

years unusually high sales of wheat and coarse grains have contributed to increase our exports. But by normal standards, the prospects for grain sales remain good. For other export commodities no significant changes seem likely, though much will depend on markets in the United States. So far as our European and Commonwealth markets are concerned, the basic economic position of these countries has improved and an increase over the export levels of 1953 is a reasonable expectation.

"As in so many other questions affecting our development much will depend on the economic situation in the United States. . . .

"In the light of all these considerations, I do not feel that drastic measures by Government are appropriate to the present economic situation. As I have said on many previous occasions, there are bound to be both ups and downs in an economy enjoying an unusually high rate of growth. Our present adjustments are taking place at a level of activity which is higher than anything we have been accustomed to in the past. . . .

"My general conclusion is that our national product in 1954 will be at least equal to 1953, and probably higher; in other words I think that an upswing in the second half of the year will more than compensate for the declines that are evident in certain branches of industry at present."

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MAPPING FOR DEFENCE: Helicopters, trucks and packhorses will be used by members of nine army survey teams this summer to carry out mapping forays in Canada's lesser known and still unmapped regions.

Members of the Army Survey Establishment in Ottawa, the soldier-surveyors will be working in conjunction with RCAF and civilian mapping agencies in pushing to completion Canada's defence mapping plan. But the job won't be completed this year or for several years to come.

The job, especially the field survey work, is getting a little easier year by year. Long, heart-breaking surveys by pack-train that only a few years ago took all summer to complete can now be completed in weeks by helicopter or truck.

Only one of the nine survey teams now being readied for field jobs this summer will use horses. It is slated for a summer-long survey in the Aishihik Lake region of the Yukon. Another party, using a helicopter, will venture into famed "Headless Valley" of the South Nahanni River. At Summit Lake, in the Caribou district of British Columbia, another party will work to complete another survey using a helicopter. Trucks will be used as a means of transport by four teams doing survey work on the prairies. Two survey parties operating in Quebec this summer will be based at Kazabazua and Sept-Iles.

DISASTER PLANS: Top-ranking hospital administrators, directors of medical services and directors of nursing of hospitals from coast-to-coast will meet in a series of Institutes this spring to discuss plans for coping with natural or man-made disaster. Plans for the Institutes, which will be held at Victoria, Fort William-Port Arthur, Hamilton, Montreal and Halifax, were announced March 30 by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Martin, the Minister responsible for Civil Defence.

The series of Institutes is the first such step to be carried out on the North American Continent. This method of preparing hospitals for disaster operation has aroused much interest in Civil Defence authorities in other countries and these Canadian Institutes may serve as a model for others to be held elsewhere.

In announcing the Institutes, Mr. Martin pointed out that hospitals form a vital part of Civil Defence Health Services. In order to function efficiently in disaster, he said, they must plan adequately beforehand to deal with large numbers of injured people. The purpose of the Institutes will be for hospitals to discuss the ways in which they can most efficiently deal with the effects of natural or man-made emergencies.

At each of the Institutes, delegates will study and discuss sample emergency plans made out by a large and a small hospital in their region. After discussing these emergency plans individual delegates will then proceed to draw up plans for their own hospitals. Hospitals represented at the Institutes will then be available to assist other hospitals in their neighbourhood at drawing up workable emergency programmes.

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MINESWEEPERS FOR FRANCE: Formal transfer of four newly constructed minesweepers to France under the Mutual Aid agreement of the North Atlantic Treaty took place at Halifax on April 7. The Minister of National Defence, Mr. Claxton, presented the ships to His Excellency Hubert Guerin, French Ambassador to Canada, who accepted them on behalf of his country.

The ships involved are H.M.C. Ships Fundy, Cowichan, Thunder, and Chignecto. They will be renamed by the French Navy following the transfer.

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WHOLESALE PRICES: Canada's general wholesale price index receded 0.4% from 219.8 to 219.0 between mid-January and mid-February, reflecting small declines in seven of the eight major groups. The largest decrease was recorded by non-ferrous metals which moved down 0.8% to 164.3 in response to lower prices for copper, lead, zinc, gold and silver.