
Health conference in Poland

A ten-member Canadian delegation recently visited Poland to take part in the first Polish-Canadian Medical Week.

The group, composed of representatives from industry, government and the academic community, exchanged opinions with Polish representatives on health in the work place.

The conference, which was the first of a series of exchange medical weeks between Canada and Poland, results from a Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries, signed February 17, 1978, which provides for exchange visits and co-operation among specialists in both countries.

New national wildlife area

Environment Minister Len Marchand recently announced that a new national wildlife area had been established on the southeastern tip of Prince Edward County, 40 kilometres southwest of Kingston, Ontario. It was being preserved, said the minister, because of its importance as a resting spot for large concentrations of birds that migrate across the peninsula in spring and autumn.

Mr. Marchand stated that regulations governing public activities in the national wildlife area would not interfere with the day-to-day activities of the commercial fishermen who docked at Point Pelee.

This latest acquisition brings the number of national wildlife areas to 40. Most were established to protect wetland habitat for waterfowl. Prince Edward Point is the first such area where the protected habitat is used by large numbers of non-game birds.

Oil and gas search intensifies

The results of a monitoring survey of Canadian petroleum corporations show that the petroleum industry has experienced the most dynamic period of oil and gas exploration activity in Canada's history and that several oil and natural gas discoveries may add significantly to Canada's proven reserves.

The report, recently made public by Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Alastair Gillespie, covers a group of sam-

ple companies which account for more than 80 per cent of the total Canadian crude oil production.

Increased cash flows, largely a result of the domestic wellhead price increases, were accompanied by increased expenditures on energy investments. Internal cash generation for the monitoring aggregate increased by 24.1 per cent from \$3.1 billion in 1976 to \$3.8 billion in 1977.

At the same time, total capital expenditures in Canada jumped by 36.6 per cent from \$2.3 billion in 1976 to \$3.2 billion in 1977. Consequently, the reinvestment ratio of total capital expenditures as a percentage of internal cash generation increased by 10.1 per cent from 76.4 per cent in 1976 to 84.2 per cent in 1977. This represents the highest ratio since 1971.

Total exploration and development expenditures in 1977 were \$2,302 million, an increase of \$710 million over the 1976 figure.

Exploration expenditures increased by 73.7 per cent from those of the previous year. The smaller producers within the survey actually doubled their level of exploration spending.

The report also indicates that production of crude oil and natural gas contributed 78 per cent of the total cash flow, while the refining, processing and marketing of petroleum products showed modest improvement in 1977, but was still well under the performance of 1974 and 1975, owing to competition and refinery over-capacity.

Government cuts red tape

Any small business in Canada can now telephone Ottawa collect for ombudsman service to cut red tape and eliminate paperwork problems. The Paperburden Office, a small and temporary trouble-shooting arm of the Federal Government headed by Jim Howe, who reports to Minister of State for Small Business Anthony Abbott, is committed to reducing the cost of the federal "paperburden" by at least \$100 million.

If a caller's problem is not solved within five days, the ombudsman will provide him with a progress report and follow up until the case is resolved. If the complaint does not concern paperburden, the ombudsman will refer the case to the department responsible and provide the caller with the name of an

official in that department for further contact.

Purpose. Over the next 24 months, to alleviate the paperburden problems of business in Canada, especially small business. Paperburden is defined as unnecessary or excessive paperwork which can be eliminated without harming government programs.

The burden. The cost to Canadians of federal paperwork has been estimated at more than \$10 billion a year.

The approach. Basically manned by a small and very active temporary staff who will identify immediate problems, then seek quick action from federal departments and agencies. For more basic problems, reforms will be developed.

Streamlining programs. Major government programs, such as taxation, manpower, and corporate reporting, will be analyzed by the office, which will then recommend steps to eliminate paperwork and improve information services.

Preventing future problems. To help prevent the growth of paperburden, the office works in close liaison with a unit of Statistics Canada responsible for instituting controls on the amount and types of new paperwork that can be imposed by government.

Soft contact lenses may replace bothersome bifocals

A Toronto optometrist, Dr. Carl H. Evans, has designed a soft contact lens that he says will rid most middle-aged wearers of the need for bifocal spectacles. The single lens, which does not demand the constant shift in focus that wearers of bifocals must make, is designed primarily for people with presbyopia — normal progressive aging of the eye — who have to wear glasses all the time.

Dr. Evans says he has tested the lens on more than 300 patients, 130 of whom wear them daily. A few people have used them for five years. He claims an 80 per cent success rate, although he warns that people who had been wearing hard contact lenses, which produce changes in the cornea, experienced difficulty.

The Federal Government, which has contributed \$15,000 to the program so far, will offer another \$66,000-grant to allow the project's transition from the laboratory to the production phase. The Ontario government helped initiate the study with a grant of \$5,000.