

## **STAFFING AND TRAINING**

A program of this size has required the hiring and training of a significant number of new staff. The Committee was informed that in Toronto approximately 50% of current staff have been in their present job for less than one year. This means that training becomes very important. The Committee saw at first-hand how the instructions from headquarters are often not made clear to officers in the field when incorrect answers to two questions were given by an inexperienced officer. Even more disquieting was the fact that for one question, the officer had checked with his supervisor before giving the erroneous answer. The Committee therefore urges that ongoing training and monitoring for all employees be emphasized to a greater degree. Management must ensure that guidelines are clear and are followed consistently.

The Committee also urges that the complete complement of staff be introduced as soon as possible. At the present time, many members of the Refugee Division are not fully occupied, to their regret, because there are not enough adjudicators to form complete panels. In order to ensure high productivity and to fully utilize the 51 boardrooms available for the program, 57 Refugee Division members, 66 adjudicators and 78 case presenting officers are required. To attain these figures, seven more Refugee Division members, 24 adjudicators and 21 case presenting officers must be hired. The Committee urges that these positions be staffed as quickly as possible.

Witnesses also informed the Committee that staff morale was low. While the Committee has no direct knowledge of this, we appreciate that newly-hired staff attempting to administer a complex program with minimal training are undoubtedly under significant stress. Further, many staff appear to be under instructions to meet processing targets that are unrealistic. It is hoped that the Committee's recommendations above relating to increased staff and training and our further suggestions below to streamline the process will assist employees who have been feeling unduly pressured.

## **THE CREDIBLE BASIS HEARING**

The Committee has identified the credible basis hearing as the bottleneck in the design of the backlog clearance. The contrast between the figures for initial interviews completed, which precede the hearing, and the completed hearings themselves well illustrates this point. In the first three weeks of November, over 900 initial interviews were completed on average per week. In comparison, an average of only 226 credible basis hearings were completed. In the final week of November, the number of initial interviews reached 1,341, yet