

GOVERNMENT
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STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 55/26 FUTURE PLANS FOR CANADA'S SALK VACCINE
PROGRAMME

A Statement by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. PAUL MARTIN, July 20, 1955.

As a result of discussions that have been held over the past several weeks, I am now in a position to announce plans for the second phase of Canada's Salk vaccine programme. First, it is perhaps useful to review very briefly the current situation.

This Spring Canada carried out successfully the inoculation of nearly one million children, in selected age groups, without a single mishap. All children have received two immunizing doses and a relatively small number have been given a third injection. With the exception of a small quantity of commercially produced vaccine -- imported from the United States in April and administered by private physicians -- all vaccine used in Canada was produced at the Connaught Medical Research Laboratories and allocated on the basis of population to the ten provincial Departments of Health.

My medical and scientific advisers inform me that a sufficient time has elapsed since the last of the inoculations to be able to state that the vaccine used in Canada was completely free from untoward effects or the possibility of direct infection. However, no two children are capable of acquiring the same degree of immunity from any vaccine. Thus cases which may occur among inoculated children will result from infection circulating in the community and not from the vaccine.

All vaccine produced at the Connaught Laboratories was double-checked for safety and potency at the federal Laboratory of Hygiene. Under the terms of the National Health Programme, the cost of the vaccine was shared equally by the federal and provincial governments with responsibility for its distribution and use placed in the hands of provincial and local public health authorities. That the programme has gone ahead so smoothly and has been carried out with little or no added expense beyond the cost of the vaccine itself, reflects the greatest credit on the producing Laboratory, departments of health generally, and the nation's public health workers. From the very outset, the programme has also had the sympathetic understanding and support of the medical profession.

To supplement the output of the Connaught Laboratories, substantial federal assistance has recently been provided to the Institute of Microbiology at the University of Montreal -- which is under the capable