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BUSINESS AND REAL ESTATE

The Mississauga News

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Business Briefs

By MIKE SOLOMON

A "full examination" of the publishing industry has been ordered by Ontario Premier John Robarts who, two days before Christmas, appointed a three-man Royal Commission to carry out the job.

Chairman of the commission will be Richard H. Rohmer, a Toronto lawyer. Other members will be Dalton Camp of Toronto, a journalist, author and PR executive, and Marsh Jeanneret of King City, a publishing executive and author.

The commission is being asked to examine and report on the publishing industry in Ontario and throughout Canada with respect to its position within the business community.

It will also take a look at the functions of the industry in terms of its contribution to the cultural life and education of the people of Ontario and the nation and the economic, cultural, social or other consequences for the people of the substantial ownership or control of publishing firms by foreign or foreign-controlled corporations or by non-Canadians.

PRICES DROP

The consumer price index for food dropped 0.8 per cent to 127.5 in November from 128.5 in October according to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

It was the biggest October-to-November decline in more than 10 years.

Food prices went down by 3.5 per cent from September compared to a 1964-69 average decrease of 1.2 per cent for the same period.

In November the price level for meat, fish and poultry decreased 1.9 per cent from the October level considered to be mainly due to an unusually large one-month decline of 5.1 per cent in pork prices. Lower quotations in wholesale markets were reflected in a drop in retail pork prices of 13.9 per cent since Nov., 1969.

From October to November beef prices moved down 1.2 per cent due to seasonal declines for most retail cuts.

Among poultry items the price of chicken fell by 1.5 per cent whereas that for turkey rose by 1.6 per cent.

Egg prices went down 5.2 per cent in November and almost 25 per cent in the previous 12 months. Quotations for milk and cheese were marginally lower than in October.

MORE ROADS

The Ontario Department of Highways completed 37 bridge projects and 158 grading and paving contracts spanning 896 miles in 1970 it was announced last week. An additional 30 bridge projects, 28 paving

jobs and 71 grading projects, involving 610 miles of road, are in varying stages of completion.

During the 1970-71 fiscal year the department is spending \$197 million on building roads in Ontario, \$80 million for maintaining the road system, \$206 million for municipal subsidies to help municipal road building, \$7 million for GO Transit and \$10 million for administration.

NO MAIL

There will be no letter carrier delivery on New Year's Day, according to the Canada Post Office Department. Normal Saturday service is back in effect on Jan. 2, and there will be regular mail delivery Jan. 4.

GAS OUTLOOK GOOD

Although current high interest rates threaten to restrict several expansion plans, the outlook for the natural gas industry in 1971 is good, says J. C. McCarthy, Vice-president and regional manager of Consumers' Gas Company.

In a review and forecast statement issued last week Mr. McCarthy said the industry is now concentrating its efforts on new and more efficient uses for the fuel.

Among those uses, says Mr. McCarthy, is air conditioning, "by virtue of the fact that the electric air conditioning load is reaching the saturation point in some areas."

There is enough gas supply for Canada's needs for the next 25-30 years.

"Currently, pollution control offers the greatest opportunity for new and increased natural gas loads," Mr. McCarthy added. "More gas will go into generation plants at prices that are justifiable."

He says, too, there will be an increased demand and a further acceptance of natural gas as a fuel in 1971.

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Hearing into cable TV applications expected

A hearing into applications to service large parts of Mississauga with cable television is expected early in the New Year.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Radio-Television Commission and the communications department of the federal government are to combine to protect cable TV subscribers who complain about the signal they are getting.

The aim is to establish a basic quality standard for cable signals, according to Pierre Juneau, CRTC chairman.

Some cable-television companies have come under fire by subscribers for providing minimum service and making as much money as possible from their monopoly.

Mr. Juneau said last week the complaints have concerned the commission.

He said there must be a balance between what is economically possible and what viewers demand. Some viewers must put up with a fuzzy signal when that is all their community is in a position to receive or can afford.

Mr. Juneau said, however,

that those who can afford and are paying for a solid signal should get it.

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