



Noteworthy

Discussions continue on development of Gull Island

Roger Grimes, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Bernard Landry, Premier of Québec, announced they have reached consensus on the fundamentals of any agreement that may be reached between the two governments on development of the Gull Island hydro resource project in Labrador. The premiers have directed their respective officials to continue discussions over the coming weeks to determine if an agreement can be reached based on these fundamentals. An update on the discussions is expected by early fall.

The premiers said any agreement must be based on the following:

- Development of a 2,000 MW Gull Island project;
- Newfoundland and Labrador ownership of the production and transmission facilities in Labrador;
- A long-term contract that reflects fair value and sharing of project risks, including an escalation provision that will ensure that the price reflects the value of electricity as it changes over time;
- All electricity produced by the project sold to Hydro-Québec with recall rights to Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Maximizing the economic and employment benefits for both Newfoundland and Labrador and Québec;
- Meaningful partnership with the Innu in the development;
- Development in an environmentally sensitive manner.

The two governments share a common interest in the development of this project, on the basis of terms that are fair to the people of both Newfoundland and Labrador and Québec, and in a manner that is sensitive to both environmental and aboriginal issues. "We all stand to benefit from the economic, employment and environmental gains to be derived from this very significant, renewable energy project," said the premiers. ☞

Annual Premiers' Conference

Health care, equalization, foreign overfishing and post-secondary education continued to be key issues for Premier Roger Grimes as he attended the 43rd Annual Premiers' Conference (APC) from July 31 to August 2 in Halifax.

During discussions on health care at the conference, Premier Grimes strongly supported a call on the federal government to work with provinces and territories to revitalize and sustain quality health care for all Canadians.

"We have accomplished a great deal in improving the efficiency of our health care systems over the past few years," said Premier Grimes. "However, it is essential that the federal government provide its fair share of health care funding if provinces are to be able to deliver the care Canadians need and deserve."

Equalization, post-secondary education and the conservation and protection of straddling fish stocks were also front and center on the premier's agenda. "Collaboration and cooperation between provinces are important as we move forward in our efforts to work with the federal government towards resolution of these issues," said the premier. "Through our collective efforts, we have a greater chance to improve the quality of life for all citizens." ☞

Employment numbers show best July since 1989

According to Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, employment for the province continued to make gains in July. Employment increased 3.2 per cent, or 7,500 jobs last month as compared to the same time period last year. This has brought year-to-date employment growth to 2.1 per cent. Along with the employment increase, there was a decrease in the unemployment rate which dropped by 1.3 percentage points to 13.8 per cent, as compared to July 2001. This is the lowest unemployment rate for the month of July since 1989.

"Employment in Newfoundland and Labrador has grown every month this year," said Ralph Wiseman, Minister of Human

Resources and Employment. "Furthermore, new major project developments and growth in the service sector bode well for employment prospects for the remainder of the year."

Employment gains were widespread in both the goods and services sectors. Industries recording growth included manufacturing; professional, scientific and technical services; management services; and accommodations and food services.

Social assistance caseloads continue to show a general downward trend, with an active case count of 28,097 for the month of July - the lowest July figure since 1991. ☞

