

billion, were \$1.5 billion higher than the \$8.7 billion attained in 1965. With imports at \$9.8 billion, Canada's surplus on merchandise trade in 1966 was nearly \$403 million — over three times the \$133-million surplus of 1965.

#### EFFORT MUST BE SUSTAINED

The Trade Minister said that he was gratified with the record level of exports in 1966 and paid tribute to all those who had contributed to its achievement. He stressed the importance, however, of sustained and intensified effort to ensure that, in the trading circumstances of 1967, Canada's exports would reach the Government's centennial-year target of \$11.25 billion. The Council, he said, would play an important role in helping attain this goal and in the task of ensuring optimum Canadian trade performance in the years ahead.

The Council agreed to meet again in Ottawa on May 1.

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#### FAIR EMPLOYMENT BRANCH DIRECTOR

Mr. John R. Nicholson, Minister of Labour, has announced that a Fair Employment Practices Branch has been established in the federal Department of Labour.

Mr. Blackburn, the first Director of the Branch, was formerly Director of Information for the Department of Labour. As head of the new branch he will be responsible for the promotion and enforcement of the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act, which prohibits discrimination in hiring practices based on race, colour, creed or national origin in all areas of work within federal jurisdiction. His work will include the organizing of educational and promotional programmes designed to overcome all forms of prejudice and discrimination in employment.

He will have similar responsibilities with regard to the Female Employees Equal Pay Act, which requires that women be given the same rates of pay as men for doing the same work.

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#### YUKON RIVER SKYLINE

A 1,500-foot long "skyline" (aerial cableway) spanning the Yukon River at Dawson in the Yukon Territory has been completed and is ready for its first "payload" this spring. Designed to haul freight across the Yukon River during freeze-up and spring break-up periods, it will enable Cassiar Asbestos Corporation Ltd. to operate its mine and ship out asbestos fibre on a year-round basis. The Cassiar asbestos mine is 60 miles northeast of Dawson.

The actual construction costs for the completed skyline have as yet not been determined but, of the original estimate of \$120,000, the Federal Government will contribute two-thirds, up to a maximum of \$80,000.

Under the terms of an agreement between the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Cassiar Asbestos Corp. Ltd., the cableway will become the property of the Yukon Territory Government, which will operate it as a public utility.

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#### BIRTH RATE DECLINES

Births registered in Canada in 1966 decreased by almost 33,000 from the figure for 1965, marriages rose by about 9,500 and deaths increased by slightly more than 1,000. Estimates based on records filed in provincial offices indicate that there were some 386,000 births in 1966, compared to 418,600 in 1965. The annual number of births for the country has been declining steadily from the high record of 479,300 in 1959. Final returns for 1966 are expected to show decreases over returns for 1965 in all provinces. The 1966 national birth rate for 1,000 population is estimated at 19.4, the lowest rate ever recorded and the ninth consecutive annual decline from 28.2 in 1957. The previous low record was 20.1 in 1937.

#### MARRIAGES INCREASE

Marriages in 1966 were estimated at a record 155,000 compared to the previous record of 145,500 in 1965. Final 1966 returns are expected to be higher than last year's in all provinces. The marriage rate for 1,000 population was estimated at 7.8, up somewhat from the 1965 rate of 7.4. Before 1964, the marriage rate declined steadily from a high record of 10.9 in 1946 to a low record of 6.9 in 1963. Deaths in 1966 were estimated at 150,000, up slightly from 1965. The annual crude death rate for 1,000 population declined in 1966 to a low record of 7.5. Final 1966 returns are expected to be higher in all provinces than in the previous year.

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#### TV MOVES NORTH

Mr. Arthur Laing, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, has expressed strong support for the extension of television service to the North. In a recent letter to the Chairman of the Board of Broadcast Governors, Mr. Laing supported the bid by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for a station at Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. In his letter, he gave public evidence of his interest in the plans. He urged the extension of television service "as soon as possible". "Television will bring many practical advantages to Northern communities," he stated. "It will be a major factor in attracting families to live in areas where there is little entertainment possibility and where the climate and surroundings are sometimes harsh."

#### ADDITIONAL STATIONS PLANNED

The CBC hopes to have the experimental station at Yellowknife and another at Lynn Lake, Manitoba, in operation by the summer. If these experiments are