



CANADA

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## ORAL POLIO VACCINE FOR CANADIANS

Live oral poliovirus vaccine of the Sabin variety had been licensed for use in Canada, it was announced recently in Parliament by Mr. J. Waldo Monteith, the Minister of National Health and Welfare. "The new vaccine" Mr. Monteith stated, "represents another great medical breakthrough and one which may, in effect, result in the almost complete eradication of paralytic polio in this country. I am gratified that Canada is among the first nations of the world to license all three strains of the vaccine. Our Food and Drugs Act sets a very high standard for new preparations of this kind and I think it is a tribute to the excellence of Canadian scientists and Canadian producers that full approval has now been possible".

"Because of the really outstanding success achieved with the Salk vaccine and because it is now built into child-immunization programmes across the country," Mr. Monteith continued, "we do not expect that the oral vaccine will replace the Salk, at least at the outset. Rather, it will be used as a supplementary or booster dose for the majority of persons who already have been immunized with the Salk, as well as for a primary stimulus for those who have not. In the case of immunized persons, the initial approach is that a single dose of the oral vaccine will be sufficient. Several doses may be necessary for those not previously immunized with Salk".

### ADVANTAGES OF ORAL VACCINE

The Sabin vaccine has a number of advantages over the Salk vaccine. First it can be easily ad-

ministered, since it comes in liquid form and can be taken by mouth. Second, the Sabin vaccine immunizes the intestinal tract and thus prevents the multiplication and spread of polio viruses. In contrast, Salk provides protection against the paralytic effects of polio but does not prevent the individual from acting as a carrier of the disease. In addition, it has been established that certain individuals who do not respond to Salk vaccination will obtain protection from the Sabin vaccine.

Mr. Monteith said that evidence to date suggests that the most effective method of using oral vaccine in the present state of knowledge is by community immunization programmes. For this reason, and in order to make the best possible use of supplies available, distribution for the time being will be through provincial and federal health authorities.

As in the case of the Salk vaccine, the costs of providing the Sabin vaccine will be shared on a 50-50 basis by the federal and provincial governments. Also, as was done with Salk, production in Canada will be handled by the Connaught Medical Research Laboratories of the University of Toronto and the Institute of Microbiology and Hygiene of the University of Montreal.

### FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS

It is of interest to note that federal contributions towards providing the Salk vaccine, totalled to 1961, over \$6,225,000. Federal assistance for the live poliovirus vaccine has been associated with studies carried out in Canada and has amounted to more than \$230,000. The federal and provincial governments