

promoted their products and services, covering the complete range of offshore hydrocarbon exploration and production activity, at the Offshore Technology Conference (External Affairs press release May 3).

Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Marc Lalonde addressed the conference May 4. His speech focussed on Canada's National Energy Program, which Mr. Lalonde felt had been misunderstood by US investors.

Forest Fire Fighting Agreement

External Affairs Minister Mark MacGuigan announced May 7 that an agreement had been reached between Canada and the US authorizing the direct exchange of forest fire fighting resources among participating departments and agencies of the two countries. Individual Canadian provincial and federal agencies will deal directly with US agencies in exchanging fire fighting resources as the need arises without having to go through complicated channels of approval each time. The agreement involves all provinces except P.E.I., Quebec and Newfoundland, who had chosen to opt out of the federally-sponsored agreement.

Ocean Ranger Inquiry

The cause of the February 15 sinking of the oil rig "Ocean Ranger" was not established during an eight-day US inquiry into the disaster which claimed the lives of all eighty-four crewmen. The "Ocean Ranger" was an American-owned oil rig drilling off the coast of Newfoundland. The inquiry, held in late May in Boston, was attended by two of the Canadian Commissioners who are part of a Royal Commission looking into the disaster. The Royal Commission, set up by the Canadian and Newfoundland governments, is not expected to start hearings until October 1982. The US inquiry will continue its investigations in New Orleans in June 1982 (*Globe and Mail*, April 21; *The Citizen*, May 3).

ALGERIA

Construction of Training Centres

The Minister of State for International Trade, Ed Lumley, announced April 15 that three Montreal firms have been invited by the Algerian government to construct and provide technical and education equipment for thirty-five vocational training centres in Algeria. According to an External Affairs press release, the value of the contracts is about \$125 million, with materials and equipment to be supplied by various companies across Canada. Financing for the training centres will be provided by the Export Development Corporation.

Canada-Algeria Joint Commission

The Minister of State for External Relations, Pierre De Bané, was in Algeria to chair the Second Session of the

Canada-Algeria Joint Commission between April 19 and April 21. The main objectives were to examine bilateral cooperation in economic exchanges and to explore the possibilities of expanding cooperation in scientific and technical areas. Both Canadian and Algerian representatives were reported pleased with the mission, which included negotiations for cooperation in professional training and tourism. Algeria is Canada's most important trading partner in Africa and the Middle East (External Affairs press releases, April 19 and 26).

Wheat Agreement

The minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Senator Hazen Argue, announced April 20 the signing of a long-term grains agreement with Algeria. The three-year agreement involves the sale of between 500,000 and 700,000 tonnes of durum wheat and a possible 100,000 tonnes of bread wheat annually. Total value of the deal is estimated at close to \$500 million, according to a press release from the office of Senator Argue. The agreement provides a fifty percent increase in the maximum and minimum amounts of grain to be delivered to Algeria annually.

ARGENTINA

Candu Reactor

The Canadian government stood firm during April and May against repeated opposition to its contract to complete work on a Candu reactor in Argentina and to ship nuclear fuel to that country. Opposition MPs registered their concern about the possibility that Argentina would use the nuclear fuel for weapons development as Argentina continued to defend its occupation of the Falkland Islands, and demanded that Canada breach the contract.

Argentina's refusal to sign a 1968 UN Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, its refusal to comply with UN resolutions demanding the withdrawal of forces from the Falkland Islands, and the military government's human rights violations led concerned Canadians to speculate that Argentina could not be trusted not to use nuclear fuel to build nuclear weapons (*Calgary Herald*, May 15, *Citizen*, April 17 and 23, *Globe and Mail*, May 27 and 29).

The official government position was to conduct business-as-usual with Argentina with respect to Canada's nuclear export contract, while maintaining sanctions against imports from that country. There were seventy-one Canadian specialists in Argentina putting the finishing touches on the Candu reactor near Buenos Aires, due to start up next year. Three thousand uranium fuel bundles were scheduled to be shipped to Argentina in early June.

Opponents to Canada's fulfilling of the contract believed that Canada should embargo the fuel exports, and recall the Canadians working on the Candu reactor in Argentina. According to opposition MPs, this would thwart or impede any Argentine attempt to start up the reactor and convert its spent fuel for the purpose of nuclear weapons