

Would-be homesteaders face disappointment

Several thousand would-be pioneers who had their yearning for a fresh life stirred by reports of free land in Alberta are facing disappointment.

Their hunger for land was whetted by a recent story in the press about a scheme by some wagon-train promoters in Kleinberg, Ontario. A party of 20 families was to make a 3,000-mile journey by horse-drawn covered wagons to the Peace River District, where it was mistakenly reported that thousands of acres of public land was available for homesteading.

Alberta Lands and Forests Minister Dr. Allan A. Warrack stresses that the Department is not encouraging homesteading because only a limited amount of public land is available and that priority is given to established district farmers needing land to improve their holdings.

Dr. Warrack also points out that public lands are not free but are sold at prices at least equal to the market value of surrounding private land.

An applicant for a homestead on Alberta public land must also have lived in the province for at least one year in the three years immediately preceding application. And, there is also a backlog of applications from eligible Alberta residents, Dr. Warrack points out.

Response to the press story has been overwhelming, both to the wagon-train promoters and to the Alberta Lands and Forests Department. About 2,000 letters and 1,500 phone calls have been received by the promoters and numerous letters and phone calls have been pouring into the Alberta Lands and Forests Department.

"It is vital that these people be given the facts and that the misleading

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information that has been disseminated be corrected," Dr. Warrack states, "otherwise a great many innocent people are going to be exposed to needless hardship and disappointment.

The story in the press also erroneously reported that wagon-master Gordon Roberts had leased 1,280 acres for a \$25-registration fee. In fact Mr. Roberts has only made application to lease the land, the \$25 being an application deposit.

Immigration policy

(Continued from P. 2)

Dilemmas associated with immigrant management in the field will become increasingly hard to resolve in future without a framework that will provide a reliable basis on which to plan the total size of the annual immigration movement, and to deploy selection capacity in source countries in a way that will serve national goals with maximum effectiveness....

Options

What options are open to future immigration policy? Four are selected for discussion as illustrative of the range of possibilities that deserve attention. Each possesses advantages and disadvantages, and they are not "either/or" options. Elements from one approach could, in certain cases, legitimately be combined with elements from another.

Option Number 1 – Retain the present "responsive" system of immigration management abroad – a system that does not fix, in advance, the numbers of visas to be issued over a given time span.

(If available capacity is allocated simply in response to the sheer volume of visa applications at certain posts, there can be no assurance that selection facilities are equitably distributed geographically, or that the immigration movement will consistently respect national priorities. These are drawbacks to maintaining the *status quo*.)

Option Number 2 – Gear the immigration program even more closely than at present to meet economic and labour market objectives.

(This would entail drawing a very clear line between the class of immigrant Canada admits because the labour market needs them, and those who are accented for other reasons.

This option appears incompatible with retaining an "in-between" category of immigrant – the "nominated relatives" who are selected partly because they meet labour market criteria and partly on the grounds of kindship.)

Option Number 3 – Develop and announce explicit targets for the number of visas to be issued annually on a global, regional and possibly post-by-post basis.

(This option could enable the immigration program to be deliberately related to national demographic/population growth policies as these are developed. It also would mean a major innovation in Canadian immigration policy – the establishment of quotas on the number of immigrants Canada is prepared to admit each year. On the other hand, the option looks less startling when it is realized that limitations on the volume of immigration are unavoidably built into any program – including Canada's traditionally open-ended one. At the same time, this option would present very difficult problems in deciding on the formula for allocating visa quotas among regions and countries.)

Option Number 4 – Establish an annual global ceiling for the total immigration movement, specifying the priorities to be observed in the issuance of visas to different categories of immigrant within that ceiling.

(This approach would entail a process of planning and preparation in advance of each immigration year. To assist the Government in determining the number of immigrant visas that would be issued over the planning period, it might be appropriate to institute a regular process of consultation through which the views of provincial governments would be sought, as well as advice from designated outside agencies and organizations. The second element would be to determine the order in which applications from different classes of potential immigrants would be processed. With the over-all ceiling and priorities established, a forecast would then be made of the number of applicants in each priority group from each source country and area of the world. This approach would avoid some of the dilemmas inherent in establishing, in advance, visa quotas on a regional or country-by-country basis (as in Option Number 3)....