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## Portable facility aids gas industry

A portable sulphur processing plant designed by a Calgary company might be the answer to a persistent problem facing the natural gas industry.

Sulphur, a by-product of gas processing, is difficult to transport and the quantities produced at small, scattered gas plants are insufficient to justify construction of a full-scale processing plant.

The portable plant, designed by the sulphur division of Procor Limited, can turn 400 tons of sulphur daily into easily transported granulated pellets.

Procor has a prototype plant operating near Calgary, and sales engineer Duncan McRae said he expects to have six to 10 similar plants operating in Western Canada within a few years.

"There are a number of sour gas plants (processing high-sulphur gas) scattered around western Canada which simply don't have the sulphur volumes to justify the capital expenditure required to build a permanent processing installation.

"But with the very strong market demand for sulphur right now, everyone has been looking for an economical way to get some of these stocks to market," said Mr. McRae.

The modular plants, which he said will be used to process sulphur on a contract basis for gas plant clients, cost about \$750,000 to build. They can be easily dismantled and moved to a new site when a sulphur stock is depleted.

Each unit might be moved two or three times, making it an economical alternative to full-scale plants, said Mr. McRae.

Two units have already been sold to South Africa.

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## NRC produces Commonwealth Games film

A highly visible yet rather unheard-of event was captured on film by a National Research Council (NRC) research team at the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton.

Six researchers and photographers recorded the athletic and gymnastic performance of spectators climbing long aisle stairs in the new Commonwealth Stadium.

The study of spectators' performance in what has become known as the "stair event" was part of a major project begun ten years ago by the NRC to improve

knowledge of people movement in buildings. Aisle handrails, an unusual but very heavily used feature of aisles stairs, received special attention in the study. Of particular interest was the use by adults and children of test pairs of handrails that could be adjusted in height.

A 19-minute film, titled *The Stair Event*, has recently been produced by the Council presenting early findings. As well as demonstrating the importance of several stair design factors, including handrails, the film shows that the "stair event" has a broad range of participants including children, the elderly, handicapped people and vendors.

Awards were not given for climbing the equivalent of eight storeys of stairs in each stadium aisle, but if they were, perhaps the vendors carrying heavy cases of soda pop all day long would be gold medal contenders.

The short documentary film, illustrating research techniques and describing findings on stair design and use factors affecting comfort and safety, is one of the legacies of the Edmonton Commonwealth Games. The film is being made available by the NRC to educational institutions and research centres as well as other interested groups.

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## Experts check Niagara Falls

The Canadian side of Niagara Falls received a clean bill of health recently, at the same time, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stepped up their geological testing on the American side of the Horseshoe Falls.

Ronald Hoskins, of the Buffalo corps, said seismic sensors, set to detect as little as one-eighth of an inch of movement in the rock at Terrapin Point, are being read daily to determine any irregularities.

Army engineers worked to install and repair testing equipment after sensors installed in 1971, and virtually abandoned, were found to be corroded.

Scientists at first thought a sensor, which sounded the alarm recently indicating that the rock had shifted one-quarter inch, might have been faulty.

Canadian geologists checked rock water pressure sensing devices installed at the brink of the falls on the Canadian side and found normal readings, said Ron Devereux, of the Niagara Parks Commission.

He said the Canadian geologists believe that if there is a rock fall on the U.S. side, most of it will fall on land and not into the water.

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## Youngest pilot in Canada



Debbie Skaer, 17, of Thornton, Ontario, poses with a plane after obtaining her pilot's licence recently in a special ceremony at Barrie airport. Miss Skaer, the youngest pilot in Canada, would like to become a commercial airline pilot.