72 per cent of frozen fruit needed by the Canadian market.

Some fruits and vegetables are exported, chiefly potatoes, turnips, dried peas, corn, carrots, apples and British Columbia raspberries. Canada is also self-sufficient in beets, canned and frozen green beans, and tomato juice.

Potato exports are expected to increase this year. By November 1, 3,000 car-lots had been exported, compared to 1,634 car-lots at this time last year. The apple crop is smaller than it was last year and wholesalers are offering firmer prices, says Agriculture Canada economist R.W. Anderson.

Canadian farmers supply about 80 per cent of the onions and cucumbers marketed in this country, 70 per cent of the cauliflower crop, 61 per cent of the cabbage, about 28 per cent of the celery, 40 per cent of the spinach, 37 per cent of the asparagus, 22 per cent of the fresh tomatoes and about 20 per cent of the lettuce.

Thirty per cent of the frozen strawberries and 65 per cent of the fresh strawberries consumed in Canada are grown here. Of other fruit on the domestic market, the Canadian-grown percentages are: canned pears, 64; fresh pears, 60; canned peaches, 20; fresh peaches, 50; fresh grapes, 36; fresh cherries, 73; and fresh apricots, 80.