

NEWS IN BRIEF

POLISH REFUGEES

Employment & Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy has appealed for private sponsorships for Polish refugees. In 1981 only 169 applications (for a total of 390 persons) were received from private sponsorship groups interested in assisting refugees from Eastern Europe. 2,211 Poles entered Canada under the government's 1981 refugee quota. In addition, 1,624 Poles already in Canada on visitor's visas have been able to stay here under special measures announced in October whereby those with relatives here eligible and willing to assist them, were able to be landed as permanent residents without having to leave the country; and those in Canada who did not have relatives able to assist them could be granted permission to work here for a period of 12 months, pending a review of the situation in Poland.

CANADIAN ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION

A detailed portrait of Canadians' attitudes to the role of immigration in Canada's economy was included in a research report prepared for the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. The survey showed that although there is a fairly widespread opinion (55% of those interviewed) that the number of people permitted to immigrate to Canada is higher than people think it should be, overall there is a desire to see some compassion and humanitarianism reflected in the country's immigration policy. Fifty-nine percent of those interviewed believe that Canada has a moral responsibility to allow oppressed people to immigrate into Canada.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION FROM VIETNAM

The government of Vietnam and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) agreed on measures to accelerate legal departures of persons wishing to leave Vietnam in order to live abroad, at a meeting of a delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam with the UNHCR and with representatives of interested receiving countries, including Canada, in Geneva in October, 1981. A minimum monthly target of 1,000 departures on the two weekly UNHCR charters from Ho Chi Minh City to Bangkok is expected.

With respect to individuals wishing to leave to join their relatives in Canada, the Orderly Departure Programme is progressing well, with Canadian immigration officials going into Ho Chi Minh City regularly, and departures becoming steady:

CANADIAN CHURCHES URGE BETTER PROTECTION FOR SALVADORAN REFUGEES IN HONDURAS

The churches in Canada have appealed for more adequate protection measures for Salvadoran refugees and relief workers in Honduras. Refugees have been abducted and killed by Salvadoran soldiers in Honduras and relief workers there have been murdered. In such incidents, according to the churches, the Honduran military have offered no protection.

Canadian, American and European churches have been sending teams to the Honduran border region to provide an international presence in the camps. On their return these representatives have emphasized the need for increased security in the area. Presently only two UNHCR representatives alternate to provide protection along a long and tense border area containing at least 30,000 refugees, both in and outside of camps. Now the UNHCR is attempting to increase protection by moving the refugees inland to a new camp near San Marcos.

But according to the church representatives who have been to Honduras, many of the Salvadorans want to stay near the border where they are close to El Salvador and where they have ties with the Honduran peasants who have shared their homes and scant land and food with them. They also feel that their presence ensures that the border is kept open to other refugees and provides some security to the Honduran civilians who have befriended them. The UNHCR has planned several reception centres along the border; but according to the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees, it is likely that once the refugees are gone, without any strong presence of protection staff supported by the UNHCR and the Honduran government, the military will have free rein in the area.

Until recently the relief workers in the area agreed with the refugees who want to stay; but after the recent military terror, they have agreed to the move. The move has been progressing slowly due to the extremely poor conditions in the camp at San Marcos; meanwhile the Canadian churches are continuing their efforts to obtain protection from the UNHCR and the government of Honduras for the refugees both crossing the border and at the new camp near San Marcos.

LEGAL DEPARTURES FROM VIETNAM

	June-Dec.	1981											Partial	
	1979	1980	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
For resettlement in Canada	58	341	67	168	135	105	39	70	111	84	187	96	213	1275
TOTAL	1986	4706	840	300	392	547	591	458	771	639	908	1551	819	7816

