



CANADA

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## CONTENTS

Marine Rescue in Canada .....	1	Quebec Promenade Christened .....	5
Giant Air Battle Recalled .....	2	Mexico's Independence Day .....	5
Winter Market for Builders .....	3	Oil Pollution in Newfoundland .....	5
Canadians to Live Longer .....	3	Pupuls' Progress .....	5
Air Terminal Nearly Ready .....	4	Consumer Price Indexes .....	6
Maple Products .....	4	One Canadian in 3 under 15 .....	6
Canada at UN 15th Session .....	4	Precision-Approach Radar .....	6

## MARINE RESCUE IN CANADA

The following is the text of a speech by Transport Minister Hees on the part played by the Federal Government in rescues at sea, at the official opening of the Nova Scotia Fisheries Exhibition and Fishermen's Reunion, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, on September 13:

"...For many years now the Royal Canadian Air Force has been responsible for co-ordinating rescue activities. At first, their responsibility referred only to aircraft in distress, but several years ago this was extended to include marine incidents. The Air Force has at its disposal rescue co-ordination centres at Halifax, Trenton and Vancouver. These are well equipped and well manned, and the communications systems in the respective areas are funnelled into them. In this way, they are in a position to be immediately aware of an accident, and of the ships and aircraft that are available for rescue.

"Under its own direct control, the Air Force has also adequate aircraft, including some helicopters. These aircraft are available for search purposes, and for such rescue operations as aircraft can handle. When practicable, RCAF aircraft are also available to deal with cases of serious accidents to individuals at sea, but not necessarily related to the safety of ships as such.

"All ships at sea are under an obligation laid down in the Canada Shipping Act to assist vessels in distress. In addition, Government ships have for some years been under a special directive to go to the aid of vessels in

danger, on orders of the rescue co-ordination centre, so as to relieve private vessels of this obligation whenever possible. I am speaking now of danger to life, as it has not been the policy of the Government to use government vessels for towing or salvage when private vessels are, or can be made, available.

"This was the situation I found when I took office. As far as it goes, it has been efficient and well run. However, I have found that more could be done on the marine side to make use of facilities ready to hand, whether these are owned by the Government or by private industry.

### MARINE CO-ORDINATORS

"As a first step in making use of all these marine facilities, three Marine Co-ordinators have recently been appointed--one each for the Atlantic region, the Great Lakes, and the Pacific Coast. Two of them, for the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, were appointed a few months ago; the third, a couple of weeks ago. The first two have already had time to discuss the situation with those concerned in their areas, and to come forward with preliminary recommendations, some of which are in the course of being acted upon.

"All government agencies operating ships have been contacted, and the co-ordination centres know just where they all are, and how to set them in motion in the event of distress calls. A substantial number of private organizations which are interested in ships,

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