

High rating for Air Canada

A survey of international airlines by restaurant rater Egon Ronay, which was published in several British newspapers recently, placed Air Canada second in performance after Delta of the United States.

Mr. Ronay's team, which examined 14 airlines flying regularly between North America, Britain and Ireland, reported that generally, passengers were taken for granted, treated with contempt, herded like cattle and given unspeakable food.

Commenting on Air Canada's performance, the report said: "We came away in a good mood, feeling that we had been served by crews who worked as a team and took pride in their job and their country."

Classifying 14 aspects of air travel at all stages and expressing performance as a percentage, the report gives the following standings: Delta 77 per cent; Air Canada 69 per cent; TWA 66 per cent; British Caledonian 65 per cent; National 62 per cent; Air India 59 per cent; British Airways 58 per cent; Braniff 57 per cent; Aer Lingus 57 per cent; Laker 56 per cent; Northwest Orient 54 per cent; Pan American 52 per cent; Iran Air 37 per cent; and El Al 36 per cent.

Postcard pollution prevention

An unusual method of helping scientists predict the direction and speed of oil spills began recently off the coast of Labrador.

Small, laminated plastic cards, dropped in the ocean during onshore winds, enable experts to test the influence of local surface currents caused by wind, depending on where and when the cards reach land.

A \$1-reward is offered for each card completed and returned to the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Residents, and fishermen in particular, have been asked to watch for the cards.

Some 3,000 cards, which float on the surface and travel much as spilled oil does, were dropped from three drilling rigs off Labrador during September and October.

Oil spills tend to drift in the direction of prevailing winds and ocean currents. In Labrador, that means in a southeasterly

direction, or away from the coast. But spills may be affected by local winds and, for this reason, the "drift" cards are released only when winds are blowing shoreward.

Spills from offshore wells are rare, causing only about 1 per cent of total marine oil pollution. Most oil pollution in the sea (54 per cent) comes from urban waste and 35 per cent is from shipping; the remaining 10 per cent from natural oil seeps.

Young soccer players win prizes in Japan

Soccer players Tony Wilkins, Tom Foy and Don Morrison returned from Japan recently after winning their respective divisions in the world soccer skills championships in Tokyo. The finals of the two-day competition were held before the World Youth Soccer Tournament final at National Stadium.

Wilkins, from Peterborough, Ontario, captured the under-12 division with 4,975 points. Foy, from Oakville, Ontario, scored 7,118 points to win the under-14 category and Morrison, from Brampton, Ontario, collected 7,758 points to take the under-16 division. Morrison also won the over-all championship, earning more points than any of the other competitors in the four age categories.

Fourteen boys from five countries competed in this skills competition sponsored jointly by Coca-Cola and Adidas.



(From left to right): Tony Wilkins, Don Morrison and Tom Foy hold one of the three championship trophies they brought back from Japan.

Forced sterilization condemned

Mentally handicapped people should be protected by law from being coerced into so-called voluntary sterilization, according to a recent Law Reform Commission of Canada report.

The 157-page working paper on sterilization concluded that the law on sterilizing the mentally handicapped has concentrated on protecting society "against" such people rather than protecting their rights to determine their own sexual and reproductive behaviour. The Commission includes both the retarded and the mentally ill in its category of the mentally handicapped.

"The laws have been founded on unsound, unscientific views" and "have the potential for discriminatory results in practice", the report says, calling for safeguards to ensure that "victimization" of the mentally handicapped does not continue.

The Commission says the mentally ill and retarded who can understand the consequences of sterilization should have the same rights to seek, consent to or refuse the operation as anyone else.

Hearing recommended

The report recommends that a judicial hearing be required before a person could be ruled incapable of understanding the consequences of sterilization. At the hearing, the person would be represented by independent counsel. The findings would be subject to appeal.

Sterilization of people ruled incapable of making the decision could nonetheless be authorized only by a provincially appointed board made up of medical, psychological and legal experts, advocates capable of assessing social and ethical evidence and lay persons with expertise in mental handicaps and human rights.

British Columbia and Alberta, the only two provinces which had compulsory sterilization laws, repealed them in the early 1970s.

But the report says voluntary sterilization laws of other provinces, including Ontario, have amounted to compulsory sterilization because the consent for the operation can be given by a parent, guardian or even an institution.

The working paper sets out the Law Reform Commission's views and is intended to elicit public discussion before final recommendations are made to the Minister of Justice and to Parliament.