

Government Orders

For example, the medical inadmissibility provisions of the act are intended to protect the health and well-being of Canadians and ensure that people coming into Canada do not place an excessive demand on our medical and social service systems. The proposed amendments will clarify the definition of excessive demand in today's terms and ensure that the medical inadmissibility provisions are applied fairly and without discrimination.

The act currently provides authority to refuse admission to anyone who has been convicted of a crime. What about people who, while never convicted of a crime, are known to be part of a criminal or terrorist organization? These people pose a real danger. Their activities frequently have a global dimension but the current act does not prevent them from coming to Canada.

New measures will strengthen the definition of criminal inadmissibility and allow us to keep out people we know are active in such groups. They will give immigration officers the authority to refuse entry to anyone involved in serious criminal activities.

This legislation will also help those who try to enter Canada under false pretences or who otherwise try to break and circumvent the rules. The best way to stop such people is to intercept them before they get to our borders. That is why the government works closely with the airline industry, helping it to identify counterfeit travel documents and illegal migrants.

The proposed legislation will provide an additional incentive for airlines to work with the government by increasing the penalties for airlines that neglect their duty to determine undocumented passengers.

In some cases people arrive at our borders with travel documents which have a direct bearing on their admissibility to Canada, but at the present time they can simply refuse to show them to immigration officials. The customs officer, on the other hand, can search a Canadian citizen returning to Canada if he is suspected of concealing something as simple as an undeclared bottle of liquor. We think that an immigration officer should have similar authority to conduct a search and the legislation will provide that authority.

For example, someone who asks for protection as a refugee may claim to have no passport and the immigration officer cannot verify that claim even if the officer

can clearly see a passport sticking out of the claimants pocket.

The legislation will also allow the use of fingerprints and photographs to establish an applicant's identity. The question of identity is obviously critical in many immigration cases and we need the most effective means available to deal with those cases firmly.

Under the new legislation immigration officers will have increased authority to identify and stop smugglers. This includes increased discretion to detain vehicles.

A number of recent reports by enforcement agencies as well as in the media have highlighted the dramatic increases in organized groups smuggling illegal migrants into Canada. A restructured system of fines will help deal with individuals involved in smuggling. Under the proposed legislation people caught smuggling will face penalties ranging from a \$100,000 fine and five years in jail to a fine of \$500,000 and ten years in jail.

For people who manage to enter Canada illegally or who have been determined not to have the right to remain in Canada, the legislation provides the tools necessary to ensure their prompt removal. We need to assure Canadians that people here illegally will not remain and that those who enter Canada legally will be held to their promise to respect Canada's laws.

The investigative capacity of immigration officials to identify, document and follow-up on infractions will be increased and made more effective.

There can be no question that examples of abuse undermine the integrity of our immigration system. Abuse also undermines the public's confidence in the value and effectiveness of the immigration program. The measures we have proposed to enforce the law and protect Canadian society will ensure that the immigration system, which has served Canada well for more than a century, continues to deserve the support and confidence of all Canadians.

Public confidence also depends on a program that operates and is seen to operate in a way that is fair, efficient and cost effective. Increasing numbers of people seeking to enter Canada have placed enormous pressures on the program and on the ability of officials to deliver efficient immigration services. As a result, the immigration program has become characterized, in some