

EXTRADITION TREATY WITH THE U.S.

A Treaty on Extradition between Canada and the United States was signed recently in Washington by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, and the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. William Rogers. This instrument is subject to ratification following its approval by the legislatures of the two countries.

Among the more salient provisions of the new pact are:

(a) Extradition offences covering unlawful seizure of aircraft (hijacking) and conspiracy to commit or being a party to any of the offences extraditable under the agreement;

(b) A stipulation that extradition cannot be refused with respect to offences against a person to whom a contracting party has the duty according to international law to afford special protection, and the offence of unlawful seizure of aircraft on the grounds that the offence was committed under circumstances making it of a political character.

The latter provision clearly establishes the resolve of Canada and the United States to refuse asylum under any circumstance to fugitives who have committed such crimes within the jurisdiction of either country and will ensure prompt prosecution in the country where the main incidence of the crime falls.

This Treaty is of particular significance to Canada in view of its geographic proximity to the United States and the fact that the vast majority of Canadian extradition cases arise from requests for rendition of fugitives to or from the United States.

CANADIAN LIBRARY IN MEXICO

A Canadian Library Centre was opened in Mexico City last month. The formal inauguration by Mr. Saul F. Rae, Canadian Ambassador to Mexico, was attended by the Minister of Education of Mexico and by leading representatives of Mexican educational and cultural institutions.

The new library, which has two floors and is situated on one of the main streets of Mexico City, will, it is believed, complement and extend the various information and cultural services provided by the Canadian Embassy and, as part of the increasing cultural exchange between Canada and Mexico, will contribute to a fuller understanding in Mexico of creative Canadian writing and of life and thought in Canada. It will contain some 5,000 Canadian books in English and French, as well as a number of periodicals and newspapers in both languages, covering a wide range of subjects and interests — principally the social sciences, the physical sciences, technology, philosophy, art and literature. A representative selection of newspapers from a number of Canadian cities will be flown to Mexico regularly to provide an up-to-date news service. In

its initial stage, the Library Centre will operate basically as a reference service for students, educators, public servants, press representatives and others who wish to consult the selection of Canadian books, periodicals and newspapers available.

Mr. Roland Rainville has recently been appointed to the new position of Information and Cultural Counsellor of the Embassy in Mexico to be responsible under the direction of the Ambassador for the Library Centre as well as for developing all aspects of Canadian information and cultural activities in Mexico.

FLOODING OF SKAGIT RIVER

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, announced recently that the Canadian and United States Governments had received and were making public a report prepared by the International Joint Commission on the consequences of the proposed flooding of the Skagit River Valley in British Columbia. The report was tabled in the House of Commons on December 17.

BACKGROUND

On April 7, 1971, the Governments of the United States and Canada asked the International Joint Commission to investigate and report to Governments on the environmental and ecological consequences of raising Ross Lake, at present almost entirely in the United States, to an elevation of 1,725 feet above sea level, which would have the effect of flooding the Skagit River Valley in British Columbia. The need for this study arose because the City of Seattle, which draws power from Ross Dam, had applied successfully to the International Joint Commission for permission to raise the height of the dam by 122½ feet. An important requirement set out in the Commission's order of approval, issued in 1942, was met when Seattle and British Columbia concluded an agreement of compensation in 1967. However, since that time there has been growing concern over the possible environmental and ecological consequences of the flooding and the request by Governments to the International Joint Commission to conduct this study was a reflection of that concern.

FURTHER ACTION

The Commission's report is currently under careful study by federal officials and is being passed to the government of British Columbia as a prelude to discussions with officials of that province. It is understood that in the United States the report is being passed to the Federal Power Commission, which will take it into account in its consideration of Seattle's application.