

Greek earthquake relief

Canada has announced it will provide an additional \$50,000 in earthquake relief to Greece through the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS).

The grant comes from the emergency relief budget of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and will be used to purchase those goods which the LRCS and the Hellenic Red Cross consider to be the most urgent.

Earthquakes measuring 6.6, 6.3 and 5.6 on the Richter scale hit Athens, Corinth and the Greek northwest in late February and early March. While there was no major loss of life, considerable damage was done to houses and other buildings, and approximately 100,000 persons were left homeless. Goods such as tents, camp beds, sleeping bags and blankets are urgently needed and are not available in Greece.

This grant follows a \$25,000 donation to the Red Cross by CIDA last month to airlift 550 parkas to Greece.

Travellers warned about pests

The federal government has begun a public awareness program to inform travelling Canadians of the dangers of bringing back agricultural items to Canada.

The program, with the theme "Don't bring it back", emphasizes that many of the worst pests and diseases of plants and animals arrived in Canada as "hitchhikers" on such agricultural items as plants, seeds and meat. These pests and diseases leave



"Don't bring it back"

their natural enemies behind in their homelands and, as a consequence, do more damage in Canada than in their native countries, according to Agriculture Canada which is mounting the campaign.

Dutch elm disease, now killing Canadian elm trees, is one such hitchhiker, arriving in Canada undetected in a ship-load of logs. The virus that caused an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among Saskatchewan cattle in the 1950s came to Canada in an uncooked sausage. The epidemic cost Canadian taxpayers \$800 million to stamp out.

Canadians are being warned that all plants and animals and any plant or animal product, including meat, that are being brought into the country, must be declared to customs at the time of entry into Canada.

Telidon test project gets funding

The federal government has signed an agreement with the Manitoba Telephone System (MTS) for the experimental provision of a variety of new, advanced communications services by fibre-optics, in the rural communities of Elie and St. Eustache, about 50 kilometres west of Winnipeg.

The \$1.4-million agreement covers the second phase of a \$9.5-million project. In addition, the federal government will contribute about \$900,000 for provision of information and other new phase two services by Infomart of Toronto, Canada's largest electronic publisher. With another \$900,000 to be spent on the project by Infomart itself, total costs of phase two would be brought to \$3.2 million.

The new accord covers the cost of supplying and maintaining the digital data facilities necessary to provide new services and 150 Telidon terminals.

Chief among the new services to be provided is Telidon two-way TV. It will be carried over optical fibre cable being installed under the first phase of the project. In this initial phase, the fibre will carry single-party telephone, cable television and FM-stereo radio services. Many of the 150 homes being wired with the advanced cable have had only multi-party telephone service.

Access to data banks

The agreement provides for the use of the fibre-optic links for ordinary telephone

conversations, simultaneously with access to data bases specially developed for rural areas. Other new services possible in phase two are electronic messaging, home computing and computer-aided learning designed to meet rural needs.

The second phase of the project is designed to:

- assess the potential of Telidon and other new services for rural areas of Canada;
- determine the feasibility of using an integrated fibre optics system for the improvement of communications services in rural Canada;
- provide a test bed for service providers, communications carriers and equipment manufacturers to obtain knowledge about the kinds of services relevant to rural communities; and
- foster the development of an information data base which could be marketed domestically and in other countries.

The project is expected to start this fall. The \$6.3-million cost of the first phase is being shared by the federal government (\$3.2 million), the Canadian Telecommunications Carriers Association, including the Manitoba Telephone System (\$2.5 million), and Northern Telecom (\$563,000). The optical fibre is being supplied and installed by Northern Telecom.

Situation in Lebanon

Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan recently expressed grave concern at the outbreak of violence in Lebanon. The large number of reported cases of injury and death of innocent civilians is particularly distressing and must not be allowed to continue, he said.

Canada calls upon all parties to the conflict to refrain from further hostilities and respect the cease-fire, said Dr. MacGuigan. Canada also urges the parties to respect the duly constituted authorities, to negotiate an end to their differences and to work towards restoring stability in Lebanon, he said.

These points are being brought to the attention of the Lebanese and Syrian governments as well as to others concerned.

Dr. MacGuigan announced that if an appeal for assistance to Lebanon were launched by an internationally recognized humanitarian organization, sympathetic consideration would be given to any request for assistance from Canada.