

A QUEER WINTER -- OFFICIAL ANALYSIS

ON BOARD H.M.C.S. "MAGNIFICENT": The combined East and West coast squadrons of the R.C.N. steamed out of the Canal Zone on March 16 and shaped course for the Leeward Islands. This largest concentration of Canadian naval ships since the war saw the carrier "Magnificent", the cruiser "Ontario", destroyers "Nootka", "Haida" and "Athabaskan" and the frigate "Antigonish" proceeding in company, under the command of Commodore G.R. Miles, O.B.E., R.C.N., in "Magnificent".

When clear of the approaches to the Panama Canal, flying operations began. Firefly aircraft of 826 Squadron ranged far from the carrier in conducting navigation exercises. Sea Furies of 803 and 883 Squadrons also put in a busy day. Strikes were conducted against H.M.C.S. "Ontario" and the parent carrier as a climax to the day's operations.

The Canadian squadron is due to rendezvous with the Royal Navy's American and West Indies Squadron on March 19 and detailed exercises will commence before proceeding into St. John, Antigua.

BASE MAPS FOR INDUSTRIES: The Topographical Survey will be provided with more than a million dollars in the fiscal year 1949-50 to carry on its work of providing base maps for the use of the mining, engineering, agriculture and forestry industries in Canada. This was revealed in estimates of the Department of Mines and Resources, tabled recently in the House of Commons.

The Minister of Mines and Resources, Mr. MacKinnon stated that it is planned to send some 70 parties into the field this summer, a substantial increase over the 37 parties sent out last year. This increase is in line with the Government's policy of getting ahead with the task of mapping Canada's vast, little-known and undeveloped areas. More parties will operate in most of the provinces and in the Northwest Territories and Yukon.

CANCER INSTITUTE GRANT: The trustees of the King George V Silver Jubilee Cancer Fund have just authorized a third payment of \$150,000 toward the work of the National Cancer Institute of Canada.

This was announced by the Rt. Hon. Thibaut Rinfret, Chief Justice of Canada and Chairman of the Trustees of the Jubilee Cancer Fund.

The newly-authorized grant is the third and final payment of a total amount of \$450,000 which the trustees agreed in 1947 to place at the disposal of the National Cancer Institute.

FARM PRICES: The index number of farm prices of agricultural products for January, on the base 1935-39=100, is estimated at 258.0, down 1.4 points from the revised figure for December, but 17.4 points above January last year,

according to the Bureau of Statistics. A high point of 264.1 was reached by the index in August, 1948.

The decline from the December level was due to lower prices paid for grains other than wheat, livestock, furs, poultry and eggs. The decreases in these commodities more than offset increases recorded for dairy products and potatoes.

Since the publication of the index for December, substantial upward revision has been made in the general level of the index from August, 1945 to date. This revision has been occasioned by the recent announcement that the initial Lakehead price of wheat to western producers would be increased 20 cents per bushel and made retroactive to August, 1945. In addition, the prices of oats and barley for the crop year 1947-48 have been advanced to include the final equalization payments of 5.881 cents per bushel for oats and 6.78 cents per bushel for barley.

FOREIGN VEHICLE ENTRIES: Foreign vehicles entering Canada on traveller's vehicle permits in February totalled 35,800, an advance of seven per cent over the same month last year, according to the Bureau of Statistics. During the first two months of this year, entries totalled 68,400, an increase of 11 per cent over the same period of 1948. In February, increases were recorded in traffic entering through ports in all provinces except Manitoba and British Columbia.

GOLD MINING INDUSTRY: Gold production in Canada in 1947 amounted to 3,070,221 fine troy ounces valued at \$107,457,735 as compared with 2,832,554 worth \$104,096,359 in the preceding year, according to the annual summary review of the industry by the Bureau of Statistics. The employment situation showed some improvement, being aided by the placement in the mines of many displaced persons brought from Europe.

Production from auriferous quartz mines and placer deposits amounted to 2,773,104 fine ounces compared with 2,430,865 in 1946, and from base metal mines, 297,117 fine ounces compared with 401,689. Ontario accounted for 63.3 per cent of the total output in 1947, Quebec for 19.5 per cent, and British Columbia 8.1 per cent.

COAL PRODUCTION UP: With substantial increases in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, and a small rise in New Brunswick, Canadian production of coal showed a sharp rise of 45 per cent in February over the same month last year. Nova Scotia's output was slightly lower in the month. Imports were down 25 per cent.

"TOPSY -- TURVY," BUREAU REPORTS: As the sun crossed the Equator on Sunday, March 20, Canada's weather service took time out to make a survey of the dying winter. The reports on the topsy-turvy weather of last winter and the progress of Spring were received from the six main Department of Transport weather offices from coast to coast.

One thing stands out - a queer winter that will remain as a guide-post in most peoples' memories in the years to come. A cold, hard season from Lake Superior to the British Columbian coast and a mild one from Georgian Bay to Halifax.

Snow still blankets the Prairies and a good part of Ontario. March in Eastern Canada is just beginning to give promising signs of spring-like conditions. But out on the B.C. coast Spring is in full swing as the weatherman there reports picking crocuses and hyacinths in his garden. Usually the next spots to feel the breath of Spring after B.C. are Southern Ontario and Southern Alberta. Temperatures today in the vicinity of Windsor are around sixty.

Despite a dry January, Vancouver had the most snow in twelve years. Frequent low temperatures brought the mountain run-off almost to a standstill and the resulting power shortage was not evident until late February. Vancouver had 71 days when the temperature dropped below freezing in December, January

TRAVEL EXPENDITURES: Canadians may, in future, obtain permits through their banks for the expenditure of any reasonable amounts for travel to France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Abbott, announced on March 18. So far as Canadian travellers are concerned, these countries are, therefore, now placed in a similar position to those in the sterling area.

Heretofore travel expenditures in the countries concerned were in practice made in U.S. dollars. They were, therefore, limited by the travel ration of \$150 U.S. covering the period from November 16, 1948 to November 15, 1949. In future, such travel expenditures will be authorized only in Canadian dollars but for any reasonable amounts.

This relaxation in travel regulations follows upon the conclusion with the French authorities of arrangements whereby Canadian dollars spent in France for travel purposes will be convertible into French francs at the same rate as the free rate for U.S. dollars, at present approximately 318 francs per dollar. This is in contrast to the normal official rate for Canadian dollars in France of 264. In the other countries concerned, Canadian dollars are convertible at the official rate of exchange which is the same for both Canadian and U.S. dollars.

and February. When the break finally came it brought a heavy snowfall and thawing temperatures in the mountains. These in turn led to heavy snowslides which blocked rail traffic and communications.

The Prairies are still in the grip of the coldest winter since 1936. Snowfall has been especially heavy in Manitoba. Winnipeg's snow in January broke a thirty-three year record and throughout the whole season snow and strong winds kept blocking highways in Southern Manitoba. Alberta and Saskatchewan did not report any extremely low temperatures. But the usual Chinooks were infrequent and long. Unbroken spells of cold weather prevailed during the mid-winter.

Farther East, Ontario came within a hair's breath of getting her warmest winter ever. An average temperature of 30.4° for Toronto from December to February was only exceeded by the mild winter of 1932-33 when the record 30.5° was set. Montreal and Halifax were also just under the record set sixteen years ago.

Winter snowfall in Ontario and Quebec was much less than normal until late winter. In the Maritimes it came close to average but in most sections was rapidly cleared by following rains. Fishermen were hard hit by a succession of gales over the Atlantic and recent storms of freezing rain have caused extensive damage to trees and communication lines.

France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway are those European countries participating in the European Recovery Program which, in addition, have arrangements with Canada under which Canadian dollars are acceptable for expenditures there. The Minister expressed the hope that the additional Canadian dollars accruing to those countries as a result of the relaxation of the Canadian regulations will assist them in carrying out their recovery programs. He also indicated that sympathetic consideration would be given to extending the present relaxation to other E.R.P. countries which are prepared to make arrangements with Canada similar to those of the countries to which it now extends.

STORE SALES UP: Department store sales showed an increase of three per cent during the week ending March 12 as compared with the same week last year, according to preliminary figures released by the Bureau of Statistics. Manitoba had the largest gain of 19 per cent, followed by Saskatchewan and Alberta with identical increases of 11 per cent. Sales in British Columbia advanced 10 per cent, while Ontario's figure was unchanged.