

News briefs

A study of a proposal for a non-government, non-profit association to promote public appreciation of Canada's national parks has been announced by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, Hugh Faulkner. The National Park Co-operating Association and its agencies would produce, sell and distribute publications, expand library facilities, extend support to interpretation activities and help provide visitor information. Recommendations on the best arrangement for the establishment of the association will be submitted for study by December 1979.

Canada and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) have agreed to commence negotiations for a settlement of outstanding property questions between Canadian citizens and the Government of the German Democratic Republic. Canadians who have property claims outstanding against the German Democratic Republic are to submit details of their claims to the Department of External Affairs before January 31, 1979. Claimants must have been Canadian citizens at the time of loss. Further details, together with forms and instructions on procedures, are available from: Economic Law Section, Legal Advisory Division, Department of External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson Building, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0G2.

Quebec Communications Minister Louis O'Neill said on July 14 that the Quebec government had no plans to create its own news agency. Mr. O'Neill, releasing a report on a study to see whether such an agency was feasible, said that while there was some interest in the idea, there were also reservations, including concern that an agency subsidized by the provincial government would not be independent.

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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.

Prince Philip, who has been awarded the St. Boniface General Hospital Research Foundation's International Award for 1978, will receive it at a dinner at the Winnipeg Convention Centre on October 15. The principal beneficiary of the honorarium will be The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Canada, founded by Prince Philip, which emphasizes fitness for young people. The award is bestowed annually in recognition of efforts in medical research and leadership in the promotion of health care.

Ontario has begun its \$1.9-million program to provide French-language versions for more than 150 of the province's 700 revised statutes. The program, to cover four or five years, follows a commitment by the Government in the Speech from the Throne last February to establish "a special section...to begin work on translating Ontario's statutes into French". Laws dealing with human or civil rights, benefits, grants or penalties — "the ones that have the most public use and most affect people" — have been selected for translation.

The Department of Veterans Affairs plans to open nine new offices and establish regional headquarters across the country next year to provide improved services to veterans and their dependants. The new offices will be in Corner Brook, Newfoundland; Campbellton, New Brunswick; Sherbrooke and Gatineau, Quebec; Brampton and Peterborough, Ontario; Brandon, Manitoba; Penticton and Prince George, British Columbia.

Higher unemployment benefits help reduce the probability of subsequent unemployment, says a report by Statistics Canada. Relaxation of unemployment insurance rules in 1971 made it possible for those out of work to take longer to look for new long-term jobs and, while this meant longer periods on benefits, it also meant those involved were less likely to be unemployed again.

Quebec Premier René Lévesque has announced that the province's hourly minimum wage of \$3.27 will be increased by 10 cents on October 1 and by a further 10 cents next April 1. The two-step increase covers all people receiving the minimum wage, except those under 18 years of age and employees who receive tips.

Ontario used less electricity than expected last year, says an Ontario Hydro spokesman. Last year's increase was 6 per cent, compared with an average of 12 per

cent for each of the previous ten years. Ottawa was the only city in the province to use less electricity last year than in 1976, perhaps because less is being used in government buildings.

Consumer price indexes rose in all regional cities from May to June, with increases ranging from 0.5 per cent in St. John's, Newfoundland and Thunder Bay, Ontario to 1.0 per cent in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Higher prices for beef cuts and increased home-ownership charges were largely responsible for these advances. Other important contributing factors were higher prices for poultry, fresh fruit, selected clothing items, some imported and North American model cars and train and inter-city bus fares. Lower prices were recorded for fresh vegetables, especially for lettuce and tomatoes, automobile insurance premiums and, in some cities, gasoline.

Wholesale sales in Canada totalled \$5.38 billion in May, an increase of 5.6 per cent from \$5.52 billion a year earlier.

Canadian Pacific Rail has agreed to turn over 334 acres in British Columbia to the St. Mary's Indian band as partial compensation for damage to reserve property caused by the diversion of the St. Mary's River in 1969. CP Rail and the federal Department of Indian Affairs have agreed to share equally the cost of the band's claim to a total of 2,800 acres.

The minimum age for marriage in Ontario has been raised from 14 to 16. Consent to marry from both parents will be required for those under 18, although there are provisions for one parent or separated families. The new legislation abolishes the notion of illegitimate children for all purposes of law, making it unnecessary for teenagers to marry simply to prevent "illegitimacy".

The unsuspecting British Columbian public has been at the mercy of a zany plot to subvert the federal metric-conversion program, throwing otherwise earnest students of the measurement system into fits of rage. Among many widely circulated official-looking, bilingual notices are those advising consumers of metric packages of eggs (ten constitute a dozen), five-pack cases of beer, and a gross of ten metric dozen (100 instead of 144). There is also a rumour of plans to switch to metric time! A B.C. metric office spokesman, Peter Hall expects more capers but, he says, "as long as these hoaxes don't hurt anybody too seriously, a little lighthearted injection isn't that harmful".