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## Canada to host international conference for disabled

The Canadian Bureau for International Education and the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped in Canada are co-sponsoring a youth conference on travel and exchange for the disabled and their friends in the summer of 1981 in Toronto.

The conference will form part of Canada's participation in the United Nation's International Year for Disabled Persons.

Over 300 delegates are expected to attend from at least 20 countries, including: Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, Japan, India, the United States, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrein. It is anticipated that approximately 100 Canadians will attend. Most delegates are members of Mobility International, an organization promoting integration through travel and exchange.

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## Diving a growing trade

Commercial diving is in big demand for workers in Alberta as the province continues to lay more pipelines, says Don Macaulay, diving supervisor at Underwater Specialists Ltd.

"Just this past year our company enjoyed a 50 percent increase in business and increased the staff from about five commercial divers to 14," said Mr. Macaulay. "That says a lot about what is happening in commercial diving."

Commercial diving is not, however, a growth industry; there are only three firms competing for underwater work in Alberta and one of them is based in Vancouver.

About 80 per cent of the job involves laying and inspecting underwater pipes. As long as the oil and gas industry expands in Alberta, Mr. Macaulay predicts prosperous times for the industry.

"Two years ago we were averaging one pipe connection a month. That number has gone up to 12 pipe connections a month. We're constantly on the run," he said.

### Polyethylene pipe

One of the major reasons behind the recent success of the diving industry is the introduction of the polyethylene pipe.

"Before the coming of the polyethylene pipe, welders were the most im-



*Commercial diving risky but becoming more popular.*

portant part of pipe connection. The pipe welder was instrumental in connecting pipes on the surface. We would then take long sections and bolt them together underwater," said Mr. Macaulay.

The new polyethylene pipes allow the divers to do all of the connecting work with heat fusion machines.

Other jobs the commercial diver can do include inspection of underwater facilities, pouring concrete, setting explosives, welding or cutting and helping drive piles. Human error and working conditions make the job of the commercial diver dangerous.

"The smallest jerk by the operators on shore in moving the pipes too quickly might spell your end. There is a lot of tension," says Mr. Macaulay.

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## Canadian owner for largest ranch

For the first time in its 118-year history, Canada's largest ranch is in the hands of Canadian owners. The Gang Ranch, spreading out over half a million hectares in British Columbia's Caribou region has been purchased by a family group led by Canadian zoologist, Dale Alsager.

The Gang Ranch got its start in 1861 when Jerome and Thaddeus Harper of Tucker County, West Virginia, "took up land at Pike's Riffle" near the geographical centre of British Columbia. Their land holdings increased rapidly until by 1883 they had assembled the vast present-day holdings. Five years later, the ranch

was sold to Thomas Galpin of London, England, and remained in British hands until its purchase by two Montana cattlemen. Not until the Alsager family bought the ranch for \$4 million was it ever in Canadian hands with its owner living on the property, where 6,500 head of beef cattle graze.

The new focus of the Gang Ranch under Alsager's direction is raising buffalo. The huge beast, once so common on the open range, was killed off to near extinction before the turn of the century and most of the remaining buffalo in North America are in zoos or parks. The Gang Ranch is now home to a growing herd of 50 buffalo being raised in their pure strain. Alsager says they are more economical to raise than beef cattle, and their meat is better. He foresees the day when the export of live buffalo, buffalo meat and hides could become a major industry for Canada because of the increasing demand from American specialty restaurants and retail stores.

*(From Canadian Scene by Alyn Edwards, December 21, 1979.)*

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## Two-way TV test tried and true

Cable television subscribers in London, Ontario, have had a glimpse of a technology that has futurists fantasizing after a Canadian cable system conducted an experiment with two-way television.

In the first Canadian program of its type, a group of viewers voted on seven questions by merely punching buttons on special converters in their own homes. Thirty seconds later, the tallied results were printed on the screen.

The two-way, or interactive, television allows the viewer to talk back to the cable company through a converter that contains an amplifier that can feed back various signals to a source along cable bands not carrying television or radio channels. The source in this case was a computer at London Cable TV, a division of Canadian Cablesystems Ltd.

London Cable has 3,000 households capable of receiving two-way service and has lent 166 of the special converters to subscribers in one section of the city.

The converters also hook up to fire alarms that can be monitored by the cable company, allow the company to check the signals it is transmitting, and read how many sets are on and to what channels they are turned.