

NATION BRIEFS

EU clears biotech barrier to Canada rapeseed import

BRUSSELS (Reuters)—The European Union has authorized imports of a genetically modified (GM) rapeseed type, clearing the way for a resumption of oilseed trading with Canada, the EU's executive Commission said on Tuesday.

Developed by Germany's Bayer CropScience, the rapeseed, known by its code number T45, is destined for use in food and animal feed, not for growing in European fields. The EU authorization will be valid for the next 10 years.

T45 is designed to resist certain glufosinate-ammonium herbicides and was discontinued from commercial planting after the 2005 season. Only a small stock remains in Canada.

"The authorization of this GM oilseed rape is important as it will allow the resumption of imports of oilseed rape in the EU from Canada," the European Commission said in a statement.

"The authorization is valid for 10 years, and any products derived from this GM oilseed rape will be subject to the EU's strict labeling and traceability rules," it said.

EU law allows for rubberstamp GMO authorizations when ministers cannot agree after a certain time. Since 2004, the Brussels-based European Commission has approved a string of GM products—nearly all maize—in this way, outraging green groups.

At their last meeting in January, EU agriculture ministers failed to reach a majority to approve Bayer's T45 application.

CBC ready to commit to "18 to Life"

TORONTO (Hollywood Reporter)—The CBC is ready to pick up locally produced single-camera comedy "18 to Life"—even with pilot partner ABC out of the picture.

The Montreal-set sitcom, from indie producer Galafilm portrays 18-year-old neighbours, played by Stacey Farber and Michael Seater, who get married on a dare only to face criticism from their parents and friends.

Last summer, ABC brokered a deal with Alchemy Television for U.S. rights to "18 to Life," marking the first time a Canadian and a U.S. network partnered on a Canadian primetime comedy. But the U.S. network said Tuesday that it is no longer involved with the project.

Rounding out the sitcom's cast are Peter Keleghan, Al Goulem, Ellen David and newcomers Tommie-Amber Pirie and Ariel Shiri.

In recent years, the CBC and other Canadian broadcasters have shifted their development process to include the production of pilots, even as U.S. networks opt for more straight-to-series orders.

As a result, a number of Canadian dramas, including "Flashpoint," "The Bridge" and "The Listener," have been picked up by the U.S. networks.

Canada says auto industry needs GM, Chrysler alive

OTTAWA (Reuters)—Automakers operating in Canada need General Motors Canada to survive so that the automotive supply chain does not collapse, Industry Minister Tony Clement said on Wednesday.

"Ford and Toyota need GM to survive; they need Chrysler to survive, because if they don't survive their whole supply chain becomes dysfunctional," Clement told reporters in Ottawa.

"We're all in the same boat together and we all have to find...solutions together."

He made the remarks as the U.S. and Canadian governments work to decide whether to give GM and Chrysler long-term rescue packages. GM's auditors raised questions last week about whether the company can continue as a going concern.

Among the world's big carmakers, General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, Toyota, and Honda Motor Co manufacture vehicles in Canada.

A reporter asked Clement if he had enough information from Chrysler to make a decision in light of his complaints last month that the company's original restructuring proposals lacked Canada-specific information.

"I think we're still talking to them. I don't think we're at the point yet where we have all the information we require to make a good judgment," Clement responded.

"We're all feeling our way along here, and to defend the auto sector a little bit here, this is new territory for them. We've seen a collapse of sales in the United States to a degree that there was no prediction of this."

Recognition needed for Chinese pioneers, organization says

Pioneers 'contributed hugely' to prosperity of B.C.

By JOAN DELANEY
Epoch Times Staff

Bill Chu is a man on a mission. He wants the Chinese pioneers who toiled to build the Canadian Pacific Railway—and often died in the process—to be recognized for their part in building Canada.

To that end, Chu, who came to Canada from Hong Kong in 1974, has been lobbying the British Columbia government to protect Chinese historical sites and build a pioneers' memorial museum.

He says the lack of documentation of the long history of Chinese in B.C. has led to Chinese-Canadians being viewed as "newcomers" and "perpetual immigrants."

"Right now if you try to find the history of the Chinese in B.C., you wouldn't be able to find it as far as the school curriculum goes, and yet we have been here in big numbers and contributed hugely to the

prosperity of this province."

Chu points out that B.C. would not be part of Canada today if the CPR hadn't been built. Back in the 1860s, the promise of a rail line linking the west coast with the rest of Canada put a stop to a threat by B.C. to join the United States.

History has it that Sir John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada, stated that without Chinese labour there would be no railway. Subsequently, between 1881 and 1885 more than 17,000 Chinese arrived in Canada.

At the height of the railroad building activity in B.C., approximately 9,000 workers were Chinese. The toughest and most hazardous construction was in the mountains and canyons, where many workers perished and where their graves remain.

Founder of Canadians For Reconciliation (CFC), Chu began making trips to the B.C. Interior after learning from his aboriginal contacts of the existence of historic sites in the Fraser Canyon.

"After six trips, we learned many stories about Chinese-aboriginal relationships and have rediscovered many former mining, railway, camping and burial

sites used by Chinese pioneers," says Chu, a retired professional engineer.

Chu says there was a lot of intermarriage between aboriginals and Chinese, and that the aboriginals showed the pioneers—who for the most part were extremely poor—how to survive the harsh conditions of the B.C. wilderness.

Mindful of the shared "dark history" of discrimination against both Chinese pioneers and aboriginals, Chu has formed strong ties with First Nations communities. Last week he spoke on this issue at the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs' (UBCIC) annual convention, unusual in that the formal event is normally closed to non-aboriginals.

UBCIC supports CFC's effort to locate and protect the Chinese historic sites, many of which have already been destroyed by highway and railroad construction and the passage of time. Chu says that because Chinese were not allowed to be buried in the same graveyards as Caucasians, their graves are scattered all over.

If the historical sites were preserved they could contribute to the economically-depressed Fraser Canyon as a tourist draw, he says.

"In Australia, New Zealand, and California they have preserved and updated their old Chinese mine sites and they became public parks and attractions. So other countries are way ahead of us."

A large Chinese cemetery dating back to 1860 was recently discovered in New Westminster, bringing to a halt plans to build a middle school on that spot. New Westminster was once home to a thriving Chinatown. There are also sites on Vancouver Island and Texada Island, which at one time also had a large Chinatown.

Aside from railroad construction, the Chinese were involved in mining, logging, fishing, farming, and building infrastructure in many parts of the province.

"You name it we have been doing it," says Chu. "We did all the dirty work so to speak for the province, and then lo and behold what happened? They introduced the Chinese exclusion act in 1923 and that lasted until 1947."

Although they risked their lives to build the railroad, after it was completed the Chinese were no longer wanted in Canada. It was a difficult period for Chinese im-

migrants who had to contend with the head tax, job discrimination, and personal attacks.

Chu laments that during the celebrations for B.C.'s 150th birthday throughout 2008, neither the racism the Chinese experienced nor the full contributions of the pioneers were acknowledged.

As well as the building of a museum, CFC wants the history of the pioneers added to the school curriculum. They also hope the provincial government will impose a moratorium on development that may infringe on any sites and begin preserving those sites.

Premier Gordon Campbell said back in November that he supports protecting the sites. Chu says prompt action is crucial to prevent further damage from development, vandalism, or erosion.

Locating, identifying and documenting the sites "takes a lot of work and energy," he says, adding that he believes it's a task in which all Canadians should participate.

"The onus is really to be placed upon all British Columbians and Canadians, because we are talking about not only Chinese history—we're talking about Canadian history."

Hundreds gather in support of Party withdrawals



Hundreds of Toronto Chinese paraded through Toronto's Chinatown on Saturday in support of the 50 million mainland Chinese who have withdrawn from the Chinese Communist Party. MATTHEW LITTLE / THE EPOCH TIMES

By MATTHEW LITTLE
Epoch Times Staff

Hundreds of Chinese people gathered in Grange Park, Toronto, on Saturday in a show of support for the 50 million mainland Chinese who have publicly withdrawn from the Chinese Communist Party.

Among speakers at the rally was Cindy Gu, Publisher of the Epoch Times. "The massive yet peaceful movement to quit the Chinese Communist Party is one of the most significant news events in the world today," she said.

Ms. Gu noted that around 80 million Chinese people have died unnatural deaths due to the Chinese Communist Party's various political campaigns against specific groups in China.

Past campaigns targeted land owners, business people, religious groups, intellectuals, democracy activists, and most recently, Falun Gong practitioners. The Chinese Communist Party is also blamed for causing the largest man-made famine in human history, leading to the deaths of some 30 million Chinese people.

After the rally, the gathered crowd lined up and had a parade through Toronto's Chinatown.

Cherry blossom time in Vancouver

By Helena Zhu & Hazelle Wang

VANCOUVER—Despite a colder than usual March, the first cherry blossoms of the spring are finally beginning to appear, gracing the streets of Vancouver's West End with their fluffy pink presence.

No less than 36,000 ornamental cherry trees are set to bloom in 25 Vancouver neighbourhoods between now and May, delighting the city's many cherry blossom lovers.

"I think it's very easy for anyone to love cherry trees. I was a paper delivery boy and I got to see cherry trees during sunrise, and it's very poetic for me," says botanist Douglas Justice.

Justice is associate director and curator of collections at the University of British Columbia's Botanical Garden. He says his "love affair" with ornamental cherry trees began when he was a child.

"My father grew a cherry tree in the front yard and one in the backyard. The one in the back yard is called 'Daybreak,' but the actual name of the tree is Akebono, and that flower is one of the most common in Vancouver. My other cherry tree was called Shirotae, and Shirotae is almost always flowering on my birthday."

It was the beauty of cherry blossoms that inspired Justice to write Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver, a guide to the 35 varieties of cherry trees in the city, all of which bloom at different times.

Ornamental cherries are most common in Japan, the British Isles, and the west coast of North America, because the moist climate in these regions suits them. Japan alone has hundreds of varieties. While most only live about 50 years, there are cherry trees in Japan that

are much older, Justice says.

"In Japan in temples there are trees that are many hundreds of years old. But these trees have an army of monks taking care of them."

One of the most popular species is Kanzan, which has long-lasting flowers and blooms at the end of April and into May.

"Kanzan produces very large bright pink flowers that look like a powder puff ... It's widely planted in Vancouver and people love it because the trees look patched in the middle and you feel cuddled while driving through."

One of Justice's favourites is Birch Bark, of which there are only a few in Vancouver.

"It's grown not for its flowers but its bark—it's like polished. ... I think it's special because it's unusual and it has beautiful bark. It's

not very widely planted because the flower isn't very nice compared to others."

Justice says the best time to distinguish the difference between species is when the trees are blossoming. Therefore at the fourth annual Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival that runs from March 28 to April 24, he will assume the role of technical advisor, demonstrating the intricate dissimilarities between the flowers that to the untrained eye are hard to detect.

The month-long festival includes a cherry blossom photo contest, a haiku contest, a Cherry Jam, tree talks and walks, outdoor canvas painting lessons, and Bike the Blossom at the VanDusen Botanical Garden.

To see a map of the cherry blossoms, visit: <http://www.vcbf.ca/map>

Parliament's trouble with tough talk

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But whether the government has infrastructure money that will lapse or not is pretty much irrelevant given that everyone agrees that the additional money needs to get out there immediately.

It's an interesting backdrop to the current controversy surrounding the government's request for \$3 billion in expedited funds. That money could get into the economy as early as April 1, sidestepping procedural delays within the Treasury Board.

The opposition parties are decrying the emergency fund as a "blank cheque." The NDP has gone as far as calling it a "slush fund." The budget passed final approval last week but budget estimates also require approval and the Liberals have said they will require a list of projects the \$3 billion will be spent on before they grant approval.

It didn't help matters that the Liberals got vague information from someone in the Treasury Board suggesting the Conservatives could spend the \$3 billion on anything they fancied.

That information appears to have prompted the Official Opposition to take a harder line on the fund, demanding the government provide an itemized list of projects those monies could be spent on.

But in addition to contradicting Mr. Baird's assertion that unspent infrastructure funds could be carried over, Mr. Smith also contradicted opposition suggestions that the expedited fund was unaccountable.

He said all money would pass normally required Treasury Board due diligence, but more importantly, he said the money was limited to Chapter 3 in the recently approved budget, a budget the Liberals supported in hopes of getting stimulus spending into the economy quickly.

Chapter 3 of the budget contains a number of stimulus programs, but actual projects will need to be determined in conjunction with the provinces.

The Liberals had in the past asked for a list of projects, but, perhaps reflecting new information that the emergency fund was limited to the budget, have more recently been asking for a list of programs.

The whole mess raises some challenging questions for Canadians trying to evaluate their elected representatives.

If the Liberals are demanding a list of programs, but those programs are listed in the budget they already approved, do they doubt the Treasury Board's assertion that the money is limited to Chapter 3 of the budget? Do they not believe the budget they just approved identified those programs adequately?

Or is this all just political posturing with the opposition trying to show Canadians they are holding the government to account?

If the Conservatives need this money urgently, are they not in consultation with the provinces already about various projects it could go towards? Could they not disclose some of those projects, in tandem with the provinces, and resolve the opposition's concerns? Even if the government can't list specific projects, can't it approximate dollar figures for the programs it plans to pump emergency funds into?

At the end of the day, it starts to look like a major difficulty for parliament is basic communication and cooperation. Opposition parties constantly try to embarrass the government and lay every problem in Canada at its feet. Meanwhile the Conservatives often deflect these attacks with vague responses that are as much insult as answer.

The good part of the scenario, as evidenced by the furor surrounding the \$3 billion emergency fund, is that it is very difficult for the government to slip anything by without it getting scrutinized by the opposition parties and the media. The bad thing is it can be hard for citizens and political observers to tell which controversies really need investigating and which ones are mostly hot air.

Which means, more often than not, Canadians are taken on a hot air balloon ride by reporters doing their best to catch as much of each controversy as they can before another one erupts tomorrow. Whether or not that ends up serving the country depends on whether the balloon lifts citizens up to a place where they can get a good view, or just carries them away for a directionless trip to nowhere.

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