

International cocoa agreement

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, announced recently that Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Dr. Saul F. Rae, had signed on Canada's behalf the International Cocoa Agreement.

The agreement, signed in New York on January 12, is the product of an International Cocoa Conference in which 55 nations participated. It will be open for accession until the end of April, and will enter into force either on that date or as soon as countries representing 80 per cent of cocoa exports or 70 per cent of total imports have deposited their instruments of ratification.

The main purpose of the agreement is the creation of order and stability in the international cocoa market. Previously, prices production and the export earnings of the developing countries that produce this commodity were all subject to wide fluctuations. By the establishment of a "buffer" stock and an export quota mechanism, the agreement will work to keep the price range for cocoa between 23 and 32 cents a pound (U.S.) This stability will also assist cocoa purchasers in countries such as Canada with long-range planning.

The main cocoa producers are Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Brazil and Cameroon. Canada, the ninth-largest importer of cocoa, accounts for 1.5 per cent of world imports.

Vaccine to combat English influenza

Production of a vaccine to provide specific protection against the "England" strain of influenza virus is now in progress, National Health Minister Marc Lalonde announced on January 11.

The vaccine is being produced at the Institute of Microbiology of the University of Montreal, from where limited quantities were expected to be available in two to three weeks.

The England strain of influenza virus, a recent mutation, is beginning to supersede the Hong Kong strain, which has been responsible for the majority of influenza cases throughout the world during the past few years.

The two strains produce symptoms that are similar in nature and severity.

Evidence produced by studies made by Health Department officials indicate that some two-thirds of the people vaccinated with Hong Kong influenza vaccine have significant protection against the England strain.

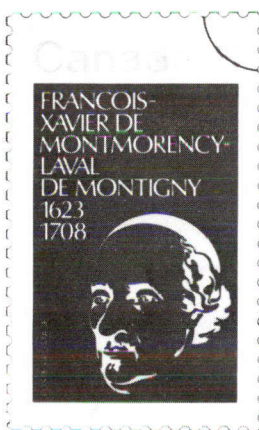
Only a few cases of influenza attributable to the England virus have been identified in Canada, though several outbreaks have been reported in the United States, as well as in other parts of the world.

Stamp honours first bishop of Quebec

François de Montmorency-Laval, one of the builders of New France and a prominent figure in Canadian history, is to be commemorated with the issue of an eight-cent stamp that will be issued on January 31, marking the 350th anniversary of his birth.

Mgr de Laval, the first bishop of Quebec and a figure of great importance in the development and reorganization of the colony of New France, encouraged the educational institutions already existing in the colony and founded others such as the Quebec City Major Seminary (1663) and the Quebec City Minor Seminary (1668). He also established the Saint-Joachim arts and crafts school and a small school where white and Indian children learned the alphabet and arithmetic.

Bishop Laval was born on April 30, 1623 in Montigny-sur-Avre in the Chartres district of France and was educated by the Jesuits at La Flèche. He was ordained in 1647. He came to Quebec City in 1659 with the title of Bishop of Pétrée to serve as apostolic vicar in New France. In 1674, he was named Bishop of Quebec. During his 30 episcopal years, Mgr de Laval founded an average of one parish a year. He died in Quebec City on May 6, 1708, after spending some 50 years of his life in New France.



An experimental program for special education teachers

The pressing need for special training for teachers of handicapped children is discussed below by Sally Rogow, assistant professor in the University of British Columbia's Department of Special Education and member of the B.C. Mental Retardation Institute.

...At the University of British Columbia we are striving to meet the challenge of developing both capacity and awareness in the teacher of such children in the following ways: The Diploma Program in Learning and Behaviour Disorders, a fifth-year professional development program, is an intensive year of study comprising a sequence of practicums in special education settings, seminars and academic course work.

Choosing the candidates

Candidates for the diploma program are selected by an interview, their academic record, and their previous experience with both normal and exceptional children. Great weight is given to the attitude of the candidate, his enthusiasm for the program and his attitudes toward children: flexibility, adaptability and a sense of humour are important, along with a willingness to make a commitment. Rigidity and dogmatic attitudes are qualities that preclude the ability to sustain the intensive year that awaits the candidate.

A maximum of eight students is enrolled by each one of the three directors of the diploma programs....

From September until April, the students devote five mornings a week to student teaching in special education classrooms, institutional settings, sheltered workshops, and treatment settings. The success of the diploma program is highly dependent upon the co-operation, skill and generosity of the supervising teachers. Students work both in group settings and with individual children and are expected to have experience in pre-school, primary and secondary school classes.

Comparison of experiences

Seminars are arranged twice weekly to give an opportunity for the students to