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### Interprovincial Second-Language Monitor Program

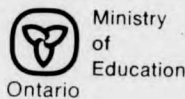
This program allows university-level students in Canada to study full-time and to work part-time as second-language monitors, usually in provinces other than their own. Monitors assist primary and secondary school, second-language teachers in conversation and pronunciation classes.

At least 500 students will each receive a minimum of \$3,000 for nine months of participation and will be reimbursed for one return trip home.

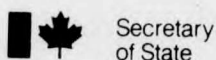
This interprovincial program is financed by the Department of the Secretary of State.

Brochures and application forms may be obtained from  
 Roy Schatz, Coordinator  
 Educational Exchange and Special Projects Branch  
 Ministry of Education  
 Mowat Block, Queen's Park  
 Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

Deadline for requests for application forms is December 31, 1976; for receipt of completed application forms January 14, 1977.



Council of Ministers of Education, Canada



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## Thousands of additives, all for cosmetic reasons

By FRANCES SGRO  
 eyeopener

Oh, the mixed joys of eating. With tastes running from caviar to peanut butter sandwiches, it's quite unfair to be bothered by the thought of almost 3,000 food additives and the disturbing question: How safe is our food?

Of all the food additives in use, more than 2,100 are flavor and color additives used to make food look and taste good. In addition, there are preservatives, bleaching agents, anti-oxidants, stabilizers and others bringing the total number of different additives to 2760 — a big number to swallow.

Dr. Venketeswhar Rao, a food chemist at the University of Toronto, says: "Some people have lost their nutritional judgement and are buying foods that appeal to their senses."

"Although the additive amounts used by food companies are legally safe, consumers should be educated about the excessive use of flavor and color additives," Rao says.

"Consumers are as much to blame for demanding food that look like pieces of art, as government and industry are for giving into the consumers' whims."

There are also political-economic implications in banning an additive such as nitrite, he continued. Meat lobbyists could pressure government into keeping in on the market, since it has not been proven harmful and it helps sell meat by improving appearance. He added, Canadian consumer groups are not strong enough to protest additive-use by boycotting products.

For example, only 20 per cent of

the nitrite used in meat is needed to prevent botulism (bacterial poisoning), while the remaining 80 per cent gives red color, Rao says.

We are all going through a phase, which has been called chemophobia. For some reason we are afraid of anything that is chemical. I think this is a reflection, not of food, but of the time we are living in because of the increased use of technology and chemistry in our lives."

"Nobody can assure any of the food we eat is safe, but on the basis of the testing techniques we have today, I can say our food is safe. But, that is not guaranteeing there is no hazardous material present." Unsuspected food may be found harmful to health as more sophisticated methods of analyzing are developed, Rao said.

Food additive testing in Canada is limited to finding single-chemical effects on the body instead of testing the effect of chemical interactions. Rao said his experiments into this undeveloped area indicate the need for further research.

Although his experiments are not finished, Rao says in one case he found the interaction of chemicals caused a greater stress on an animal's body than either of the chemicals given separately. He said research must continue to determine how well we can defend against chemical combinations.

"Little research is being conducted in this area because of the difficulty of duplicating the average eating pattern of Canadians who consume several thousand chemicals in different combinations," Rao says.

Another criticism of present food additive testing is relating results from animal experiments to humans. Since scientists can't use people in their laboratories, a 100-fold safety factor is built into the results. The no-effect dosage given to a test animal is divided by 100 to establish the acceptable daily intake for humans.

"Only long-term use of chemicals will tell if the safety factor is enough or if it was needed at all, since humans could be more resistant to the chemical than the tested animal," Rao says. Diethylstilbestrol (DES), which was used to fatten animals, was not linked to cancer until two generations after it appeared on the market as a birth control pill.

But Rao takes issue with health food advocates who advise eating natural foods instead of processed foods. "Both may have toxic compounds," Rao says.

The chemical solanin, found in the potato, is a neuro-poison. If a person were to eat in one sitting half the solanin found in the 120 pounds of potatoes consumed yearly by the average Canadian, he would die. "But your body can cope with that toxic chemical in small concentrations," Rao says.



## Food image problems

By FRANCES SGRO

Foods, like people, have image problems. If your mother used to drag you from bed to stuff mushy, bland looking porridge down your throat, you probably don't relish porridge for breakfast.

Today's use of enriched white bread can be traced from the historical image of white as purity, goodness and nobility. Traditionally, white flour was the symbol of refinement and higher living standards and was used only by the rich, until technology and mass-production made enough for the public.

When nutritional deficiencies were discovered in North American diets in the 1930's, the white image prevailed and both government and industry in Canada enriched white bread with nutrients, rather than substitute inherently-nutritious brown or whole wheat bread. (During the milling process, the most nutritious part of the grain, the bran and the germ, is removed, while whole wheat bread contains a greater part of grain.)

US prune merchandisers discouraged by the slow sale of prunes, commissioned a motivational-research group in the 1950's to find out why people were not buying their product. The group found some people commented on the sinister color of the black prune, while word-association tests linked prunes with such thoughts as "old maid" and "dried up". Other people recalled that, as children, they

were told to eat prunes "because prunes are good for you".

The new ad campaign used children, pretty girls, and bright colors, and jingles, such as "Get that top of the world feeling", to sell prunes as the new wonder fruit. Industry spokesmen attributed the increased consumption and the increased price of prunes to the new public image.

Tea had the same image problem in the 1950's. A research group found that people felt tea was for sissies and club ladies. Test-areas reported tea consumption increased up to 25 per cent after ads, using bright colors and police-sergeant-type figures, implied that drinking tea was as manly as killing an ox.

