

Controls and Enforcement

Entry and exit controls

114. The Committee was impressed by the need to improve control over the entry into and stay in Canada of persons who come as visitors with the intention of residing and working illegally. The magnitude of the problem is unknown, but many Canadians expressed a fear that "illegal immigration" is out of control. It seems clear that this fear can foster negative attitudes towards immigrants in general. Moreover, the plight of many illegal aliens is a matter of concern as they are vulnerable to varied forms of intimidation, exploitation, and blackmail.
115. The Committee considered the present system for screening out non-bona fide visitors at ports of entry. A person suspected on certain specified grounds of intending not just to visit Canada but to remain can be refused entry. This can cause not only embarrassment, but genuine hardship to individuals who have come long distances on the understanding that all that is needed to get into Canada is a return ticket. Some bona fide visitors may be refused entry for lack of the means to make their case. Others may eventually emerge from the Special Inquiry procedure free to visit Canada—the Committee was informed that this is true of some 30 per cent of the cases that go to Special Inquiry—but their stay will be marred by their unpleasant experience at the port of entry. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that many "illegals" get through and disappear without any record of their entry.
116. For these reasons the Committee weighed the pros and cons of implementing a comprehensive visitor visa system, excluding only United States citizens, 30 million of whom visit each year, from the requirement of obtaining a time-limited visitor visa before seeking to enter Canada. Prospective visitors would then be accurately informed of Canada's regulations before undertaking a journey and would have the minimum necessary documentation, thus avoiding futile travel. Inspection at ports of entry would be facilitated. However, it is questionable whether officers abroad