

Guinean delegation in Canada

A ministerial delegation from Guinea, headed by Minister of Economic and Financial Domain Ismael Touré, visited Canada from March 19 to 23.

The delegation held discussions with Renaude Lapointe, Speaker of the Senate, Jean-Pierre Goyer, Minister of Supply and Services and Adviser for Francophone Affairs to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Léo Dorais Vice-President of the Canadian International Development Agency, Verne MacKay Vice-President of the Export Development Corporation and Claude Charland, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

On March 21 the delegation proceeded to Montreal where it met with representatives of several Canadian companies and of the Department of Industry and Commerce of the Quebec government.

Ontario updates its family law

The Ontario Law Reform Bill of 1978, designed to provide an "equitable" settlement of affairs when a marriage or a common-law relation breaks up, came into force on March 31.

The New Democratic Party did not support this bill.

The authors of Bill 59 recognize marriage as a partnership of equals, both of whom, if the relation ends, have an equal right to an equal share in the property, or family assets, owned by either of them. Family assets are defined as the matrimonial home, a cottage, a car, household items and the household bank account.

The family court considers what contributions each partner has made to the marriage, how long the marriage has lasted and what each has brought into it, and may decide that a 50/50 split is not fair. The court may also order the sharing of any property not defined as a family asset. A new provision in the bill, added during final discussion, states that child-care, household-management and financial provisions are a "joint responsibility". By recognizing that a woman who looks after the home can give her husband the freedom to acquire and operate other property, the amendment directs the courts to consider dividing property other than family assets, such as a business, when a marriage ends.

The bill outlines a list of factors, such as need, dependency created during the marriage, and the means and capacity of one spouse to pay support to the other, that may qualify one person as "support obligations". For the first time in Ontario, a man will be able to claim support from his wife.

A judge will no longer be able to base his denial of or award of support payments on the conduct of either partner in a marriage. Judges will be directed to consider an "unconscionable" course of conduct not just of the applicant for support but of both spouses. They will also be able to decide to raise support payments in cases where conduct is considered.

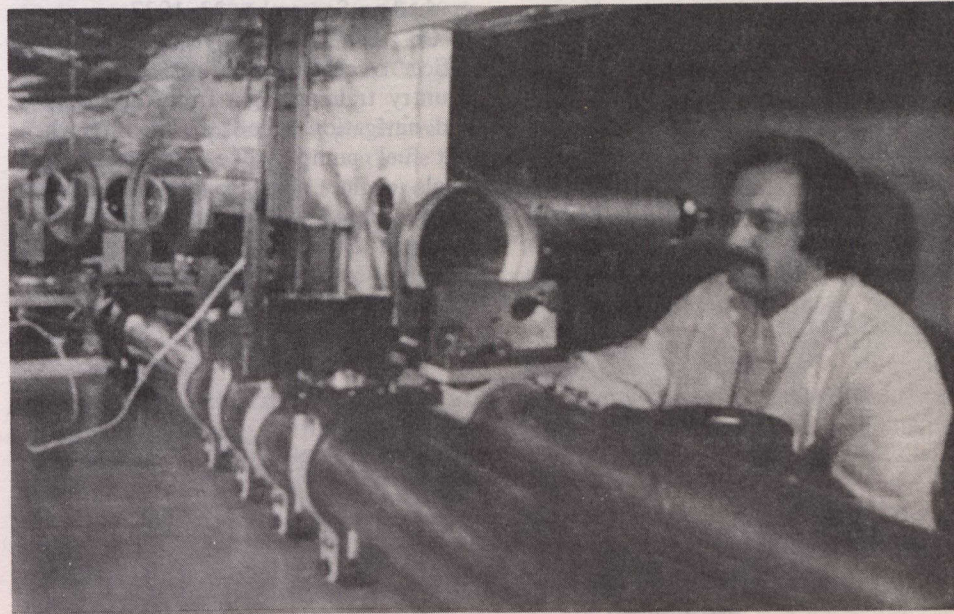
While some women argue that the definition of family assets should include investments, insurance savings and pensions, Lynne Gordon, chairman of the Ontario Status of Women Council, called the new act, "the best possible family-law reform bill at this time based on the democratic process".

Canada-Hungary sport exchanges

A memorandum of agreement signed recently in Ottawa by the Canadian and Hungarian Governments provides for the exchange of sports coaches and specialists, for the participation of athletes and observers in bilateral and international competitions, and for the organization of training camps. The agreement also covers the exchange of experience in the production of sports equipment, the planning and building of sports facilities and the manufacturing of scientific instruments and related technical documentation.

Under the agreement, a gymnastic team from Canada will visit Hungary from April 6 to 10. In June, a Canadian canoe team will participate in a joint training camp in Hungary. In October, a team of Hungarian canoeists will attend a training camp in Canada, and from November 3 to 5 a team of gymnasts from Hungary will take part in the Toronto Cup competitions.

Research Council monitors metres for millions



With road signs now shown in kilometres and speed limits in kilometres per hour, the day is quickly approaching when more measurements in Canada will be made in centimetres and metres. Years ago, the international metre was defined by the length of a special metal bar kept in France. Today, it's more involved than that but the measurements are much more accurate. The metre is now based on a certain wavelength of radiation produced by excited atoms of krypton-86. The Canadian standard of length is derived from the instrument shown here, housed at the National Research Council's physics building in Ottawa. In accord with Canada's Weights and Measures Act, NRC is responsible for maintaining several reference standards of measurement, including mass, length, time and temperature.