

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION:

PRESS RELEASE:

Marchi Announces New Vision of Canadian Citizenship

April 14, 1994, No. 94-23

Sergio Marchi, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, announced plans to develop a new Citizenship Act and measures to streamline citizenship processing. The current Citizenship Act, created in 1977, has remained virtually unchanged. The Minister underlined the need for a new Act which is more relevant, dynamic and symbolically important to the Canada of today. "A country's Citizenship Act should be a proud and bold statement of its history and its hopes, its common principles and common values," said the Minister. "The proposals I am announcing will build on this tradition by calling for a renewed and reinvigorated citizenship." Action will proceed on three fronts. First, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration will undertake a substantive review of the principles, rights and responsibilities fundamental to a Canadian concept of responsible citizenship (...) Second, the Minister is implementing immediate measures to resolve the backlog in the processing of citizenship applications (...) To improve efficiency, the accelerated process will include group assessments of knowledge and language skills instead of individual interviews by a Citizenship Judge. Other measures include increasing the daily numbers of hearings, encouraging applicants to file by mail, and extending business hours for Citizenship Courts. The processing time will initially be reduced to about 18 months with an end goal of six months when all reforms are in place. The Minister also announced that the position of Citizenship Judge will be eliminated.

STATEMENT:

The initiatives I am announcing today change the fees charged for immigration services and alter eligibility to the Adjustment Assistance Program (AAP). These changes are part of a cost management strategy to deal with the immigration program shortfall which, without these changes, amounts to \$48 million. Effective June 1, 1994, cost recovery fees now collected for immigration services will be increased. Fees will also be assessed for the first time on a number of other immigration services ... Those applying abroad for visitor visas will pay the fee upon submitting an application. In the present situation, a fee is only paid when we assess the application and decide to issue a visa. In addition a fee will now be collected from everyone applying for permanent resident status within Canada, including successful refugee claimants ... As of May 15, 1994 only those refugees sponsored by the government from abroad will be eligible for this program that provides basic income support. People enrolled in AAP before May 15, 1994 will continue to receive AAP benefits. AAP provides allowances for clothing, housing, furniture and food to people in need for up to one year after they arrive in Canada, or until they become self-supporting, whichever comes first ... Today, almost half of AAP recipients are not government-assisted refugees - the people for whom the Program was designed to help.

Notes for an Address by the Hon. Sergio Marchi, P.C., M.P. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on Changes to Fees Charged for Immigration Services and Changes to the Adjustment Assistance Program (AAP) (April 15, 1994)

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Youth Employment and Learning Strategy to Lay Groundwork for Modernizing School to Work Measures

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The Government of Canada is embarking on an employment and learning strategy, in collaboration with the provinces and industry, that will help young people prepare for the challenges of the 1990's labour market and the new global economy by improving existing school to work transition measures and introducing new approaches to the education and training systems. The strategy is budgeted at \$684.5 million for fiscal year 1994-95, which includes an estimated \$479 million in outlays for student loans. The total budget represents a reallocation of existing funds from within the Department of Human Resources Development Canada. " You know the status quo is not working when we see too many young people sidelined in society. This government is now laying the foundations for improved education and training systems. We will test new models to help young people make a successful move from school to the workplace," said Human Resources Development Minister Lloyd Axworthy. Key elements along the strategy's two main fronts are as follows: Youth Employment; Youth Service Canada; Youth Internship; Summer Employment Program; Youth Learning; Reforms to Canada Student Loans Program; Learning initiatives; and, Stay-in-School Partnerships.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- June 5-11, 1994: OAS Annual Assembly (Belem, Brazil)
- June 9-10, 1994: NATO, North Atlantic Council and North Atlantic Co-operation Council Meetings (Istanbul, Turkey)
- July 8-10, 1994: G-7 Economic Summit (Naples, Italy)

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