

News briefs

Justice Minister Ron Basford, who announced in January his intention to leave office when the next federal election was called, has submitted his resignation, effective immediately. He has been replaced temporarily by Minister of Transport Otto Lang. The federal election, which was originally expected last June, has not yet been called by Prime Minister Trudeau.

The number of marriages solemnized in Canada during 1976 totalled 193,343, a decline of 2.2 per cent from the previous year's total. The rate *per* 1,000 population declined to 8.4 from 8.7 in 1975 — 3.4 per cent. All the provinces except Prince Edward Island and Quebec registered declines in the rates: Prince Edward Island is the only province showing an increase in the rate in 1976 while the rate for Quebec remained unchanged from that of the previous year. The sharpest decline was registered in Manitoba.

The number of births to Canadian residents in 1976 totalled 359,987, a 0.2 per cent increase from 359,323 for 1975. The birth rate *per* 1,000 population, however, declined to 15.7 in 1976 from 15.8 for the previous year. Alberta and Newfoundland, as in the previous year, registered higher birth rates in 1976. Saskatchewan registered a higher annual increase than any other province.

A special voting system to give blind people a secret vote will be introduced in the next federal election. Deputy returning officers at each poll will have a special template which fits over the standard ballot. Notches on the template will tell blind voters where to mark the ballot. Candidates' names will be listed alphabetically and the election officer or a friend of the blind voter will read the names to the blind person.

Ford Motor Company of Canada Ltd., with the assistance of \$68 million from the federal and Ontario governments, will build a \$535-million engine plant in Ontario, providing up to 5,000 jobs. The plant will pay taxes of more than \$60 million a year.

British Columbia had a budgetary surplus of \$232.9 million in the first three months of the current fiscal year, says provincial Finance Minister Evan Wolfe. That is up from the \$196-million surplus recorded in the corresponding period last year. The government expects the \$4.28-billion budget to balance at the end of the fiscal year, March 31, 1979.

Quebec's department of natural resources has reported the discovery of traces of high-grade uranium, about 200 kilometres north of Schefferville, Quebec.

Montreal-based Molson Breweries of Canada Ltd. has purchased the Montreal Canadiens hockey club for \$20 million, together with an agreement for a long-term lease of the air-conditioned, 16,544-seat Montreal Forum, with an option to purchase the building in the future. The National Hockey League club, winner of 19 Stanley Cups since 1930, was owned by Carena-Bancorp Inc., controlled by Edward and Peter Bronfman.

Canadians bought 98,467 new cars and trucks in July, compared with 90,036 in July 1977.

Fewer Canadians were travelling outside the country in June than a year earlier, while more foreign visitors made visits here, Statistics Canada reports. There were 3.7 million U.S. visitors to Canada in June, a 4.2 per cent increase from that of a year earlier. Visitors from other countries increased in number by 14.1 per cent to 231,000 in June. The number of Canadians returning from U.S. visits in June was unchanged from the number a year earlier at 3.3 million. Canadian travellers returning from other countries totalled 121,500, a 1.1 per cent decrease from last June's figure.

The foreign control of manufacturing investment in Canada for the years 1976, 1977 and 1978 represents almost half of all capital expenditures in this sector — 48.6 per cent (\$3,059 million) of the total program of \$6,297 million in 1978, 49.5 per cent (\$2,972 million) of \$6,007 million in 1977 and 45.1 per cent (\$2,465 million) of \$5,465 million in 1976. In 1978, total manufacturing investment is projected to increase by 4.8 per cent with the Canadian and foreign

controlled increases expected to be 6.7 per cent and 2.9 per cent respectively. For 1977, the total increase was 9.9 per cent with Canadian controlled establishments having a 1.2 per cent increase while foreign controlled establishments had a 20.6 per cent increase.

Two Parks Canada employees and two university students have left for an eight-week archaeological expedition on Beechey Island, Ellesmere Island and Somerset Island in the High Arctic. In 1976 they surveyed 12 sites in the Arctic, some of them associated with Sir John Franklin's ill-fated 1845 expedition and the expeditions sent in search of him.

A formal agreement concerning immigration to Prince Edward Island was signed in Charlottetown recently by Minister of Employment and Immigration Canada Bud Cullen and Minister of Labour, Prince Edward Island, George Proud. Marc Lalonde, Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations, also signed the agreement. The arrangement, which establishes a joint federal-provincial immigration committee to consult on policies involving prospective immigrants and temporary workers in Prince Edward Island, also provides the province with a role in the selection of entrepreneurs, academics, students and doctors.

According to a report by Treasury Board on equal opportunities for women in the Public Service, less than 3 per cent of the Government's top executives are women. In 1977 only 38 women were in senior executive positions, compared to 1,286 men. However, 79 per cent of the clerical and secretarial jobs were held by women. Treasury Board says it has instructed all government departments to increase promotion opportunities for women.

Residents of four Canadian centres, three in Ontario and one in New Brunswick, turned off their lights and ate cold meals one day in late July to try to save energy for Zero Energy Day, sponsored by the federal Office of Energy Conservation. In Oronocto, New Brunswick a spokesman said the experiment had not been a great success; however, in Ontario, Kapuskasing had a 6.49 per cent decrease in power use from that of the previous week; six restaurants in Stratford featured cold dinners, and one family in Hamilton won first prize for saving energy when it went without television, radio, record playing or lights and ate salad and fruit.

Canada Weekly is published by the Information Services Division, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, K1A 0G2.

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Cette publication existe également en français sous le titre Hebdo Canada.

Algunos números de esta publicación aparecen también en español bajo el título Noticiero de Canadá.