

## News of the arts



*Shelterbelts (Sudan), planting of prosopis trees in Sudan's Kerma Basin.*

produced while restoring soil fertility. The leucaena, a leguminous tree, fixes atmospheric nitrogen in the soil for other plants. Like other species, such as the prosopis, it also provides food and fodder. Other species produce fruit and nuts or

various useful products — gum arabic from the acacia, for example.

Agroforestry is not new. What is new, says Dr. King, is the attempt to devise a coherent land-management system from the welter of information on several agro-

forestry practices, and the effort being made to draw attention to the necessity of farming, raising domestic animals and growing trees simultaneously on the same land.

“What is also new,” he says, “is the realization that there is a need to create a new discipline of agroforestry to utilize lands which cover more than half of the land surface of the developing world in a manner that effectively conserves the physical environment yet develops the human being.”

It was to meet these needs that, on the initiative of the IDRC, ICRAF was established in 1977. Located in Nairobi, the autonomous, international institute aims to promote agroforestry systems to achieve better land use in developing countries, encourage and support research and training, facilitate the collection and dissemination of information, and assist in the international co-ordination of agroforestry development. Dr. King, former Assistant Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization and head of FAO's Department of Forestry, is ICRAF's first Director-General.

*(The foregoing article was prepared by Michelle Hibler, editor of Development Directions, photographs courtesy International Development Research Centre.)*

### Sexual offences of special interest to Law Reform Commission

Two proposed new criminal offences of “sexual aggression” and “sexual interference” would, if enacted, make the sexual offences sections of the Criminal Code conform more closely to present day reality, according to Francis Muldoon, chairman of the Law Reform Commission of Canada.

Muldoon, referring to a Commission report tabled in Parliament November 29 by Justice Minister Marc Lalonde, said, “The Commission's recommendations express modern progressive attitudes which assert that, in so far as realistically possible, men and women should bear equal responsibilities and should expect equal protection under the law...” The report recommends that reform of sexual offences be based on three fundamental principles, namely, protecting the integrity of the person, protecting children and special groups, and safeguarding public decency.

The report's recommendations, which are drawn largely from a working paper

published in June, advocate a sweeping reform of the Code provisions for sexual offences. The proposed offence of “sexual interference” would be applied in sexual offence cases where no violence or threat of violence was used. “Sexual aggression” would be charged in cases where violence had been used or threatened. Both men and women would be liable to either charge and the legal term “rape”, with its “essentially irrational folklore” could be rendered obsolete, the report suggests.

The mentally ill and handicapped would have the full protection of the proposed law plus additional qualified protection under the terms proposed by the Commission. The current Code “applied exclusively to those of the female sex and only to cases of actual sexual intercourse”, the report states and explains “the mentally handicapped, like other persons, have a right to sexuality. The law ought not therefore to protect them except in so far as their handicap prevents them from

giving a valid consent and from realizing the consequences of their own acts”.

### Child protection broadened

The report supports a continuing absolute prohibition against sexual exploitation of children under 14 with a recommendation that the Criminal Code should be revised to “apply equally to both sexes and not be limited to sexual intercourse alone”. The Commission recommends that persons between 14 and 18 years, although they might have consented, be protected from sexual interference by adults if their consent was obtained through the exploitation of a dependency relationship. However, offences against juveniles by other juveniles, the report states, should be dealt with by family or child welfare law, in family or juvenile courts. For each of the above situations, the Commission recommends that the defence of reasonable diligence be allowed in cases where the precise age of the person was in question at the time of the offence, which is not permissible under the Criminal Code's current strict liability provisions.