

are certainly prepared to look at individual cases as they come forward.

The question of immigration consultants has bothered me a great deal and I have referred it to the special task force on immigration regulations which I established two months ago. The task force has prepared a discussion paper outlining the legal regulatory questions related to immigration consultants who do sometimes prey upon immigrants. What I intend to do is release that discussion paper to provincial governments, immigration groups and ethnic groups for their comments and then bring about whatever changes are necessary to tighten up the system. I hope this discussion paper will be ready immediately after Christmas. I will ensure that the hon. member receives one, as will all members of Parliament.

On the question of visitors' visas I am concerned about the assertion of the hon. member that some people in his constituency have complained that they have been denied visitors' visas for the time period they requested. The general principle is that applications are considered carefully in our offices overseas, and whether visits be requested for three months or six months, if they are legitimate the applications should be considered in accordance with that time frame. I can only say to the hon. member for Parkdale-High Park, and perhaps to other hon. members opposite, that if there has been a tightening in certain immigration posts abroad, they should let me know and we will immediately telex and ask them about specific cases. I make the same offer to the hon. member for Mississauga.

● (2050)

As to the Buffalo shuffle, I do not like to use that word in the confines of the House, Mr. Chairman. It almost sounds like a new dance we are originating, and in fact it is almost a new dance. It really does mean there is a reciprocity between the United States and ourselves for people who may be in this country and do not want the total inconvenience of going back to a country far away to apply to come here. We are working out arrangements with the U.S. authorities. We have been negotiating an agreement with the U.S. authorities since July, I believe, and I can report to the House that the agreement is almost finalized and there will be reciprocity between the two governments in terms of exchanging those privileges. I want to indicate that that is not a general privilege; it is one that will be fairly well administered in terms of control in cases which really warrant it. In most instances we feel that people who want to land here, should follow the rules and go back to their place of origin, but where there are special circumstances we are prepared to make those arrangements with the U.S. authorities, and they are able to do likewise.

On the question of special measures for Poland, this is an area in which I feel a little reluctant to intervene because External Affairs is not my responsibility, nor necessarily my strong point. Perhaps I lack the diplomatic skills which are required for that post. However, I would say we would obviously be ready to respond to any immediate emergency, just as we responded two weeks ago to the severe problems in Italy

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when they experienced the earthquake. If there were a major problem—our past record shows how we responded to the problems in Czechoslovakia or Hungary—we would obviously be prepared to consider such arrangements. But, as the saying goes, let us not cross the bridge until we come to it, and I suppose it works in this case. I would only say that we are watching the situation in Poland very carefully, along with other organizations and countries, and we hope nothing serious will happen. If there were a major invasion or some other international crisis, we would obviously make our immigration services respond in a flexible and open manner.

As far as consultation with provinces is concerned, we are required by law, as the hon. member knows, to consult with each of the provinces before we establish immigration levels each year. We undertook a very extensive consultation the previous summer with them and most of the provinces reported to us that they were prepared to accept the existing immigration levels. In some cases, provinces indicated that they were prepared to take more immigrants, particularly the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. In no case did we receive a request that the numbers be fewer. It was upon the basis of that consultation that we arrived at the proposal for continuing immigration levels at about the same level as last year but changing the composition of that level, as the hon. member knows, to provide for more people coming in under the family class and under the independent class.

With regard to the question related to regulation 4H, this is a matter which we will refer to the task force I mentioned. It has been charged with the examination of a large variety of regulatory decisions and procedures under the Immigration Act. I will refer the hon. member's request to them and ask for a report. In fact, I suggest to him, as I did to another hon. member earlier, that perhaps he would like to meet the members of the task force and explain his case more fully so they will have a better understanding of his point of view and can incorporate it into their findings.

With regard to the Helsinki agreement on the visiting of families, I go back to my point with regard to the visitors' visas. We will attempt to provide for the proper length of time as that provided in exchange. I know of the hon. member's great concern with difficulties in the Ukraine. We have to admit that there has been a serious falling off in the numbers coming in from the Ukraine. It is not owing to our action but rather to the fact that the Soviet Union is limiting the number of people they allow to leave, which is contrary to the Helsinki agreement. I had a meeting with the new ambassador, Ambassador Pearson, before he went to Moscow and I asked him to take up that matter with the Soviet authorities as soon as he arrives; I expect a report from him on the discussions he will hold.

Finally, on the issue of co-sponsorships, I think that the hon. member has raised a very important point. I will take it under consideration. I think it would require changes in the act which I am not all that anxious to make right away since we have enough problems. But it is a very useful suggestion and