NEWS

DEADLINE - Wednesdays, 12 pm

Number of claimants seeking refuge has risen

by Marc Mercier

Since the 1985 Supreme Court of Canada decision in Singh, where it was held that administrative convenience was no excuse to denying refugee claimants natural justice, the number of claimants seeking refuge in Canada has risen sharply, said an Immigration and Refugee Board official speaking to 35 students at the Law School last Thursday.

Gordon Fairweather, Chairman of the new Immigration and Refugee Board, said he is confident all new refugee claimants after January 1989 will receive a fair and "oral hearing to test their claim". Fairweather was less than positive when asked about the 85,000 file backlog of claimants that arrived in Canada before the January 1989 start of Board hearings. he agreed "clearing the backlog will take time".

Fairweather's solution to the systematic backlog is for the court's to "stay out" of the determination process and to let the Board do its job. Although empathizing with the Government on its use of amnesties for clearing backlogs, Fairweather voiced his concern with the message being sent out to would be refugee claimants. He stated the message is "get into the system any way you can and wait for an amnesty to happen".

Since January of this year approximately 16,000 refugee claims have been made with over 50% of those being made in Toronto. As of October, Fairweather said that over 10,000 claims have been heard, of which 90% have been accepted as valid refugee claimants. Fairweather was to meet Barbara McDougall, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, for the first time this week to discuss the Board's first full year of operation.

Recruiting drive held

By Pierre St. Amand

On November 23 the recruiting team of the first Batallion rural. N.B. regiment (militia) held a recruiting drive here on campus.

The recruiting drive was set up by officer cadet Richard Fenelly.

Aimed at students who do not want a full time military career, the drive was held from 12 pm to 2 pm in the Blue Lounge of the Sub. "The organizers were quite surprised with the turnout. The application procedure is quite straight forward. Those wishing to apply will be asked to submit information and allow the recruitment center to perform various inquiries about their background.

The people are then asked to write a short test of military aptitude. At this point several documents (proof of age, social insurance, etc.) will be required. Having gone through these formalities, prospective joiners will then be given a battery of tests to measure their aptitudes and medical fitness.

General military training starts in January with military law, rifle training, rank structure, and field training.

In addition to providing guaranteed summer employment, the militia offers opportunities in many areas of interest as well as the opportunity to travel around the world with members of the regular force.

photo by Al Johnstone

Cadet Fenely showing equipment to interested students.

Movies to be added

Although the UNB Film Society's regular fall schedule officially ended last weekend, two additional weekends of movies have been added, as benefit screenings for the Food Bank. On Friday and Saturday, December 8 and 9 at 7:00 p.m., three episodes from 1960's TV serials will be shown: "The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle", "Tarzan - 'The Ultimate Weapon'", and "Batman - 'Shoot a Crooked Arrow'". These are some of the most memorable, and some of the silliest films to cross TV screens two decades ago.

The second of the film Society's Food Bank benefit weekends takes place at 7:00 p.m. on December 15 and 16, and will feature the superb 1951 production of "A Christmas Carol", starring Alastair Sim. This film should offer the exam-stricken university community a much-needed opportunity to take a break and work up some Christmas spirit.

The regular admission price of $3.00 will be waived for these showings; people wishing to attend are asked, in lieu of an admission fee, to make a donation to the Food Bank. Donations will be accepted at the door. Remember, these screenings are for a good cause; so come, be entertained, and do your part in aiding the Food Bank.

Tibbits/Jones visit York Manor

On December 5 about 75 residents of Jones and Tibbits went to York Manor, a senior citizens complex in Fredericton.

This is a traditional event that Tibbits and Jones houses organize each year. Christmas carols along with the giving out of gifts by Santa Claus to all senior citizens in York Manor are part of the event.

Each year, after all the gifts are given out the students walk down the halls and sing Christmas carols before they leave.

This year of a total of 184 senior citizens in the complex, about 100 senior citizens took part in the event. Kathleen Brannen, Residence Council President of York Manor expressed her appreciation to the students after all the gifts were distributed. In a touching speech she gave a heartfelt thanks to both residences and said that the senior citizens look forward to thier visit every year.

Gerry Hughes, who was Santa Claus, described a touching moment when one of the nurses asked him to go into an elderly blind woman's room. She had been too sick to take part in the events. After Santa said hello, she felt his beard and realized who he was. Santa said he could see tears in her eyes.

Norma Maclennan House President of Tibbits said "it is nice to see the residence system being active in the community of Fredericton and doing something for others especially in this festive season. She remembers when they went over to York Manor last year and the senior citizens could not get over the fact that the students really wanted to do this for them.

Barry Landry, Social Chairman at Jones said that it not only makes them (the senior citizens) feel good, but makes him feel good for doing it for them. He said that it is an experience that reinforces how important it is to do things for the elderly. He plans to back again next year.

Chretien to speak at UNB

On December 8, the Honourable Jean Chretien will be speaking at Ludlow Hall (Room 2) at 2:15 p.m. The topic of discussion is "Challenge for Canada". The UNB law school speaker's hour, is presenting this event and everyone is welcomed to attend.