

Smoking habits of school children

At least one-half of Canadian school children have tried smoking by the age of 12, according to a 1978 Health and Welfare survey on the smoking habits of Canadian school children. The findings were released to mark this year's National Non-smoking Week (January 20-26).

The survey covered all students in grades three to 13 in 409 schools, selected to be representative of the 14,000 such schools in Canada. An appropriate number of both elementary and secondary schools was included from each province and from urban and rural areas. A total of 105,788 students responded to the survey questionnaire.

The survey indicated that by age 14, 15 per cent of boys and 20 per cent of girls are daily smokers and by age 17 these figures have increased to 27 per cent of boys and 30 per cent of girls. Beyond this age, the proportions of students who reported daily smoking did not change significantly. The figures showed some indications that boys who smoked tended to smoke more heavily than girls. Forty-seven per cent of students aged 8 to 19 reported never having smoked at all.

The highest proportions of daily smokers of both sexes occurred in the Atlantic provinces, notably New Brunswick (18 per cent) and Newfoundland (17 per cent). The three westernmost provinces and Quebec were near the national average (13 per cent), while Ontario (12 per cent) and Manitoba (10 per cent) school children had the lowest rates of smoking.

The statistics showed that children with non-smoking parents were somewhat less likely to be regular smokers themselves than those with one or two parents who smoke. A high proportion of those who smoked regularly reported that most or all of their friends smoked (66 per cent of males, 73 per cent of females).

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Algunos números de esta publicación aparecen también en español bajo el título Noticiario de Canadá.

News briefs

Jean Wadds has become the first Canadian woman high commissioner in London since the post was created in 1880. She replaces Paul Martin who retired in November. Mrs. Wadds was a Progressive Conservative member of Parliament from 1958-1968 and served as a member of Canada's delegation to the United Nations in 1961.

Canada's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate dipped to 7.1 per cent in December from 7.3 per cent a month earlier; the rate in December 1978 was 8.1 per cent. Unemployment, seasonally adjusted, totalled 811,000 in December, down 16,000 from November.

The Canadian International Development Agency will provide \$249,000 towards a project preparation study of a bulk material handling facility at the Pacific port of Matarani, Peru. The government of Peru will invest \$250 million in the project of which a large percentage of the sourcing is expected to be made in Canada. The study, which has been requested by the government of Peru, will be undertaken by the firm of H.A. Simons Overseas Ltd. of Vancouver for the Peruvian state mining corporation, Mineroperu. The port of Matarani is the terminal of a freight rail line for the export and import of general cargo and for the offloading of minerals from mines in the region of the cities of Cuzco and Arequipa.

The Steel Co. of Canada Ltd., has hired two female production workers — the first women blue-collar employees to be hired at the Hilton Works complex in Hamilton in the past 15 years. Their hiring comes four days after four other women filed complaints with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, charging discrimination, and announced plans for a public campaign to force Stelco to hire more female production workers.

Canada Steamship Lines (1975) Ltd. (CSL) of Montreal has awarded a \$34-million contract to Canadian Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd. of Collingwood, Ontario, for a prototype maximum Seaway-sized self-unloading bulk carrier. The ocean-going carrier, 730-feet long, is expected to join CSL's fleet of 34 vessels in 1981.

People in Ontario accused of offences under the Criminal Code or other federal

statutes will have the right to a trial in either English or French, Justice Minister Jacques Flynn has announced. Parliament approved language-of-trial provisions in June, 1978, and they are being proclaimed on a province-by-province basis as each government is able to implement them. New Brunswick and the two northern territories have already instituted these provisions.

Immediate price reductions of as much as 30 per cent on some types of computer equipment have been announced by IBM Canada Limited. Similar price reductions have been made in the U.S. and Europe.

Federal grants totalling \$4,245,681 will be made available in 1980 to support activities of rural and native housing groups across Canada, Elmer MacKay, Minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has announced. Mr. MacKay said that \$1,329,100 will be used for urgently needed repairs and improvements to the homes of low-income people who cannot afford the costs involved in making their dwellings safe and comfortable. The balance of the funds — \$2,916,581 in grants — will be provided to meet the operating expenses of organizations involved in improving the living conditions of rural and native people.

Dr. James B. Bassingthwaight has been awarded McGill University's Louis and Artur Lucian Award in Circulatory Diseases. The international award, which was first made last year, recognizes the best work in the area of circulatory diseases published during the preceding calendar year. Valued at more than \$30,000, the award provides for the recipient to undertake research in McGill's Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Bassingthwaight is a professor of medicine at McGill as well as professor and director, Center for Bioengineering, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

Rather than violate its traditional neutrality by going to war with Canada's Rhinoceros Party, Belgium has agreed to pay reparations for what was termed an act of provocation against the Party's symbol. An official of the Belgian embassy in Ottawa said that the country will send a case of its best beer and a case of its best mussels to Rhinos Montreal headquarters. The party declared war on Belgium recently after reading the latest *Tin Tin* adventure in which a rhinoceros is blown up with dynamite.