

Puerto Rico economic summit

The heads of states and governments of Britain, Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan, Northern Ireland and the United States of America were invited by the President of the United States to meet in Puerto Rico on June 27 and 28 to discuss issues of mutual interest. Progress of their economic recoveries and the current phase of their efforts to attain sustained economic expansion, financial and monetary matters, trade, energy and relations with developing nations were topics to be discussed.

The countries that participated in the meeting at Rambouillet, having agreed to the participation of Italy at the meeting, will examine with the Italian Government whether the latter believes it will be able to take part on the agreed dates.

Patent legislation study

Bryce Mackasey, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, recently released a special study proposing revisions to Canada's patent laws.

The patent system is a means by which the Government confers a controlled monopoly on private individuals and corporations. In Canada today, an overwhelming proportion of Canadian patents — 95 per cent — are granted to non-Canadians. Whether Canada can benefit from the continued maintenance of the present form of patent system is one of the major questions raised in the working paper.

The study, entitled *Working Paper on Patent Law Revision* was prepared by a group of independent experts. Mr. Mackasey noted that the paper did not necessarily represent either the views of the Government or of his department, but rather it provided proposals that would be seriously considered in preparing a new patent law for Canada.

The proposals for a completely new patent law provide an incentive for encouraging research, the disclosure of invention, and the early exploitation of inventions by industry in Canada.

It is hoped that this paper will stimulate such groups as consumers, businessmen, patent agents and academics

to contribute their views. The Minister invited all those interested to submit their comments on the working paper to the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Bureau of Intellectual Property by October 1, 1976, to be considered in the preparation of a major bill to be presented to Parliament revising and bringing up to date the patent legislation.

Omnibus bill will facilitate conversion to the metric system

The Government plans to introduce an omnibus bill in each of the next four years to facilitate or accommodate metric changeover. The first bill to be drafted by the Department of Justice will give top priority to amending measurement clauses where failure to do so would prohibit or inhibit implementation of the metric system. There is provision for a transitional period during which both traditional and metric units may be legally used where necessary.

Scheduling

The 1976 bill will highlight the fact that the scheduling phase of conversion is already under way. As a result of their investigation and planning work, many Metric Commission sector

Milk marketed in metric packages

A new natural milk product in one-litre cartons is the first metric-sized milk package to appear on retail shelves. Marketed under the trade name "Grand Pré", in the province of Quebec, it is produced and distributed by Laiterie Cité Limitée of Quebec City. This product is remarkable — it lasts up to three months without refrigeration.

British Columbia is expected to begin selling metric-sized milk products later this year. The tentative target date for the beginning of conversion of fluid milk packs in B.C. is July 1, 1976. Other provinces have set target dates from 1976 through 1978; however, these are not yet definite.

In addition to the one-litre size, milk will most likely be marketed in 200 millilitres, 500 millilitres and two-litre cartons and in three-, four- and five-litre pouches.

committees have scheduled the start of their implementation phase in 1976 or early 1977. Legislative subcommittees of each sector are already identifying where legislative changes are required and will work with the appropriate level of government to effect the change.

The principle is that hard conversion and rationalization should be used. Hard conversion means replacement of traditional measurement units by rounded, logical metric units. With hard conversion the physical size of products and packages will be changed; in soft conversion there is no change, which results in metric units usually being given in odd numbers.

Rationalization

For example, milk is currently sold in one-quart containers. With soft conversion, the container size would continue to be one quart or 1.14 litres. With hard conversion and rationalization, there would be a selection of a rational series of sizes such as 200 and 300 ml (millilitres), one-, two-, three-, or four-litre containers.

In preparing amendments, departments and agencies will consult with other federal departments and agencies, provincial government departments and agencies, the Metric Commission and trade, industry and consumer associations.

Stratford film festival cancelled

The Stratford Festival has been forced to cancel the twelfth International Film Festival, owing to lack of funding.

The film festival was to have been held at the Avon Theatre from October 9 to October 16, with representation from film-makers abroad and from the Canadian film industry.

As in the past, plans for the non-competitive event were contingent upon federal and provincial grants, which were expected to be forthcoming. The federal grant has been cut back by one-third, however, and the Ontario government has not been able to guarantee financing at this time. Previously, grants were made available through the Festivals Office, Department of the Secretary of State and through the Ontario government.