
Delegation to Rome

Deputy Prime Minister Allan MacEachen headed the official Canadian delegation to Rome October 20 for the ceremonies marking the installation of Pope John Paul II. The other delegates were Minister of Regional Economic Expansion Marcel Lessard; Senator Stanley Haidasz; Edward Broadbent, M.P.; Charles Caccia, M.P.; James McGrath, M.P.; Leo Bernier, from the Government of Ontario; Jacques Parizeau, from the Government of Quebec; Kenneth MacMaster, from the Government of Manitoba; and Wladislaw Gertler, President of the Canadian Polish Congress.

Equal rights guidelines approved

Equal pay guides drawn up by the Federal Human Rights Commission permit employers to justify different wages for males and females on grounds ranging from seniority and merit to democracy and training.

However, the principle applied most often gives equal wages to men and women in the same establishment in jobs requiring the same skill, effort and responsibilities under similar working conditions.

The law is intended to eliminate discrimination against women in federal departments and agencies, Crown corporations, and the federally-regulated private sector ranging from chartered banks to small interprovincial trucking companies.

The guides describe what is meant by skill, effort, responsibility and conditions of work to determine if employees are "performing work of equal value". They describe grounds employers can use to justify different wages for different sexes:

- merit pay for performance measured under a formal system which employees know about;
- seniority pay to reward length of service;
- red circling, where the position of an employee is downgraded as a result of re-evaluation and the wage is frozen or curtailed;
- rehabilitation, where higher wages than warranted are paid while a worker recovers from a temporary injury or illness;
- demotion pay because of unsatisfactory job performance or an internal

labour force surplus (this covers one-time or gradual wage reductions or freezing wages);

• temporary training positions which result in a worker receiving wages different from those paid to a person with a similar position on a permanent basis.

The guides are legally binding on a human rights tribunal which can be called upon to settle complaints about wage discrimination in cases where conciliation does not work.

The guides are the partial outcome of months of talks between the commissioners, employers, trade unions, staff associations, women's groups, and labour relations experts.

Rita Cadieux, Deputy Human Rights Commissioner, said complaints of sexual wage discrimination which turned out to be the result of regional economic differences would be rejected.

"The act is not there to correct market differences. It is meant to correct a wrong — when women are not paid the same rate as men doing work of equal value," she said.

Letters, letters, letters

Gilles Lusignan of Hull, Quebec, a former airman and now an employee with the Department of National Defence (DND), says he answers an average of 6,000 letters a year from citizens and foreigners with questions about the Canadian Forces.

Some of the letters are a bit strange — like the one from the Great Master in Absolute Christianity who wrote in Japanese wishing to provide direction to the Department; and the offbeat query from the young lady who requested detailed information on the functions and duties of a military firing squad; or the little fellow who wanted to enlist in the Canadian Forces but only as a colonel.

From another writer came the serious request: could DND arrange a flypast by a fighter aircraft over a particular farm at precisely 1400 hours on a certain date? The occasion was a little boy's birthday party. Accompanying the request was a rough map of the area.

Then there was the letter from the elderly gentleman who wrote in to say he had an invention that would revolutionize jungle warfare — it only works at night, after dark.

A final example is the young foreign national who expressed a wish to enlist

in the Canadian Forces because he thought Canada's volunteer forces were better than his country's military organization.

The letters are treated with equal zeal by Mr. Lusignan who sets a 24-hour deadline for replies.

Seminar on housing

The Institute for Canadian-American Studies will present the twentieth annual Canadian-American seminar, November 9-10, entitled this year, Housing in North America and the Public Interest.

The seminar, to be held at the University of Windsor, will address a number of issues including the scarcity of land, rising mortgage costs and greater role in housing by government.

Leading cancer surgeon dies

Dr. Jessie Gray, Canada's first woman surgeon, died of cancer recently at Women's College Hospital in Toronto, where for more than 20 years she had held the post of chief surgeon. She was 68.

Dr. Gray was the first woman to receive a gold medal for the highest standing in the graduating class in medicine at the University of Toronto, the first woman to earn a Master of Surgery degree, the first woman resident surgeon in the 100-year history of Toronto General Hospital, the first woman to become a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada, and the first woman member of the Central Surgical Society of North America. She was also a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

A recipient of the Elizabeth Blackwell Citation of the New York Infirmary in 1954, Dr. Gray was considered one of the four leading cancer surgeons in North America.

Australian Foreign Minister visits

The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Andrew Peacock was in Ottawa October 10 and 11 for talks with Secretary of State for External Affairs Don Jamieson. Their discussions covered bilateral issues and a range of international topics of interest to both countries.