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## Van pools save gasoline

The Ontario Government is offering van pools for commuters who are tired of travelling to and from work by public transit or car.

The van pool — which works the same as a car pool — could take 7,500 drivers off the road and save 23 million litres of gasoline a year, ministry of transportation officials say.

Michele Harding of the government's Share-A-Ride program said the ministry itself has run three vans since last spring and knows of 54 others taking people to and from work for big corporations in Ontario.

The government is trying to encourage commuters who cannot use mass transit to go into van pools instead of driving. Government planners estimate there are enough potential van commuters in Ontario to keep 1,000 of the mini-buses active. They say that for every van, 7.5 cars are left at home, saving 22,730 litres of gasoline a year.

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## Students learn how to work

School authorities in Thompson, Manitoba, have hit on an unusual solution to the problem of high school drop-outs. They have introduced a learning-to-work class in which students whose interests are not focused on traditional subjects are given the opportunity to find out what it will be like to work after they graduate from school.

Students at the R.D. Parker Collegiate were allowed to choose from two new courses, one in building construction, the other in mineral science technology. The latter course is popular in a town whose main industry is the giant Inco nickel mine and smelter.

The building construction course captured the imagination of students because the decision was made that the best way to learn would be for students to build a real house. That house — a bungalow measuring 1,400 square feet — is now finished. Building a house was a decision that flowed logically from a lack of technical workrooms in which to train students, and it was decided that there was no better workshop than actually building a house.

On site, the students built forms for the foundation and basement, installed

steel reinforcements and poured concrete. They erected the shell of the house and did everything required except electrical wiring, plumbing, heating and interior painting. These jobs are being done by outside contractors. Later, the students will learn these skills too, and be able to build an entire house on their own.

When the house is finished, it will be sold so that the program is virtually self-financing. Once costs of materials and of hiring the sub-contractors has been deducted, the balance will go to paying for improvements to the program.

Students engaged in these learn-to-work courses must spend half of their school hours learning traditional subjects, but their attitude to school has improved markedly.

*(David MacDonald from Canadian Scene, February 15, 1980.)*

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## New blancher saves energy

A new commercial-scale blancher developed by Agriculture Canada scientists in Nova Scotia may lead to energy savings for the vegetable freezing industry.

Before vegetables are frozen, they must be blanched, or scalded, to destroy enzymes that would reduce their quality while frozen. Normally, vegetables are immersed in water heated by oil burners.

The new blancher, developed by Agriculture Canada's Research Station in Kentville, Nova Scotia, uses a steam process and requires only one-tenth as much energy as conventional systems.

The commercial-scale blancher, known as the K-2 was operated in parallel with a conventional water blancher used by a local processor.

The K-2 blanched five pounds of vegetables for every pound of steam, while conventional systems process only about one-half pound of vegetables with an equivalent amount of steam.

Another major advantage of the new system is that its freezing capacity is double that of conventional systems.

### How it works

Vegetables pass through a valve and into a sealed steam cabinet. Steam is then blasted through a single layer of vegetables. Because the cabinet is sealed, steam can be recirculated.

The vegetables then move through another valve into a holding area. For about one minute, heat is allowed to penetrate

to the centre of the vegetables.

The vegetables then go through an air cooler, which dries surface moisture. The next step, freezing, can be done quickly because the vegetables are nearly dry.

In most conventional systems, vegetables are kept in hot water until they are heated to the center then immersed in cold water. They are still dripping with water when they are moved into the freezer.

Energy is wasted in the freezer, because the unit is freezing water as well as vegetables; a layer of ice on vegetables acts as insulation and it takes a long time for complete freezing.

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## Portugal to buy Canadian fish

Portugal has agreed to significantly increase its imports of Canadian cod, squid and redfish under a 1980 bilateral fisheries agreement signed recently in Lisbon.

Under the new agreement, Portugal will guarantee purchases from Canadian companies of 10,000 metric tons of cod products and 1,500 metric tons of squid or equivalent squid products in 1980. It has also agreed to buy at least 60 per cent of its total redfish imports from Canada. In 1979 Portugal imported approximately 4,500 metric tons of cod, 650 metric tons of squid and 200 metric tons of redfish from Canada.

In a move to help check unregulated fishing in North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) waters outside of Canada's 200-mile limit, Portugal has agreed to take all possible action to prevent "flag of convenience" transfers of Portuguese vessels and crews to non-NAFO countries and to impede the entry into Portugal of the catches of such vessels taken from NAFO waters. If necessary, Portugal will exercise its influence by way of the regional authorities of the Azores to have them close their ports to offending vessels.

Portugal's increase in purchases of Canadian cod would be made up of 2,500 metric tons of dry salted cod, 2,500 metric tons of frozen cod and 5,000 metric tons of wet salted cod. These purchase levels would be met or exceeded provided supplies are available and that the cod is of reasonable quality and offered at normal world prices.

Delegations of the two countries will meet again in September to review developments and discuss the outlook for 1981.