

## EARTH SCIENCES STAMPS

At the beginning of August, the Canada Post Office issued 15-cent stamps representing the sciences of cartography, geography, geology and photogrammetry – the subjects of four international congresses already held, or scheduled to be held, in Canada during July and August: the Sixth Congress of the International Cartography Association, the Twenty-second International Geographical Congress, the Twenty-fourth International Geological Congress and the Twelfth Congress of the International Society of Photogrammetry. The conferences bring together a



combined total of over 15,000 delegates from some 125 countries.

The presence in Canada of these four international organizations gives recognition to the work of Canadians in the field of earth sciences. The release of four appropriate Canada Post Office stamps, each with a denominative value suitable for use on mail destined for a large part of the earth's surface, provides evidence of the significance attached to these events in the host country.

## BILL OF LADING EXPEDITES EXPORTS

A new "door-to-door" container bill of lading issued by Canadian National on July 1 is expected to prove of considerable importance to Canada's export industries.

The document, the first dual-purpose bill of lading issued by a Canadian inland carrier, has also been designed to conform with the international aligned-document system.

It will allow the railway to issue a single docu-

ment to cover the "door-to-door" movement of container traffic from an inland point in Canada to an inland destination overseas.

It will also replace the through bill of lading now used by the railway to cover the movement of export traffic shipped by conventional methods to overseas ports – that is, traffic which does not move in containers.

## SPEEDIER PAYMENTS

One of the more significant advantages of the new document is that it will enable exporters shipping goods in containers to obtain documentary credit earlier than is possible with many export bills of lading. "Once we have accepted a shipment and signed the new bill of lading, the shipper is immediately placed in a position where he can, if he wishes, begin converting it to cash through his bank," says R.E. Lawless, CN's vice-president of freight sales. In the past, the exporter usually had to wait until his containers had been loaded aboard a vessel and a clean bill of lading returned to him before he could set about obtaining documentary credit. The delay involved could run from two days to two weeks and more, during which the capital that these goods represented was neither available to him nor earning anything.

"The significance of a through bill of lading which we can issue the moment we accept export goods would be obvious at any time," Mr. Lawless says, "but never more so than in periods like the present, when interest rates are high and profit margins sometimes thin."

Export bills of lading are, in effect, a medium of international exchange. Whoever holds a negotiable export bill of lading has title to the goods covered by the document.

It is not uncommon for exporters to sell their bill of lading to a bank, which sells it to a bank in the country to which the goods are destined, which in turn sells it back to the persons who want to import the goods.

The company expects it will prove of particular benefit to exporters located some distance from Canadian ports and to persons shipping containers overseas.

"Such a bill of lading issued for a container shipment from Winnipeg, say, would cover the through movement of that container all the way to the customer's door in Luxembourg or Leningrad or where have you," Mr. Lawless explains.

He adds that single export documents which cover the through inland-to-inland movements of goods overseas represent the first major change to the bill-of-lading system in decades.

"The international standard format has not yet been fully adopted in Canada, Mr. Lawless says. "But I think inevitably that it will be, and for this reason we were anxious that the new bill of lading conform both to the international standard and the Canadian aligned-document system."