

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, now on an official visit to the People's Republic of China, has informed his Chinese hosts of the decision of the Canadian government to declare Dr. Norman Bethune to be of national historic significance and that fitting recognition of his exceptional humanitarian achievements will be made at Gravenhurst, Ontario, the place of his birth.

The Minister's announcement was contained in a speech delivered today at a banquet in the Great Hall of the People. On August 20, Mr. Sharp will be visiting Shihchiachuang, the site of China's memorial to the Canadian surgeon who is honoured in China as a great humanitarian. Mr. Sharp also noted that his colleague, the Honourable Jean-Luc Pepin, Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, is making a similar announcement today at Gravenhurst in the presence of the Chinese Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr. Pai Hsiang-kuo.

The government's decision was the subject of an official announcement this morning by the Minister responsible for Historic Sites and Monuments, the Honourable Jean Chrétien.