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## Canada/Ivory Coast program

Canada and the Ivory Coast have signed a memorandum of understanding providing a \$6.6-million grant to the African country for a \$41-million rural electrification program.

The memorandum was signed in Ottawa by Marcel Massé, president of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Ivory Coast Ambassador Louis Guirandou-N'Diaye.

The purpose of the fourth Ivory Coast-Canada rural electrification program is to link the towns of Odienné and Séguéla with the Ivory Coast electric energy network and supply electricity to the surrounding towns and villages, benefitting an estimated 90,000 people.

Through the program, Canada and the Ivory Coast have sought to reduce regional disparities and promote economic, social and cultural development in these rural areas in order to integrate them into the national economy.

This grant, which will ultimately be complemented by a \$34.4-million loan, will pay for engineering services, the equipment and fittings needed to install power lines in the two areas, the development of senior managerial staff, the training of transportation and distribution technicians and the sending of line installation and maintenance instructors to Ivory Coast.

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## Energy legislation introduced

Legislation to implement a new legal framework to govern oil and gas resource-development activity in Canada's frontier regions was tabled recently in the House of Commons for first reading. The principal elements of the bill, the Canada Oil and Gas Act, were set out in the National Energy Program.

The new legislation will apply to all Canada lands, that is all lands in the territories and offshore. Together these comprise a total area almost twice as large as that of the ten provinces combined, some 2.5 million square miles of land offshore and about 1.5 million square miles in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. This vast area presents Canada's best prospects for large new reserves of conventional petroleum.

The regulatory regime currently governing oil and gas resources in Canada

lands is no longer appropriate to resource-development needs. The proposed act constitutes a major restructuring that results in a thoroughly modern land-management regime. When enacted, the new legislation will replace the Territorial Lands Act and the Public Lands Grants Act as concerns the disposition and management of oil and gas rights in Canada lands. It will also include amendments to the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act that will strengthen existing provisions for the supervision and control of frontier oil and gas activities in the interests of safety and pollution prevention.

The proposed new Act will play a very important part in the achievement of the National Energy Program objectives of security of energy supply, opportunity for Canadians to participate in energy development, and fairness in revenue sharing. Principal objectives of the proposed Act include ensuring active exploration and development of frontier oil and gas rights, increasing Canadian ownership of frontier oil and gas reserves, ensuring that Canadians receive a fair return for these oil and gas resources, and optimizing the employment of Canadians and the use of Canadian goods and services in frontier oil and gas activities.

Federal oil and gas rights already issued cover some 300 million acres in the frontier regions, including the bulk of those areas considered prospective for oil and gas from the standpoint of current technology. The basic terms of these outstanding oil and gas rights were established under regulations originally promulgated two decades ago and they are not appropriate to the current energy situation.

### Oil and gas rights

Under the proposed Act, all non-producing federal oil and gas rights will be converted to the new modernized regime within one year of passage of the Act. The terms and conditions of rights issued under the new regime will be designed and negotiated with prospective operators in accordance with perceived geologic promise, operating conditions and desired activity level. They will involve stiffer work obligations and will in all cases require the drilling of wells, the only means of definitely ascertaining the presence of petroleum.

The proposed Act also constitutes a major component in the achievement of the government's goal of ensuring that by

1990 at least 50 per cent of Canada's oil and gas production is owned by Canadians. An important provision in the proposed Act is designed to vest in the federal Crown a 25 per cent share in oil and gas rights in Canada lands. Another requires a minimum of 50 per cent Canadian ownership in respect of any oil or gas produced from Canada lands.

Although the emphasis is on the early assessment of the oil and gas potential of Canada's frontier regions, this "need-to-know" requirement will not be fulfilled at the expense of the fisheries or the environment. The new Act will provide for levying assessments on operators to cover the costs of biological and physical research designed to ensure safety and pollution prevention. Moreover, there will be provisions in the form of amendments to the existing Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act to make the existing system for control of frontier oil and gas activities even more stringent, including provisions for absolute liability on the part of operators for any possible pollution damage.

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## System keeps embassies in touch

Ambassadors representing Canada in more than 100 countries need to be able to communicate quickly and easily with headquarters in Ottawa in order to make timely decisions.

To do this Canada's Department of External Affairs developed what is considered to be a unique switching system to control the flow and distribution of messages among 120 embassies, other Canadian government agencies and departments, the world-wide telecommunications network and the department itself.

Canadian National/Canadian Pacific (CNCP) Telecommunications put together the New Ottawa Communications Switching System (NOCAMS, as the system is called). Faced with developing a software program more complex than routine message switching, CNCP incorporated provisions for handling classified as well as unclassified messages. The program queues messages for transmission according to established priorities and switches them over a world-wide network.

The Department of External Affairs system currently averages 25,000 messages daily from 24 time zones. The system operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.