

#### BUILD-UP IN BACKLOGS

The result of our inability to cope with the large numbers who could not immediately be granted landed immigrant status has been a large build-up in backlogs at two levels of procedure, that is, in the immigration inquiry system and at the Immigration Appeal Board.

Unintentionally, this has created hardship for many people anxious to become Canadians. As an example, abnormally long delays in determining the final status of immigrants have caused financial hardships forcing some immigrants to take employment without authorization. It is our objective to eliminate these delays so that this situation will not arise in the future. While I intend to remove the immediate hardships and eliminate delays, I do not intend to change the basic policy under which persons coming to Canada are prohibited from taking employment without permission.

#### THE PLAN

I want to say that the program we are instituting now is not in the category of a general amnesty such as we have had in former years.

Rather, the plan calls for action on two fronts: first, to streamline and improve current procedures to prevent a further build-up of the backlog of cases; and secondly to eliminate this backlog of some 13,500 applications now awaiting hearings by special inquiry officers who determine in the presence of the applicant and his counsel whether an applicant should be landed or ordered deported.

The Department's field strength is being increased by 260 persons so that backlog cases can be reviewed and reassessed and delays in the handling of current applications can be drastically reduced.

The prospective immigrant's performance in Canada will be reviewed, taking into account how he has been able to adjust to Canadian life while awaiting his departmental hearing. Consideration will be given to his financial stability, trade and language training, participation in community activities and his employment potential.

We hope this will result in the granting of landed status to some 50 per cent of the applicants whose cases have been caught up in the backlog. Those not immediately accepted as landed immigrants will have their departmental hearings continued with full protection of their right of appeal to the independent Immigration Appeal Board.

Each applicant in the backlog will be notified that the Department is undertaking a review of his case. He will be informed of the factors on which this review will be based, and invited to provide any new information to show that he has in fact successfully established himself in Canada. He will also be asked to produce letters of recommendation from Canadian citizens or other permanent residents of Canada.

For purposes of this review, we will be prepared to seek relief by order-in-council from the application of the relevant immigration regulations for those persons who have established themselves successfully in Canada.

#### NEW APPLICATIONS

Our objective is that any future applicants for landed immigrant status from within Canada will be assessed within one month, and if a further hearing is necessary it will be held without delay.

It is expected that this rate of processing new applications can be achieved by January 1, 1973. No additions will be made to the existing backlog after that date. A target date of April 1, 1974, has been set to eliminate the remaining departmental inquiry backlog.

Although they cannot be resolved directly by any administrative measures, the Department will also re-examine its files on some 10,000 cases now before the Immigration Appeal Board....

#### BIG FEDERAL HOUSE-CLEANING PLAN

Canada will spend more than \$60 million over the next four years to clean up pollution caused by federal facilities.

Announcing this Canada-wide program recently, the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Jack Davis, said that new federal buildings would be equipped with the latest clean-up devices. "The Government must first put its own house in order," Mr. Davis declared. "The Federal Government must take the lead. It must show the way and clean up in the same way it is asking the private sector to do."

The anti-pollution program will be financed through a central fund approved by the Treasury Board. Environment Canada will act as a co-ordinating agency working with other government departments to pinpoint "bad spots" and to establish priorities for Government spending on pollution abatement.

"We have been asking to include pollution control from the very start of planning," said Mr. Davis. "It is a necessary cost of doing business and government must be businesslike as well."

The Minister said that pollution control standards for the federal clean-up program would be set at a very high level - "we also want to show the provinces the way", he said.

A detailed inventory of "problem spots" and costs of clean-up, site by site, is being assembled by Environment Canada on the basis of reports received from dozens of departmental establishments across the country.

Environment Canada is co-operating with federal Crown Corporations, which must also meet national standards, according to Mr. Davis.