

As for the USSR, in September 1976 the latest Canadian list of persons who wished to be reunited with their families in Canada and who had been refused exit documents at least once was presented to the Soviet authorities. There were 162 cases (453 persons) on that list. By May, 1977, 25 cases (69 persons) had been resolved. Although the major outstanding reunification problem at present is with the Soviet Union, it should be pointed out that a number of persons from the Soviet Union have been permitted to join their families in Canada without having experienced any problem in obtaining exit documents and without representations having had to be made by the Canadian government. Details are contained in Annex II. These show that despite the slow pace in resolving the old, difficult family reunification cases on our lists, there had in fact been in 1976 an increase in the total numbers permitted to leave the Soviet Union to join their families in Canada—by 14% over 1974, the previous peak period.

Regarding Bulgaria, no progress whatsoever had been made between 1966, when there was an exchange of notes with Canada providing for benevolent consideration of reunification of families, and December 1976 when the first case was resolved. In February 1977 the Bulgarian authorities informed us that 25 out of 27 persons who wished to go to Canada (including not only those on whose behalf representations had been made but other individuals) would be given exit documents. By May, 6 cases (8 persons) had received their exit documents and were about to leave Bulgaria or had already left.

Until very recently, there had been little or no movement on reunification of families in Czechoslovakia, 17 cases in 1975 having been resolved only following high-level representations. In November 1976, the Czechoslovak authorities informed us that new procedures were being introduced and progress on family reunification could be expected. Since then, 15 cases involving 18 persons (from a total list involving 58 persons) have received permission to leave Czechoslovakia. Of these 14 were children, 3 were mothers of children and one was a young single woman. Assurances have been given that additional adult cases will be resolved.

Over the last two years, the number of family reunification cases with Romania have increased sharply. The increasing figures tend to give the impression that the situation is worsening whereas, in fact, the Romanian authorities have been exhibiting considerable willingness to clear up the cases presented to them by Canada. The increase in the lists has resulted from an increasing number of new cases being submitted by those having recently emigrated to Canada, and from the addition of the new fiancée category to our representations. Of 255 new cases (466 persons) submitted in the last two years, the Romanian government has resolved 153 (263 persons). There is obviously some concern on the part of the Romanian government about the drain of human resources which could occur and President Ceausescu, while affirming the government's "understanding attitude in justified cases" of family reunification, warned in a speech on March 28, 1977 about attempts by outsiders to promote emigration. He indicated that Romania strongly disapproved of emigration as such.

Reunification of families with Hungary has never been a major problem for Canada and most cases on which representations have been made have been resolved with comparatively little delay. Those cases that have presented some difficulty have involved dual nationals who, having lived in Canada for some years, have returned to Hungary for a prolonged visit or permanent residence and have subsequently wished to return to Canada. Although these may not strictly speaking be considered family reunification cases, representations on them have been made and will continue to be made.

On the basis of Canadian experience, Poland continues to exhibit a liberal attitude towards emigration and has been steadily resolving cases on which representations have been made. Most problems involving family reunification occur where sponsors in Canada are considered, under Polish law, to be illegal emigrants.

As diplomatic relations between Canada and the German Democratic Republic are being established on a non-resident basis, there have been few developments regarding family reunification so far. Nevertheless, six cases have come to our attention. To date, formal representations have not been made on these cases but preliminary discussions have been held with GDR consular officials with a view to resolving these cases. These officials have expressed the GDR's intention to uphold the principles of the CSCE Final Act.