

NEW WHEAT SALE TO CHINA

A new sale of wheat involving a maximum of 62.7 million bushels, to the People's Republic of China was announced on November 10 by Mr. Otto Lang, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

"The value of the sale, at about \$150 million, reflects the sharp increase in wheat prices which has occurred in the last few months," Mr. Lang said. "Negotiations for the new sale were concluded in Peking this week by representatives of the Canadian Wheat Board and the China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Import and Export Corporation."

Shipments under the new contract will start in April 1973, after deliveries under the present contract are complete, and will continue until October. All shipments will be made from Canada's West Coast ports.

The grades to be shipped will consist of No. 1 Canada Western Red Spring Wheat 12½ percent protein and No. 2 and No. 3 Canada Western Red Spring Wheat.

As in previous contracts with the People's Republic of China, the terms of the new sale call for the payment of 25 percent cash when each vessel is loaded and the balance in 18 months with interest. The credit terms are made possible under a guarantee to the Canadian Wheat Board by the Federal Government.

POSSIBLE RAISE IN PHONE RATES

Bell Canada filed two applications with the Canadian Transport Commission on November 10 for higher telephone rates over the next two years. If the applications are approved, basic residential telephone service, for instance, would go up 5 cents a month in 1973 and an additional 6¼ per cent in 1974.

Bell says that an increase in costs, which are in large part beyond its control, will offset the benefits gained from the increased rates the Commission granted the company last May.

Earnings this year have shown improvement, Bell admits, owing partly to the last increase granted, partly to a generally-improving business climate, and partly to the keeping down of expenses and the keeping up of productivity. But, says the company, there would be a sharp drop in earnings next year without a rate increase, impairing Bell's credit and its ability to secure capital on reasonable terms.

The new rates would cover most aspects of Bell's business, and would be applied in two stages.

SERVICES AFFECTED

General increases that would take effect next January include a 5-cent-a-month increase for residence and hotel extensions, and a 1½ percent increase — with a 5-cent minimum — for most other local services. The charge for the initial period of all long-distance calls within the territory Bell serves would go up 2 cents

for calls dialled by the customer, 5 cents for station-to-station calls handled by the operator and 10 cents for person-to-person calls.

The company also proposes to increase most service charges 50 per cent in 1973 and another 33 1/3 per cent in 1974. This would put the present charge of \$11 for installation in a residence up to \$16.50 next year and to \$22 in 1974.

Beginning January 1, 1974, the basic residential telephone bill in the Metropolitan areas of Montreal and Toronto would go up 40 cents a month to \$6.80 from \$6.40. In smaller towns, such as Arnprior and Sturgeon Falls in Ontario and Arundel and Trois-Pistoles in Quebec, the increase would be 30 cents — to \$4.85 from \$4.55.

Smaller towns still, such as Drumbo and Rigaud, would be reclassified under a proposed plan to create a new minimum-rate group, and their increase on a \$4-a-month bill would be 45 cents, bringing it to \$4.45.

Rate groups are classified according to the number of telephones a customer can reach without having to pay a long-distance charge. Bell's new minimum-rate group would be up to 5,000 telephones.

Other increases to take effect January 1, 1974, would include 5 cents a month for Contempra telephones and residence Touch-Tone service, 5 cents on residence and hotel extensions and 1 cent on each minute of overtime on all long-distance calls.

Further changes proposed for 1974 include increasing the pay-phone rate from 10 cents to 20 cents and initiating a 25-cent charge for some calls to directory assistance, which Bell hopes to include for calls to directory assistance for numbers listed in the caller's directory. Handicapped persons, such as the blind, would be exempt, as would calls from hospital and hotel rooms, and pay-phones.

Bell says more than 680,000 calls a day were made to directory assistance in 1971, and that at least 70 per cent, or half a million of these calls were for numbers listed in callers' directories. Cost of the service now is being borne by all customers.

UNIFORM POLICY CHANGES

The 20-year practice in most directorates of the Armed Forces at Headquarters in Ottawa of wearing uniform one day a week only has been dropped as of November 20. Under new regulations all ranks will appear in uniform four days a week, from Monday to Thursday.

Other members of the Armed Forces across the country and overseas, including those serving at nearby Uplands and Rockcliffe, wear the uniform during the normal five-day duty period each week.

The reason for servicemen adopting the alternate uniform-multi schedule at the end of the Second World War is lost in dust-covered policies of the postwar period. However, the practice of wearing uniform one day a week began early in 1952, at the time of the death of King George VI.