

Report on the handling of crises

The Prime Minister tabled in the House of Commons last month a report entitled *The Enhancement of Crisis Handling Capability within the Canadian Federal Structure*.

The report is a condensation of the results of a study by a group headed by Lieutenant General M.R. Dare. The study dealt with the state of preparedness for managing crises, with the problems of recognizing and anticipating approaching crises and with physical and procedural arrangements for improved handling of crises.

The Government has accepted the main thrust of the proposals and implementation of specific recommendations is well advanced. Foremost among them is that federal departments and agencies should retain primary responsibility for handling emergencies that come within their areas of responsibility. Some departments such as the Department of National Defence, the Department of Environment and the Ministry of Transport will be expected to assume a major role in managing certain types of emergency and for coordinating action of particular kinds.

In accordance with the recommendations of the report, the Emergency Measures Organization (Canada EMO) has transferred a number of its functions to departments which will carry them on. In its new form Canada EMO will be known as the National Emergency Planning Establishment (NEPE). It will assist and be directed by a small emergency planning secretariat which has been established in the Privy Council Office. The Secretariat will assist an interdepartmental committee in the development of emergency planning policy, with reports on policy to the Cabinet as required.

One recommendation in the report, the establishment of a central government situation centre, has been deferred. Further study will be given to the need for it after experience in operating the new system.

The Government has also differed from the report in deciding to maintain in each province a regional director who will continue to maintain liaison with provincial governments on emergency measures. The report had recommended that there be five regional directors instead.

Ottawa-WFL still in conflict over Toronto entry

The Federal Government continues its efforts to block establishment of a Toronto franchise in the new World Football League (see *Canada Weekly*, dated March 13, P. 5). Two meetings were held in March between Health and Welfare Minister Marc Lalonde and John F. Bassett Jr., owner of the Toronto Northmen — the prospective Toronto entry in the WFL. The result was a stalemate. Mr. Bassett and his associates refused to withdraw their entry. As a result, Mr. Lalonde indicated in press interviews and in the House of Commons that he would recommend to Cabinet a course of action designed to block the WFL's Toronto franchise. There have been suggestions that this would take the form of legislation to bar the Northmen from operating in Toronto. Mr. Bassett Jr., in turn, warned that if such legislation were brought forward, he would fight it in the courts on constitutional grounds.

Mr. Lalonde has maintained that to permit a WFL entry to function in

Toronto would erode the Canadian Football League and hence damage Canadian identity in the sports world and beyond.

Meanwhile, the Toronto Argonauts of the Canadian Football League were sold by John Bassett Sr. to a group headed by William Hodgson of Toronto, president of Skyline Hotels Corporation. The group includes a number of Western Canadian interests linked in Western Realty Projects Ltd, led by Samuel Belzberg of Vancouver. The announced purchase price for the Argos was \$3.3 million. Mr. Bassett put the club up for sale in the wake of pressure from other CFL clubs which had criticized him earlier for alleged conflict of interest. The other clubs felt the Argo owner had failed to exercise his right to prevent the new WFL entry from using the Canadian National Exhibition stadium for its home games and they noted that his son, John F. Bassett Jr., was a key figure in the organization and ownership of the rival Toronto Northmen.

Flexible hours experiment in the Public Service

A three-month experiment with new hours of work began last month for more than 46,000 employees of the Federal Government in the national capital area. The move follows an announcement, in January, by C.M. Drury, President of the Treasury Board, urging departments to spread the arrival and departure times of their employees — particularly in the downtown area — so as to reduce peak-traffic loads on transit systems.

The Treasury Board announced that 37 departments and agencies had implemented new work schedules under which employees will start work between 7 and 9.30 a.m. and finish between 3.30 and 6 p.m. Thirty-one departments have adopted flexible hours (the employee chooses the starting time) and six departments have introduced staggered hours (different branches of the same department start at different times).

Some 43,400 employees are participating in the flexible hours program. Another 2,700 are on staggered hours.

The largest department involved in the new work schedules is the Department of National Defence in which almost 8,200 employees are now on flexible hours.

Almost 30,000 of the 35,000 Federal Government employees working in the downtown core area have switched to new hours of work. Detailed reports from 28 departments with more than 19,000 employees indicate the following distribution of arrival times: 7-7.29, 9 per cent; 7.30-7.59, 24 per cent; 8-8.29, 37 per cent; 8.30-8.59, 22 per cent; and 9-9.30, 8 per cent. (Until now most employees arrived at work in a 30-minute period between 8.15 and 8.45.)

The spread of departure times is subject to minor adjustments since employees can choose a lunch period ranging from 30 to 90 minutes. Most must work at least 7½ hours a day; most departments have adopted a core period between 9.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. when all employees must be at work.