



Governor-General Jules Leger and his astrolabe.

NAVIGATION DEVICE

Leger receives astrolabe

OTTAWA (CP) — A navigation device, dating back to 1613 and once belonging to Samuel de Champlain, the first governor of Canada, was presented Monday to Gov.-Gen. Jules Leger.

The device, an astrolabe, was used by early mariners to calculate the time and their location.

The presentation was made by Dr. David Baird, director of the National Museum of Science and Technology, at Government House.

Gov.-Gen. Leger was presented with the original astrolabe, on loan from the New York

Historical Society Museum. It is to be returned to the museum, which acquired the device through a donation in 1943, at the end of March.

Before the astrolabe is returned, it will be on display at the science museum while two replicas are made.

One copy is for the collections of the National Museums and the other for display at Government House.

The astrolabe was found in August, 1867, by a 14-year-old farm boy near Muskrat Lake, Ont.

EDMONTON (CP) — Big Brother fits on to a University of Alberta computer, enabling it to turn ordinary literature into braille transcript at more than 300 lines a minute. This might mean a big change for blind people in Canada.

The device "is the only answer to production of braille in Canada," a consultant for the visually-impaired with the education department said.

Don Murray, with the Canadian National Institute of the Blind's Edmonton office, said braille now is transcribed from original texts by volunteers. The computer braille output, he said, will increase efficiency of braille production.

Marg Hetch, an education department consultant, said a computer that can produce

braille at the rate of Big Brother, which already has printed its first five copies of a book, would help shorten the schooling of blind children.

Now, she said, blind children who attend regular classes often cannot get textbooks on time to finish courses with their classmates.

"A 600-page chemistry text could take 1½ years to have transcribed, bound, labelled and sent to the student," she said. "With this new process, we could have the same book in six weeks."

John Stasiuk, senior systems analyst for the university, said he and his colleagues tried various methods to get the computer to produce braille, but none worked satisfactorily.

When they heard of a United

pstates school board which had ordered a computer component that did the work automatically, as long as the material was fed into the computer in machine-readable language, they obtained a \$5,400 grant to buy the device.

Mr. Stasiuk said computer services donated time and manpower to program the machine, while paper suppliers developed stock.

The process is expensive, Mr. Stasiuk said, with the first copy printed to cost about \$1 a page, although unit cost will drop with increased volume.

Miss Hatch said manually transcribed books also were expensive, while the computer-printed books had the advantage of rapid production. Computer tapes can be filed, she said, and prints made at low cost.

Computer writes braille

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Abortion laws may be relaxed

By Don seller
Southam News Services
OTTAWA — It's becoming apparent that Justice Minister Ron Basford is carefully assembling a strategy for handling the abortion issue which caused his predecessor, Otto Lang, so much grief.

He is moving step by step toward what appears to be a further relaxation of the country's therapeutic abortion law, stopping short of abortion on demand.

In this manoeuvre, he has the substantial support of the Trudeau cabinet, which one informant insists accepted the principle of easier abortion in a 17-6 straw vote last summer.

Mr. Basford has avoided stating his own views on the explosive, highly-emotional issue for the time being. He evidently wants to avoid painting himself into a corner.

Officially, he is awaiting the arrival of the facts—a report from the three-member "Abortion Law Study Committee" scheduled to complete its work early this spring.

Actually, Mr. Basford is well aware of how the therapeutic abortion law is working. The committee, appointed by Mr. Lang on his last day in office but guided by terms of reference established by Mr. Basford, will set the scene for legislation.

The first reality is that 48,198 abortions were performed, legally, in Canada during 1974. The Trudeau government is not going to propose a law that would make all abortions illegal and open the door to back-alley butchery.

The second reality is the government's acknowledgement that abortions are harder to obtain in Quebec and in smaller centres or rural areas than in other parts of Canada.

Health and Welfare Minister Marc Lalonde, for example, has complained that in 1974, only 27 of 281 hospitals in Quebec had therapeutic abortion committees in operation.

He said Canada's abortion legislation "corresponds to the evolution of public opinion, but Quebec doesn't even apply the present law's conditions. Access to abortion is all but forbidden."

In the medical community, there is speculation that the government will try to rectify the uneven appli-

cation of the abortion law in several ways.

For example, the hospital committee system might be replaced by a requirement that a woman obtain the approval of two physicians before an abortion can be performed.

In addition, there may be a proposal allowing abortions to be performed in physicians' offices, at least by the vacuum suction method in the earliest stages of pregnancy.

There also could be a government move toward the construction of outpatient facilities for abortions so that hospitals not wishing to offer abortion services would not have to provide them under pressure from government.

It is entirely possible that some or all of these measures—primarily geared toward creating greater uniformity in abortion services across Canada—will be proposed by Mr. Basford for Parliament's consideration.

The justice minister's aides and other officials decline all requests for information about the government's plans for changes in the abortion law, at least until the Badgley Committee presents its report.

Mr. Basford already has promised to make the report public, regardless of its contents, and to table it in the Commons for debate, the first opportunity MPs have had to discuss the issue since the law was changed in 1969.

The justice minister's caution is well illustrated by two recent events which may or may not have been well timed.

At his first opportunity—when a second jury acquitted Dr. Henry Morgentaler of Montreal on a charge of performing an illegal abortion—Mr. Basford ordered a new trial on the charge that led to Dr. Morgentaler's first conviction and jail sentence.

This move was balanced by the Professional Corporation of Physicians of Quebec disciplinary committee suspending Dr. Morgentaler's licence to practice medicine.

Thus, by accident or design, a neutral state was achieved that will allow Dr. Morgentaler a new trial but prevent him from challenging the abortion law again before it is held.



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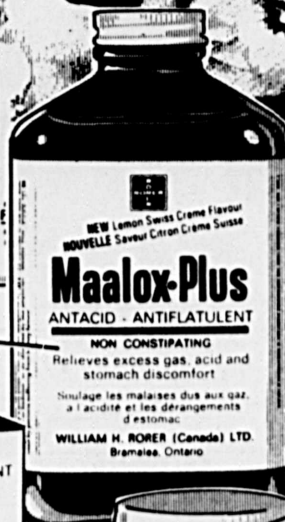
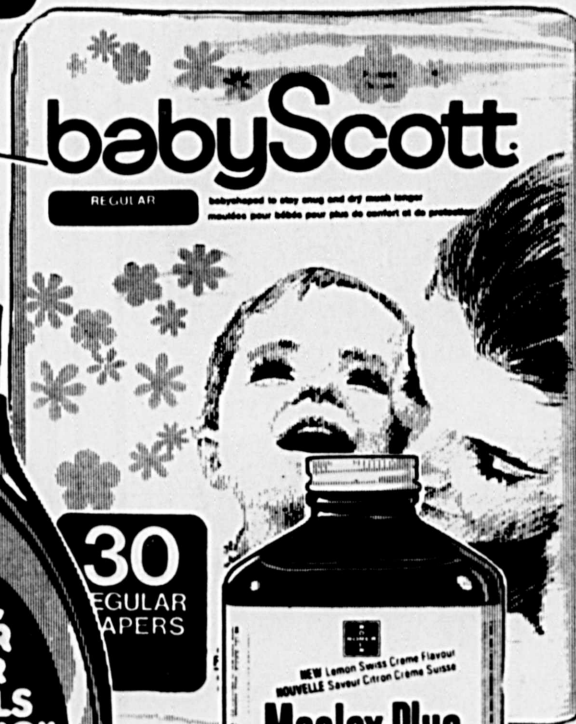
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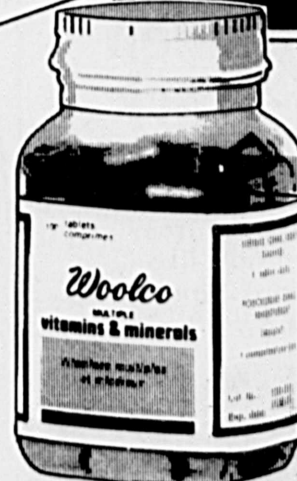
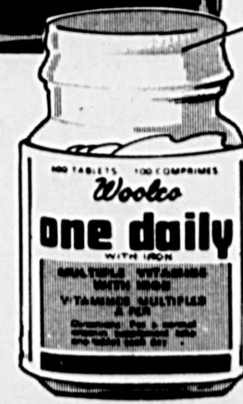
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