

## MUSEUMS ACT PROCLAIMED

The recently-appointed board of trustees for the National Museums of Canada held their first meeting in Ottawa on March 25.

The board, which is chaired by Jean Ostiguy of Montreal, was named after the National Museums Act was passed during the current session of Parliament, creating the National Museums Corporation with proclamation of the Act on April 1.

The National Museums Corporation now comprises the National Gallery of Canada, the National Museum of Man (formerly the Human History Branch of the National Museum), the National Museum of Natural Sciences (formerly the Natural History Branch of the National Museum), and the National Museum of Science and Technology.

## SUB-SEARCHING PLANES TO GO

The "phasing-out" by June of this year of Canada's famed *Neptune* anti-submarine aircraft will result in savings of approximately \$8 million a year in personnel, maintenance and operating costs.

Twenty of these aircraft, 12 at Canadian Forces Base Summerside, Prince Edward Island, and eight at CFB Comox, British Columbia, are at present with Maritime Command.

Maritime Command's *Argus* aircraft, which have a longer flight range than the *Neptunes*, will be re-deployed to meet operational commitments. The replacement of eight *Neptunes* by six *Argus* at Comox will increase the maritime operational capability on Canada's West Coast.

The *Neptune*, with a crew of 10, was acquired in March 1955 from Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. The *Argus*, which carries a crew of 15, was brought into operation in May 1958. The aircraft is manufactured by Canadair Ltd.

## AID FOR POTATO GROWERS

Agriculture Minister J.J. Greene recently announced a programme of federal assistance to commercial potato-growers in Canada. The Federal Government will pay each grower \$25 for each eligible acre up to a maximum of \$400 for each farmer, based on his 1967 crop. Payments will not be made on crops of one acre or less.

Mr. Greene said that prices received by growers had been extremely low for two consecutive years. "Low prices in the winter of 1966-67 were the direct result of overproduction in Canada in 1966," he added. Low prices during the winter 1967-68 had not, however, been the fault of Canadian farmers. Growers had cut back acreage in 1967, and production was down to the point where reasonable prices could be expected. Exceptionally large U.S. supplies had forced down Canadian prices.

"Growers in Western Canada had requested the Government to place a value-for-duty on potatoes entering their region as a means of improving returns.

After careful consideration, it was felt that, on balance, a support programme applicable across Canada was preferable. This approach will not conflict with Canada's trade obligations and it will provide assistance to growers everywhere. In addition, it means that prices of potatoes to the consumer will not be raised," Mr. Greene said.

## PERMAFROST MAP

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in co-operation with the National Research Council, has produced a map which shows the distribution of permafrost in Canada. This full-colour map, charted by EMR's Geological Surveys branch, from data collected over 14 years by NRC's Dr. R.J.E. Brown, has detailed explanatory notes and bibliography, as well as diagrams.

Permafrost conditions occur when the temperature of the earth remains below 32 degrees F continuously for a number of years. Permafrost can be a few inches or hundreds of feet thick and from a year and a half to thousands of years old.

## AVALANCHE WARNING SYSTEM

Six trained avalanche observers working with the National Research Council of Canada are testing a system designed to warn road-clearing crews of any sudden snow avalanches.

In 1965, two men were killed by an avalanche at Rogers Pass, British Columbia, while attempting to clear the Trans-Canada Highway of snow from a previous avalanche.

Experience has shown that, in Glacier National Park, British Columbia, there is a maximum of three minutes from the time an avalanche releases until it strikes the highway. This short time is all that road-workers have to abandon their slow-moving "cat" or grader and run out of the avalanche path; to maximize the escape potential of this brief interval, NRC engineers have devised a plan built round modified commercially-available Citizen Band (CB) communications equipment.

A trained avalanche-observer is stationed in a safe location up to a mile away from where road crews are working, from which he is able to observe all the "trigger" areas that may affect that portion of the highway being cleared.

At the first indication of danger, he need only press a button on his modified CB transmitter-receiver to ring an alarm bell in the cab of the snow-clearing vehicle. The operator must then abandon his vehicle and run for his life.

Work began on this project after NRC received a request from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, which has responsibility for Glacier National Park.

Two vehicles were equipped with the alarm system following an initial testing period in the summer of 1967. Full-scale trials began in mid-October and are to continue until spring.