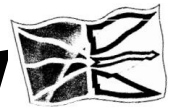


MARCH 9, 2001

Noteworthy



Mealy Mountains

feasibility study announced

Federal and provincial officials, as well as representatives of Labrador Aboriginal peoples, announced a joint study on the feasibility of establishing a new national park in the Mealy Mountains area of Labrador.

The study will examine the potential impacts and benefits of establishing a national park for all users in the area. It will enable an informed decision to be made about whether to proceed to negotiate an agreement to establish a national park in the area. The feasibility study will be a public process, designed to solicit the views and concerns of all interested parties and groups.

Tourism, Culture and Recreation Minister Kevin Aylward said the province is pleased to participate in the study. "The area is an ideal candidate for a national park, and the feasibility study will present all interested people with an opportunity to assess the benefits of a national park, along with alternative development options that might otherwise occur in the study area. This initiative will represent a significant contribution toward the goal of completing Canada's networks of representative protected areas."

Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs Ernest McLean sees this as a significant step forward. "This feasibility study is a very positive move towards achieving protected eco-region goals in Labrador," said Minister McLean. "My office in Labrador will work with the Parks Canada office in Happy Valley-Goose Bay as part of a joint working committee on this study."

Government has adopted an eco-region approach to protected areas establishment to ensure that each eco-region of the province is adequately represented in a protected areas system. Newfoundland and Labrador is a vast area with diverse ecology. If feasible, the Mealy Mountains National Park would see the protection of four eco-regions. ☞

Province meets with INCO

Premier Roger Grimes announced March 5 that the province and Inco are interested in re-opening discussions on the Voisey's Bay project. The comment was made following meetings between the province and Inco held last weekend in Toronto.

The meeting also gave the premier the opportunity to introduce his new Mines and Energy Minister Lloyd Matthews to Inco executives. "I have now asked Mr. Matthews and his officials to take the lead in any future discussions," said the premier.

The Voisey's Bay nickel sulphide deposits are considered to be one of the richest nickel sulphide deposits in the world. Inco is the western world's biggest nickel producer and describes Voisey's Bay as a multi-billion dollar project.

The premier said that government's objective is to ensure that the project maximizes the benefits associated with the processing of nickel concentrate to a final nickel product in this province. "The province is committed to securing long-term benefits from this project," said the premier. ☞

Trans Labrador Highway contracts awarded

The provincial government announced \$30 million in contracts for construction of approximately 123 kilometres of the Trans Labrador Highway. One contract will allow construction of approximately 17.7 kilometres of Route 510 from Port Hope Simpson towards Paradise River. A second contract will see the completion of the final 15 kilometres of Route 513, the St. Lewis Access Road.

Government awarded a third contract for the construction of approximately 47 kilometres of Route 510 from Cartwright to Port Hope Simpson. A fourth contract includes construction of

approximately 44 kilometres of Route 510 between Port Hope Simpson and Paradise River. Work on these projects will begin in the spring, with completion of the first two projects by November 30, 2001, and the latter two by November 30, 2002.

"These projects represent a significant amount of the work to be done on the highway over the next two years," said Minister of Works, Services and Transportation Percy Barrett. "We're pleased we were able to call early tenders so contractors can begin work as soon as weather permits." ☞

