

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Friday, September 11, 1964

The house met at 10.30 a.m.

### IMMIGRATION

#### STATEMENT ON CHINESE STATUS ADJUSTMENT AND AMNESTY PROGRAM

**Hon. René Tremblay (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, further to my recent statement in the house regarding Chinese immigration, and because of certain references outside the house to this subject, some questions have arisen as to the detailed application of the points I set forth.

I had spoken of a proposed termination date for status adjustment statements offered by Chinese immigrants who had committed immigration offences. It had been planned to terminate the effective date of such statements as of September 1, 1964, but subsequently I extended the time until further notice. Since my observations in the house on this subject on August 14, more than 2,500 Chinese have come forward to offer status adjustment statements.

My references at that time to the status adjustment statements had led to questions about the Chinese amnesty program, which is related to the status adjustment matter but is by no means the same thing. Status adjustment statements comprise the vehicle or the means by which certain Chinese have been able to avail themselves of the amnesty. To remove any grounds for misunderstanding I wish to explain the precise nature of the Chinese amnesty as it has been applied during the past several years.

On June 9, 1960 the government announced an amnesty effective July 1, 1960, covering illegal Chinese immigrants in Canada and also those who entered posing as Canadian citizens. It was clearly stated that the amnesty did not apply to those who had engaged in illegal immigration for a profit, or to those who helped others than their own relatives to enter Canada illegally.

On November 16, 1962 the minister of citizenship and immigration announced that much simplified procedures were being instituted to enable Chinese to make voluntary statements more readily. He reiterated

that only those who entered before July 1, 1960 were eligible to take advantage of the amnesty. He warned that Chinese making false affidavits would be prosecuted and would be debarred from sponsoring relatives or other intending immigrants to Canada.

It will be evident that the amnesty of 1960 applied only to those offences committed before July 1, 1960. However, successive ministers have been relatively lenient with Chinese whose immigration offences occurred since 1960, even if they did not fall within the 1960 amnesty program. This period of tolerance has lasted more than four years, and I am sure all hon. members will agree that it cannot continue unduly long without seriously weakening the application of, and the respect for, our laws.

While the government has not authorized a new amnesty program, as such, beyond that of 1960, I wish to say to those Chinese who have entered Canada illegally or committed immigration offences between July 1, 1960, and September 1, 1964 that I intend to continue to be as understanding as has been the case during the past four years. I invite Chinese affected to continue to come forward to complete voluntary statements. All cases of offenders, whether they become known through these voluntary statements or otherwise, will be sympathetically reviewed. However, the government must reserve the right to prosecute for serious offences committed during this period, such as those involving immigration agents and racketeers.

I have covered the authorized procedures affecting those committing immigration offences before 1960 who may take advantage of the 1960 amnesty. I have gone on to review the situation of those affected by offences committed between July, 1960 and September, 1964 who, with the exceptions noted, will be treated tolerantly and sympathetically. For those Chinese entering illegally or committing immigration offences from September 1, 1964 onward, I must state now that their cases will be treated precisely as would those of any other racial group, and the immigration laws must be fully applicable to them.

Voluntary statements will continue to be received in the meantime from Chinese com-