

Waldheim, launched in May to help meet expected shortages in rice and wheat stocks in Bangladesh in the next four months.

In addition to the \$24.5 million for food aid, Canada has also committed \$27 million in grants to support development assistance projects in agricultural, power and transportation sectors of the Bangladesh economy, which were disrupted by the war.

FIGHT AGAINST PAIN

Pain has always been one of man's greatest enemies. Before the days of alcohol and the earliest forms of anaesthetics, toothache or the acute agony of a broken limb caused suffering and misery for lord and vassal alike. Modern drugs have done much to alleviate pain and all kinds of operations are now possible which were once not feasible due to man's limited capacity to endure pain. But excess of any type of drug can build up an immunity to it and no patient will ultimately improve if constant sedation is necessary.

GATE-CONTROL THEORY

In 1965, Dr. Donald Melzack, Professor in McGill's Department of Psychology in Montreal, with Dr. Patrick Wall, Professor of Anatomy at University College, London, evolved the "gate-control" theory of pain. This theory describes the functioning of a gate-like mechanism in the spinal cord. The functions of this system have not yet been fully established, but there is evidence of a mechanism in the spinal cord that modulates the transmission of information from the body to the brain. When the "gate" is closed down tightly, no message can be transmitted to the brain and pain will not be felt. The gate-mechanism functions in different ways according to the circumstances. For example, if a football player were to receive a kick in the shins during play when concentrating hard on the game, he would feel little pain because his body would not be expecting it. In this situation, the gate-mechanism is closed. However, if a person is expecting a blow from an assailant, he is in a state of apprehension, his gate-mechanism is wide open and his pain will therefore be acute. In some diseases, such as neuralgia, the large fibres required to close the gate are destroyed, causing the gate to be permanently open. Constant pain results. Therapy based on the gate-control theory is now used widely in hospital clinics in the United States. The therapy involves the electrical stimulation of the spinal cord by placing electrodes on the patient's dorsal columns (the back part of the spinal cord). The electrodes are attached to a small receiver inserted under the skin. By turning the knob of a small radio transmitter he carries on his person, the patient can stimulate his own spinal cord and close the gate mechanism whenever he is in pain. It

is believed that stimulation of the dorsal column activates fibres that inhibit pain signals. This type of electrical stimulation has been carried out on a larger number of patients by Dr. Blaine Nashold, a neuro-surgeon at Duke University, who was a resident in neurosurgery at the Montreal Neurological Institute some years ago.

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...

A Winnipeg woman was fit to be tied when a tobacco company sent her 12-year-old daughter some samples.

The woman, who used to be a heavy smoker but has now "kicked" the habit, sent off a stinging complaint to Health Minister John Munro. She complained of the practice of tobacco firms sending "their deadly wares" to children and the tone of her letter suggested she'd like somebody's head on a plate.

So the Department of National Health and Welfare passed the complaint to officers of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs for investigation and action. They got to the bottom of it. In error, the professional premium-handling organization got the daughter's request for an Ann Murray record mixed up with a pipe-tobacco campaign they were also handling. Instead of getting Miss Murray's *Snowbird*, the child got a plug of pipe tobacco.

The tobacco firm conducted its own investigation and found that not only was the Winnipeg complaint accurate in every detail, but a similar error had been made in 300 other cases where consumers had sought the record and had been sent tobacco. They conceded that some of the 300 may have been children. The tobacco firm also hit the roof because it abhors the practice of sending out samples not distinctly solicited.

Each of the 300 persons who got the pipe tobacco received a letter apologizing for the promotional sample mix up - which occurred through a simple clerical error - plus the record they had asked for.

