

## AIRLINES

## WestJet to start new Abbotsford-Hamilton service

CALGARY • WestJet Airlines Ltd. reported in a news release yesterday that it will be offering a new weekly non-stop passenger service between Abbotsford, B.C., and Hamilton, Ont. beginning on Jan. 19. One-way fares for the flights will start at \$263, the Calgary-based discount air carrier said.

## DISTRIBUTION

## Finning International says Q3 net income up sharply

TORONTO • Heavy-equipment distributor Finning International Inc. said yesterday its net income and revenue rose sharply in the third quarter because of acquisition-related growth. Finning said earnings in the quarter ended Sept. 30 rose 60% to \$29.9-million, or 39¢ a share, compared with \$18.7-million (25¢) in the year-ago quarter.

## ENERGY

## Chevron opens office ahead of expected drilling

HALIFAX • Chevron Canada Resources is opening a pre-emptive drilling office in Halifax in anticipation of opening a deepwater exploratory well on the Scotian Slope. Chevron partner Petro-Canada plan to drill an exploratory well Mahone Block about 250 kilometres south-

*U.S. environmental lawyer helps launch campaign against utility's Belize project*

# Fortis disputes Kennedy claims

## 'MISLEADING INFORMATION'

BY JAMES MCCARTEN

The son of former U.S. attorney-general Robert Kennedy launched a blistering public-relations salvo at Newfoundland-based Fortis Inc. over its dam project in Central America.

Robert Kennedy Jr., a lawyer for the U.S.-based Natural Resources Defense Council, is among those urging utility giant Fortis to abandon a planned hydroelectric dam in the Macal River Valley in Belize.

"The Belize project is inconsistent with that Canadian tradition, the best traditions of Canada," Mr. Kennedy said yesterday.

Mr. Kennedy was in Toronto to help kick off a campaign opposing the dam, which critics insist will lead to an environmental catastrophe in one of central America's last remaining tracts of pristine wilderness.

The Chalillo dam has become a cause célèbre, prompting howls of protest from Hollywood star Harrison Ford and prominent Newfoundland entertainer and activist Greg Malone, who was on hand for yesterday's launch.

Fortis, however, denies the activists' claims.

"It's a major bombardment in the media of misleading information," said Fortis president and chief executive Stan Marshall.

"Look, I can't directly take on Harrison Ford. What am I going to do, hire Darth Vader?"

A \$250,000 environmental as-

essment paid for by the Canadian government said the project would cause "significant and irreversible" harm to at least 12 different endangered or rare species of wildlife, including the scarlet macaw, the jaguar and the freshwater crocodile.

But the environmental component of the study is flawed, Mr. Marshall said, because the people who conducted it were influenced by lobbyists.

"It's my understanding that they came under some tremendous pressure from these environmental groups, and to a certain degree capitulated to them," he said. "It was noted by the people doing the study that it was factually incorrect."

The government of Belize responded to criticism of the project last month in a strongly worded letter that chastized Mr. Ford, Mr. Kennedy and the council for spinning "an interesting tale based loosely on the facts."

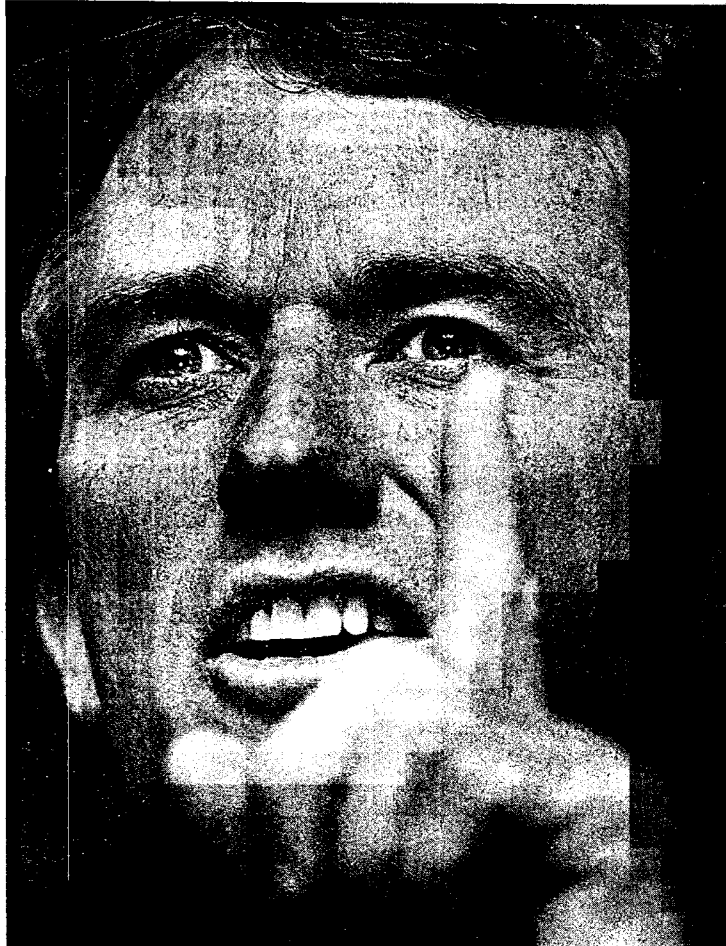
Belize is a poor country with many villages that still have no power, something the government is committed to reversing in the most efficient way possible, said the letter, signed by Cabinet secretary Robert Leslie.

"We are the people most directly affected," Mr. Leslie wrote.

"In Belize, we are clearly, and almost to the person, of the view that we the people and democratic government of Belize must be the ones to decide."

Mr. Marshall said Fortis will abide by the government's decision.

*The Canadian Press*



KENT GILBERT / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Robert Kennedy Jr. is among the high-profile critics of Fortis Inc.'s dam project in Central America. "The Belize project is inconsistent with ... the best traditions of Canada," he said in Toronto yesterday.