

in two and unchanged in six. Clothing indexes declined in eight regional cities, increased in one and remained unchanged in the remaining city. Household-operation indexes increased in six cities, decreased in three and remained unchanged in the other. Indexes for other commodities and services declined in four cities, increased in two cities and were unchanged in four.

PERMAFROST CONFERENCE

A two-day permafrost-research conference will be held at the National Research Council of Canada, Ottawa, April 17 and 18, the first such meeting. It will be sponsored by the Associate Committee on Soil and Snow Mechanics of the National Research Council of Canada. The conference will provide an opportunity for those interested in permafrost and the problems it represents to meet and to discuss mutual problems and their solution. The theme of the conference will be "Permafrost in Relation to Northern Development." In connection with this theme, papers will be presented that will consider phases of basic research, design and practice as they pertain to a variety of problems arising from permafrost: geology, climate, vegetation, soil, heat flow, economics, site investigations and construction.

DISCOURAGING SEA POACHERS

As a precautionary measure against the encroachment of foreign fishing vessels on east coast Canadian fishing-grounds, patrols are being carried out by surface craft and aircraft, Fisheries Minister J. Angus MacLean announced recently. The area concerned is the southwest coastal region of Newfoundland from Cape Anguille to Grand Bruit, but the range can be expanded if necessary.

The Fisheries Department's Newfoundland-based vessel "Arctica" is in the area and is being joined by the Department's "Cygnus" out of Halifax. Reconnaissance missions are being carried out by naval patrol aircraft.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Claimants for unemployment insurance benefit on December 29, 1961, numbered 601,200 (including 108,500 identified as seasonal), compared to 386,000 (15,000) on November 30 and 754,100 (134,100) on December 30, 1960. Initial and renewal claims filed in December numbered 357,900 as compared to 252,600 in the preceding month and 448,300 in the corresponding month of 1960.

The number of weekly beneficiaries averaged 320,200 in December, compared to 209,800 in November and 402,600 in December 1960. December payments aggregated \$29.4 million against \$20.9 million a month earlier and \$39.8 million a year earlier.

Payment for weeks compensated averaged \$24.20 in December against \$23.76 in November and \$23.51 in December 1960.

STEEL BUILDINGS FOR IRAN

Canada has secured an order from Iran for 50 pre-fabricated steel buildings, manufactured by the Stran-Steel Division of the Central Bridge Company Limited, Trenton, Ontario. The 800-ton shipment left Trenton on February 22 for Halifax by a special train comprising more than 20 gondola cars of the Canadian National Railways.

Trade and Commerce Minister Hees said this contract, amounting to approximately \$250,000, was significant, in that the value equalled ten per cent of Canada's total exports to Iran in 1960. The order had also been beneficial to Canadian employment, he added, as about half the total value represented labour costs.

The Iranian order is the largest for pre-engineered steel buildings ever filled by the company's Stran-Steel Division, which obtained the contract in competition with firms in Iran, Britain, France and the United States. The favourable price quoted by the Canadian company, and the delivery date, were factors that brought the order to Canada. Smaller shipments have been made to South America, and a pre-fabricated steel building has been completed for shipment to Chile shortly. Quotations have been submitted on eight buildings for Spain.

The Central Bridge Company Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Toronto Iron Works Limited, obtained the Iranian contract through an agent in that country and with the assistance of the Department of Trade and Commerce. An official of the firm said its increased interest in overseas markets, and the subsequent receipt of export orders, can be attributed to the trade promotion conference held in Ottawa in December 1960.

The 50 pre-engineered steel buildings going to Iran each measure 50 by 100 feet. They have been designed for rapid erection, and are equipped with windows, doors and ventilators. Nine other Canadian firms filled sub-contracts, the largest being the Steel Company of Canada Limited of Hamilton, which provided the steel sheeting. Steel for the main frames was supplied by Dominion Foundries and Steel Limited, also of Hamilton.

IMPORTS IN 1961

Canada's commodity imports in December were valued at an estimated \$471,400,000, according to preliminary figures released by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, a gain of 9.6 per cent over the December 1960 total of \$430,100,000. The rising trend begun in May 1961, when imports in that and each succeeding month were greater than those in the corresponding month of the preceding year, was thus continued.