

distribution of responsibility within the international community at large, bearing in mind that the Canadian contribution may often appropriately take the form of financial or material aid in addition to, or instead of, opportunities for immigration."

The Immigration Act of 1976

Up until the Immigration Act of 1976 Canadian immigration legislation made no reference to refugees. In dealing with refugee crises, therefore, Canada relied almost exclusively on various *ad hoc* administrative procedures in order to protect and resettle refugees in line with this country's humanitarian traditions and international commitments.

The 1976 Immigration Act encompasses as one of its objectives the initiation of resettlement assistance for refugees. Thus for the first time in Canada's history, refugees have become a separate admissible class in the Canadian body of legal jurisprudence. However, even in this new Act the criteria used for the selection of refugees demonstrate a pronounced emphasis on economic factors such as the ability of refugees to assimilate in the economic structure and fabric of this country.

It is unlikely that the Indo-Chinese refugee crisis is the

last one that Canada will have to contend with. Refugee movements have taken place from time immemorial and are likely to continue so long as individuals and their families are persecuted, or minorities are oppressed, or basic human rights are deliberately abused. Confronting this factual premise, Canada should continue to be an active participant in the international scene in dealing with the refugee problem by means of providing resettlement opportunities as well as contributing financially to the programs initiated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

There is another aspect, however, that should be borne in mind. While the resettlement of the world's homeless and unwanted millions is an act in the highest ideals of humanitarianism, it is also like treating the symptoms rather than the disease itself. So long as various forms of persecution, oppression and discrimination continue to exist and are condoned by governments, individuals and their families will be forced to flee their countries of origin. For in its most fundamental essence the root cause of refugee movements is the abuse of basic human rights and until some way is found to eliminate these occurrences, refugee movements will continue to be a source of international embarrassment and global concern.

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