

Canada/EC pact in force

The Department of External Affairs and the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities announced the coming into force on October 1, 1976 the Framework Agreement for Commercial and Economic Co-operation between Canada and the European Communities (see *Canada Weekly* dated July 21, 1976).

As a result, the two sides are now in a position to convene the joint co-operation committee provided for in the agreement. The committee, which will be responsible for promoting and reviewing commercial and economic co-operation activities under the agreement, is expected to hold its first meeting before the end of the year.

The agreement, signed in Ottawa on July 6, this year, provides a framework to develop closer and more vigorous economic relations between Canada and the EC.

pondents wish to see Canada extend its contacts with the Far East in general, especially with Japan and the People's Republic of China, as well as with socialist countries such as the U.S.S.R., and with Latin America. The importance of Canada's links with Europe is seen in the context of foreign relations in general and Europe appears to share the limelight with major powers on other continents.

Study of trial procedures

Justice Minister Ron Basford recently announced federal funding of \$6,925 for a study by the University of Victoria Law School, British Columbia, to determine whether certain less serious criminal cases could be dealt with outside normal criminal trial procedures.

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The process of settling such cases before trial or even before a charge is laid is known as diversion, and has the aim of reducing the impact of the formal criminal justice process on the non-dangerous offender, and of encouraging him to take responsibility for his anti-social behaviour by making restitution to the victim and the community.

"Diversion of these kinds of cases from the criminal justice process could help to reduce the present overcrowding of Canadian courtrooms and spare the taxpayer the expense of criminal proceedings against the non-dangerous offender, who does not pose a threat to the security of his fellow citizens," Mr. Basford said.

"The Law Reform Commission of Canada has done much to develop and foster the diversion concept in their report on disposition and sentencing.

We now want to determine the practical implications of their proposals."

In the Victoria project, two students from the law school will assess cases brought forward for trial to see if any of them could have been diverted before trial or before police laid charges. The project will evaluate the success of the diversion process in Victoria, where a diversion program has been operating for almost two years.

Dr. K.B. Jobson, formerly a member of the Law Reform Commission and now professor of law at the Victoria Law School, and Professor L.R. Robinson will supervise the project. Ron Anderson and Nick Lang, both of the Victoria crown prosecutors office, will participate.

Following the three-and-a-half month study, ending October 31, a report will be prepared for the Dept. of Justice.

News briefs

■ Jean Chrétien, on his first mission as Industry, Trade and Commerce Minister, has sold heavy equipment and skim milk powder to Venezuela. In a telephone interview from Caracas on September 27, Mr. Chrétien said a contract had been signed with the Venezuelan Government for the sale of five hydro-electric generators worth \$60 million and 4,500 tons of surplus skim milk powder.

■ Winpak Ltd., a newly-created subsidiary of Wihuri-Yhtymä Oy, a group of 20 companies in Finland, will open a \$5.5-million manufacturing plant in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The plant, which will manufacture flexible packaging materials, mainly from nylon and polyethylene laminates for food and medical equipment, will employ 140 persons during its first year.

■ Housing starts during August were at a seasonally-adjusted rate of 222,900 for all areas, according to preliminary figures from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The July rate was 256,900. Actual starts in urban areas in August were 15,953, a decrease of 9 per cent from the 17,530 recorded in August last year. During the first eight months of 1976, starts totalled 135,695 dwelling units, compared to 101,108 in the same period last year.

■ At the end of 1974, Canadian direct investment abroad amounted to \$9,307

million, an increase of nearly 20 per cent for the year. This growth in book value exceeded the previous year's record advance by almost \$400 million. About two-thirds of the increase in direct investment occurred in the United States, bringing direct investment there to \$4,909 million, representing 53 per cent of total direct investment abroad.

■ Canada's merchandise trade balance improved substantially in August, with record export and import levels producing a surplus of \$193 million, reports Statistics Canada. Exports during the month, adjusted for seasonal variations on a balance-of-payments basis, totalled \$3,404 billion, while imports stood at \$3,211 billion. The deficit so far this year is \$3,036 million, over \$1 billion less than in 1975.

■ The broadcasting provisions of Bill C-58 have been proclaimed and will take effect immediately, Minister of Communications Jeanne Sauvé announced on September 22. The bill prevents the deduction from income, for tax purposes, of the cost of advertisements placed on U.S. broadcasting stations and aimed at Canadian markets. Although the bill received royal assent in July, the broadcasting sections did not take effect immediately, to allow time for interested parties to make representations to the Government on the availability of advertising time on Canadian stations.