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Petro-Canada opens first eastern Canadian gas stations

The first Petro-Canada gas stations in eastern Canada were opened October 26 as part of the federal government's plan to open a string of gasoline retail outlets across Canada.

Petrocan signs were officially unveiled at three stations in Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. These signs will soon be appearing above more than 1,000 gas stations in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes.

Petro-Canada, the federally-owned oil company acquired these stations and more when it bought control of Petrofina Canada Incorporated of Montreal from its Belgian-based parent company for \$1.46 billion last February (see *Canada Weekly* dated February 25, 1981). The job of converting the former Petrofina gas stations to Petrocan outlets should be completed by August 1982. Until now all of Petrocan's gas stations have been located in western Canada.

Petrofina gasoline sales have risen 5 per cent since the outlets were bought by Petro-Canada and eastern Canadian consumers have begun to apply for Petro-

can credit cards at a rate of 1,600 applications each month.

Petro-Canada also found that gasoline sales rose dramatically when it bought a chain of gas stations in western Canada. In the fall of 1978, the Crown corporation acquired Pacific Petroleum Limited. In October 1980, the Petro-Canada brand appeared for the first time in retail, wholesale and consumer markets using a new logo. The introduction of the new identity began with the installation of new signs and the launching of an advertising campaign to alert the public to the change.

Other activities

In addition to its retail activities the federally-owned oil and gas corporation has been involved in frontier oil and gas exploration, as well as exploration activities in the conventional producing areas of western Canada.

The company's exploration budget for 1981 is \$375 million with \$240 million destined for the frontiers and \$135 million for western Canada.



Energy Minister Marc Lalonde (wearing hat) fills up first tank at the official opening of a Petro-Canada gas station in Montreal.

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