

FEDERAL ROLE NEEDED

Nothing concrete from premiers' economic talks

TORONTO (CP) — Canada's 12-per-cent unemployment rate could be virtually halved if it regained the share of world trade it held in 1970, an Ontario spokesman contended Wednesday as the 10 provincial premiers focused on the troubled economy.

But despite glowing comments from most of the premiers on the first day of their two-day annual conference, there was no indication they had reached agreement to do anything specific.

Ontario Premier William Davis, asked twice if the premiers had agreed on any action they could take on their own, said only that they were unanimous on "some views."

Asked what the provinces could do to boost international trade themselves, he said some premiers reviewed existing programs, but returned repeatedly to the need "in a more co-operative way to involve the government of Canada."

One official, who asked not to be named, doubted anything concrete will be in the communique the premiers release today except the issues they want to raise with Ottawa.

And New Brunswick Premier Ri-

chard Hatfield, who as the longest-serving provincial leader has seen more premiers' conferences than any of his colleagues, described the session as mostly "deja vu."

Davis revived his call for regular first ministers' conferences on the economy, telling reporters without prompting that there was only a limited amount of "fed-bashing" around the conference table Wednesday.

Davis sympathized with Prime Minister Trudeau's reluctance to call another conference after the disastrous February, 1982, meeting, but appealed to Trudeau to set aside those concerns and try again.

He dismissed a reporter's suggestion that Trudeau would be putting his neck on the line to call such a meeting now with Liberal support in the polls at a record low and an election approaching.

"All of our necks would be collectively out," he said, adding Canadians want their governments to work together and stop bickering.

However, Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed said he isn't sure a first ministers' conference now would be worth while, given the state of federal-provincial relations.

Quebec Premier Rene Levesque,

in a statement delivered to the conference and released to reporters, said economic recovery may once again be threatened by rising interest rates and what he called Ottawa's single-minded defence of the value of the Canadian dollar.

Earlier, Levesque praised the discussion on international trade as "the most stimulating meeting on the economy that I've seen in many years."

Frank Miller, Ontario industry and trade minister, led off the trade discussion with his estimate that 700,000 jobs could be created directly and indirectly if Canada's share of world trade was restored to its 1970 level of 5.2 per cent from the current 3.7 per cent. With 1.5 million unemployed, that would cut the jobless rate by almost half.

Davis did not know how much extra trade that would mean, but figures provided by officials suggest Canadian exports would have to jump about \$33 billion a year from their current level of \$84.5 billion.

Prince Edward Island's James Lee said the economic talks "really hit home," adding his province has only scratched the surface of the world market.

GUARANTEED INCOME

Changes for poor wanted

TORONTO (CP) — A report that says many of Canada's 400,000 working poor would fare better on welfare may revive interest in a guaranteed annual income, says the head of the National Anti-Poverty Organization.

Patrick Johnston, executive director of the anti-poverty group, was responding to a report prepared by University of Manitoba professor Derek Hum released Wednesday by the Ontario Economic Council.

Hum's study of the working poor recommended the provinces and the federal government negotiate a new cost-sharing formula for income-assistance programs. He also said the governments should agree on a "national standard of basic income support" for poor Canadians.

Johnston said the failure of programs such as unemployment insurance to provide for poorer Canadians during the current recession may create more interest in new support programs.

"We're seeing a situation where the safety-net system hasn't really worked that well," he said Wednesday.

Johnston said the minimum income standard should be the Statistics Canada poverty line, which ranges from \$13,400 to \$18,200 for a family of four, depending on where they live.

In 1979, more than 2.5 million Canadians

lived in poverty and 55 per cent of poor families were headed by working people, Hum's report said.

It said living standards for poor working Canadians may grow worse if a better Canada Assistance Plan — under which the federal government gives money to the provinces for programs such as welfare — is not negotiated.

The study also said minimum wage levels, which range from \$3.50 to \$4.25 an hour in Canada, have not kept pace with inflation since 1975, leaving the working poor further behind.

Jeffery Patterson of the Metropolitan Toronto Social Planning Council said Ontario's minimum wage has increased 17 per cent in the last three years, while the cost of living has risen 30 per cent.

But increasing the minimum wage is not the answer in fighting poverty, the report said. Workers in most poor families earn more than the minimum wage, so it would require extremely large increases in the wage rate to push them above the poverty line, it said.

Patterson said 25 per cent more people are on welfare now than at the beginning of the recession. And because the provinces have been carrying much of the increasing cost of welfare, they may want to renegotiate federal contributions to income-support plans.

Gregoire pressure increases

MONTREAL (CP) — Pressure on Gilles Gregoire to resign from the Quebec national assembly mounted Wednesday when 24 of 28 mayors in asbestos mining municipalities in his Eastern Townships riding adopted a resolution demanding he step down.

The independent member for Frontenac was sentenced last month to two years less a day in jail and fined a total of \$2,900 after being found guilty of immoral sexual acts with seven minor girls.

Gregoire, who was convicted under the Juvenile Delinquents Act, does not have to resign because he was not convicted under the Criminal Code and sentenced to more than two years in prison.

ROMANIAN DEAL

Gov't won't barter Candus

OTTAWA (CP) — The government is washing its hands of a deal under which Canadian nuclear companies are being told to peddle Romanian goods if they want a piece of the action in a billion-dollar Candu sale to that country.

In an unusual move, Ottawa gave Romania the green light to negotiate separate contracts for the Candu with nuclear industry companies in Canada and to ask those companies to sell Romanian goods.

But the government's involvement now is restricted to helping finance the sale, Energy Minister Jean Chretien told reporters Wednesday. The government is providing \$680 million through the Export Development Corp.

"We are not bartering Candus against strawberries," Chretien said when asked about reports the reactor will be traded for everything from Romanian frozen strawberries and wine to tractors, shoes and clothing.

"They have to pay for the Candus. Trade is trade."

And if individual companies get involved in bartering, that's not the EDC's concern, said spokesman Michael Carmichael.

"As far as the EDC is concerned, our loans are in money and our disbursements are in money and we collect in money."

Normally, Crown-owned Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. which builds the Candu, would have ne-

gotiated the deal with Romania and then would have negotiated individual contracts with Canadian suppliers.

But debt-plagued Romania, hungry for export revenue, asked that it be allowed to negotiate directly with the Canadian nuclear industry in hopes it could flog its exports.

The EDC this week ended an 18-month freeze on further financing of the sale of two Candu reactors to Romania, clearing the way for reactor construction to resume.

The nuclear industry is starved for contracts. There have been no Candu sales for three years.

Estimates on the number of direct jobs the sale will create in the industry range from 1,000 to 5,000.

During the next 18 months, the sale could create up to 1,000 jobs in the nuclear industry's manufacturing sector, said Norm Aspin, president of the Canadian Nuclear Association.

About 6,000 people worked in that sector at its peak but about 3,000 have been laid off, he said.

And Atomic Energy spokesman Victor Godin said the sale will result in 5,000 direct manufacturing and engineering consulting jobs in Canada and another 15,000 indirect jobs in manufacturing and service industries.

But he said it will not lead to the rehiring of about 600 AECL workers laid off last year because of the downturn in the industry.

Prisoners don't work or eat

Thousands of federal prisoners protesting prison conditions and commemorating those who have died violently behind bars were locked in their cells Wednesday after refusing to work or eat.

Participation in the ninth annual National Justice Day was higher than in past years, probably because of more advance publicity, prison officials said.

Quebec was the only exception, with all but 400 of the 3,500 prisoners eating and only four kitchen workers at the Laval prison complex refusing to work.

"Participation was quite active in all regions other than Quebec," said Dennis Finlay, spokesman for the Correctional Service of Canada.

About 70 per cent of federal prisoners in the Atlantic region participated in the day of mourning, 80 per cent in Ontario, 75 per cent on the Prairies and almost 100 per cent in B.C., Finlay said.

The work stoppages and fasts began in 1975 as a tribute to Eddy Nolan, an activist for prison reform who committed suicide in the isolation unit of Millhaven penitentiary near Kingston, Ont., on Aug. 10, 1974.

Nolan was chosen as a symbol because prisoners say they shouted in vain for assistance after they discovered he had slashed his left arm.

But an inquiry by the correctional service found prisoners were not aware of Nolan's suicide attempt until prison officials found and tried to save him.

The protest day has since expanded among the

estimated 11,500 prisoners in 59 federal institutions to mourn all inmates who have died violently and to protest prison conditions.

A mother whose son hanged himself in an isolation cell at an Edmonton institution last March was conducting a 24-hour hunger vigil in front of the maximum-security prison Wednesday.

Alice Baker says punishing prisoners by locking them in isolation 23 hours a day is a "slow form of murder."

"I just feel I have to do this . . . I have no choice," she said. "I loved my son and when I lost my son I lost a part of myself."

About 207 of the 450 prisoners at Dorchester maximum-security prison near Moncton, N.B., were locked in the cells after being denied permission to hold a large memorial service and refusing to work or eat solid food, said Atlantic prison spokesman Jim West.

However, in a compromise with prison officials a small ceremony marking Nolan's suicide was allowed in the prison chapel.

Most who did not participate in the fast and work stoppage were in isolation cells or had medical problems, he said.

A 26-year-old Halifax man was found hanging in his cell at the medium-security prison in Springhill, N.S., Wednesday morning, the sixth prisoner to commit suicide in the Atlantic region since February.

Fourteen federal prisoners have committed suicide throughout the country so far this year, compared with 11 in 1982 and 12 in 1981.

The four mayors who refused to vote on the resolution, passed during a meeting of the Municipalite regionale de comte de l'Amiante (an organization of towns in Quebec's asbestos mining region), said their councillors had not been officially consulted on the question.

They also said they feared Gregoire's resignation would deprive them of "the excellent services provided by the member's secretaries."

In addition to asking for Gregoire's resignation, the resolution also requests a temporary representative for the riding in the national assembly.

Gregoire, 57, has also been asked to resign by the towns of Black Lake, Coleraine, Disraeli, Thetford Mines and south Thetford, also in Frontenac riding.

Gregoire, who could be released when one-third — or eight months — of his sentence is served, has refused to resign until he has exhausted all avenues of judicial appeal.

EVERYDAY SPECIALS AT
BI-RITE are BETTER
than any other local
“SALE”, “SUPER SALE”,
or “LIQUIDATION SALE”

Before you buy any furniture, T.V. or appliance,
come in to Bi-rite and ask for Servy or Ron who
GUARANTEE you'll get it for LESS!

EXAMPLE
EVERYDAY
SPECIALS

Hot Point
WASHER & DRYER PAIR
Heavy duty model
Reg. \$1229.95
SALE
\$959

20" Zenith
COLOR PORTABLE T.V.
Reg. \$699
\$499⁹⁵

Hot Point
13 CU. FT. REFRIGERATOR
Frost Free
ONLY
\$599⁹⁵

Hot Point
SOFA, CHAIR & LOVE SEAT
100% nylon in velvet
Reg. \$1899.95
SALE
\$1199⁹⁵

Moffat 30"
ELECTRIC RANGE
with easy clean oven.
SALE
\$499⁹⁵

NOBODY
UNDERSELLS
BI-RITE

WE GUARANTEE
THE LOWEST PRICES!

TRUCK LOAD EXTRA SPECIAL!
Just arrived! Grange Box Spring & Mattresses
39" Mattress & Base *Extra Special*.....\$139
59" Mattress & Base *Extra Special*.....\$189
SUPER SPECIAL
Queen Size Mattress & Base
Posture Poise Imperial
"back fixer" system. Reg. \$740 *Super Special*.....
\$499

BI-RITE FURNITURE & WAREHOUSE LTD.
563-2574
511 GEORGE STREET
The LOW OVERHEAD SMALL STORE with the BIG SAVINGS

Move to metrics slows

EDMONTON (CP) — Metric use has peaked in Canada as retail outlets revert to imperial measurements, says prominent anti-metric crusader Bill Domm.

But the Canadian Metric Commission says this is merely the lull before the crackdown which could come this fall if a Toronto court convicts two service station owners who sell gas by the gallon rather than the litre.

The number of retail outlets not using the metric system has increased since January as weights and measures inspectors hold off laying charges while the Toronto judge prepares his decision.

Domm, Progressive Conservative MP for Peterborough, Ont., and opposition critic on weights and measures, said the metric movement is doomed in Canada.

He is encouraged by the closing of the U.S. Metric Commission and the end of the Canadian Metric Commission, which will close in March, 1985. He said the anti-metric movement gained further impetus when the crash-landing of an Air Canada Boeing 767 in Manitoba was traced to fuel shortage following a metric conversion foul-up.

"The failure of the government to lay any charges since Feb. 1 and the closing of the metric commission means the Liberals have finally gotten the message that

the Bay

THE BUFFET PRESENTS
Veal Cutlet Vienna
includes:
mashed potato,
vegetable
Only 4³⁵

FRIDAY NIGHTS
4:00 TO 8:00 P.M.
AT ALL BAY BUFFETS
Hudson's Bay Company

Have I Got A CAVALIER For You!!

DEMO
2 dr. hatchback, 2 litre, 4 cyl., auto, ps, pb, block heater, pin stripping, am/fm stereo with clock, White letter tires, Rear defroster.
Was \$11,125.
NOW **\$9569**

NICHOLSON CHEVROLET OLDSMOBILE
564-4466
2000 Victoria St
Prince George
Dealer No. 7280