

European market for healthful Canadian foods

The growth of the "health" food industry indicates a gradual change in the dietary habits of Canadians, writes Ben Malkin, Parliamentary press correspondent, in *Canadian Scene*. From the small health food specialty shops, the movement towards a different kind of diet has spread to the supermarkets, where tubs are now standing in rows, filled with largely unprocessed grains, nuts, and other foods.

The movement may be traced to two factors: a growing distrust of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, and a growing impatience with packaged food, with the shopper unable to see exactly what he or she is getting, either in quantity or quality.

An article in *Food Market Commentary*, a publication of Agriculture Canada, analyzes the growing movement toward a new Canadian diet. To begin with, the

article sorts out the difference between "health" food, "natural" food, and "organic" food. It quotes a consultant commissioned by the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture to study the new trend. His definitions: "Health food is a broad description of foods that are sold because they are believed by some to provide a healthful benefit. Natural food is a less broad term for foods that have undergone minimal processing.... Organic foods, an even less broad segment, are foods grown without the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers."

The article says the study focused on organic foods because they are the segment with the most direct implications for farmers.

"A number of producers in Saskatchewan," the article reports, "who farm without chemical pesticides or fertilizers are trying to establish more effective

marketing channels for their products. Among the difficulties they face in this effort is the confusion among consumers and distributors over what is meant by the various categories of 'health' food.

"Consumers are vulnerable to fraud or unintended deception because they are not well equipped to evaluate the claims which are made for various food products. Saskatchewan organic producers are eager to have some standards defined for organic production, as well as some means of inspection and enforcement."

Being free of chemical residues or additives, organically grown foods command a premium price. "The group of organic grain growers in Saskatchewan," says the article, "is working to supply a European buyer with several thousand tonnes of wheat at a price that is about 50 per cent above that of the current market.

"In western Europe," the article continues, "health food and natural food stores are described as 'mushrooming'. Most of the product sold by these stores is not organic, however, and the stores would like to buy organic grains if they are available.

"European farmers are trying to reduce their use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, mainly in response to rising costs. Nevertheless, the extent of industrial pollution of air and water in parts of Europe apparently makes many health-food customers suspicious as to whether any foods grown in that environment can be completely free of chemical residues. Thus the prospect of being able to advertise foods grown organically in the supposedly pure air of the Canadian prairies may explain the interest of European wholesalers in Saskatchewan grain."

Special stamps mark Newfoundland's four-hundredth anniversary and World Council of Churches assembly

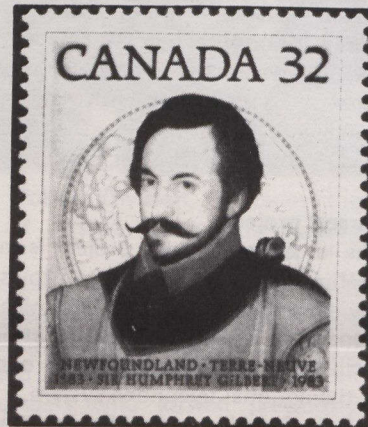
Canada Post Corporation has issued a 32-cent commemorative stamp to mark Newfoundland's four-hundredth anniversary and honour its founder, Sir Humphrey Gilbert.

Sir Humphrey claimed Newfoundland for Queen Elizabeth I in 1583, laying the foundations of the British Empire and marking the beginnings of Newfoundland.

The stamp, designed by Roger Hill of Toronto, bears a portrait of Sir Humphrey and a polar projection map he used to convince the Queen to allow him to found a colony in the New World. The map had been prepared in 1582 by an astronomer, John Dee. Sir Humphrey set sail for the New World June 11, 1583, arriving in St. John's harbour August 3. He died a few weeks later on his return trip to England.

Another special stamp was issued this summer to mark the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches which was held in Vancouver from July 24 to August 10.

The stamp, designed by Gus Tsetsekas of Vancouver, features steel-engraved cross elements of different sizes which come together to form a larger cross, symbolic of its meaning to all churches. The minister responsible for Canada Post Corporation, André Ouellet, said the stamp was issued "because organizations of international scope that strive for spiritual and human dignity, such as the World Council of Churches, deserve our attention". The council, an ecumenical organization of some 300 Protestant and orthodox churches in about 90 countries, is now 35 years old. It maintains programs aimed at promoting world evangelism and dialogue between people of different faiths and ideologies, involving itself with relief work and combating racism.



Poverty rate drops

Among those most likely to be poor in Canada are unemployed people with eight or fewer years of education and who rent their living accommodations, new Statistics Canada figures show.

The federal agency also reports a high incidence of poverty in rural Maritime families, elderly widows in Quebec and immigrants who arrived after 1960.

There were approximately 3.5 million persons living in poverty in 1981, about the same number as in the previous year. However, because of population growth, the poverty rate declined to 14.7 per cent from 15.1 per cent of the total population.