

Illegal Immigrants

The federal government was asked by the Canadian Bar Association in early August to extend the deadline allowing illegal immigrants to claim amnesty. Association spokesman Mendel Green stated that many illegals had failed to come forward before the deadline because of lack of awareness of the amnesty program. "We feel an extension to the end of the year will certainly provide ample opportunity for those persons to come forward and seek adjustments," he said. Leniency should also be used in "deserving cases" which fall short of the five-year residency limit as well, said Mr. Green. Poor response to the program had resulted in an earlier extension last March, many illegals apparently suspicious of the government plan (*The Citizen*, August 14).

On August 21, then Employment and Immigration Minister John Roberts announced an extension of the Long-term Illegal Migrant Review Program until January 3, 1985. Applications for permanent resident status for the illegals considered under the program were to continue until the new deadline under existing criteria (those who have remained in Canada undetected for five years or more). Additional criteria such as absence of convictions for serious criminal offences, family work ties in Canada, and humanitarian considerations, will also remain part of the program (Employment and Immigration news release, August 21). The announcement was welcomed by Mr. Green, although he remained concerned that the program was being applied "too strictly," with a "heavy-handed and hard interpretation" of the program guidelines (*Globe and Mail*, August 22).

Sri Lankan Refugees

An extension was granted September 13 to special immigration measures instituted to assist Sri Lankan nationals "affected by strife in their homeland." The extension will permit the newly-elected Progressive Conservative government to review the situation. "Considerable internal strife" in Sri Lanka has necessitated continued Canadian assistance, and the special measures will provide protection for those unable to return to Sri Lanka and those "already displaced or dispossessed by violence," said Mr. Roberts. The measures included:

- a moratorium on removals to Sri Lanka;
- a relaxation of criteria for family reunification;
- a facilitation of landing Sri Lankans already in Canada affected by the ongoing violence and with relatives willing to undertake financial support (Employment and Immigration news release, September 13).

TRADE

Countertrade

A report by the Science Council of Canada on industrial development advocated a firm government commitment to encourage countertrade, or barter, as an increasingly important aspect of international trade. Council chairman Dr. Stuart Smith stated that Canadians must

develop "greater expertise" in the area. Countertrade is often employed by those countries with low foreign reserves, and involves payment for foreign goods with an exchange of domestic produce. Dr. Smith noted that with 30 percent of current world trade taking the form of barter, Canadian industries require help from government to remain competitive in changing world markets (*The Citizen*, August 1). The report makes several recommendations, including the creation of an External Affairs information data base for assistance to Canadian exporters involved in countertrade. Responding to the recommendations contained in the report, Canadian Export Association spokesman David Goldfield pointed out that being a member of the GATT trading network, the Canadian government could not involve itself directly in barter procedure. Mr. Goldfield suggested that, while countertrade growing, it was the responsibility of the private sector to "arm exporters with expertise."

International Trade Minister's Remarks

Speaking before the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Toronto, Ontario September 25, International Trade Minister James Kelleher outlined changes to be implemented by the Conservative government to increase the attractiveness of Canada as a place for the investment of foreign funds. Both FIRA and NEP would be altered to enhance Canada's reputation as a "first-class" place for foreign investment, he said. The Government would end the "retroactive and excessive discrimination" in NEP. He also confirmed that the name and mandate of FIRA would be changed — the agency would now be called Investment Canada and would review "major investment proposals of national economic significance." It would, at the same time, adopt a more "positive" role — to facilitate job-creating investment, and to work with a revived and expanded Trade Commissioner Service to identify new ideas, new technologies and new export and investment opportunities for Canada." Mr. Kelleher said the changes should be viewed as an illustration of the Conservative government's belief that an improved Canadian reputation for international investment would help alleviate the present high interest rate-weak dollar problem.

Another area to be addressed, said the Minister, was Canada's weak competitive position in the world, "caused in great part by our dismal record in research and development and technological innovation. The current weak demand, both foreign and domestic, for Canadian goods and services, must also be spurred. In order to lower interest rates in the short term, the Government intends to keep them as low as possible without "causing a run on the dollar, and to offset the high cost of credit in key sectors of the economy by lowering other production costs." In the medium term, Canada will "implement trade, investment and tax policies which combine to put upward pressure on our dollar." At the same time, an inflow of direct investment capital must be encouraged to "lessen our dependence on foreign debt," stated Mr. Kelleher.

Canada's international competitiveness was emphasized in Mr. Kelleher's address. He outlined two "parallel initiatives" for improvement in that area: a restructuring of Canada's primary sectors, particularly the fisheries, forestry and mining sectors (lowering production costs); and