

## Declaration against torture

Minister of State (External Relations) Charles Lapointe has recently announced that following the wish expressed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its Resolution 32/64, Canada has made a unilateral declaration of its continued compliance with the "Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment".

The unilateral declaration, conveyed in a note addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, confirms the intention of the Canadian authorities to continue to act in conformity with the declaration.

The UN declaration against torture, which was adopted by the General Assembly on December 9, 1975, does not include legally binding obligations for states. To date, over 30 governments, including the Canadian government, have declared unilaterally that the competent authorities within their respective territories intend to act in conformity with the provisions contained in the declaration.

Canada intends, in addition, to continue to work within the UN Commission on Human Rights for the early completion of the drafting of an "international convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" that has been under consideration in Geneva since 1978. Canada believes it is important that the international community provide itself with the legal instruments necessary for the effective suppression of the practice of torture in the world.

## Vaccine plant in Pakistan

Gerald Regan, Minister of State (International Trade), announced recently that the Canadian Commercial Corporation had awarded a contract valued at \$3.4 million to Connaught Laboratories Limited, Willowdale, Ontario to assist in the establishment of a measles vaccine plant in Islamabad, Pakistan. It is expected to be operational in 1986.

The contract, won against international competition, is on behalf of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Connaught will provide training, technical advice, design work, equipment and bulk concentrated vaccine.

## Revamped sexual offences bill proclaimed as new law

Justice Minister Mark MacGuigan has announced the coming into force of Bill C-127, legislation which restructures the offences of rape, attempted rape and indecent assault, and replaces them by sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault and sexual assault with a weapon or threats to a third party. These new provisions, which were developed in consultation with concerned groups across the country, apply equally to men and women, both as assailants and victims, thus eliminating the sexual discrimination that previously existed.

The new law modifies certain rules

used in sexual assault trials; for example, corroboration is no longer required for a conviction of sexual assault and the rules regarding recent complaint are repealed and replaced by the ordinary rules of evidence which apply to all criminal offences.

The legislation also strengthens the Criminal Code provisions against taking a child without the consent of the person who has legal custody of that child. "The new law puts the child first," said Dr. MacGuigan, "and recognizes that children have rights: the right to security, stability and continuity in their lives."

## Naval veterans keep Canada's last corvette afloat



The Canadian corvette, HMCS Sackville, shown here at sea in 1943. The ship is the only one still existing of Canada's wartime fleet of 123 corvettes.

HMCS Sackville, the sole survivor among Canada's fleet of 123 corvettes from the Second World War, has been taken out of service by the Canadian navy, but retired naval officers are moving ahead with plans to ensure its preservation.

The Flower-class corvette, launched in Saint John, New Brunswick, in May 1941, was used on convoy escort duty in the North Atlantic.

Although other corvettes were sold after the war, the Sackville was retained, having been converted near the end of the war to lay submarine-sensing loops in East Coast harbours. It was converted again to a survey ship in 1953 and underwent extensive modification in 1968 to reflect its new status as a research ship.

The final assignment in September — testing new anti-submarine sonars — was

somehow fitting for a ship credited with sinking an unidentified German U-boat off Newfoundland on August 3, 1942, and damaging a second one the same day.

A third U-boat of the German wolf-pack was spotted that night, but fled into the darkness before the Sackville could attack.

Despite more than 41 years of service, Sackville "is in exceptionally good condition — clean and unruined", Verne Howland, a retired navy captain, said.

Mr. Howland is a member of a committee from the Maritime Museum in Halifax and the Naval Officers Association of Canada that wants to acquire the Sackville and restore it to wartime form.

Target date for completion is May 1985, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy.