

relaxation of procedures has been undertaken so that refugees interested in coming to Canada may be processed as speedily as possible.

Mr. Fairweather: Did these special arrangements include having the embassy in Vienna remain open on Labour day?

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, what special financial arrangements have been made to assist these Czechoslovakian immigrants to come to Canada and to establish themselves here after they arrive?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, special arrangements have been made and we are attempting to treat these refugees as the Canadian government treated Hungarian refugees some years ago. Where necessary financial assistance will be available to help them or to pay their transportation costs and the settling-in costs of these refugees in Canada.

Mr. Harkness: What is the per capita financial assistance that is provided?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, there is no way of determining the per capita amount. Each refugee will have to be treated as an individual case. Normally we would help or pay the transportation costs and their settling-in expenses in Canada, at least until they are able to obtain self sustaining employment. We have not enough experience as yet to know what the per capita cost will be, and I am sure it will vary in individual cases.

Mr. Harkness: Has the minister any idea what length of time this support will continue after the refugees arrive here and until they find employment, learn the language and so forth?

Mr. MacEachen: I do not think it is possible to say how long this will be necessary. We may get a very adaptable group of refugees with a high degree of skills, and it may be in many cases that it will not be necessary to provide any kind of settling-in assistance. I cannot give any estimate of the required length of time.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister whether he is prepared to make available these very generous provisions and the relaxation of the regulations to assist those refugees who have

Inquiries of the Ministry

escaped from red China and are now in Hong Kong. Perhaps the minister did not hear my question or does not intend to answer it. Would he like me to rephrase it?

Mr. MacEachen: I have not given that question any consideration as yet.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Obviously.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, while we are dealing with the subject of Czechoslovakian refugees perhaps I could ask the minister of immigration or the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether the flow of refugees already arriving in Canada includes only those Czechoslovakians who were caught outside that country at the time of the Russian occupation, or whether there are refugees coming now who left after that occupation.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to deal with all Czechoslovakian refugees on the same basis. I think the hon. gentleman will also understand that our concern is in respect of the Czechoslovakian people as a whole, including those who got out of the country and those who remain. He must also be aware that we should be very careful in dealing with this question so that we do not in any way prejudice the safety and well being of those Czechoslovaks who cannot get out.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, would the minister of immigration inquire into the allegations that Czechoslovakian refugees who have applied to Canadian offices in Dusseldorf, Cologne and Vienna have been told it will take at least two months before they obtain visas?

Mr. MacEachen: I think this situation may have prevailed before the special instructions went out to all immigration officers. Certainly at the present time there is no justification whatever for this statement being made or for this practice to be followed. It is not necessary to wait that length of time at all.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, would the minister indicate to the house when these special instructions went out to which he has just referred?

Mr. MacEachen: I do not have the date before me, but certainly the instructions went out early last week, just as soon as it was possible to determine the extent of the problem and to examine the procedures