

CW UPDATE

THE MONTH IN REVIEW

by Michael Rutherford

B.C. TAXES FOREST COMPANIES TO CREATE JOBS

The B.C. government introduced legislation on April 15 that would impose \$2 billion in new taxes on forest companies to finance a job creation scheme for forest workers who lose their jobs. The plan has received support from industry officials and environmentalists.

SOCIAL REFORM MEETING CANCELLED

The federal government cancelled a federal-provincial meeting on social program reform scheduled for April 18 after Quebec Premier **Daniel Johnson** threatened to boycott the meeting. Johnson is critical of the federal refusal to give Quebec full control over manpower training.

UNITED STATES ESCALATES FARM TRADE DISPUTE

The United States notified the General Agreement on Tariffs (GATT) and Trade on April 22 that it would impose new tariffs and a cap on Canadian imports of wheat, barley, and malt in 90 days. The move came after agricultural trade talks between the two countries broke off on April 15. The United States claims that unreasonable subsidies in Canada have resulted in a flood of Canadian wheat into the U.S. market.

McLAUGHLIN WILL RESIGN IN 1996

New Democratic Party Leader **Audrey McLaughlin**, announced

on April 18 her intention to resign as leader in 1996, before the next election. McLaughlin will continue as leader while the party undertakes a thorough review of its principles and policies.

NEW FISHERIES ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

A new five-year, \$1.9 billion federal assistance package for 30,000 Atlantic fishery workers was announced on April 19. Under the terms of the program, fishery workers will be required to upgrade their education or participate in community development projects in order to receive assistance.

DUMONT REPLACES ALLAIRE

Mario Dumont, the 24-year-old former leader of the youth wing of the Liberal party of Quebec, took over the leadership of the Parti action démocratique du Québec from **Jean Allaire**, who resigned on April 28 because of failing health.

N.S. PREMIER ATTACKED AT LEGISLATURE

For the first time in the 150-year history of the Nova Scotia legislature, spectators forced the cancellation of a sitting of the House of Assembly on April 29. Angry construction workers prevented the reading of the budget and then punched and kicked Premier **John Savage** on his way out of the legislature. The workers were protesting against legislation they say would allow non-unionized workers on job sites and lead to lower wages.

MCCARTHY RESIGNS AS SOCRED LEADER

Grace McCarthy resigned as leader of the B.C. Social Credit party on May 3. Her decision follows her defeat in a March by-election and the defection of half of her Social Credit caucus to the Reform party of British Columbia.

PAROLE CHAIRMAN RESIGNS

Solicitor General **Herb Gray**, announced on May 6 that the chairman of the National Parole Board, **Michel Dagenais**, would be replaced by the vice-chairwoman of the board, **Nancy Stableforth**. Dagenais offered to resign following allegations that he misled the House of Commons Justice Committee on the role of board member **Ghislain Bellavance** in five controversial parole decisions.

AGREEMENT ON INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE PANELS

Talks between Canada's trade ministers ended on May 10 with an agreement to establish interprovincial trade dispute settlement panels accessible to provincial governments and private individuals. The panels would be similar to those provided for in the trade agreements with the United States and Mexico.

CRUISE TESTING NOT NEEDED, UNITED STATES SAYS

U.S. Defense Secretary **William Perry**, told the federal government on May 16 that the Pentagon has no need for further tests of the cruise missile in Canada. The announcement came three days after Foreign Affairs Minister **André Ouellet** said that the government would no longer approve any requests for testing.

NEWFOUNDLAND TEACHERS STRIKE

Newfoundland teachers launched a legal strike on May 16 to protest against a government contract offer that included cuts in wages and benefits and the elimination of hundreds of teaching positions. The walkout comes six weeks before the end of the school year.

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BOUCHARD SEEKS SUPPORT IN PARIS

In his capacity as leader of the official opposition, Bloc Québécois leader **Lucien Bouchard** travelled to Paris to meet with French politicians and to elicit support for Quebec sovereignty. Bouchard's week-long trip, beginning May 16, passed almost unnoticed in France, but aroused considerable controversy back in Canada.

MERCREDI PULLS OUT OF NATIVE SELF-RULE TALKS

Ovide Mercredi, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, quit a two-day meeting on native self-government held in Quebec City on May 16 and 17. Mercredi pulled out of the multilateral negotiations after the federal and provincial governments rejected his plea to limit the talks to native groups and the federal government.

IRWIN SAYS QUEBEC NATIVES CAN STAY IN CANADA

Federal Indian Affairs Minister **Ron Irwin** said on May 17 that Quebec's

native peoples have the right to remain part of Canada if Quebec should separate. Irwin said that the federal government had a responsibility under treaty provisions to protect native interests. Irwin's statements were strongly criticized by Quebec Premier **Daniel Johnson**, who said that Quebec's territory would always be "indivisible."

OTTAWA TO APPEAL RULING ON CHILD SUPPORT

Justice Minister **Allan Rock** announced on May 18 that the federal government will ask the Supreme Court for an immediate stay of a Federal Court of Appeal ruling that child support payments should no longer be taxed. The case involves a Quebec mother of two, **Suzanne Thibaudeau**, who launched a Charter equality rights challenge to the Income Tax Act in 1989.

BRITISH COLUMBIA PENALIZED FOR EXTRA BILLING

Federal Health Minister **Diane Marleau**, announced on May 19 that the federal government will penalize British Columbia \$1.7 million, the amount extra-billed by a small group of B.C. doctors. The

penalty, imposed under the terms of the *Canada Health Act*, will be subtracted from the federal government's monthly \$62 million transfer payment to British Columbia for health and education services.

SAME-SEX LEGISLATION IN ONTARIO

On May 19, the Ontario NDP government introduced legislation giving same-sex couples the same rights as common law couples. The legislation, which narrowly passed a vote on first reading, would be the first of its kind in Canada.

MOHAWKS CLEAR NEW GROUND AT OKA

Mohawks at Oka, Quebec, have moved into disputed land in an attempt to expand a sacred burial ground. Several Mohawks moved into the area on May 19 with bulldozers and chain saws to begin clearing the land. The area under dispute, claimed by both the Mohawks and the town of Oka, was at the centre of a summer-long crisis in 1990.

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