

NICKEL PLANT FOR NEW CALEDONIA

New proposals for discussion with the French Government, outlining a plan for the immediate and long-range development of a major new nickel-producing operation based on lateritic ore deposits in the southern part of the Pacific island of New Caledonia, were submitted to the French Government recently by The International Nickel Company of Canada, Limited.

The INCO proposals state that, if agreement is reached with France in the near future on essential matters, an initial commercial-scale unit, which would require the investment of about \$85 million, could come "on-stream" by mid-1974. The new plant would have a yearly output of 15 million pounds (about 7,000 metric tons) of nickel. Some 1,100 persons would be employed during construction, and total operating manpower requirements would be about 400 persons.

The matters requiring an agreement with the French Government, if the project is to be viable, include the definition of the mining domain, the establishment of a long-term fiscal regime, and the financial structure.

The INCO proposals were submitted at the suggestion of the French Government following the non-realization of the Cofimpac project, in which INCO was associated as a minority shareholder with a consortium of French interests. It is envisaged that, in the new project company, INCO would have a majority position, and it is hoped that there would also be participation by French and possibly other European interests.

The initial plant would represent the first phase of a three-phase project — the first lateritic project in New Caledonia — that could ultimately produce at least 220 million pounds (100,000 metric tons) of nickel annually. The progressive development of the phases leading to this capacity would have to take into account the general development of the nickel market and the orderly and realistic development of the New Caledonian economy. INCO, which would bear the greater part of the responsibility for the project, considers that the only way for the new venture to become truly economically satisfactory is to proceed beyond the first phase.

NEW "CHOPPER" FOR MILITARY

The Minister of Defence, Mr. Donald Macdonald, accepted the first of 74 new "air jeeps" for the armed forces on December 16 in a ceremony at Canadian Forces Base Uplands. The new aircraft, the *Kiowa* helicopter, is a military version of the Bell *Jet Ranger*, ordered for the armed forces land element to broaden operational mobility and flexibility.



The Kiowa in flight.

The capabilities of the *Kiowa* include observation, armed reconnaissance, medical evacuation, command and control, and target-acquisition and adjustment of fire.

The 74 *Kiowas* to be delivered during the next ten months, will replace an obsolete fleet of 44 small helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. They include the CH-112 *Nomad* helicopter, and the L-19 and L-182 light observation aircraft.

The machines will cost \$23.7 million, including ground-support equipment, training courses, publications, spare engines and mission kits. The contract also includes spare parts, which can be supplied from U.S. military logistics sources in both North America and Europe. The U.S. Army has ordered 2,200 *Kiowas* on a multi-year procurement basis.

SOME TO EUROPE

Fourteen of the *Kiowas* will go to Canadian NATO elements in Europe, 18 will be used to train helicopter pilots at CFB Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, and the remainder will go to five Mobile Command squadrons and detachments across Canada, as well as on reserve.

The *Kiowa* is powered by a single turbine engine, has a three-hour endurance capability, a cruise speed of 110 knots and a range of 270 nautical miles. The payload is 727 pounds, excluding crew and fuel.

PROMISES TO FARMERS HONOURED

All commitments by the Federal Government under the Agricultural Stabilization Board to offset difficulties during the period when the United States 10 percent surtax was in effect will be honoured, according to Agriculture Minister H.A. (Bud) Olson.