

- Joseph Guay, from Multiculturalism to National Revenue;
- Jack Horner, from Minister of State without Portfolio to Industry, Trade and Commerce;
- Norman Cafik, a new appointee to the Cabinet, who becomes Minister of State for Multiculturalism.

French Justice Minister visits

Justice Minister Alain Peyrefitte of France visited Ottawa, September 12 and 13 to meet with Justice Minister Ron Basford and Solicitor-General Francis Fox.

Mr. Peyrefitte, who discussed items relating to the justice systems in France and Canada, also met with Supply and Services Minister Jean-Pierre Goyer concerning Canada's relations with *franco-phone* countries. He lunched with the Prime Minister and other Government officials.

The French Justice Minister, author of the book *Quand la Chine s'éveillera*, also delivered a lecture on China at Ottawa University.

Mr. Peyrefitte began his official trip to Canada on September 8 in Quebec City, where he marked the tenth anniversary of the signing of a Franco-Quebec co-operation agreement.

Canada and Spain to construct railway in Venezuela

An agreement was signed in Madrid, on September 1, between Canaven Limited, a subsidiary of Canadian National, and a Spanish group representing 16 companies, to form a consortium to design, construct, equip and manage the Cuidad Guayana to San Juan de Los Morros Railway project in the eastern part of Venezuela. Training of Venezuelan personnel is included in the pact.

Agreement was reached based on a protocol signed on June 25 by Jean Chrétien, former Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and Carlos Perez de Bricio, then Minister of Industry and Trade in Spain.

The new accord is the first step towards the formation of a tri-national consortium including participation by Venezuelan companies to present a proposal to the Venezuelan Government.

Venezuelan participation is expected to be 20 per cent, with Canada and Spain sharing the remainder.

Canada will have prime responsibility for the design and engineering of the project and supply of equipment; Spain for construction of the railway, training of Venezuelan personnel and management of operations. Canada and Spain will participate also in the activities primarily allocated to the other.

While the initial cost of the project was estimated at some \$1 billion, Venezuelan authorities have recently introduced some modifications to the conditions which might reduce it. Consequently, when the new consortium signs the contract for the project, Canada's share would be in the order of \$250-300 million, of which about half would be spent in Canada for services and equipment such as locomotives, cars and rail.

Associated sub-contractors of Canaven are: Canac Consultants Limited, Canadian Pacific Consulting Services Ltd., Canatrans Ltd., Hawker Siddeley (Canada) Ltd., Loram International Ltd., Bombardier-MLW Ltd. and Sydney Steel Corporation.

Celebrity computer

A steady stream of senior military visitors has been making a pilgrimage to CFB Petawawa, Ontario for the past year-and-a-half to talk with a clerk.

Nicknamed "Superclerk", for his willingness to work long hours with amazing accuracy and speed, he has confounded many a visitor with an ability to answer even the most complicated questions in seconds. Superclerk's co-workers, who sing his praises without appearing to harbour any resentment, say he has a mind like a machine.

Actually, Superclerk is a machine — a "mini" computer — programmed to store, update, edit and retrieve a wide variety of information about the people and activities of the Petawawa base.

Petawawa has been the trials and test site for the Forces' base automatic data processing (ADP) project since 1975, when Lieutenant-Colonel Roger Fortin of Montreal, the base ADP trial director, first thought of using a computer to store engineering data.

The base's experiment with computerizing many of the more routine, time-consuming administrative functions has

been so successful that, beginning this fall, 35 more mini-computers will be installed and programmed on other bases across Canada.

Mind boggling

Lieutenant-Colonel Fortin, the moving force behind the idea, says that, even though the computer is capable of answering a mind-boggling 10 million billion questions, it cannot make management decisions, nor can it substitute for trained personnel.

Superclerk edits information before he processes it, updates his own data, and constantly monitors files to locate discrepancies. He's also willing to serve more than one master at a time. As many as 16 people can operate computer terminals simultaneously, and as many as 32 terminals can be hooked into one system.

As an added bonus, Superclerk is a "stand alone" computer. He doesn't need a full-time operator. And when French literals are added, he'll be bilingual.

Superclerk is proving his worth to medical and dental personnel. Faced with a shortage of a rare blood type in an emergency, for instance, the base hospital has only to consult Superclerk to find potential donors.

A test request for AB-donors was answered in less than two minutes, and the names of nine men scattered across seven base units appeared on the terminal print out.

Many functions

When the base ADP program is complete, each mini-computer will handle at least 11 areas of information: construction engineering, personnel records, rations and quarters accounting, leave accounting, medical and dental records, married quarters and accommodation inventory, civilian personnel data, financial management, non-public funds, and mobile support equipment (vehicles).

As the analysts begin refining the revolutionary system they have created, Lieutenant-Colonel Fortin, the engineering officer, with a Ph.D. in physics and a fertile imagination, is already thinking about a field ADP.

The positive results at CFB Petawawa indicate that a mini-computer will soon be an important piece of hardware on bases in Canada, and possibly in the field as well. Meanwhile, Superclerk is alone in his league, enjoying celebrity status.