

News briefs

Former New Democratic Party leader T.C. Douglas will lead an 18-member delegation to China in September to examine ways to increase trade in potash and wheat. Although Mr. Douglas visited China in 1974, the group of party members and unionists will be the first official NDP delegation to that country.

The Canadian Wheat Board has concluded a contract to sell China two million tonnes (73.4 million bushels) of wheat. The board said shipments will start in late October. It was the first Canadian wheat contract with China under a new sales agreement concluded by the two countries last February.

The number of drug offences in Canada declined in 1978, according to preliminary crime statistics prepared by Statistics Canada. There was a 5 percent decline in the number of cannabis offences, the category of marijuana and hashish that continues to dominate Canada's drug statistics. The total number of drug offences declined to 60,747 last year from 63,843 in 1977, a 4.8 percent drop.

Premier Peter Lougheed has announced that Alberta now is prepared to lend Heritage Savings Trust Fund money to Quebec under certain conditions. The change in thinking is a major policy shift for the Progressive Conservative government.

The Federal Government will increase the tax paid by Canadian air passengers on domestic and U.S. flights to a maximum \$15 from \$8, effective in October, Transport Minister Mazankowski has announced. The tax on other international flights will increase by \$2 to \$10 effective January, 1980.

Canadair Limited of Montreal will resume production of its CL-215 water bomber because of renewed interest in the aircraft, particularly from France, which suffered a series of forest fires in southern areas this summer. The new

price for the plane will be about \$4 million, up from \$2.5 million. Canadair ceased production of the water bomber line a year ago.

Three prominent Conservatives have been appointed to the Senate: Lowell Murray, the national director of the Conservative Party's successful election campaign was appointed along with former Conservative member of Parliament James Balfour and former Nova Scotia Attorney-General Richard Donahoe.

The New Brunswick Electric Power Commission said in its annual report that it plans to meet energy needs by using coal and peat, developing new hydro sites and expanding hydro and nuclear plants. The commission said it expects New Brunswick to have enough electric power available to meet energy needs until the late 1980s. New additions to the province's generating capacity, combined with potential purchases of power from neighbouring utilities will meet the increased demand for power, the commission said.

The Export Development Corporation has approved loans, surety and export credits insurance and a foreign investment guarantee totalling \$232.18 million to support prospective export sales of \$285.05 million to 18 countries: Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Greece, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Britain, U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia. Export sales which will result, if commercial contracts are confirmed, are expected to create or maintain some 11,906 man-years of employment in Canada and will involve 211 exporters and major suppliers across Canada.

Projects involving 171 senior citizens groups across Canada will receive federal contributions totalling \$839,874, Health and Welfare Minister David Crombie has announced. A total of 20,869 participants are directly involved. The funds are made available through the department's New Horizons program.

Denison Mines Limited of Toronto and Reserve Oil and Gas Company of Denver have agreed to merge. The two companies have signed a letter of intent to merge in a deal that has been valued at \$535 million (U.S.). Under the merger agreement, Denison would offer common shareholders of Reserve \$27.50 (U.S.) a share; preferred shareholders of Reserve would be offered \$40.15 (U.S.) a share. Reserve shareholders are expected to be

asked to approve the transaction at a meeting in mid-November.

Great West Life Assurance Company of Winnipeg is planning a corporate reorganization that calls for the establishment of a U.S. head office in Denver, according to Kevin Kavanagh, president. During the first half of this year, the company — out of sales valued at more than \$5 billion — sold 49 per cent of its life insurance and annuity policies and 43 per cent of its health insurance policies in the 45 U.S. states in which it is represented.

The Canadian International Development Agency has contributed \$150,000 in cash to the League of Red Cross Societies in response to its international appeal for emergency relief on behalf of the 130,000-150,000 people left homeless in Dominica and the Dominican Republic in the wake of hurricane David.

The British Columbia government has approved a new farm income assurance for all commodities. Pat Hibbert, president of the B.C. Federation of Agriculture, said that under the program, which took 20 months to negotiate, producers will pay into the scheme each year, with the premiums creating a surplus during good years to offset losses during bad ones.

The Rideau Club in Ottawa, one of Canada's most prominent men's clubs, has its first woman member in 114 years. She is Jean Pigott, Prime Minister Clark's human resources adviser and a former Progressive Conservative member of Parliament. Her name was put forward in July and was approved recently by the club executive, which last March received approval from its 500-odd members to open full club privileges to women.

Canadian immigration officer Colleen Cupples was supervising the embarkation of Indochinese refugees for their flight to Canada, when she spotted a tiny Vietnamese girl in the lineup carrying a large bucket. One of Miss Cupple's tasks is to ensure that certain foodstuffs, contrary to Canadian regulations, are not imported by refugees. She approached the child and asked what she was carrying. The child took the lid off the bucket. It contained water. "When we left Vietnam," she gravely explained to the interpreter, "we were all very thirsty on our boat. Now I'm going to Canada. I don't know how far away it is but it is certainly a long journey, and I am never going to be thirsty again."

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