

## Science Council of Canada

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age its agencies, such as Petro-Canada, or influence its partners, such as Pan-Arctic, to increase and co-ordinate their efforts in developing the necessary technological capabilities. This will enable early access to oil and gas resources and ensure significant transfer to Canadians of the benefits accruing from such industrial development.

"On the other hand, AECL is clearly the chosen instrument for demonstration of the feasibility of a thorium cycle nuclear reactor. In this case, AECL will need to ensure that Canadian industry becomes involved at the outset, so that an indigenous technological capability and structure of appropriate size is in place by the time the new reactor reaches the stage of commercialization.

"One particularly innovative management structure is the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority (AOSTRA), which was set up to capture, hold and manage the intellectual property surrounding *in-situ* oil sands.... It has an initial fund of \$100 million to allocate among contractors, for industrial research and pilot projects related to *in-situ* extraction and production of hydrocarbons from oil sands. AOSTRA is, thereby, a powerful instrument for the implementation of the policies of the Alberta government.

"The sharing of responsibilities with respect to transportation, storage and disposal of irradiated fuel, is an illustration of co-operation between federal and provincial government organizations.

"Merging government expertise, at federal and provincial levels, with industrial expertise in energy-related demonstration projects, will ensure that Canada is able to develop and maintain technological sovereignty in key areas of the energy sector. This sector is, in turn,

inextricably tied to economic, social and political sovereignty."

### The Council's conclusions

The Council concludes that the report's "main thrust is not to make rigid decisions, but — because of uncertainty — to advance a diversified and broadened supply options base, and thus provide, with greater confidence, more choices or future decisions. An important by-product will be an increase in the system's stability".

"National demonstrations are suitable instruments for progressively reducing un-

certainty. Demonstration results, being invested with the "authority of actual presence for all to see", will bring research and development objectives into better focus," says the report.

The Council's conclusions are based on the technological experience of a group of experts, who within the framework of the study during the years 1976-1978, ranked "the various technologies in accordance with technical, economic, and socio-political criteria". The recommended demonstrations must be viewed as extensions of the technologies ordered by priority, says the Council.

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### News briefs

**The Chief Justice** of Canada, Bora Laskin, was given an honorary doctorate from Harvard University at its spring convocation. Others honoured included Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor of West Germany; Sir George Solit, musician; Yves Cousteau, French oceanographer; and Prof. Milton Freidman of Chicago, a Nobel Laureate in economics.

**Directors of the Provincial Bank** of Canada and the Bank Canadian National, both of Montreal, have agreed in principle to merge the two banks. Bank Canadian National ranks sixth in terms of assets among the Canadian banks with assets of \$8.6-billion at April 30, and Provincial Bank ranks seventh with assets of \$5.3-billion. The merger must be approved by regulatory authorities and shareholders.

**Canada's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** declined to 7.5 per cent in June, its lowest level since December, 1976, Statistics Canada reports. The June rate compares with jobless levels of 7.7 per cent in May and 8.5 per cent in June, 1978. The seasonally adjusted number of unemployed was 831,000, down from 853,000 in May and down from 923,000 in June, 1978.

**A British Columbia company** has been awarded a \$600,000 (U.S.) contract to build an underwater recovery system for the U.S. Navy. International Submarine Ltd. of Port Moody will build the unmanned submersible, to be used mainly in the recovery of torpedoes and other ordnance. The craft is expected to be employed at a weapons range off the British Columbia coast. The underwater craft is scheduled to be completed by the end of November.

**A joint Canada-U.S. tourism study** group has been established to examine the possibility of creating a pass similar to Europe's Eurailpass. But unlike the Eurailpass — a ticket good for unlimited travel on railroads in a number of European countries for a certain length of time — the pass proposed at the seventh annual conference of U.S. governors from six New England States and five eastern Canadian premiers would apply to other forms of public transportation as well. The creation of the pass was a recommendation of a Quebec Tourism Department study group looking into ways of increasing tourism in Eastern Canada and the northeastern United States.

**Department store sales** totalled \$685.1 million in May, up 12.1 per cent from a year earlier, according to Statistics Canada. In Ontario, sales totalled \$248.4 million, up 10.1 per cent from a year earlier; Quebec \$135.3 million, up 11.1 per cent; British Columbia \$107 million, up 15.8 per cent; Alberta \$92.7 million, up 14.4 per cent; Manitoba \$37.6 million, up 9.8 per cent; Saskatchewan \$18.7 million, up 16.2 per cent; and Atlantic Provinces \$45.3 million, up 14 per cent.

**A small pine tree** in Touraine, Quebec, near Ottawa became the roost recently for about 7,000 bees that had followed their queen out of an unknown hive. The bees were spotted by Robert and Diane Vachon who called the police and a beekeeper. The queen bee was lured into a crate baited with honey, and the rest of the swarm slowly followed. The process took about two hours, and curious neighbourhood youngsters kept their calm and their distance. Nobody was stung and the origin of the bees is still unknown.

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