
Saudi Arabian Telecommunications Minister visits Canada

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Post and Telecommunications, Dr. A.D. Kayyal, who spent three days in Ottawa last month at the invitation of Communications Minister Jeanne Sauvé, held talks with Mrs. Sauvé and other members of the federal Cabinet, met senior executives of Bell Canada and Telesat Canada and toured both Bell and government telecommunications facilities in Ottawa and Toronto. Members of Dr. Kayyal's delegation were also briefed by government officials on Canadian industrial capabilities of interest to Saudi Arabia.

Bell is part of a three-nation consortium which, last December, won a multi-billion dollar contract for the modernization and expansion of the Saudi telephone system. Believed to be the biggest job of its kind, the project is bringing Canada \$1.1 billion over five years and some 500 senior jobs for Canadians.

Mrs. Sauvé said that Dr. Kayyal's visit confirmed Saudi Arabia's interest in Canadian high-technology products, systems and expertise and emphasized this country's international reputation as a world leader in telecommunications.

The Minister accompanied her Saudi Arabian counterpart on a tour of the Department of Communications' research laboratories near Ottawa, where Canada's expertise in direct broadcasting satellite technology was demonstrated. Dr. Kayyal was also shown a novel trail and remote camp radio system and Videotex — the Department's new interactive television technology, regarded as the best in the world.

Immigration orientation program

The Italian Immigrant Aid Society in Toronto is sponsoring a Canada Works project called Immigrant Orientation Program to make all recent residents more aware of the services available to them in Canada.

Society administrator Antonio Sarzotti says his organization has noticed that many permanent residents who have been in Canada as long as 15 years are still not fluent in English, don't know enough about the system of government, and are unaware of the social services available to them. But they don't seek help until they

run into a problem they can't solve.

"We want to try a preventative approach. If we can go out into the community and reach more recent arrivals and provide them with extensive orientation and counselling on the programs available to them, they can avoid having to ask for help later in their lives."

Orientation for immigrants has its headquarters at 1174 St. Clair Avenue W.; its staff includes counsellors capable of speaking seven or eight languages.

Unaware of services

"We have found that an immigrant will go to an agency to receive help with a specific type of problem but is still unaware of the services available to him," says co-ordinator Lada Hirnyj. "That's where we come in."

Portuguese counsellor Domingos Alves de Lima says some of his people have been here ten years without adopting the Canadian way of life. They know little English and have little formal education. They have probably taken on a menial job and may stay in it the rest of their lives. When the children become educated as Canadians there may be rifts in the family.

Some Portuguese are professional people who could be retrained under Canada Manpower programs, but they may be unaware that such training is available.

Elton George, West Indian counsellor, has found there's a problem differentiating between the jurisdictions of various levels of government.

"You are being sent from one agency to another but after a time you get fed up."

Recent arrivals also need to know how to make the best use of the school system, he says.

Increasing family troubles

Korean counsellor Catherine Lee says the Korean community has expanded rapidly in recent years but has not developed a network of service agencies. There are an increasing number of problems involving family breakup and education that have to be dealt with.

Alejandra Alvarado is a Spanish counsellor from Chile with a background as a social worker. She helps with family problems.

Greek counsellor Nitsa Tsoumaris tells her clients how to conduct a job search.

"I tell people who are unemployed how to fill out their own forms so I don't

have to keep filling them out for them. I've taught them how to look for jobs in the newspaper, and how to go down to a Canada Employment Centre and look at the job board every day instead of staying home and waiting for a job to come to them."

She's also been able to put some professional people into Canada Manpower training courses.

Language problem acute

Underlying all problems is the problem of language. Mr. Sarzotti points out that many immigrant women come to Canada, already married with children, but are less likely to learn the language than their husbands.

"We try to motivate not only the husband but the wife to learn the language. She'll probably need it more because in the Italian community at least, the responsibility for education of the children is left to the wife. If she doesn't speak the language we are faced with the situation later where she can't communicate with her own children."

Language teaching is part of a second Canada Works project the Italian Immigrant Aid Society is sponsoring called Orientation to Citizenship. It attempts to integrate immigrants into Canadian society and make them familiar with Canadian institutions. At the same time, English is taught.

"A lot of people who have been here for ten years finally realize they'll stay here for good," says Mr. Sarzotti, "so they want to apply for citizenship."

Vikings return to America

The University of Victoria rugby Vikings returned recently from a three-week tour of Europe during which they played against teams in France, Italy and Yugoslavia.

The 31-member contingent raised \$18,000 for the tour, with the team receiving some financial assistance from the provincial government.

The Vikings played in Tournon, Grenoble, Venice, Zagreb and Dubrovnik after arriving in France August 18.

In Yugoslavia the team played against the national youth side and the national team.

This is the fourth overseas tour for the Vikings. Other trips have included South America, Britain, Australia and Fiji.