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Work safety data computerized

Labour Canada recently inaugurated a computerized service to provide up-to-date information on workplace hazards as well as other occupational safety and health data.

The service is available to workers, employers, government, workplace health and safety committees, and the general public. It is provided through a computer terminal located in Labour Canada's headquarters, linked to a major world-wide data base developed by the International Labour Organization in Geneva. The Canadian data base is managed by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) in Hamilton, Ontario.

The terminal is being installed, on an experimental basis, to supply information on a wide range of occupational health and safety questions, including safe job conduct and dangerous substances.

Terminals have been or will be installed in various centres across Canada by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Future CCOHS plans call for terminals which would allow users to "converse" with the computer in order to explain better their information requests.

Northern oil deal announced

Esso Resources Canada Limited of Calgary and ten Canadian companies will participate in a $600-million exploration program over the next five years in the Mackenzie River delta-Beaufort Sea region.

The deal, covering six exploration agreements between Esso and the federal government, is the first since passage late last year of the Canada Oil and Gas Lands Act, the new federal program for petroleum activity on frontier lands.

The agreements cover six million acres of land both onshore in the Mackenzie delta and offshore in the Beaufort Sea.

Land returned to government

At present, the entire acreage is shared 86 per cent by Esso and 14 per cent by Petro-Canada. Under the energy legislation, half of the land is turned back to the federal government, with 25 per cent relinquished after the third year and 25 per cent after the fourth year of the agreement.

Under the deal, Esso will farm out a major portion of its own lands to ten Canadian companies with Home Oil Company Limited of Calgary acting as the operator.

The remaining partners are Canalands Energy Corporation, Bralorne Resources Limited, Oakwood Petroleums Limited, Spitzee Resources Limited, Valley Industries Limited, Bow Valley Industries Limited, Westcoast Petroleum, 107180 Canada Limited, the oil and gas arm of Manufacturers Life Insurance Company, Argyll Resources Limited, and MLC Oil and Gas Limited.

Esso Resources' parent, Imperial Oil Limited of Toronto, controlled by Exxon Corporation of New York, is the only U.S.-controlled multinational represented in the agreement with a 10 per cent share.

Petrocan's 14 per cent interest is not affected by the announcement.

Assuming the companies make commercial discoveries and go to the production phase of development, and counting in the 25 per cent Crown share interest in all frontier lands, Esso would effectively wind up with 37 per cent of production of oil and gas. The federal government would have 25 per cent, with 14 per cent for Petrocan and the remainder divided among the remaining partners in the farm-out arrangement.

Between 60 and 70 per cent of the $600-million exploration program — in effect more than $400 million — will be funded by federal petroleum incentives which provided grants worth up to 93 cents for every dollar of exploration by companies with at least 67 per cent Canadian ownership.

Canada co-hosts OECD ministerial meeting

Mats Jonell

Mr. Gray (left) *and Mr. Asling speak with reporters following the closed door sessions.*

Canadian Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion Herb Gray, along with his Swedish counterpart, Neil Asling, co-hosted a recent meeting of regional development ministers from member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The sessions afforded the 19 national representatives, 15 of them of ministerial rank, the opportunity to have a frank exchange of views on current regional issues, both at the conference table and on a one-to-one basis. The meetings addressed the growth of protectionism and the wide differences of opinion on regional development ranging from the free market economies to those that are highly structured.

Traditional regional problems have recently been complicated by massive sectoral disruption — for example, the North American auto industry has been hard hit by world-wide recession and increased international competition.

On the Canadian front, Mr. Gray explained that more than $500 million would be spent in the next three to four years through the federal Industry and Labour Adjustment Program and the Canadian Industrial Renewal Board to meet the problems of regionally concentrated sectoral decline.