

Mosaic

NEWS



Canada Day, 1986

LAW

- Mandatory retirement will be abolished in the public service
- Part-time workers under federal jurisdiction will be provided with pro-rated benefits
- With marriage break-down there will be an automatic splitting of credits under the Canadian Pension Plan
- Those receiving Survivor Benefits under the Canadian Pension Plan will continue to receive them if they remarry
- More women and members of minorities will be appointed to federal offices and agencies.

These are a few of the federal laws and regulations that should come into effect January 1, 1987 to conform to the equality provisions in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Supreme Court is on the verge of truly becoming Canada's court of last resort. Final emancipation will likely occur this fall when Parliament votes on eliminating automatic appeals in criminal cases which lately have crowded out more important appeals.

That change could free up as many as 20 openings of approximately 90 hearings a year.

The Supreme Court may also now hear appeals even if the highest court in a province has already refused to hear the case. Previously the Supreme Court refused such cases out of judicial deference.

These two initiatives will confirm the Supreme Court as the gatekeeper of cases it will hear.

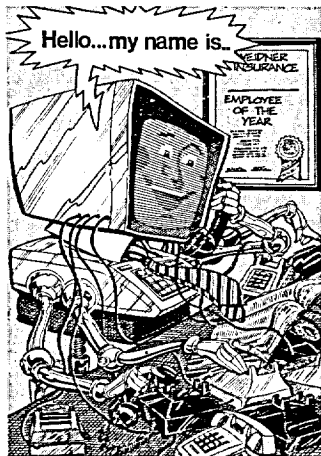
Quebec Laws governing inquests have been changed. On March 3, 1986 a new Coroner's Act went into effect which bans cameras and tape recorders from the hearings and revokes the coroner's power to attribute criminal responsibilities or recommend that charges be laid. Now arrest warrants will be issued by judges only.

TECHNOLOGY

Talking computers are selling insurance. Six evenings a week Mr. Weidner switches on his personal computer which has a voice board attached to it and it automatically makes 82 calls an hour.

"This is Harold Weidner" purrs the recorded voice. "I'd like to ask you three short questions: Do you own a car? Is your insurance policy about to expire? Would you be willing to let someone from our agency give you a quote? If the answer is "yes" the recording says: "Thank you, I'll have a human get in touch with you" and it notes the phone number that responded positively.

"If they want to hang up, who cares," Weidner says, "The computer doesn't get upset. A human being has emotions. After a certain number of hang-ups he hates to dial the next number. For me, this little friend has done wonders. My sales are up tremendously."



The Smart House project promises to revolutionize the way houses around the world work. Scheduled to be installed in new homes in the United States in 1987 and to be introduced in Canada late in 1988, it will be more sophisticated than any home control system available today, but in many ways much simpler.

Instead of using a computer to make existing wiring and appliances talk to each other, the Smart House will start with a whole new way of wiring a house. Wiring for everything — telephone, appliances, heating, alarm systems — will be combined into one big cable bundle allowing every system to talk to each other.



The Smart House

Electricity won't be constantly flowing through the wires rather, the plugs will contain microchips which will request the type of power needed. Consequently, a short circuit in the wiring won't cause an electrical fire, and a fork or a child's finger stuck into a plug won't generate a shock. Electrical costs are predicted to be cut by one third in that the system will be able to monitor the family's needs and only turn on what is required. In addition, through master buttons, numerous functions can be done at one time — one hit of a button at bedside could turn off the lights, turn down the heat, lock all the windows and doors, and turn on the security system.

Singer sewing machines may become obsolete. Singer Co., founded in 1851, wants to get out of the sewing machine industry it once dominated worldwide. "The world's sewing machine markets have declined over the last 10-15 years in North America and Europe basically because more women are working," said spokesperson Jack Elliott. The company has sold all of its 950 Singer Sewing stores in the United States and closed three plants in the U.S., Britain and Germany. It plans to concentrate on expanding its aerospace and military products line which it began in 1968. In 1985 Singer's aerospace electronics business generated \$1.2 billion in revenue, while the sewing revenues amounted to \$567 million.

HEALTH

Fitness. From June 8-11, 200 health professionals, fitness experts, educators, politicians and policy-makers met in Ottawa at the Canadian Summit on Fitness. The purpose was to involve cooperation among the various groups to come up with a series of recommendations that would "steer the country down the path toward fitness". Fitness and Amateur Sports Minister, Otto Jelinek said that it may even be time for the government to get out of the business of fitness promotion and turn over the funds to other groups to administer. "It is very possible that governments have served their purpose in fitness", he said.

The elderly. We are still a relatively young people. Only 10.7% of Canadians are over the age of 65, and 22% are younger than 15. Where that is leading is plain: those who are now 15 will have lots of company when they reach the "ripe old age of". Most health experts agree that the aging population is the single biggest problem in sight for the Canadian medical establishment.