

Oral Questions

tion that employers frequently send immigrant workers to manpower offices to apply for a work permit, and their applications are vetoed or turned down by manpower officials on the ground that there are qualified Canadians to do the job, and yet the same manpower offices are unable to supply the Canadians to do the job? Has the minister any explanation for this?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if there are no Canadians available to do the job and a visitor or foreigner who is in this country is not otherwise disentitled from doing it, we will issue work permits. There are odd occasions when this has not worked out. I have had a conference with the directors general of immigration and manpower officials from across the country this morning on this matter, and any rough edges that may have occurred putting this into practice are being smoothed out. We have no desire to impede the operations of employers where work permits can be issued.

COMPLAINTS THAT COUNSELLORS OVERWORKED

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Have the minister or his officials made any response to the overwork grievances that have been received from a number of manpower offices in respect of Canada Manpower counsellors being overworked, and is this the reason for the situation that was described in my first question?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): I think that the situation described in the first question of the Leader of the Opposition would be narrowed down pretty much to the Toronto area where there was a heavy volume. With regard to the workload of manpower counsellors, we have been aware that they are facing a generally heavy work load with all the additional programs they have taken on this past year. All grievances have been considered in accordance with the required grievance procedures. In fact, the staff resources of the department's field offices have been considerably strengthened to take care of increased workloads. Man-years allocated to field offices in the 1972-73 estimates amount to 8,672, which is an increase of 1,017 man-years or 13 per cent.

Mr. Stanfield: The minister has admitted that he has received overwork complaints in respect of manpower counsellors. Would the minister indicate what steps he is taking to enable the manpower officers to discharge their responsibilities, having instituted a work permit system and now presumably going ahead with new programs such as LIP? What does the minister propose to do to enable manpower officers to discharge the responsibilities that he has placed on them?

Mr. Andras: I think I just indicated to the Leader of the Opposition the increase in man-years in this year's allocations which are considerable and recognize the problems they are facing. I might say, with regard to the additional burden of work permits, that obviously there has been a special and I think short-term, one-time workload by virtue of the introduction of the system. I might say that

[Mr. Stanfield.]

16,677 applications have been received for visas and approval was given and 10,624 visas were issued. Another 2,500 have been rejected. The rest are being processed. I think we will be over that hump very shortly and will return to a more normal stream, but it did create an extra burden for a short time.

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INCOME TAX

APPLICATION OF CERTAIN SECTIONS OF ACT TO BENEFITS ENJOYED BY EMPLOYEES IN NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND YUKON

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Revenue which I ask him at the request of my colleague, the hon. member for Northwest Territories who could not be here today. It arises out of widespread concern in the Northwest Territories and, I understand, in the Yukon as well, over the application of certain sections of the Income Tax Act dealing with benefits enjoyed by employees and paid for or subsidized by employers. I should like to ask the minister whether this matter is being studied by his department and other relevant departments.

Hon. Robert Stanbury (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, there is a review going on about what subsidies, in particular housing subsidies, in the north might properly be subject to income tax. Further information has been requested by my officials from the territorial government, but I can assure the hon. member that until this review has been completed no territorial residents will be assessed or reassessed to include such subsidies in their incomes, and I will undertake to consult with the hon. member for Northwest Territories before any action is taken.

● (1530)

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I have a short supplementary question. If the minister has not already done so, can he make certain that the representative of his department in Edmonton, which office services the Northwest Territories, is informed of the fact that there is such a review and that there will not be any re-assessment until the review is completed, so that Mr. Marlborough, or some name like that—I don't quite know the name—will not give the people in the north the impression that they come under the act immediately?

Mr. Stanbury: Mr. Speaker, I have so instructed.

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[Translation]

FINANCE

BANK OF CANADA INTEREST RATE INCREASE—REPERCUSSIONS ON ECONOMY

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question of the hon. Minister of Finance.

In the light of higher Bank of Canada interest rates and the attendant uncertainty amongst Canadians, can the