

LEGATION IN BEIRUT: The Department of External Affairs announced on August 26 that the Governments of Canada and Lebanon have agreed to exchange diplomatic representatives at an early date with a view to developing the bonds of friendship between the two countries which have, during recent years, become closer through common membership in the United Nations and specialized agencies.

It is planned to open the Canadian Legation in Beirut within the next two months. During the absences of the Minister, who will also be accredited as head of the Canadian Mission in Cairo, a senior officer of the Department of External Affairs will act as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim. The Canadian Government Trade Commissioner in Beirut will be attached to the Legation with the rank of Commercial Secretary. Lebanon, now represented in Canada by a Consul General, will open a Legation in Ottawa.

It is hoped that this step will help to promote trade between the two countries as well as other economic, social and cultural interests which they have in common.

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RAIL EARNINGS, COSTS AT PEAK: Earnings of railways in Canada topped all previous records in 1952 when they grossed \$1,172,159,000. This was 7.6% above the previous peak of \$1,088,584,000 in 1951, and steeply above 1948's \$875,833,000. Operating expenses also climbed to a new high of \$1,057,186,000 from \$977,577,000 in 1951 and \$808,126,000 in 1948.

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PETROLEUM, GAS INCREASES: Production of 8 of Canada's 16 leading minerals rose in the first five months this year. Petroleum advanced to 34,362,355 barrels from 26,582,392 in January-May last year, natural gas to 57,602,220 M cubic feet from 46,356,588, clay products to \$10,463,021 from \$10,189,760, copper to 118,638 tons from 113,258, gypsum to 1,143,646 tons from 1,093,238, lead to 91,088 tons from 85,333, lime to 497,890 tons from 495,342, and nickel to 64,262 tons from 58,647.

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Last year Canadians visiting the United States for more than 48 hours spent an average of \$86, while Americans visiting Canada spent an average of only \$52. This compared with averages of \$88 and \$51, respectively, in 1952.

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RETAIL SALES DIP: Retail trade was again slightly under last year's level in June and the half-year sales total of \$5,690,158,000 was 1.5% less than 1953's \$5,775,608,000. June sales aggregated \$1,052,422,000 versus \$1,058,430,000 last year. Except for a slight increase in March retail trade has been lower in every month this year, the May decline of 3.2% being the sharpest.

Sales of retailers east of Manitoba were higher this June, but these gains were overbalanced by lower volume west of Ontario. In the first six months, sales in the Atlantic Provinces were up a slight 0.2% to \$482,607,000, but were down 0.3% in Quebec to \$1,333,023,000, 0.2% in Ontario to \$2,210,137,000, 2.9% in Manitoba to \$310,248,000, 9.4% in Saskatchewan to \$339,235,000, 6.2% in Alberta to \$432,331,000 and 1% in British Columbia to \$582,603,000.

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FARM PRICE RISE: With higher prices for live stock and potatoes more than offsetting lower prices for grains, dairy products, and poultry and eggs, the Bureau's Index of farm prices of agricultural products for all Canada (Newfoundland excluded) rose 1.5 points in June to an estimated 234.9 from the revised figure of 233.4 for May. It was the second successive monthly advance in the index following declines in March and April and brought it to the highest level since October last year when it stood at 236.0.

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25TH BRIGADE TRAINING: An intensified programme of current affairs training has been launched for officers and men of the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade in Korea.

Specially selected officers, representing units within the formation, have been undergoing refresher training. Subjects include the principles of instructions and the conduct of discussion groups, lectures, forums and debates among troops.

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Provincial governments had net general revenues totalling \$1,314,000,000 last year, \$93,000,000 or 8% more than in 1952 and \$473,000,000 or 56% more than five years earlier. Taxes provided less than 31% in 1953 and 1952 as compared with nearly half the total in 1949.