

### COPPER PRICE RAISED

The International Nickel Company of Canada, Limited, has announced that, following similar moves by other Canadian producers, it has raised the domestic price of its copper to 45¢ a pound, effective January 6. This brings the company's Canadian price into conformity with its European overseas price and the prevailing world price of copper. International nickel sells all its copper in Canadian and European markets.

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### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

Mr. Allan J. MacEachen, Minister of Health and Welfare, said recently that he hoped the meeting of federal and provincial ministers of welfare, held in Ottawa recently, would complete federal-provincial discussions on the Canada Assistance Plan so that the proposed federal legislation could be introduced early in the coming session of Parliament. The Canada Assistance Plan represents a joint endeavour by the provincial and federal governments to develop a modern integrated plan of public assistance.

The Minister pointed out that the provinces would have some \$60-million worth of new financial resources with which to improve the existing assistance rates and to provide additional income for old age pensioners who needed to have their pension supplemented. These additional funds result from the lowering of the age to 69 under old age security, thereby relieving the provinces of old age assistance costs, and from new payments under the Canada Assistance Plan to aid in the cost of mothers' allowances and health care.

### CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN

The Canada Assistance Plan was first brought before Parliament in the Speech from the Throne last April. It is one of the group of measures presented at that time as part of the concerted effort to increase opportunity and reduce poverty. The Plan represents federal recognition that public assistance and associated welfare services have an important and positive role to play in attacking poverty and the effects of poverty on the economic and social well-being of Canadians. Seen in this context, public assistance takes on a new and more constructive role - that is, it is designed not only to relieve need, but also to provide the services and support required to enable the individual to attain or regain the fullest measure of self-support and independence of which he is capable.

### CHIEF ITEMS

The main features of the Plan, designed to achieve this objective, are: a comprehensive approach, mothers' allowances, assistance on the basis of need, medicare, administration and welfare services, supplementation of income, Indian welfare and work-activity projects.

Mr. MacEachen emphasized that, though the Federal Government would contribute, through the Canada Assistance Plan, to the costs of assistance and

welfare services, responsibility for determining the exact form of the programmes and for administration, rested with the provinces. This means that programmes can be designed by each province to meet its particular circumstances. The Plan, however, will help to ensure that all Canadians can have access to needed assistance.

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### HEART CARE FOR THE UNBORN

A team of doctors from the National Research Council and the Ottawa Civic Hospital has developed a simple low-cost preamplifier to help obstetricians keep a closer watch on the development and condition of unborn children. It is hoped that the machine will become as popular among physicians as the stethoscope.

Used in conjunction with any standard electrocardiograph, the machine enables physicians to record the faint heartbeats of an unborn child which cannot be recorded by a standard electrocardiograph as they are masked by the mother's heartbeat, her muscular electrical activity or by external electrical interference.

In 1964, the Instrument Section of NRC's Radio and Electrical Engineering Division developed a special electrocardiograph for recording the heartbeats of unborn children. However, this machine is expensive, costing about \$2,000.

In an effort to encourage wider use of fetal electrocardiography, Dr. Graham Schuler of the Instrument Section, has developed a simple pre-amplifier to pick up fetal heartbeats and feed them into a standard electrocardiograph. This machine produces a graph that distinguishes the fetal heartbeat from that of the mother.

### SIMPLE AND INEXPENSIVE

Dr. Schuler said it is not claimed that this device has any virtue other than its simplicity of operation and very low cost which will make the benefits of fetal electrocardiography more widely available.

The preamplifier, which is about the size of a donut, can be manufactured and sold for about \$60 to \$100. It was displayed for the first time by Canadian Patents and Development Limited, a subsidiary of NRC, at the Canadian Electronics Conference in Toronto recently.

The new machine will be useful in determining whether an unborn child is alive or dead. It will help doctors to determine how a baby is getting along and whether it is in trouble due to labour, knotting or occlusion of the umbilical cord or because the mother is hemorrhaging. In addition, the machine will be useful in indicating the position in which a baby is lying in the uterus, monitoring the baby's heartbeat during labour, determining the best time for performing a Caesarean section or inducing labour in incompatibility conditions and in testing an unborn baby's heart condition by temporarily lowering the mother's supply of oxygen.