

Automotive centre opened

Premier William Davis and Industry and Trade Minister Gord Walker of Ontario have officially opened the Ontario Centre for Automotive Parts Technology, the second of six centres being created under the province's \$120-million, five-year technology development program.

Premier Davis said the centre in St. Catharines, Ontario, was being set up in response to challenges arising from the global restructuring of the automotive industry.

Mr. Walker said the facility would help to ensure that Ontario's automotive parts manufacturers increase their productivity and competitiveness through the application of new technology, effective marketing programs and improved management and delivery methods.

Objectives of the Ontario Centre for Automotive Parts Technology are to improve the productivity and quality of automotive parts manufacturing in Ontario; to enhance technological capabilities in product design, development and manufacturing; and to increase the ability of manufacturers to identify and capture new market opportunities in the automotive field.

Circulatory disease studied

The federal government will soon begin a five-year study of vibration white finger disease — also known as Reynaud's disease — an ailment that strikes people who use vibrating tools such as chain saws, jack hammers and some farm equipment.

Prolonged jarring by a heavy piece of equipment, usually in cold weather, damages nerve endings in worker's fingers and collapses tiny blood vessels. It causes numbness, tingling and blanching in the fingers and can lead to loss of control of the hands and gangrene.

Forestry workers affected

Experts estimate that more than 10 000 Canadians are candidates for vibration white finger disease. Surveys have shown that more than 50 per cent of British Columbia lumbermen are afflicted.

This year, with \$114 530 from Environment Canada, the University of British Columbia's medical faculty will survey about 200 B.C. lumbermen and test the circulation in their hands.

"We want to look at the people who use chainsaws to determine if the disease

is increasing or decreasing," says Donald Myles, manager of forestry contract programs for Environment Canada.

"New anti-vibration chainsaws have been introduced in the last four or five years, but they haven't been around long enough for us to know if they're having any effect. We also want to find out if white finger is reversible if a worker stops using the equipment in the early stages of the disease."

The lumbermen are to be checked for five years, with the B.C. Workmen's Compensation Board and the Woodworkers of America union helping to run the study.

In 1981, the most recent year for which statistics are available, about 500 Ontario workers were collecting Workmen's Compensation for disability resulting from white finger disease.

Solar water heaters on trial

The federal government is conducting an experiment under the Department of Public Works' purchase and use of solar heating (PUSH) program, to demonstrate the practicality of solar water heaters in Canadian homes.

The \$2.5-million program which is being administered by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources calls for 1 125 home solar systems to be installed across the country by 14 companies which applied to participate in the project. The federal government will pay 65 per cent of the installation cost which is currently about \$3 600 per unit.

The solar systems are designed to operate alongside conventional water heaters in single-family dwellings. The 225-litre heating system calls for the installation of three 1.2 x 1.2 metre solar collector panels.

The program is a first step in what executive director of the Canadian Solar Industries Association Adrian Gatrill hopes will be an expansion into other areas of solar technology.

"Up to now, the government's policy has been to put solar heating units on government buildings, so that the early risk of something going wrong could be worked out before it became a full-fledged commercial thing. Now it's time solar heating systems moved into the private market place and this is a start," said Mr. Gatrill.

He added that the solar industry is hoping to see similar government programs set up for the introduction of solar water heating systems into industry.

World communications year conference planned

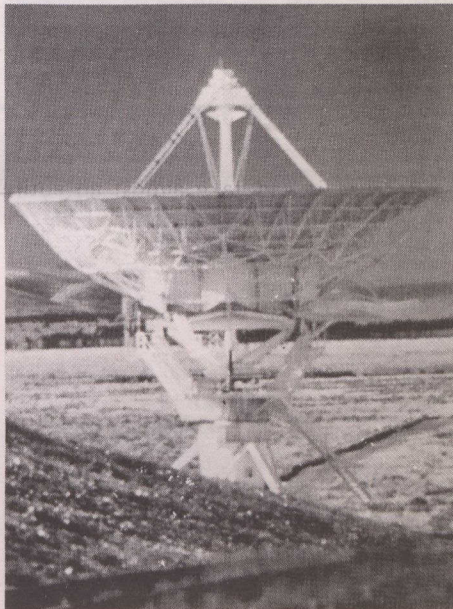
"Canada's global link — technology and communications" is the theme chosen to highlight the 1983 World Communications Year, Canada's premier electrical and electronics exposition.

Sponsored by the Canadian region of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), the 1983 International Electrical, Electronics Conference and Exposition (IEEC&E) will take place on September 26, 27 and 28, 1983, in Toronto.

"Technology and communications is an apt choice for World Communications Year," according to conference chairman Hugh J. Swain, "especially as Canada is a recognized leader in communications systems and equipment technology and has well-established links with industry and many governments around the world.

"To further emphasize this link, the 1983 conference and exposition has been registered by the United Nations as an official activity of World Communications Year."

Held every two years, the event traditionally attracts buyers and sellers from



across Canada and throughout the world.

Some 100 technical papers, mostly application-oriented, will be presented at conference seminars which will cover the latest developments in electrical and electronic technology.