

Commonwealth countries were up sharply (nearly 53 per cent), to \$18,800,000 from \$12,300,000, while the total from all other countries as a group increased 6.8 per cent, to \$67,400,000 from \$63,100,000.

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### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

A provincial Department of Federal-Provincial Affairs is provided for in a bill recently presented to the Quebec Legislature. According to Premier Jean Lesage, the new department is designed to safeguard provincial autonomy and facilitate Quebec's collaboration with the federal and the other provincial governments. It will work towards the establishment of a more formal procedure for the calling of inter-provincial conferences to discuss problems of common interest.

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### RECORD ARCTIC PROJECT

Canada's continuing programme of scientific research in its polar regions in 1961 will cost an estimated \$1,500,000, will involve some 70 scientific and supporting personnel in the largest field project ever undertaken by a Canadian government service, and will be supported by the largest airlift of its kind ever known in Canada.

The first group of the scientific team of the Polar Continental Shelf Project left Ottawa on March 6 for Isachsen, on the rim of the polar basin. The group included the co-ordinator of the project, Dr. Ernest Frederick Roots.

"This is our third and largest expedition into the polar basin", said Mr. Comtois, the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys. "The Arctic has become a vital factor in our lives today and we have no time to lose in overcoming our ignorance of our polar regions both for resource assessment and defence purposes."

The 1961 expedition comprises oceanographers, topographers, geologists, geophysicists, and geographers. They will continue the project's closely-integrated study of Canada's polar continental shelf and its northern archipelago and adjacent waters.

#### USE OF AIRCRAFT

In the field, the expedition will be supported by three fixed-wing aircraft and four helicopters, to enable its various scientific groups to perform tests and investigations out on the ice of the shelf and inland within the 150-mile radius of base camp at Isachsen, the proposed field of work this year. A number of the scientists also plan to make traverses west of Isachsen as far as Banks Island. A fourth fixed-wing aircraft will be required for the low-level aeromagnetic survey planned for the region inland from Isachsen.

The more than 700 tons of equipment and

supplies required to support the expedition, from food and gas and everyday needs to the most delicate scientific apparatus, will be flown in by three freighter aircraft from Edmonton and Churchill. The expedition's helicopters will be loaded and flown in from Montreal.

The proposed aeromagnetic survey will comprise 200 hours flying time and cover the islands and intervening channels in the region, with special closely-spaced flights over critical geological features, such as the gypsum domes that are of such interest because of their petroleum potential.

#### VARIETY OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

Submarine geologists will continue their investigation of the materials on the sea floor. This phase of the research will be emphasized to facilitate the correlation of the geology of the shelf with that of the emerged coast.

Seismologists will continue to study the structures of the continental shelf. They hope to make marked progress on the successful start they made last year in outlining the outer edge of the Sverdrup Basin, which is of such interest to the oil industry.

The oceanographers will work mainly in the western end of Peary Channel and will investigate water structures in critical areas within the Sverdrup Islands. Hydrographers plan to extend bathymetric observations at least 175 miles out to sea, over the whole area from Meighen Island and over Prince Gustaf Adolf Sea.

Geophysicists hope to complete gravity and magnetic studies over the region. To measure gravity on sea ice, they will use special instruments, now ready for field trial, that have been developed by the Dominion Observatories.

Geographers will complete the study of Ellef Ringnes Island and make a comparative study of nearby Borden Island. They will continue their systematic studies of sea ice and study of the ice cap on Meighen Island.

Topographers will extend survey control for mapping southwestward across Patrick Island to Banks Island and, if possible, to Melville Island.

The expedition will be in the field until early September.

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### CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The February consumer price index registered a decline of 0.2 per cent, from 129.2 to 128.9, from the January level. A year ago the index was 127.2. The current decrease resulted entirely from a drop of 0.8 per cent in the food index, as the other four component indexes were unchanged.

Lower prices for citrus fruits, fresh tomatoes, eggs, lettuce and beef outweighed price increases for other meats, apples and