

A manually-operated reader for IBM punched cards assists blind persons working as computer operators and in related fields. A carriage is moved across the card and pins are raised when a hole is encountered. Brailled markings indicate the location of the hole.

Various electronic thermometers equipped with tactile and auditory readouts are used by blind technicians working in commercial photographic darkrooms.

The Swail Dot Inverter for production of Braille drawings by hand. In producing a Braille drawing, a pointed instrument is used to produce characters by punching holes through paper, the raised dots forming the characters come out on the underside of the paper meaning that Braille must be produced in reverse. The Swail inverter raises the dots on the upper side, eliminating the reversal process.

An auditory beacon which emits a beep every ten seconds, enabling a blind person to place it next to an object he wishes to leave and then later locate.

A four-section collapsible white cane for the blind. Rigid in use, four feet in length, it can be carried in a blind person's pocket.

Scientific mission to France

A federal scientific mission visited France from December 11 to 20. The three-man body examined:

- (1) *Health care*, including regional aspects of administration, medicare, health-care costs and community clinics.
- (2) *Organizations*, terms of reference and the operation of "Haut Comité médical de la Santé".
- (3) *Adverse effects of drugs*, including drug-abuse problems and procedures for the reporting of adverse effects in medical products.
- (4) *Health effects* of pollution in air, water and soil.
- (5) *Perinatal problems* (such as occur shortly before and after birth).

The members of the mission were: H.L. Laframboise, Director General, Long-Range Planning Branch, Department of National Health and Welfare; Dr. Michel J. Bérard, Chief of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Notre Dame Hospital, Montreal, and Director of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Univer-

sity of Montreal; Dr. Yves Morin, Head of the Department of Medicine and Associate Dean, Laval University, Quebec.

The despatch of this group, which visited Paris and Lyons among other centres, came as the result of recommendations of the joint Franco-Canadian cultural commission. Its objectives were to encourage co-operation between institutions, universities, laboratories and other organizations in the two countries.

New hotels for Canada

The huge Four Seasons Sheraton in downtown Toronto had its official opening recently. Near the airport, the Bristol Place Hotel is being finished; this handsome 225-room convention hotel will be opened early in 1973. Western International Hotels has started a 600-room building on University Avenue.

In London, Ontario, National Traveller Hotels, a new chain, opened its first hotel recently.

In Quebec City, the Quebec Hilton, with 577 rooms, will open next summer. With its convention centre and meeting-rooms, it will be an important part of Place Quebec, the big new business and commercial centre. Construction has started on a Quality Inn in Quebec.

In the Montreal area, Holiday Inn-Longueuil was opened last autumn. The 17-storey building has 214 bedrooms. Work is also proceeding on a 22-floor Holiday Inn at Place Dupuis in downtown Montreal.

In Halifax, CP Hotel's Chateau Halifax (271 rooms), is scheduled for opening in the spring and a 112-room addition to the Lord Nelson Hotel has been started.

Out West, CP Hotels has opened the 100-room Red Oak Inn at Brandon, Manitoba. Quality Inns International will build a hotel in Edmonton and Delta Hotels plans a 144-room hotel near the Calgary airport. A 100-room hotel will open near the Vancouver airport next spring.

Therapeutic abortions in Canada

Hospitals reported 18,801 therapeutic abortions performed on Canadian residents in the first half of

1972. This increase from the 14,168 reported a year earlier raised the rate in 100 live births by 33 per cent — to 10.1 from 7.6. The rate increased 71 per cent to 1.2 in Newfoundland; 79 per cent to 2.5 in Prince Edward Island; 45 per cent to 5.5 in Nova Scotia; 56 per cent to 1.4 in New Brunswick; 61 per cent to 2.9 in Quebec; 36 per cent to 14.8 in Ontario; 70 per cent to 6.3 in Manitoba; 61 per cent to 6.1 in Saskatchewan; 21 per cent to 11.5 in Alberta; 16 per cent to 22.4 in British Columbia; and 309 per cent to 9.0 in the Yukon.

Helicopter destroyer commissioned

The helicopter destroyer HMCS *Huron* (DDH 281) was christened and commissioned on December 16 at Sorel, Quebec. Mrs. M. Elizabeth Collins, wife of Vice-Admiral D.A. Collins, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Support), was the sponsor.

Huron, third of her class to be commissioned, was designed and built in Canada. She has recently completed three weeks of exacting sea trials conducted by the builders on the lower St. Lawrence River, during which her performance was reported to have exceeded design specifications. She was put through rigid tests of her speed and fuel consumption, manoeuvring capabilities, main-engine performance, command and control.

The four ships of this class will serve in Maritime Command of the Canadian Armed Forces and will be based at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

HMCS *Iroquois* (DDH 280) and *Huron* were built by Marine Industries, Sorel. *Athabaskan* (DDH 282), which was commissioned in September 1972, and *Algonquin* (DDH 283), still under construction, are products of Davie Shipbuilding Limited, Lauzon, Quebec.

Federal employment

Employment in the Federal Government reached 422,700 on June 30, 1972. This was 17,700 more than on March 31, the increase being primarily casual help on seasonal employment. The total payroll increased by \$99.1 million, to \$911.3 million, reflecting the increase in employees and also a third pay-period in June.