

CANADIAN CULTURE AT PEKING FAIR

At the request of the Chinese Government, the Department of External Affairs provided a Canadian cultural aura to the recent Peking Canadian Trade Exposition, which closed on September 2 after a 12-day run.

Here is Canada, the Department's new film, was shown during the fair in the 1,500-seat auditorium, together with ten other films depicting aspects of Canadian life, such as industry, culture and science. The films were praised for their production values and their inherent interest, as well as the high-quality translation of their commentaries into Peking Mandarin.

Displays of sports and other forms of entertainment, including performances by Canadian figure-skaters and demonstration games by teams of male and female basketball-players, received the enthusiastic response of Chinese audiences.

A 24-screen audio visual presentation in multi-images that greeted visitors to the exhibition, was devoted to the depiction of the Canadian way of life, the country's natural beauty, its cities and its industries. It also provided biographical information on the Canadian surgeon Norman Bethune, recently recognized for his humanitarian achievements by the Canadian Government as announced in Peking by the Secretary of State for External Affairs Mitchell Sharp (see September 20 issue of the *Canadian Weekly Bulletin*).

Mr. Sharp and the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chi Peng-fei, opened the fair, which has been acclaimed as an unqualified success by both Canadian businessmen and government officials.

THE POST OFFICE'S ELECTION ROLE

To elect 264 Members of Parliament on October 30, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will use almost 1,000 tons of paper – and most of it will travel through the mail. Of all the Canada Post Office's big customers, the Chief Electoral Officer probably makes the most use of its machinery and manpower.

In a recent interview, Chief Electoral Officer Jean-Marc Hamel talked about the relations between his Office, the CPO and the Government: "When the staff of the Post Office is involved in the election process, practically speaking, the staff is not working on behalf of the Government. The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer is not an agency of the Government, it's an agency of the House of Commons.

"Thus the Post Office staff is working for the Canadian nation helping it to elect a new Parliament. The services of the Post Office are an essential part of the election process from beginning to end."

PO INVOLVEMENT

Mr. Hamel said that the CPO's involvement went beyond the delivery of some 12 million householders'

and enumeration lists. More than a third of the 60,000 ballot boxes are sent by mail, mostly to smaller communities. Each box is 12 by 12 by 8 inches and, when full, can weigh up to 15 pounds.

The Canada Elections Act imposes special duties on postmasters, each of whom is considered an election officer and is entitled to receive necessary oaths and is also obliged to post notices from returning officers.

Like any other election officer, the postmaster is subject to penalty should he fail to carry out his responsibilities.

In urban centres especially, letter-carriers often help prevent omissions from the enumeration lists by reporting changes on their routes. "My experience has been that the local returning officer is usually on very good terms with the postmaster and his staff," Mr. Hamel said. "Letter-carriers often take notice of new buildings or housing developments and the returning officer is advised. This is a big help when we are counting eligible voters or redrawing electoral riding boundaries."

PUTTING THE WHEELS IN MOTION

Months of preparation are needed to mount an election. Once it is called there is a ten-week period of crucial deadlines. Here are some of the things that must be done:

- (1) recruit, appoint, brief and supply 95,000 enumeration officers across Canada;
- (2) print and send out voters' lists to six million Canadian households;
- (3) select, rent and publicize 60,000 polling stations;
- (4) carry out the armed forces' and diplomatic corps vote and obtain the results from tabulation points in Edmonton, Ottawa, Halifax and London, England;
- (5) organize all other advance polls;
- (6) carry out polling-day operations;
- (7) issue unofficial tabulations to newspapers, radio and television on election day;
- (8) return all writs of election by registered mail to the Chief Electoral Officer;
- (9) return all used and unused supplies.

TOTAL COST

It isn't cheap. Mr. Hamel estimated that the total cost to his office for the upcoming election would be about \$19 million.

"With the 13 million electors we expect this time around, along with the increased costs over 1968, the cost per elector will average about \$1.45."

Because the Chief Electoral Officer has the right by law to send most items through the mail free of charge, the CPO will receive only about \$100,000 for its services. About 80 per cent of this comes largely from handling the enumeration lists compiled and returned by election officers.

If the CPO could charge for all its election services, Mr. Hamel estimated that postage costs alone would easily top \$1 million.