

News of the day

Military turns to propane

The Canadian Armed Forces is converting its vehicles over the next three years to run on liquid propane rather than gasoline, the Department of National Defence has announced.

The Department has accepted the idea that propane is a cheaper and more efficient fuel than gasoline, and estimates there will be savings of at least 30 per cent in fuel costs on each vehicle converted.

Conversion has already begun on vehicles at Canadian Forces Base Uplands in Ottawa.

Colonel Gordon Lindsay, director-general of transportation for the Canadian Armed Forces, said the technology is already proven and the main question now is whether a satisfactory supply system can be set up.

Major Tony Butterfield, project officer for the conversion, says he expects "hundreds of vehicles will be converted this year, and thousands will be converted in the next three years".

Cost of converting each vehicle ranges from \$1,200 to \$1,500, but the military expects lower fuel costs to make up for that in less than 18 months. Conversion involves changing the fuel tank and the



A Canadian Forces serviceman places sticker on propane-driven vehicle.

carburetor, among other things.

The Armed Forces is planning to convert everything from three-ton trucks to staff cars if a satisfactory supply network is created. As many as 8,000 vehicles in these categories may be converted, out of a total fleet of about 9,000.

Vehicles converted for propane use can be filled up with liquid propane at a pump just as gasoline-powered vehicles are now.

Butterfield said about 1.2 litres of liquid propane are required to cover the same distance a vehicle gets on one litre of gasoline. However, propane now retails for about half the cost. Propane is also cleaner and causes less engine wear.

Another factor that persuaded the military to opt for propane is that about 25 per cent of the oil used in Canada is imported, so there is always the danger the supply could be disrupted.

Swimming made easy

There has never been a drowning in Manitou Lake, Saskatchewan despite the fact there are no lifeguards and thousands of vacationers have swum there each summer for more than half a century.

The explanation: the 29 kilometre (12 miles) long lake, with its specific gravity of 1.06, is denser than the Dead Sea.

The mineral waters of the lake, which is 110 miles (117 kilometres) north of Regina, the provincial capital, are also said to ease the pains of arthritis and other such diseases. They contain calcium sulphate, magnesium bicarbonate, magnesium sulphate, oxide of iron, potassium sulphate, silica, sodium chloride and sodium sulphate.

In short, the lake contains proteins, iron, fertilizers and plenty of salt. This makes the water of Manitou Lake denser than that of other lakes so that bodies float more easily.

The lake's reputation for buoyancy and curative properties has drawn tourists

from early in this century but, long before that, Indians knew of the lake's qualities and they came in great numbers.

The lake's popularity reached its peak in the 1920s and the Saskatchewan government established Manitou Lake Provincial Park and built a large chalet in 1930.

In those days, trains were the popular mode of transportation and, being on the main east-west CN line, Manitou Lake, or Manitou Beach as the village is called, drew visitors from Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary and even farther.

In 1969, the province diverted water from the South Saskatchewan River into Manitou Lake in order to maintain its level. This has resulted in renewed popularity for the resort lake so that today about 400 families have their summer cottages close to its shores.

The lakeshore now has four hotels, one motel, rooming houses, a campground, a trailer park and several clinics with mineral baths.

Food additive survey results

The vast majority of Canadians fear that commonly used food additives represent a health hazard, despite scientific evidence to the contrary, according to a survey by Health and Welfare Canada.

The results of the national survey on food additives indicated that Canadian need and want to know more about the use and control of additives.

Almost 25,000 Canadians completed questionnaires asking their views on the definition, use, value and control of food additives. Most people were confused about what food additives are and to what degree they are permitted in foods, the findings show; 91 per cent of the respondents said they need to know more.

The survey disclosed that 70 per cent of Canadians feel additives do not improve the quality of food and 60 per cent say they would pay more for additive-free food. The department will consider the findings when reviewing food policy and when revising public education programs.