

Top skaters to perform in Ottawa

The World Figure Skating Championships, involving about 110 of the world's top figure-skaters from some 15 countries, are being held in Ottawa this year. Eleven days of practice and competition, from March 2 to 12, are scheduled for the Civic Centre and the Nepean Sportsplex.

Among those expected to take part are: Vladimir Kovalev of the U.S.S.R. and Jan Hoffman of East Germany, who placed first and second in the men's singles at the 1977 World Championships; Linda Fratianne of the United States and Anett Poetzsch of East Germany, first and second last year in the women's singles; Irina Moiseeva and Andrei Minenkov of the Soviet Union, last year's champion ice-dance couple; and the champion pair Irina Rodnina and Alexandr Zaitcev, also of the U.S.S.R.

The men's and women's singles competition will consist of compulsory figures, short-program and free skating. An original set pattern dance and free dance are included in the ice-dancing competition.

Following the competition in Ottawa, the Parade of Champions, an exhibition by medal winners, will visit Montreal and Quebec City, Québec, Moncton, New Brunswick, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Toronto, Ontario, Edmonton and Lethbridge, Alberta, and Vancouver, British Columbia. The tour will then proceed to the United States, visiting Los Angeles, Oakland, Colorado Springs, Cleveland, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Hartford.

The World Figure Skating Championships have been held in Canada three times previously — in Montreal in 1932, in Vancouver in 1960 and in Calgary in 1972.

Indian studies boosted

Indian Affairs will provide up to \$250,000 to assist the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in its operations during the current year. The college, associated with the University of Regina, offers degree programs related to Indian affairs. At present, 87 students are enrolled in the college's B.A. program of Indian studies. Accredited courses are also offered in Indian social work, guidance-counselling and art.

Food poisoning and the consumer

Each year thousands of Canadians suffer from salmonella poisoning — one of the most common types of food poisoning — and scientists in the food-processing industry search constantly for its cause.

Dr. Charles Davidson, of Canada Packers' Research Centre in Toronto, outlines the cause of salmonella poisoning: "Unlike some other types of food poisoning in which an organism secretes poison into the food, with salmonella you have to ingest the live bug. If the degree of contamination is high enough, then some of the bacteria survive the high acidity of the stomach and pass into the lower intestine where they multiply. After an incubation period of one to two days, the familiar and unpleasant symptoms begin."

Most cases occur when food is left uncovered and unrefrigerated in a kitchen and is then eaten without being cooked — it may simply be "warmed up". While the problem can be solved with simple common sense, the food industry is concerned that it does not contribute to the problem in the packaging of the foods it offers. Dr. Davidson is particularly interested in the microbiology of vacuum-packed luncheon meats, sausages and wieners.

Packaging helps

"Vacuum packaging retards the growth of microorganisms which cause spoilage but it does not destroy salmonella," he explains. "It is possible for a consumer to unseal a package which appears and smells perfectly fresh but could be contaminated with salmonella. While the chance of such contamination in a modern packing plant is rare, we have nevertheless undertaken an investigation of the behaviour of salmonella in vacuum-packed products."

The organism is effectively destroyed in the heat treatment which all cooked meats receive, so that if a problem arises it is normally attributed to contamination after processing. While extensive precautions are taken, it is simply not possible to free the factory environment of all bacteria. Some are brought in on animal carcasses or can be carried by otherwise healthy staff. In the rare event that salmonella contamination occurs during the packaging process, the number of bacteria will be far too low to cause ill effects. A

hazard can arise, however, if the packaged meat is mistreated by the consumer before being opened.

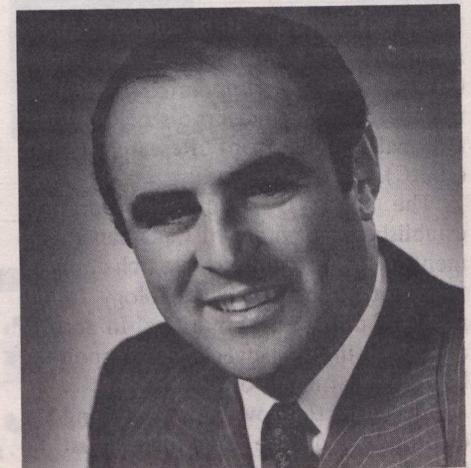
Refrigeration the answer

"Salmonella does not multiply in meats if they are kept in a good refrigerator," continues Dr. Davidson. "However, if you leave a contaminated package in a warm room for more than a day or so, then there is a possibility that the bacteria will rise to a dangerous level."

The laboratory has made careful investigations of the multiplication of salmonella in various meats at different temperatures. The inhibiting effect on bacteria growth of various additives and preservatives has also been studied. But, despite the best precautions the food industry can take, the final responsibility rests with the consumer.

Food removed from a refrigerator should be cooked or eaten as soon as is convenient. Raw and packaged meats should not be allowed to warm up, on a long car journey to the cottage for example; instead, they should be placed in a cooler. Frozen meats and fish should be defrosted in the refrigerator. Leaving a couple of pounds of frozen hamburger meat in warm water may be a short cut to dinner — but it could be asking for trouble.

New Solicitor General



Jean-Jacques Blais (above), the 37-year-old North Bay lawyer who has been Postmaster General for the past 18 months, is the new Solicitor General. He succeeds Francis Fox, who resigned on January 30 for personal reasons. J. Gilles Lamontagne becomes Postmaster General.