

The recent events in Chile, particularly the situation of Chileans and non-Chileans who now wish to leave that country have given rise to understandable concern on the part of the Government and on the part of all Canadians.

As I stated in the House of Commons on September 12 the Government extended its sympathy to the people of Chile on the death of their President and I expressed the hope that democracy would be re-established as soon as possible.

Canada extended its formal recognition of the new Government of Chile on September 29 in order to be able to deal with the government that was effectively in control, and to assist Canadians and many other persons affected by recent events in Chile. As indicated at that time, an act of recognition does not imply any particular attitude toward the government being recognized.

Immediately after the coup d'état in Chile and the accompanying violent situation in Santiago, the Canadian Embassy granted refuge to eight Canadians and 19 non-Canadians. By September 24, the Embassy had arranged for the safe conduct out of Chile for all these Canadians as well as three others who had been detained by the Chilean authorities. The Embassy also arranged for the safe conduct out of Chile of four non-Canadians who had sought refuge in the Embassy, and it worked closely with other diplomatic missions and the representative of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees to assist about 50 other non-Canadians who desired to leave the country.

The primary responsibility of all Canadian Embassies abroad is the protection of Canadians and Canadian interests. Canada, like most other countries outside Latin America, does not have a doctrine of granting political asylum in its Embassies. Nevertheless, exceptions are made on humanitarian grounds and the standing instructions for all Canadian Embassies authorize the Head of Mission to grant temporary refuge to any person, whether a Canadian citizen or not, "whose life is in immediate danger during political disturbances or riots". A decision in this regard must, of course, rely on the judgement of the Head of Mission in the light of the circumstances at the time, the effect that this action could have on his primary responsibility for the protection of Canadians and the likelihood that he might not be able to get them out of the country. Canadian Embassies, unlike those of Latin American countries, are unable to guarantee asylum because we do not have the reciprocal arrangements or understandings in this regard which are common and unique among Latin American countries.

Within the past several days a number of persons, not in any clear or immediate danger, have enquired at the Embassy about the possibility of asylum or of leaving Chile. They have been assisted by the Embassy in making contact with the Embassies of their own nationality or of the country of their requested destination which would be in the best position to assist them. I wish to assure that no one who has approached the Canadian Embassy with a genuine request for assistance has been refused a hearing and no person who was clearly in imminent danger of his life has been denied refuge.

At the first of this week there were only two requests for emigration to Canada from among the approximately twelve non-Canadians still in our Embassy. Later this week, however, the remainder indicated a wish to emigrate to Canada and the Government instructed on October 3, that a Canadian Immigration Officer in Buenos Aires proceed immediately to Santiago to assist them.

As I have already stated in the House of Commons, the Government will give very sympathetic consideration to requests by persons in Chile wishing to leave that country to emigrate to Canada. I have already indicated this to the United Nations' Secretary General when I met him in New York last week and had the opportunity