

visit, the Commission has satisfactorily cleared up the misunderstanding and that the rules are now being applied consistently across the country.

Nevertheless, the Committee is of the opinion that the criterion should be widened. At the present time (apart from high-profile defectors), the only people who are accepted on humanitarian and compassionate grounds at this initial stage are close family members who can demonstrate physical or emotional dependency upon a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. The Committee thinks that such a criterion is unnecessarily narrow. We recommend that emotional dependency should not be a required element for acceptance and that assisted relatives should also qualify. This approach would recognize the importance of claimants' ties to relatives in Canada and could be fully justified on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Close family members who did demonstrate physical or emotional dependency on Canadians but who were not members of the family class or assisted relatives should, of course, continue to qualify.

CONCLUSION

It is in Canada's best interest to process the backlog as efficiently and fairly as possible, with minimal detrimental effects on other important programs. The Canadian public has the right to expect government resources to be used in the most effective way available. It is also in the best interests of those who have a credible basis for their refugee claim to be accepted and landed as permanent residents as fast as possible so that they may be reunited with their families and continue their lives on a more stable basis. This Report has recommended some important ways in which we believe the twin goals of efficiency and fairness can be better achieved within the existing framework of the backlog process. There must be other ways as well, which the Commission with its considerable expertise can devise. The importance and cost of the undertaking is too important to risk failure.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The ongoing training and monitoring of all employees assigned to backlog processing should be emphasized to a greater degree by the Commission than at the present time. Management must ensure that guidelines are clear and are followed consistently.
2. To fully utilize all members of the Refugee Division assigned to the backlog and to fully utilize all available boardrooms, 7 more Refugee Division members, 24 adjudicators and 21 case presenting officers should be appointed or hired for the backlog as soon as possible.