

Capital-assistance program for urban transportation

The Federal Government will provide \$100 million for an urban transportation capital-assistance program to help the provinces and municipalities manage urban growth and combat traffic and related problems.

Urban Affairs Minister Barney Danson and Transport Minister Jean Marchand announced on July 30 that the funds would be available over five years beginning April 1, 1977 for the acquisition of commuter rail vehicles, stations and platforms and traffic-control facilities. The program does not apply to vehicles currently on order or to facilities already in place.

Where rail is not the best mode for commuter services, alternatives including express buses on reserved lanes, will be considered for funding assistance.

Because of the lead time required for planning, the five-year payment period will begin April 1, 1977, and extend to March 31, 1982.

Preference will be given to Canadian-manufactured vehicles, provided they are available on time, are of the quality requested and are competitive. New or developmental commuter systems will be supported.

Studies have shown that energy consumption *per capita* for transportation stabilizes or declines as the use of public transportation increases. For every dollar Canadians spend in urban areas on cars, they spend less than five cents on public transportation.

The new measures are intended to encourage planned management of urban growth and greater use of public transportation services. Both these matters are key aspects of the Government's urban priority.

To qualify for assistance, the province and the municipality concerned and the Federal Government must agree upon a strategy for metropolitan growth-management within the urban region. Agreement must be reached on the role commuter services will play, the efficient use of their special characteristics and their integration with the surrounding transportation system. The province or municipality must also agree to cover any past or future operating deficits of the system.

The federal contribution will be up to 75 per cent as a grant and 25 per cent as a loan toward the capital cost of systems at an early stage of development. For other systems, federal assistance will be between 25 per cent and 75 per cent on a grant basis, depending on the maturity of the system and up to 25 per cent on a loan basis.

Loans will be made to provincial governments or to the municipalities or transit authorities if guaranteed by the provincial governments concerned.

Federal grants will be available for up to half the cost of directly associated commuter rail platforms, stations and feeder systems, or traffic-control facilities.

The assistance program is expected to have the greatest impact on major metropolitan areas where the degree of urgency about urban problems is highest.

The Ministers also noted that capital assistance for municipal urban transit services, as distinct from commuter services, remains under consideration and will be the subject of further examination by the federal ministries of Urban Affairs, Transport, Finance and Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Petroleum products decreased export charges

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Donald S. Macdonald, announced the following reductions, effective August 1, in the charges on licensed exports of Canadian petroleum products (dollars *per barrel*): Motor gasoline and gasoline components — \$3.50 (from \$4.25); middle distillates — \$3.25 (from \$4); heavy fuel oils — \$1.75 (from \$3).

The Minister pointed out that these reductions reflected an average effect in the month of August of the increase of \$1.50 a barrel in crude oil prices which occurred on July 1. A uniform tariff of export charges during the month was being sought as a matter of administrative and operational convenience. The alternative could have involved a continuance of the existing

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Loan to Barbados

Canada will lend \$3.1 million to purchase water-supply materials and equipment from Canada, Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan J. MacEachen announced recently. The Canadian International Development Agency loan, which will mature in 30 years, will bear 3 percent interest.

This project is the second phase in a program recommended by the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization to help the island's domestic and industrial water requirements up to 1996. A similar loan of \$2.6 million in 1970 helped Barbados buy equipment in Canada for the first phase. In both phases, the Canadian loans matched equal amounts provided by the Government of Barbados.

The program is expected to reduce the incidence of disease related to water and provide increased employment in industry and tourism.

Canada sponsors ozone probe

The most comprehensive probe ever launched into the stratosphere is about to be carried out by a team of 25 Canadian scientists stationed near Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

Four giant balloons, each lifted by 15 million cubic feet of helium and carrying 3,500 lbs of scientific equipment to a height of over 20 miles, will analyze the effects of aerosol propellants, known as *freons*, and exhaust gases from supersonic aircraft, on the destruction of ozone, the protective layer of gas that partly filters out ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

The probe is being conducted by the Atmospheric Environment Service of Environment Canada in co-operation with York University, the Universities of Calgary and Saskatchewan and a U.S. Government agency, the National Center for Atmospheric Research, of Boulder, Colorado.

Data from the 12 separate experiments on board each balloon will be telemetered to ground receivers and will be used to try to unravel the complex relations between the various gases in the stratosphere and the incoming solar radiation. Until now, scientists have had to rely on theoretical models to