

Canada recognizes North Vietnam

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, announced on February 7 that Canada had extended formal recognition to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and that the Prime Minister had sent the following message to Premier Pham Van Dong:

"On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to express my gratification at the conclusion of the 'Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam', which was signed in Paris on January 27 by representatives of your Government and representatives of other parties concerned."

The following message was also sent to Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem of the Republic of Vietnam, which Canada already recognizes as the sole legal Government of South Vietnam:

"On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to express my gratification at the conclusion of the 'Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam', which was recently signed in Paris. I would hope that in the future we shall be able to work together to strengthen the cordial relations which already exist between our two countries."

The effect of this decision to extend recognition to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam means that Canada now accords equal status to the two Vietnams.

There is no immediate intention of exchanging ambassadors with either of the two Vietnams, although Canadian representatives are now in Saigon and Hanoi as members of the international commissions established in 1954 and 1973.

Spent fuel storage vaults

Rather than bury its radioactive wastes in abandoned mines or man-made cavities, Canada intends to store spent radioactive fuels in specially constructed buildings above ground.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited says that the first of the "engineered storage facilities" is likely to be built in the mid-1980s somewhere in Ontario

to handle the accumulating wastes from nuclear reactors at such stations as Pickering and Bruce.

Each building will be designed to last about 100 years, by which time it is hoped that better methods for disposing of nuclear wastes will have been found. It takes about a million years for all the radioactive components of spent fuel bundles to decay.

Engineered storage facilities will represent the second phase in the long-term storage of spent reactor fuels. Spent fuel bundles are first placed in special water-storage bays at Canadian nuclear plants, where they will remain for a number of years while most radioactive.

Fur prices increase

Fur prices increased sharply with the start of the 1972-73 marketing season, and mink producers were optimistic that the market would remain firm, at least until the end of January, when the bulk of Canada's production — about 1 million pelts from some 800 farms — would have moved to market.

The return of strong prices will enable mink ranchers to pay off debts accumulated during recent years, when prices sometimes sank below the cost of production.

Fur prices normally fluctuate and, in the past, strong prices have often been followed by a sag as buyers fill their needs. This year, however, demand is strong and there are indications that the fur industry may be on a general upswing.

Although the reason for increased demand is hard to define, there is speculation that incomes round the world are rising to the point where more consumers can afford the luxury of fur.

Prices for ranched mink in December were about 25 percent higher than they were a year earlier.

Furs of all colours were in demand, but price increases were strongest for female pelts, which are smaller and lighter than the males, and therefore well suited for capes and jackets, currently popular retail items.

Demand was very strong for furs from the North, and competition by buyers from many countries pushed prices to

the highest levels in many years.

Beaver pelts brought about 35 percent more this year, red fox almost 100 percent more, white fox 60 per cent, with a 100 percent increase for the lower grades, and a 35 percent increase for muskrat. Lynx pelts set record prices, white coyote and raccoon prices advanced nearly 100 per cent.

The number of wild furs available in December was limited; substantially larger quantities were available in January.

Radio link for trains

A new "point-to-point" radio system — the first development of its kind for CP rail — has been put into operation on the railway's busy Revelstoke division between Kamloops and Field, British Columbia.

The radio network gives dispatchers for the first time, at Revelstoke, direct voice contact with trains on the move anywhere on the 254-mile division, as well as with maintenance gangs along the right-of-way and with the railway's motor vehicles on adjacent highways. Designed to supplement existing signalling and communications system the point-to-point radio system is expected to improve control of train movements and upgrade service through the tough mountain region.

"This new ability to communicate by radio directly with the enginemen and maintenance-of-way crews enables our operating personnel to minimize train delays and will help to keep traffic moving during the heavy winter snowfall," says Mr. J.D. Bromley, general manager, operations and maintenance, Pacific region.

It is expected that the new system will eventually eliminate the need for trackside telephones at points along the line. It can also be used to supplement the centralized traffic-control system which arranges train "meets" by remote control of signals and power-operated track switches. Aboard trains, the system utilizes the same mobile radios with which CP Rail locomotives have been equipped since the mid-Sixties, mainly for end-to-end communication between enginemen and conductors.

Each of the nine new base stations has a 100-foot aerial and a building housing two transmitter-receivers.