

CW UPDATE

THE MONTH IN REVIEW

by Jonathan Batty

BOURASSA RESIGNS

On September 14, in a long anticipated announcement, Quebec Liberal Premier **Robert Bourassa** resigned from office. Bourassa held office between 1970 and 1976 and was re-elected in 1985. The Premier was diagnosed with cancer in 1990. The Quebec Liberal Party will hold a leadership convention in Quebec City from January 28 to 30, at which time Bourassa's resignation will take effect.

NAFTA SIDE DEALS SIGNED

President **Bill Clinton**, Prime Minister **Kim Campbell**, and President **Carlos Salinas de Gortari** individually signed the side agreements to the North American Free Trade Agreement on September 15. The deals address U.S. concerns about environmental protection and labour laws.

NAFTA CHALLENGE OVERTURNED

A U.S. Federal Appeals Court overturned a June 30 decision of the district court that found the agreement violated federal environmental law. The court found that an environmental impact assessment did not have to be concluded prior to passage through Congress.

MANITOBA BY-ELECTIONS

Manitoba's Progressive Conservative government lost five by-elections on September 21. Three seats were won by the New Democrats, 2

by the Liberals. These standings leave the Government with 29 of the 57 seats in the legislature, meaning the Speaker of the House, a Conservative MLA, will have a tie-breaking ballot in the now evenly divided assembly.

NOMINATIONS CLOSED

On September 28, nominations closed for candidates in the October 25 general election. Under recent amendments to the Canada Elections Act, a party is required to field at least 50 candidates for official status. Party status is important to secure tax credits for donors, broadcast time, and party listing on the ballot. Thirteen parties met this requirement: Progressive Conservative; Liberal; New Democratic; Reform; Bloc québécois; National; Abolitionist; Canada; Christian Heritage; Commonwealth of Canada; Green; Libertarian and Natural Law. 1,624 candidates are nominated in the 295 ridings across Canada. Party status was lost by the Social Credit Party and the Communist Party.

FIXED LINK CONTRACT AWARDED

The federal Government Services Department, on September 29, announced that it had completed negotiations with the Calgary company, **Strait Crossing Development Inc.**, to build the causeway between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. It is estimated the five year project will cost \$842 million.

NOVA SCOTIA BUDGET

Nova Scotia's new Liberal government introduced its first budget on September 30. Finance Minister **Bernie Boudreau** announced tax increases estimated to increase revenues by \$78 million, through a one per cent increase in the sales tax (bringing the provincial rate to 11 per cent) and rises in fuel and income surtaxes. The operating defi-

cit for the province is projected to be \$396 million in 1993-94. The Liberal government had campaigned on a platform that it would not raise taxes.

LEADERSHIP DEBATES

On two successive nights, the party leaders of the five major parties engaged in the only scheduled leadership debates of the federal election. The French language debate on October 3 included Reform Party Leader **Preston Manning**, who is not bilingual, in a limited segment of the debate. National Party leader, **Mel Hurtig** unsuccessfully sought leave to appeal to the Supreme Court to force the television network broadcast consortium to allow him to participate in the October 4 English language debate.

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CW Update is a regular feature of
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