
Refugees contribute to economy

Canadian Government studies over the past ten years indicate that immigrants and refugees make major contributions to the Canadian economy and social growth in a short time.

The studies began following the arrival of Czechoslovakian refugees in 1968. "Our findings show quite conclusively the contribution these newcomers make," said Employment and Immigration Minister Ron Atkey. "The facts speak for themselves."

In the past 11 years, Canada has been host to four significant refugee movements: Czechoslovakians (1968), Ugandan Asians (1972), Chileans (1973-79), and the present Indochinese program.

Nearly 12,000 Czechoslovakians entered Canada between October 1968 and March 1969, according to the studies conducted by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC).

Most of them received financial assistance, during their first few months in Canada, on an average of \$766 a person until they became self-sufficient. By the end of the first year the average Czechoslovakian refugee family was earning \$518 monthly. In the two following years the average monthly earnings rose to \$603 and \$726 respectively. The \$726 represented about 85 per cent of the Canadian average for that year, said the Commission.

Most of the earnings went back into the economy, according to the CEIC. In the second year, for example, income was spent this way: 18 per cent on housing, 16 per cent on food, 8 per cent on clothing, 8 per cent on transportation, 4 per cent on education, 5 per cent on medical care, 6 per cent on recreation and 12 per cent on miscellaneous items. About half had purchased furniture and cars; 30 per cent had bought televisions, radios and record-playing equipment; 10 per cent had bought refrigerators, stoves and washing machines. Almost one in five — 17 per cent — had purchased a home, said the Commission.

Ugandan refugees

The Ugandan Asian movement brought 7,069 persons from Uganda to Canada and, 12 months following arrival, 88 per cent were employed full-time. Of these one in 11 were at the managerial level, 15 per cent were in professional and

technical positions, 36 per cent were in clerical and sales, and 22 per cent were craftsmen. Though starting at income levels well below the Canadian average, most had moved quickly upward and after one year were just slightly below the Canadian average, said the Commission.

Within a year, people from this group had launched 66 small businesses. While many were family operations, about 9 per cent were already providing employment to between 20 and 49 other residents of Canada. On the average, each self-employed Ugandan Asian brought direct employment to five other workers. After a year, more than two-thirds were paying rent regularly for modest apartment accommodations and one-quarter had rented or bought a house.

In Chile the *coup d'état* of September 1973 created another special refugee movement. About 7,000 people have come directly from Chile as well as from special refugee camps in adjacent South American countries.

A study made in 1976 showed that 73 per cent of the Chileans who had arrived by then had become employed. One-third had a family income in the range of \$10,000-\$14,999, while 11 per cent had a family income of less than \$6,000. This is comparable to figures for the Canadian population in general. Of these former Chilean refugees, 85 per cent were paying rent for housing while 7 per cent had purchased a home. Only a fraction were sharing accommodations with relatives or receiving further adjustment assistance.

Taking unwanted jobs

Indochinese refugees are having little trouble finding a variety of jobs without taking them away from Canadians, reports Austin Allen, a resettlement officer for the CEIC in Toronto.

The refugees, he said, were taking jobs the employment centre has had on file for a long time — jobs that Canadians do not want.

"They are not high-paying jobs," he said. "Some of them are very dusty and dirty. We find the Vietnamese are quite willing to do them. They're not taking jobs away from Canadians."

Only about 20 per cent of the refugees speak English; they are working as chambermaids, dishwashers and kitchen help, and training to work in trades.

Many have skills and experience with machines. One young man is a trainee in a

metal-polishing business. Another started as a machine-shop trainee for \$4.50 an hour, but quit to take another job that paid \$3.75 an hour but offered him as much overtime as he wanted.

Some of the women who can sew are taking the employment centre's 12-week industrial power sewing course. Others were office workers in Vietnam and with English-language training, plus training in Canadian business practices and a refresher typing course, they too, are finding jobs.

The employment centre takes care of the refugees from the time they arrive. Staff meet them at the airport, put them into hotels temporarily, give them settlement counselling, financial help and health care, then assist them in finding permanent accommodation and jobs.

The Government gives them food and shelter for up to a year if they need it, but most are on their feet in six weeks, said Mr. Allen.

Many are finding work through volunteer agencies. Employers, he went on, report the refugees are excellent, hard-working employees.

"One businessman says they are there before he is in the morning, waiting for him to open the door," he said. "And they're very grateful. They think Canada is the best country in the world."

Saskatchewan Premier tours abroad

Saskatchewan Premier Allan Blakeney is touring seven countries in an attempt to attract more secondary industry to the province.

Mr. Blakeney, began his official tour on September 10.

The Premier said he hoped to encourage foreign companies to view Saskatchewan as a prime location to establish manufacturing plants. The tour will also promote Saskatchewan's rich natural resources, especially uranium deposits.

Mr. Blakeney is accompanied by Roy Lloyd, president of Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation and several senior government officials. David Dombowsky, president of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, will join the tour in Moscow.

Mr. Blakeney's schedule includes visits to Britain, France, West Germany, Sweden, the Soviet Union, Australia and New Zealand.