

SOUTHEAST ASIA AIR SURVEY

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Howard Green, announced on October 22 that an agreement had been signed in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on the 19th of October 1959. between Canada and the Governments of Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam to provide for Canadian participation in a survey of the Mekong River Basin. The agreement was signed on behalf of Canada by Mr. D'Iberville Fortier, Canadian Representative to the Mekong Co-ordination Committee.

Parliament was informed on March 12, 1959, of the Canadian Government's decision to participate in the project initiated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East for investigation of the resources of the Mekong River Basin in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand. All these Southeast Asian countries are members of the Colombo Plan and Canadian assistance to the project is being provided as part of Canada's Colombo Plan programme. The eventual development of the Mekong River will benefit the four riparian states in the form of flood control, irrigation, hydro-electric power and improved navigation.

The Canadian contribution to the Mekong Basin project will take the form of aerial survey and mapping of the lower Mekong River and some of its tributaries. The agreement signed in Phnom Penh on October 19 sets out in detail the work Canada will undertake, at a cost of 1.3 million dollars. The agreement also defines the facilities and contributions to be provided by the four co-operating local governments.

The Photographic Survey Corporation of Toronto has been awarded a contract by the Canadian Government to act as management engineers for the Mekong survey. The survey will begin in November 1959 and is expected to take two years.

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SEAWAY TRAFFIC GROWS

In the current navigation season to the end of September, 14,200,000 tons of cargo were carried through the St. Lawrence Seaway (from Montreal to Lake Ontario), the increase over the tonnage passing through the old St. Lawrence canals to the same date last year being 67 per cent. Figures for the month of September and the year to date were released recently by the Canadian and United States Seaway authorities, on a preliminary basis and subject to revision when all returns have been processed. To September 30, the upbound movement increased by over 4,000,000 tons (116 per cent) and the downbound tonnage by 1,500,000 tons (31 per cent).

Cargo carried during September amounted to 2,600,000 tons, of which 71 per cent was upbound. The total was 81 per cent ahead of the corresponding figure for 1958.

FOOD FOR STRICKEN JAPANESE

The Prime Minister, Mr. Diefenbaker, recently announced a donation of 100,000 pounds of Canadian canned pork as further relief assistance to the victims of the severe typhoon that struck Japan on September 26. This shipment, which will be taken from Government-held stocks, will represent a value of about \$60,000. Arrangements are now being made to have it transported to Japan as quickly as possible.

The Prime Minister said that the gift was in addition to the \$20,000 in cash grants from the International Relief Fund that had been made available to the Japanese Red Cross for the emergency relief of victims of Typhoon Vera through the Canadian Red Cross Society.

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STRATFORD AUDITIONS

Seventy-two actors and actresses, from widely separated points on the North American continent, were auditioned at the Stratford Festival Theatre during the first two weeks of preparation for the 1960 season. Appearing alone on the platform stage, they read from Shakespeare, Shaw and contemporary playwrights in the echoing auditorium before an audience of two -- Michael Langham, artistic director and general manager, and John Hayes, production manager.

The majority of the performers came from Toronto, although Winnipeg, Ottawa and Montreal were also represented. About a third came from the United States, making the trip on speculation, fully aware that their chance of being included in any future Festival company was slimmer than that of the Canadians.

One young man hitch-hiked all the way from Boston, arriving with \$10 in his pocket.

Three flew up from Cleveland, on their day off from the Cleveland Playhouse.

One Toronto girl overslept and, fearing she might miss her appointment, took a 100-mile taxi-ride from Toronto to Stratford.

Each audition took from 15 to 30 minutes, and every player had his own choice of material. For the men, one of the favorite selections was the opening speech from "Richard III", with which Alec Guinness dramatically launched the first Festival season in 1953. A surprising number of women chose Portia's speech from "Julius Caesar." Others read portions of such modern works as "Cyrano de Bergerac," "Misalliance", "Saint Joan" and "The Skin of our Teeth".

While the majority, of course, were bent on gaining a place in the 1960 Festival company (the complement of which has not yet been decided), several were interested only in applying as apprentices. In a plan to broaden the apprentice system, which began to function modestly in 1958 and was slightly expanded during the past summer, Mr. Langham expects to engage about 10 such fledgling actors in the

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