

in several projects, pilots an inland waters investigation that is designed to explore the problems of river-basin management in a multi-jurisdictional setting. The Saint John River basin was chosen as a case study for the project.

The CCMS meets twice yearly to review the progress of on-going projects, to choose new undertakings and to discuss environmental concerns and activities in each of the member countries.

Grain-handling transportation to be studied

In his remarks closing a two-day seminar on grain-handling and transportation in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan recently, the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Otto Lang, commended the decision of the Grain Handling and Transportation Committee of the Canada Grains Council to study the grain-gathering system for a specific area.

"The time has come to apply the results of the studies carried out by the Council and the Government over the past two or three years to a specific area," Mr. Lang said. The area chosen for study is that lying north and west of Brandon, Manitoba. Mr. Lang explained that this area was selected "because most of the problems likely to be encountered in improving the present grain-handling and transportation system across the whole of the Prairies" would be found there.

The Brandon study will examine the whole transportation and handling system, from the farm bin to the railway freight car. It will include investigation of the location of elevators and their possible relocation in a more efficient network, of the effect of additional distance from farm to elevator on producers, of the adequacy of the road system to meet present and future grain-trucking requirements, and of the impact of any changes on the community. The study will also seek to determine which rail lines in the area are needed for transportation and which may be too expensive to maintain for small amounts of grain.

"When the study is completed," Mr. Lang stressed, "producers in the area affected should be given the

opportunity to examine the results, and give their reaction to any action which should follow. "The experience gained from this first study could prove to be very valuable in similar studies in other areas across the Prairies," he concluded.

Vancouver International Airport gets expansion go-ahead

Following a review of a hearing officer's report on the expropriation of land required for the expansion of Vancouver International Airport, the Federal Government will complete the acquisition of the necessary land on Sea Island.

Transport Minister Jean Marchand stated recently that Vancouver International Airport was the "spring-board" for Canada and the Pacific Rim countries and, as such, was an essential facility in Canada's air-transportation network.

Last year, Vancouver handled some three million passengers; by 1980 this is expected to double. The airport's importance to the economy of the West Coast and to the convenience of travellers through this Western gateway is beyond dispute, claims the Ministry of Transport.

Mr. Marchand expressed his concern about the property owners involved and stated that the rights of property owners to full and fair compensation could best be provided under the terms of the Expropriation Act.

Mr. Marchand also stated that the Government would ensure that the expansion of the airport facilities would not be undertaken without full consideration of the impact on the urban and natural environment and that the studies involved would be made public and freely discussed.

Tri-level committee

To ensure that federal plans are co-ordinated with the activities of other levels of government, and that public concerns are taken fully into account, Mr. Marchand said that if other levels of Government agreed, the topic of airport expansion would be placed on a continuing basis, on the agenda of the Greater Vancouver tri-level committee. Tri-level committees are being formed on the initiative of the Ministry

of State for Urban Affairs, and with the concurrence of other government levels, for major urban regions throughout Canada.

The proposed tri-level group for Greater Vancouver will bring together political leaders and officials of the Federal Government, the province, and the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Regular meetings would be held to discuss a wide range of urban issues involving consultation and co-ordination among the governments.

Strong demand continues for housing in Canada's metropolitan areas

Of the 65,000 new single and duplex dwellings completed in Canada's 22 metropolitan areas during 1972, only 4,640 were unoccupied at the end of the year, according to Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Demand, when measured by the number of completed and unoccupied single and duplex units, was strongest in Halifax, Nova Scotia; Saint John, New Brunswick; Thunder Bay, Ontario; and St. John's, Newfoundland. The survey showed that every newly-completed unit was occupied on December 31. However, each of the areas had a substantial volume of dwellings under construction at that time.

One quarter of Canada's new and unoccupied inventory of single and duplex units was in Montreal, Quebec, while Vancouver, British Columbia, had 12 per cent, Calgary, Alberta 11 per cent, Victoria, B.C. and Winnipeg, Manitoba both 9 per cent, and Edmonton, Alta, Quebec City, and Toronto, Ontario 6 per cent each.

The absorption of newly-completed units was also particularly rapid in Toronto and Ottawa-Hull. Of a total of 12,904 completions in Metro Toronto, only 276 remained unoccupied at the end of the year. In the Ottawa-Hull area just 47 of 3,401 new completions were vacant.

The semi-annual apartment vacancy survey carried out in December by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation also showed strong market demand in metropolitan areas as did the the monthly survey of newly completed, unoccupied row and apartment units.