

News briefs

Rumours of a federal election in June abound but the majority of Canadians still don't know how they will vote, according to the latest Gallup poll. A survey by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion shows the level of indecision has risen significantly from 23 per cent in the poll conducted in February to 38 per cent in the latest poll, conducted in early March. The poll also indicates that voters who have made up their minds favour the Liberals by 45 per cent with the Conservatives at 34 per cent and the New Democratic Party trailing at 17 per cent. In the February poll the Liberals had 43 per cent of decided voters, the Conservatives 36 per cent and NDP 17 per cent.

Dennis McDermott, 55-year-old Canada director of the United Auto Workers, was elected President of the Canadian Labour Congress at the 1978 biennial CLC convention in Quebec City earlier this month. McDermott, who was elected by acclamation, succeeds Joe Morris, who was in office for four years.

The Federal Government will spend \$4.5 million for a week-long celebration ending July 1, Canada Day, on the bilingual theme of *Canada is You and Me - Le Canada c'est Toi et Moi*. Festival Canada will finance popular festivities across the country every year, culminating in national celebrations on Parliament Hill on July 1.

Dr. J. Tuzo Wilson, Director General of the Ontario Science Centre, has won Columbia University's 1978 Vetlesen Prize, the world's top prize for earth sciences. Dr. Wilson will receive a gold medal and \$50,000 for his study of the earth's structure and theories of the

formation of land masses by continental drifting. Among scientists, the Vetlesen Prize is the equivalent of a Nobel Prize, which does not have an earth sciences category.

Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan recently announced new restrictions, effective April 3 on the import into Canada of thoroughbred horses from Kentucky, U.S.A., as a precautionary measure to prevent the introduction into Canada of contagious equine metritis (CEM), a venereal disease of horses that causes reduced fertility and abortions. Outbreaks of the disease, which were identified in Britain, France and Ireland last year, have now appeared in Kentucky. United States authorities have contained the disease to that state, where 24 mares and five stallions are infected on 13 farms. A ban on the import into Canada of all horses that could carry the disease from Britain, Ireland and France was imposed last September.

Agriculture Canada is hiring three farmers and three diesel mechanics to augment its efforts in a joint wheat-farming project in Tanzania. They will share their knowledge of production methods with the Tanzanians on three large wheat farms in the northern highlands of that east African nation to determine how best to grow wheat there and to help Tanzania to become self-sufficient in wheat production within the next five to ten years.

Canada has pledged \$1 million for the next two years to the Commonwealth Youth Program. Since the program began, in 1973, the Canadian Government has been the major contributor, providing nearly \$2 million.

Some 22.5 million people visited Canada's national parks and national historic parks and sites during 1977. There is at least one national park in each province and territory.

The Toronto Real Estate Board reports that the value of real estate transactions in March decreased by 11 per cent, compared to the March 1977 figure, but the price of the average house rose 2.9 per cent.

While Canada ranks third in the world in total life insurance owned, on a per capita basis Canadians now rank first, slightly ahead of that of the people of the United States. Canadians own an average of \$11,030, Americans \$10,850. Relative to national income, the Japanese own more life insurance than the people of

any other country. At the end of 1976 Canadians owned \$257-billion worth of life insurance, some \$37 billion over the amount at the end of 1975, and more than double the amount owned in 1970. Group life insurance continues to grow, increasing from 47.1 per cent of the total in 1970 to 56.8 per cent in 1976.

Employment prospects in Canada will improve in the next three months, with major job openings in the construction industry and the public administration sector, according to a survey conducted by Manpower Temporary Services of Toronto. Of the 927 companies contacted in ten industry sectors, 29 per cent expect to increase staffing levels this spring and only 6.2 per cent anticipate layoffs. The forecast, while repeating a pattern experienced in the same period last year, is a great improvement on results projected for the first quarter of 1978, when only 12.3 per cent of businesses expected increased hiring and 15 per cent forecast staff cutbacks. The 26-city survey predicts significant employment increases of 40.9 per cent in the construction sector and 40 per cent in public administration.

Canada's petroleum refining industry shipped \$6,725.2-million worth of products in 1976, up 16.5 per cent from 1975. Total value added by the industry increased 19.7 per cent to \$945.8 million, the number of employees decreased 3.3 per cent to 15,105 and total salaries and wages increased 7.6 per cent to \$298.2 million.

After-tax profits of industrial corporations, not seasonally adjusted, were \$2,768 million for the fourth quarter of 1977, an increase of \$595 million or 27.4 per cent from the fourth quarter of 1976. Total sales of \$68 billion increased \$7 billion or 11.5 per cent from the fourth quarter of 1976. Assets increased \$5 billion or 2.8 per cent over the third quarter of 1977 and \$17 billion or 10.4 per cent from the fourth quarter of 1976. The figures represent the latest data for the fourth quarter of 1977 and supersede the preliminary estimates for the same period released by Statistics Canada in February 1978.

A Toronto woman is reported to be threatening to sue Xerox. Since her husband went to work there 12 years ago they have had six sets of identical twins. The lady wants her husband taken off the high speed copier production line.

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