

K74

in a dip bag

On January 20, at the Canadian embassy in Paris, a travelling case containing a domed steel container was put in a diplomatic pouch and attached to a DFAIT diplomatic courier to begin a flight to Canada. Inside that domed container was an ingot, made of an alloy of platinum and iridium, which Canada uses as the national reference standard for the kilogram. Usually protected under two glass bell jars in a vault at the National Research Council (NRC), the unique cylinder—one of only 100 in the world and assigned the name K74—is sent to Paris every few years to be compared with the international prototype of the kilogram, “le Grand K,” at the *International Bureau of Weights and Measures*.

For René Wassill, Deputy Director of the Innovation, Science and Technology Division (BBT), helping with the transit of K74 is one of the highlights for his team. “It’s an interesting departure from the daily routine, especially when we know how important K74 is to our system of weights and measures and to our economy.” Though the platinum in K74 itself is worth only

The language of wine

Janet Dorozynski has been DFAIT’s expert on wine and spirits for over seven years. Though she regularly judges at wine competitions and is fascinated by the taste of wine, her work at DFAIT focuses on international market development of Canadian wines, spirits and beer. Dorozynski runs the Canadian Wine Initiative, which assists and advises Canadian missions on purchasing Canadian alcoholic beverages. At Headquarters, she manages the wine cellar and sees that only the most refined of Canadian wine is served at high-level official events. “Coming from the industry means that I understand the business and products and that I speak the language,” she says. “Together with the missions, our goal is to promote the Canadian industry internationally, one glass at a time.”



photo: NRC

Canada's reference kilogram weight under two glass jars at the NRC.



photo: Alexandra Shaw/NRC

Technical officer George Matthews and measurement scientist Claude Jacques of the NRC unpack K74.

\$65,000, its value in the measurement of industrial production and exports is in the billions of dollars.

After delivery to DFAIT, K74 was turned over to Claude Jacques of the NRC’s Institute for National Measurement Standards, where it will remain until its next journey in 2015.

“Canada is among a limited number of countries to possess a prototype of ‘Le Grand K,’” says Kevin Fitzgibbons, Director of BBT. “This national mass standard gives us an autonomous capacity to participate in the International System of Units, which underpins billions of dollars of Canada’s international trade in goods. It’s fitting that DFAIT has a role in K74’s safe transit as it makes its way to be verified for the benefit of all Canadians.”



photo: Martin Orozco

Janet Dorozynski, DFAIT's wine and spirits expert, samples a superb Canadian wine.