
Mild winter kills tulips

Ottawa's annual tulip festival may be short of its main attraction this year because as many as a third of the 500,000 tulip bulbs may have died during the unusually mild winter.

Lack of snow to protect the bulbs from frost is the culprit, says Neil MacLaren, landscape manager for the National Capital Commission, the federal agency that runs the famous gardens.

Mr. MacLaren says there is no way of knowing for sure how many bulbs were killed or where the losses are but he is "afraid there will be big gaps".

The popular tulip festival, which began in 1952 and has been known as the Festival of Spring since 1974, attracted 400,000 people last year, at least half of them from outside Ottawa, organizers say.

Between 150,000 and 200,000 tulip bulbs are usually replanted each year. Mr. MacLaren said he expected many more would have to be replaced this fall.

Queen Juliana of the Netherlands still sends 10,000 tulip bulbs to the city each year to commemorate the two-and-a-half years she spent in Ottawa during the Second World War when her country was occupied. Her daughter, Princess Margriet, was born in Ottawa.

Canadians take world championship

A Canadian team registered a perfect record in taking the world men's curling championship held recently in Moncton, New Brunswick.

Rick Folk and his rink from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan beat the defending champion Kristian Soerum of Norway in the final game of the Air Canada Silver Broom.

The foursome made up of Folk, Ron Mills and brothers Tom and Jim Wilson won the first world men's title for Canada since 1972. Folk, who finished second on two occasions in the Canadian championships before winning the title in Calgary this year, directed his rink to a 9-0 record in preliminary play. He was the first to go undefeated in round-robin play since 1974. The Canadian rink finished with a 10-0 record, followed by Norway at 8-3 and Switzerland at 7-3.

Nine countries took part in the championship: the United States, Scotland, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Canada.

The first Air Canada Silver Broom competition took place at Pointe Claire, Quebec in 1968. Until then, the world championship had been under the sponsorship of the Scotch Whiskey Association and was held annually in Scotland. It is now held in one of the participating countries.

Moncton is the fourth Canadian city to be awarded the tournament after Pointe Claire, Winnipeg and Regina. Next year London, Ontario will host the competition. Bern, Switzerland was the host in 1979.

Operation first for Canada

Montreal heart surgeons made Canadian medical history recently when they employed a tiny plastic balloon to clear a blocked artery in a 35-year-old truck driver.

The operation spared Gilles Beaulieu of Montreal immediate open-heart surgery.

The technique, developed in Switzerland, is called percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty — but the idea is simple.

Dr. Martial Bourassa and Dr. Paul David of the Montreal Heart Institute said that a branch of Mr. Beaulieu's coronary artery, the main vessel supplying the heart with blood, was blocked by fatty deposits on the inside of its walls.

The blockage was preventing sufficient blood from reaching the heart, causing chest pains known as *angina*.

Doctors located the blockage by taking a moving X-ray of Mr. Beaulieu's heart. They injected dye into his coronary artery through a long hollow tube called a catheter that had been threaded through a blood vessel in the patient's leg up into the artery.

The balloon had been attached to the end of the tube. Air was pumped in the tube, inflating the balloon for a few seconds at a time. This pushed the soft, fatty material into the artery wall and reopened a wide channel for the blood to flow through.

The balloon technique is cheaper than open-heart surgery and keeps a patient in hospital for only a few days. But the technique is not foolproof. There is a 2- or 3-percent chance a patient will have a heart attack during the procedure, Dr. Bourassa said, and about 10 per cent of blockages develop again three to six months later, making surgery necessary.

California still wants Western Canadian gas

California is eyeing Western Canada as a continuing source of natural gas supplies beyond 1985 when most of the existing exports terminate, reports Thomas Kennedy in the *Globe and Mail*, March 8.

Mr. John Bryson, chairman of the state's Public Utilities Commission (PUC) said that California will want to receive at least as much gas from Alberta in the latter part of the decade as it does now — about one billion cubic feet a day — in addition to Alaskan fuel delivered through the proposed Alaska Highway pipeline.

Mr. Bryson led a three-member PUC delegation to Alberta and Ottawa to explore the possibilities for continued gas deliveries and to discuss present and future gas pricing.

He said Californians "are very concerned" about the "sudden and big" jump in the border price of western Canadian gas ordered last month.

The export price went up 30 per cent to \$4.47 (U.S.) a thousand cubic feet. Northern and central California consumers will have to pay another \$400 million (U.S.) annually for the fuel.

Alberta has already indicated that it has surplus gas that it would like to sell in its traditional markets, but the actual export decision is up to the National Energy Board.

Mr. Bryson said Western Canada will not be relegated to an auxiliary supply role even after Alaskan gas begins to flow to the state. Alaskan gas in a liquefied form will soon begin to come ashore at a terminal to be built near Los Angeles.

Scientists elected to Royal Society

Two Canadian scientists have been elected fellows of the Royal Society of London, the highest scientific honour offered in Britain.

Dr. Zbigniew Stanislaw Basinski, head of the crystal plasticity group at the National Research Council, was honoured for his studies of the plasticity of metals.

Dr. Basinski and the other Canadian, Professor Louis Siminovitch, chairman of the medical genetics department at the University of Toronto, who was lauded for his study of bacterial and somatic cell genetics, were among 40 scientists elected during a recent society meeting.