

THE SETTLEMENT OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES:
A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS BASED ON INTERVIEWS
WITH OFFICIALS OF
THE CANADA EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION COMMISSION

Meyer Burstein
September, 1981
Immigration Program Division
Program Evaluation Branch
Strategic Policy & Planning

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In order to assess the private Group Sponsorship Program for Indochinese refugees, the Department has undertaken a series of coordinated studies. These include surveys of refugees, sponsoring groups, social agencies and Canada Employment and Immigration Centres. This paper reports on a series of interviews carried out with officials of the Commission in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. An appendix at the end of the paper lists the precise locations visited in the four provinces.

At each site, in-depth discussions were held with the manager of the respective CEC or CIC and with the officials who were most intimately involved in providing services to the refugees. In addition, interviews were carried out at the regional level in Manitoba.

The principal objectives of this paper are to describe the impact of the refugee movement on the Commission - in other words, the workload imposed by the thousands of new arrivals - and the quality of the Commission's response. Since the two topics cannot be addressed separately, the report will proceed from a general description of the workload occasioned by the refugees to a more detailed analysis of selected topics and problem areas. Within each area, the private group sponsorship program will be contrasted with the "traditional" system by which refugees are served.

The selection of topics follows from the Commission's responsibility to refugees as set out under the Immigration Act and, perhaps, more importantly, from an understanding of that responsibility as it has evolved in practice.

Taken at its broadest level, the CEIC is responsible for the settlement and adaptation of immigrants during their first year in Canada. Beyond this first year, immigrants are, in theory, treated as regular clients of the Commission insofar as they seek employment or apply to sponsor overseas relatives. The only noteworthy exception to this picture arises in the case of the ISAP program. Under ISAP, the Commission subsidizes social agencies in providing direct settlement

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services to immigrants during their initial three years. Beyond the first year, the federal responsibility for adjustment to Canada devolves largely onto the Secretary of State.

From the standpoint of the analysis undertaken in this paper, it is especially noteworthy that, prior to the Indochinese movement, no special distinction - beyond counselling - occurred in the provision of services to immigrants and to refugees. Refugees were treated as immigrants - albeit immigrants who, in some cases, required additional assistance - and their special situation was not explicitly recognized in the Commission's programming. This was altered in 1978 and again in 1979. Two unique elements were introduced at a time when their first major test occurred in response to the Indochinese movement. The two elements were, first and more importantly, the private group sponsorship program together with its component supports and, second, the refugee liaison function. Both measures represent a tacit acknowledgement of the difficulties encountered by immigrants and, especially, refugees in adjusting to life in Canada.

While the Commission's programming has not, until recently, supported the idea of a special status for refugees, a very important difference arises within the Immigration Act itself. Whereas the principle underlying the admission of immigrants rests on the self-interest of Canadian residents - in other words, the flow of immigrants is regulated so as to maximize the benefits accruing to persons already domiciled in Canada - the justification for admitting refugees is based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. (The self-interest principle is being stretched here to include members of the family class brought in by their relations.) This holds true for both Convention and designated refugees. It follows that an evaluation of refugee programs must differ from an evaluation of immigration programs if only because the objectives of the two programs are different. Defining that difference, however, raises a host of theoretical and practical concerns.

To a certain extent, evaluating the Commission's provision of settlement services to refugees is like building a pipeline over permafrost. The ground is not entirely stable. Two fundamental conditions for carrying out a successful evaluation are not fully satisfied:

First, the definition of an immigrant for the purpose of delivering settlement services varies with the program. Under some programs, the target population comprises persons who entered Canada within the past year, whereas, other programs extend the definition to encompass the first three years in the country.

Second, and perhaps more important, the different objectives that underlie the admission of immigrants and the admission of refugees have not, until recently, been translated into specialized services. The Commission has been "colour blind" in servicing the two groups thereby declaring, at least implicitly, that from an operational point of view, the settlement of immigrants and the settlement of refugees is much the same business.

In addition to definitional ambiguities revealed by the programming available to immigrants and refugees, the Commission's settlement objectives have themselves not been spelled out. A clear operational understanding of what constitutes a "settled" immigrant or refugee and the Commission's responsibility in that process does not exist. Accordingly, the settlement program, to a greater extent than other programs, encompasses a plethora of goals and marches to varying beats summoned up by a large number of drummers. Programs and services are marshalled according to the personal views of officials engaged in providing immigrant services.

Analyzing the Commission's intervention on behalf of Indochinese inevitably raises the question of whether or not Canada needs to reformulate its refugee strategy. Unquestionably, the recent efforts by officials at every level have been nothing short of heroic. It is precisely this scale of response, however, that has generated the inconsistencies and raised the policy issues to which the balance of this paper addresses itself. The analysis has both particular and general

import. At a micro level, the report discriminates between "treatments" that were successful - in the eyes of those being interviewed - and "treatments" that failed. At a more general level, however, the report draws attention to the relationship between the conceptualization of a refugee settlement policy and the practices by which that policy reveals itself. Perhaps the strongest conclusion of the CEC/CIC impact analysis is that a rationalization at the micro level must await the development of a coherent refugee policy.

The topics considered below parallel the format that was developed in the interviews. They reflect pragmatic as opposed to theoretical considerations. The following areas have been mapped out:

- I. The impact of the refugee movement on the CECs and CICs.
- II. Programs and services delivered by the CECs and CICs.
- III. An assessment of the Group Sponsorship Program
- IV. Family reunification.
- V. The interface between the Commission and other public and private agencies.

I. THE IMPACT OF THE REFUGEE MOVEMENT ON THE CESSs AND CICs.

The Indochinese refugee movement by virtue of its size, the speed with which it occurred and the novel mechanisms put in place to deal with it, stressed the public and private agencies engaged in providing settlement services. By far the greatest demands, insofar as the public sector was concerned, fell on the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. The Commission responded to this stress with as much flexibility, commitment and compassion as can reasonably be expected from an organization of its size and complexity - in many instances, the bounds of reasonableness were exceeded. Nevertheless, the interviews carried out across the country suggest a near universal shortfall in resourcing. This was particularly true of the CECs charged with the responsibility of settling the DCI arrivals. Rigid constraints on additional staffing forced the burden to be distributed by whatever means were available to local managers.

In the short-run, adjustments of the type invoked by the refugee movement are possible. Over the longer term, however, such a situation is potentially destructive and calls into question the Commission's settlement objectives. The following three sections sketch the impact of the DCIs and DC3s on Employment and Immigration centres.

a) Additional resourcing:

The impact of the Indochinese refugee movement placed a considerable strain on the Commission's existing person-year complement. It is unlikely that such a load can be carried on a continuing basis. The mere fact that refugee programs generally functioned as well as they did is a tribute to the highly motivated individuals who drew on their own time to perform the essential functions of settlement. Refugee involvement, in particular, was very time-consuming and personally intrusive. Reception involved late nights and weekends, some counsellors were virtually on call at all times. Similarly, speaking engagements and public information sessions involved work outside regular office hours. The heavy burden imposed by the refugee movement, especially during the initial startup phase, was cited in nearly every CIC and CEC where interviews were carried out.

In addition to overtime and various other adaptations discussed below, most of the bigger centres, especially the CECs, reported a need for additional resources. In Montreal, for example, the immigrant reception unit required the addition of three counsellors in its "Welcome Module," one of them on loan, and six counsellors to provide the refugees with programming support. Similarly, the Toronto Central CEC reported the need to augment its counselling strength by five, while Winnipeg required three additional person years to counsel the refugees.

Despite these additional resources, a great many CECs reported that they were still short-staffed. This occurred in both large and medium-sized centres. London, Sudbury, Kamloops, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg all expressed the view that staff resources were insufficient.

In addition to placing a heavy load on the Commission's counsellors, an equally onerous burden fell on the administrative and clerical units of the CECs. The Adjustment Assistance Program, in particular, vastly exceeded its originally planned allocation and required additional person-years to administer. The clerical complement in Toronto Central, for example, rose from one to five persons (now reduced to three) at the peak of DCI arrivals. Similarly, Vancouver and Montreal required additional administrative assistance.

While no direct measure can be obtained of the pressure under which CECs and CICs operated, there is ample evidence to suggest that additional resources were required in the field. The following two sections dealing with staff reallocation and the diversion of resources confirm this view.

b) Staff reallocation:

In addition to placing a heavier workload on CEC and CIC officials, the influx of refugees led, in a number of cases, to a reallocation of staff and a change in duties. The Sudbury and London CECs, for example, centralized the refugee counselling function in order to benefit from specialization and to take advantage of the previous work experience of staff.

As well as shifting persons within the office, staff were transferred between offices where the volume demanded such transactions. In Toronto, the CIC and CEC with primary responsibility for refugee settlement received staff from other offices. A similar transfer occurred in the Montreal CEC.

Of particular interest was the fact that in several cases, the burden of orienting refugees and counselling sponsors was assumed by persons normally engaged in clerical and secretarial functions. Not only was this realignment indicative of a high degree of commitment by Commission staff, but the capable manner in which the tasks were carried out suggests that a fuller use can be made of persons who normally function in a support capacity. The CEC in Kamloops and the Brandon CIC provide excellent examples of staff redeployment.

c) Diversion of resources:

Both CICs and CECs diverted resources to service their refugee clients. The extent to which this occurred depended on the local resource situation and the client load. By and large, CICs found the accommodation easier because a greater component of their work consists of discretionary activities such as investigation and control. In Kelowna, for example, enforcement was abandoned for several months during the peak of refugee arrivals. Curtailments in enforcement activity were also reported in Brandon, Prince Rupert, London and Toronto. In addition to affecting investigation activities, an impact was felt in recruitment and selection and in services to outlying communities.

CECs, as outlined earlier, experienced an even greater disruption in their normal workload. Because the unemployment insurance program must be fully resourced to comply with legislative standards, the bulk of adjustment had to be absorbed on the manpower side. This resulted in appointment delays for regular clients, a loss of continuity in the provision of service, less active marketing of the client load and fewer employer visits.

Particularly affected by the cutback in service were special needs clients, a situation that, in at least one instance, led to complaints. Diversions were reported in Winnipeg, Kelowna, Prince Rupert, Kamloops, Toronto and Montreal.

Unlike overtime and additional person-years, diversionary responses do not enter directly into a calculation of costs. Accordingly, there exists a tendency to underrepresent the true costs of settlement.

II. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES DELIVERED BY THE CECs AND CICs:

CEC Activities:

The programs and services provided by the CECs can be grouped according to function into three categories:

(a) orientation and support (b) language training (c) job-related services.

a) Orientation and Support:

The nature and extent of counselling provided by CECs varied with their resources and their interpretation of the Commission's settlement objectives. This interpretation ranged from the provision of bare necessities, where the CEC was seen as being primarily concerned with the labour market, to extensive instruction in basic life skills including shopping, banking and cultural activities.

Despite the range in service, there was universal agreement that refugees needed considerable personal attention. In this regard, the majority of counsellors felt that the general orientation sessions given by CECs were useful but not, in themselves, sufficient. Opinion was divided, however, over who should provide additional help, the

Commission or private agencies.

Beyond counselling, DCI refugees were supported during their first year in Canada by the Adjustment Assistance Program (AAP). AAP pays for accommodation, food, clothing and other necessities until the refugee becomes self-supporting (while on language training the refugee gets a training allowance in place of AAP payments). After one year, or in the event that the refugee moves or finds work, responsibility for support is shifted to the province.

As with counselling, considerable variability was seen in expenditures and the administration of the AAP program. To a large extent, this is determined by local housing and labour markets. Tight housing situations such as those in Vancouver and Kelowna, led to four week delays before accommodation was arranged whereas, in Sudbury, the average hotel stay was four days. Similarly, the price of accommodation varied enormously between cities like Toronto and Prince Rupert.

The length of time until refugees were placed in jobs was also a major determinant of AAP costs. These depended on the local labour market and the CECs policy on language training. This ranged from seeing language training as a matter of entitlement to the position adopted in Toronto that language courses should be offered only where language constitutes a significant barrier to employment.

In addition to variances attributable to differences in philosophy and the local economy, AAP suffered from murky guidelines, improper controls, and inexperience on the part of CECs not accustomed to immigrants or refugees. In its present mode, the program is confusing with too many regulations concerning the interpretation and use to which funds can be put.

(Note: The role of the RLO will be discussed in Section 8.)

b) Language training:

As with AAP, the provision of language training was not consistent between, or even within, regions. In some areas, excellent day, evening and part-time courses were available while

in others long delays were experienced or courses were not available in the immediate area.

The criteria for admission to language training require that the beneficiary intends on entering the labour market after completion of the course; however, this was not always strictly applied. Generally, training was offered to the head of household but the availability of training for other members of the family depended on the views held by the CEC to which the refugee reported. In some cases, mothers with small children were encouraged to locate day care services and were placed on courses, while in others, vocational assessments demonstrating that language was a barrier to employment were required before any member of the household was admitted to training. Generally, most CECs assigned full-time language training precedence over employment. In a number of instances, however, refugees were encouraged to seek jobs and pursue their studies in the evening.

While refugees located in major cities had little difficulty in gaining access to courses, such was not the case in smaller towns. Frequently, courses were not available in the immediate area or until a sufficient number of persons had accumulated. As a result, refugees waited for different lengths of time before commencing their training. The recent cutbacks in funding for local school boards in Quebec illustrates this point. In the future, language training will only be provided in three major cities.

Not only the availability of courses, but their length and quality were subject to wide local and provincial fluctuations. Frequently, problems were experienced in getting qualified teachers, especially in rural areas. The absence of any consistent standards for language instruction has implications at both a program level, for example, in AAP costs and for refugee settlement.

c) Job related services:

It is generally agreed that the most important determinant of settlement is finding employment. To this end, the Commission provides both counselling for refugees and a series of program supports.

Based on the interviews, it would appear that the majority of refugees have at least one member of the family working. This occurs, as a rule, within one or two months of the time they complete language training. Most of the work falls into the low and semi-skilled categories primarily in service industries, factories or light assembly operations. In some rural areas, refugees are also involved in agricultural activities.

The absence of skilled work has led to considerable frustration on the part of refugees and will likely contribute to occupational mobility as their language skills develop. Language remains the principal barrier to employment and, even after six months of full-time instruction, refugees are not able to function in an environment that calls for extensive communication. In addition to language problems, most counsellors also felt that refugees were not well prepared for the Canadian labour market. Occupational skills were, in most cases, not directly transferable - as in the case of sewing machine operators who were not familiar with the heavy domestic machinery - and refugees lacked the ability to market their skills.

As a result of these problems, in many cases, it proved difficult to place the refugees directly in employment upon completion of their language training. Further program support was required primarily in the form of employer subsidies. The most useful and widely used program was the Canada Manpower Industrial Training Program (CMITP). In this regard, subsidies ranged from sixty through eighty per cent. In most instances, the lower range of subsidies was used. In addition to CMITP, fairly heavy use was made of the Employment Tax Credit Program (ETCP), depending on employer uptake.

In both programs, the retention rates proved to be excellent and frequently resulted in additional job orders.

To date, little use has been made by most regions of the Canada Manpower Training Program (CMTTP) or Basic Training for Skill Development (BTSD). It has been found that the refugees' language proficiency is not sufficient to allow them to participate in skill training courses. This is expected to change, however, as refugees develop their language skills and seek upgrading.

Limited use has also been made of other Commission programs, especially in regard to providing employment supports. In London, for example, an Employment Development Project was mounted to counsel women in job search techniques and pre-employment workshops were held where modified versions of the Creative Job Search Technique course were given. Similarly, in Winnipeg, Outreach was used to provide specialized counselling services. These instances constitute exceptions, however, and the use of these programs was restricted.

CIC activities:

Unlike the CECs which provide direct program support, CIC operations consist principally of monitoring the private Group Sponsorship Program and encouraging support by social agencies involved in refugee adjustment.

In theory, four monitoring interviews are required at specified intervals. These are largely focussed on determining the refugees' progress and ensuring that the sponsorship relation is progressing smoothly. To a certain extent, field operations deviated from this model and after the initial interview, follow-ups were, in many cases, conducted by telephone. Where the situation warranted it, personal visits were also made and, in the event of problems, expert counselling was sought. This support, was in large measure, provided by social agencies along with translation and orientation for both sponsors and refugees. CICs were not, for the most part, equipped to provide the specialized guidance that was

required in problem situations. (This topic is discussed in greater detail in Section V.)

In addition to involvement in the sponsorship process, CICs administered the Immigrant Settlement and Adjustment Program (ISAP) and the Settlement Grants Program. These programs, respectively, supported social organizations in providing direct services to refugees and in mounting developmental projects. Agency support was not limited to the DC3 population and contributed significantly to the adjustment of the DC1 refugees as well. The role of social and voluntary organizations is developed more fully together with an analysis of the Refugee Liaison Officer (RLO) function in Section V.

Assessment of CEC and CIC activities:

Vague objectives and the absence of a coherent settlement policy within the Commission resulted in the uneven treatment of refugees. Both Immigration and Employment centres were susceptible to differences in the style and philosophy of their counselling staff. For the most part, these variances did not detract from the excellent level of service provided to the Indochinese, nevertheless, refugees in some areas were at a considerable advantage to their less fortunate peers.

The effects of diverse standards were apparent in the extent of counselling, the provision of language training and the delivery of employment services. Where employment was seen as the prime focus of the Commission, settlement activities and, by extension, the availability of language courses were curtailed. The burden of providing these services fell largely on private agencies. Where, on the other hand, settlement was viewed as a legitimate objective - particularly where specialized immigrant counselling units were in place - the CECs played a large and continuing role in the adjustment of refugees.

A similar, though less pronounced phenomenon, occurred in the CICs. Where immigration centres rigidly maintained their traditional orientation, monitoring was usually carried out in a perfunctory fashion. Under these circumstances, social agencies again bore the brunt of the adjustment burden.

To a certain extent, the refugee liaison officers moderated the effects of the uneven treatment described above but even here imbalances were detected. These are discussed in Section V.

While disparities in treatment can be readily identified, their associated costs are less apparent, particularly in the long-term. This becomes obvious when settlement policy is conceived of as an investment - rather than as a consumptive service. Restricting the Commission's role to job placement reduces staff requirements and lowers AAP costs. At the same time, however, such a policy increases underemployment and maladjustment. These latter effects manifest themselves as locational and occupational mobility with a consequent increase in demand for skill training and job placement activities. Further, a trade-off is established between the Commission's demographic objectives and resource deployment. Put bluntly, a policy of dispersion will require investment in social and human capital. Specialized training and the provision of cultural goods may be necessary to ensure job and locational stability in the refugee population.

In the course of carrying out the CEC and CIC interviews, a number of program initiatives to improve the occupational matching and placement of refugees were identified. These measures, if adopted, could reduce the apparent trade-off in program requirements.

First, there was near universal agreement that language courses should place a greater emphasis on developing job-related vocabularies. This emphasis could be introduced as part of a package centred on creative job-search techniques.

Second, there is a need to develop the concept of vestibule training whereby employers could be subsidized in the provision of on-the-job language training.

Third, increased reliance should be placed on CMITP (or a modified version of CMITP) as an instrument of settlement policy. This will require an increase in the program's budget.

Fourth, the relationship between the Commission and private social organizations should be explicitly recognized in developing settlement programs. A coordinated approach will permit greater specialization and will conserve scarce counselling resources. (See Section V.)

Fifth, the development of specialized CMTP courses for refugees and immigrants should be investigated. These were used successfully in Montreal where refugees had a strong language capability.

III. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE GROUP SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

In the opinion of the vast majority of officials at both CICs and CECs, the private Group Sponsorship Program for Indochinese refugees was a success. Notwithstanding this widespread support, the interviews revealed a fairly consistent set of concerns. Generally, the comments provided on the sponsorship program can be grouped into five categories;

- a) The strengths and weaknesses of the program from the standpoint of refugee settlement;
 - b) An assessment of the sponsorship role and its attendant requirements;
 - c) The interface between the Commission and private sponsor groups;
 - d) Refugee mobility;
 - e) An assessment of the overall sponsorship strategy and its implications.
- a) The strengths and weaknesses of the Group Sponsorship Program from the standpoint of refugee settlement:

Support for the Group Sponsorship Program was almost unanimous amongst officials interviewed at CICs and CECs. The consensus of opinion was that government-sponsored refugees, while not at a material disadvantage, did not receive the same level of personal attention and guidance as did DC3s. (This guidance was seen as being far more important in the case of Indochinese refugees than, say, in the case of East European refugees). Sponsors, in many cases, showed refugees how to use the bus, took them to medical appointments, and instructed them on where to shop, etc... In a significant number of cases, sponsors even provided jobs. This level of personal attention could not be matched within a government program. The numbers of refugees involved did not, in most cases, allow for much more than a half-hour briefing. As a result, the responsibility for counselling and orientation services shifted onto social and immigrant agencies in the community.

The support provided by sponsors was particularly important where large families were involved. Under government sponsorship, support is generally channelled to the head of household leaving non-working dependents very much on their own. This has negative consequences insofar as the adaptation of these persons is concerned. The private Group Sponsorship Program, on the other hand, greatly facilitates the involvement of non-working refugees in the larger community. In turn, by reducing the gap that otherwise develops between working or school-going persons and those who stay at home, the overall pace of refugee adjustment is sped up.

The advantages of private Group Sponsorship were especially evident in smaller communities across the country. (Below, the tendency of the Group Sponsorship Program to disperse refugees is addressed separately.) Whereas in large cities or metropolitan areas, a number of agencies existed or formed to support the refugee movement, such was not the case in smaller centres. Furthermore, refugees sent to these place could not fall back on their own ethnic community for support. In such cases, DC3s generally found themselves at a significant advantage.

While the private Group Sponsorship Program showed itself to be a valuable tool in facilitating settlement, it was characterized by a high degree of variability in the extent and quality of support accorded to refugees. Support ranged from purely financial assistance to instances where refugees were brought into the sponsor's household and integrated into the day to day life of the sponsoring family. From the refugee's standpoint, the variability of support was itself problematic. Comparisons were made with other DC3 households and with DC1s. The refugees were puzzled by, for example, the fact that DC1s often received new furniture while DC3s were given hand-me-downs. Further, one refugee family might have a television set and various luxuries while a second group was provided with relatively spartan accommodation. In a limited number of instances (few, but mentioned in several cities), DC3s expressed a preference for DC1 status both because

they felt it to be more lucrative and, more importantly, because the financial support was offered as a matter of entitlement rather than as a welfare payment.

As well as contributing to financial conflict, the ties between sponsors and refugees generated tensions that, while not in most cases, leading to a breakdown in the relationship, posed continuing problems for refugees and sponsors alike. One of the more prevalent sources of tension arose over the question of jobs versus language training. Refugees, aware of the language training made available to DCIs, felt that they should also be afforded the opportunity for study. A significant number of sponsors, however, especially where budgets were stressed, sought to place the refugees in employment as soon as possible. Refugees were encouraged to take courses in the evening thus allowing the sponsor to reduce the level of financial support.

Another problem centred on religious instruction. Given that the DC3 movement was almost entirely church supported, there was a certain inevitability about this course of events. Sponsors sought to persuade the refugees to attend particular denominational services and refugees, though reluctant, felt duty-bound to accept.

To a great extent, these problems derived from overly paternalistic sponsorship relations. A significant number of sponsors sought to intervene in every aspect of the refugees' lives - from budgets and the allocation of expenditures, including the selection of housing that was often inappropriate to the refugee's financial situation, to religious attendance and the imposition of Canadian norms. This was particularly vexing to refugees situated in remote communities. Paradoxically, a greater degree of intervention by the sponsor did not, in the opinion of Commission staff, lead to a more rapid integration of refugees. Instead, dependencies were created which interfered with the smooth dissolution of the sponsorship relation. These problems will be analyzed below in assessing the private sponsorship program from the sponsor's point of view.

- b) An assessment of the sponsorship role and its attendant requirements:

The private Group Sponsorship Program provides a vehicle by which groups of Canadians can get together to sponsor refugees. The model pre-supposed that the demands, both financial and personal imposed by the sponsorship relation, would be overly burdensome unless shared among a minimum of five persons. This view of sponsorship has proved doubly wrong.

Many of the officials interviewed described a system whereby the financial resources were raised by an entire church congregation which then organized itself into one or several sponsoring groups. While these groups initially conformed to the minimum requirement of at least five persons, the level of commitment was not maintained for long. Similar experiences were recorded by groups where the members themselves provided the necessary financial support. After several months, the responsibility for contact with the refugees fell on the shoulders of two or three committed individuals. It is especially noteworthy in this regard that few breakdowns occurred as a result of financial problems. Several CIC officials indicated that in future counselling sessions they intended to place more stress on the need for continuing human support and less emphasis on financial matters.

A second aspect of the sponsorship model that was not verified in practice concerned the distinction between ad hoc and constituent groups. At the national level, the constituent arrangement whereby parent organizations, such as the Mennonite Central Committee, assume financial responsibility in the event of a sponsorship breakdown was seen as a device whereby local groups were relieved of the onerous legal obligation to maintain support. In practice, sponsors saw the parent organizations as a means by which to escape the documentation and financial declarations that accompany ad hoc sponsorship. Further, it did not appear that umbrella organizations, with the possible exception of the Mennonites, conferred special advantages on the local groups. In the case of the Mennonite Central Committee, a considerable amount of background and support materials was disseminated, possibly contributing to an easier adjustment by the sponsors.

Generally, sponsors were not adequately prepared for the task that awaited them. While initial problems were ameliorated where groups were well-organized, the range of problems confronting sponsors was staggering. The initial guidelines that were disseminated proved inaccurate and did not adequately counsel sponsors in regard to their financial burden and major demands such as dental work. More generally, sponsors experienced enormous difficulties in communicating with the refugees and orienting them to a totally different environment.

In many instances, sponsors felt that they had been left to flounder by both federal and provincial agencies. The vacuum in which sponsors operated led to highly variable settlement strategies and a great many errors. Groups were, in some cases, too paternalistic and, in others, too lenient. Correspondingly, refugees became totally dependent on the sponsor or were cast loose without support. A key mistake committed by many sponsors was in initially securing overly lavish accommodation for the refugees. At the end of the sponsorship period, these refugees found they could not maintain their dwellings and were forced to relocate.

One of the principal factors that contributed to the sponsors' malaise lay in the paucity of special services outside the major metropolitan areas. Faced by psychological (mostly depression) and family problems, sponsors found they had nowhere to turn for advice.

The lack of preparation by sponsors was to a certain extent alleviated by access to social agencies. In some cases, these organizations provided a means by which information and experiences could be shared. Even more successful was the use of a "host family" system in London as a practical measure by which sponsors could gain hands-on experience in settling refugees. Under this scheme, potential sponsors were encouraged to informally provide orientation services to government sponsored DCIs. This allowed the sponsor to

develop an appreciation of the problems that would materialize upon arrival of the refugee group for whom they would be responsible. It also put the sponsors in touch with the public and private resources available to support their group.

Despite the problems that were encountered, the incidence of breakdown was extremely low. At the very least, this suggests that the current model is workable within certain parameters.

- c) The interface between the Commission and private sponsor groups:

The responsibility for counselling sponsors and monitoring the sponsor-refugee relationship, by and large, fell on the shoulders of the CICs. Some regional differences were, however, observed. In Quebec and to a lesser extent in Manitoba, monitoring is carried out by the Refugee Liaison Officers. These are attached to the CICs and the Regional Settlement Office respectively. (The community-liaison responsibilities of the RLOs will be discussed in the section dealing with social agencies.)

The involvement of the CICs in implementing the sponsorship program went well beyond the traditional role assumed by Immigration Officers. These duties have, in the past, centred on processing immigrant applications and ensuring compliance with the Immigration Act and Regulations. Accordingly, the degree to which the CIC interacted with the community at large was limited. Settlement functions and services have been concentrated within the employment side of the Commission.

The private Group Sponsorship Program represented a substantial departure from the status quo. The responsibility of Immigration Officers under the Program went well beyond the processing of sponsor applications. Included in the duties were the counselling of sponsors regarding the elements of a successful settlement strategy and subsequent trouble shooting during the monitoring phase. To carry out this function, however, required some knowledge of settlement policy and the availability of services both in the Commission and in the community at large. Many officials did not feel competent to undertake this task.

While Immigration Officers consistently identified the need for more accurate, nitty-gritty information to be made available to sponsors at the initial counselling session, they were not, at least in the beginning, provided with this type of resource material. In the view of officials, both written and audio-visual material depicting sponsorship requirements should have been available at the outset.

Coupled with their lack of involvement in the settlement process and consequent inability to identify the services - even those within the Commission - that were available to sponsors, Immigration Officials suffered a loss of credibility in the eyes of sponsors.

Similar difficulties were experienced by Immigration Officers in carrying out their field work. Confronted by sponsors and refugees in difficulty or by problems in refugee-sponsor relations, the monitoring officer often lacked the experience to propose remedial action. This is not to say that CIC counsellors were totally ineffective or unable to help. Rather, their experience and knowledge were developed under fire.

The most commonly cited need by Immigration Officers was for specialized training that would allow them to carry out their responsibilities under the Sponsorship Program. This training, to be effective, should concentrate on counselling to both sponsors and refugees.

To a certain extent, the experience developed by Immigration Officers in the course of their monitoring provided insights that could be applied in counselling sponsors. In Quebec, and to a lesser extent in Manitoba where the CIC were involved in some monitoring, this learning process was truncated, however, and assumed by the RLOs. As a result, the experience gleaned in monitoring was not directly converted into a richer base from which to counsel prospective sponsors. This is aggravated by the finding that the links between RLOs and Immigration Officers were either tenuous or non-existent. The import of this situation is discussed in the section dealing with coordination.

d) Refugee mobility:

Historically, immigrants to Canada have clustered in major metropolitan areas. The resulting concentration of visible minorities has heightened inter-group conflicts and raised the spectre of urban ghettos. In order to minimize this phenomenon, the assignment of Indochinese refugees to various locations was based on a notional view of each community's absorptive capacity. While this did, in the initial stages, conform to the objective of dispersion, as the flow increased, the bulk of the settlement effort again fell on the larger centres. In Manitoba, for example, the entire DC1 surplus, above the planned allocation, was assigned to Winnipeg thus belying the distributive objective.

In contrast to the DC1s, a more pronounced dispersion of refugees was achieved under the Sponsorship Program. The massive support of the churches catalyzed communities across the country into sponsoring refugees. Whether or not this was an intended effect of the sponsorship program is a moot point. What is important is the effect. Largely as a result of the Private Sponsorship Program, refugees have been distributed in a manner that is significantly different from the prevailing pattern of earlier immigration. Both the urban-rural as well as the provincial distribution has been affected. The Maritimes, for example, an area that has received proportionately little immigration over the past decade has absorbed a substantial number of refugees.

In analyzing the effects of this dispersion, several critical questions must be examined: First, is the initial distribution of refugees stable and if not, what forces account for the spatial collapse? Second, and closely related, what are the advantages and disadvantages to the refugees? Third, what are the implications for the communities in which the refugees are domiciled?

It would be difficult, at least for the present, to compare the mobility of refugees generally with that of preceding immigrant groups. Nor is it safe on the basis of impressionistic reporting to draw conclusions regarding the stability of DC1 and DC3 populations. Within the first year especially, various artificial forces, not necessarily symmetric, act to depress the mobility of refugees. Chief

among those affecting the DC1 population, is the requirement that refugees remain in the community of first destination in order to receive language training and adjustment assistance. On the DC3 side, refugees are obviously dependent on the support of their sponsors during their first year in Canada.

Despite these ties, there is evidence that a substantial degree of mobility has already taken place and that the pace of these moves is increasing, particularly among refugees who have completed their language courses or whose sponsorship period has drawn to a close. Both push and pull factors account for this trend.

Probably the major factor underlying the moves by Indochinese is the desire to relocate near friends and family. Since most refugees have been located in the major urban centres, these locales continue to exert the largest draw. Analyzed in terms of stability, it can be reasonably inferred that the rate of movement will increase with each successive wave of moves.

A second, closely associated factor underlying the concentration of refugees in larger centres concerns the availability of special services, cultural goods and jobs. Undeniably, the major urban areas provide the richest job markets and contain the bulk of our social agencies providing social and cultural services not available in remote or even small urban communities. A similar paucity of government services also occurs in the smaller centres. In Quebec, for example, the recent decision to concentrate language training in the COFI institutes and to cut support for courses offered by local school boards has meant that only three urban centres will continue to provide refugees with language training in their community of initial destination.

The emerging relocation trend raises a number of policy issues whose impact has not been fully considered by the Commission:

The first question is to what extent the more rapid integration achieved by the private sponsorship program moderates the tendency to concentration. The impressionistic evidence by CEIC officials suggests that this is indeed the case.

Second, there is evidence that occupational matching between refugees and the demands of the local labour market can be improved. CEC counsellors were generally of the opinion that skills identified by the refugees were not consistent with Canadian job requirements. Agricultural workers, for example, had no knowledge of the specialized machinery used on domestic farms. In fact, there is some question of the extent to which local labour market information entered into the estimates of absorptive capacity.

Third, it is clear from the interviews that a specialized social infrastructure of the type that exists in, say, Toronto or Vancouver does not exist in communities like Terrace or Red Deer. To the extent that such an infrastructure retards the tendency by refugees to relocate, it becomes a policy question as to whether or not the costs of providing the necessary social support are consistent with program objectives. There is, in any event, a case to be made for strengthening the Commission's support for social programming and the need for a refugee policy as distinct from an immigration policy.

A similar argument can be made for specialized vocational training under, say, CMTF or CMITP. Refugees, if they are to be encouraged to remain in smaller communities, will have to be equipped with the skills that give them access to the local labour market. There is at present, in the eyes of the refugees, a considerable degree of under-employment. The provision for skill courses will, however, require additional resources and a redeployment of resources to reflect the novel distribution of refugees.

The latter two points must be considered in light of the Commission's settlement objectives and Canada's declared rationale for admitting refugees. The present policy of dispersion (even if implicit) while consistent with some immigration objectives is counter-productive for refugees in that it does not achieve the maximum gains per "settlement" dollar.

- e) An assessment of the overall sponsorship strategy and its implications:

Taken as a whole, the private Group Sponsorship Program for Indochinese refugees appears to have been successful. Refugees benefitted from the generosity of their sponsors and thousands of Canadians enriched their lives through association with the refugees. As with any social experiment, however, especially one of such vast proportions, there is a need for fine tuning.

The interviews with Commission officials suggest that considerably more emphasis should be placed on the human, as opposed to financial, aspects of sponsorship. Sponsors and refugees need to develop a clear initial understanding of their roles if the tension that characterized a significant number of relationships is to be eliminated. Similarly, a more realistic appreciation of the sponsorship process would eliminate some of the excesses that led to refugee complaints of uneven treatment.

On the Commission side, there is a corresponding need for staff training and for additional resource to aid in the counselling process. There is also a need for improved labour market information and a better matching between refugee skills and local labour market requirements. A closer occupational match would facilitate a more rapid integration of refugees.

Looking to the longer term, the Commission will have to rethink its current strategy for settling refugees. There are indications that refugees will, in the near future, require skill training and social supports that are not presently available, especially in smaller communities. The increasing volume of moves by refugees away from smaller communities is indicative of this shortfall in programming. The resource implications occasioned by meeting these needs should be examined and the Commission's settlement objectives clarified.

An important consideration in developing a coherent refugee strategy will be the future role of the Sponsorship Program. Preliminary estimates by the Commission employed target projections of as many as five thousand refugees to be brought in annually under the Program. This does not appear realistic in light of current trends. While sponsor groups have, in a substantial number of cases, provided additional support for the relatives of refugees already under their care, new sponsor applications have fallen drastically. The falloff suggests that the massive support for Indochinese was, to a great extent, media driven and is not available for further exploitation. Alternate sponsor arrangements, particularly in financing refugee settlement, may be required. The current host or friendship family system may provide a guide for future sponsorship models.

IV. FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Until recently, about seventy per cent of the immigration to Canada was oriented to meeting the needs of the domestic labour market. The past five years has seen a reversal of this trend with the bulk of immigrants falling into the family and assisted classes. This tilt towards family class entrants has raised the demand for settlement services considerably.

To a large extent, the heavy volume of refugee admissions has contributed to the recent skewing of the immigrant population. In light of the emphasis placed by the Dodge Task Force on economic factors as a prime determinant of admission to Canada, it is especially important to anticipate the volume of immigration from Indochina.

Currently, applications by refugees seeking to sponsor relatives constitute a significant portion of the on-going workload associated with the Indochinese movement. The process is complicated by the need to verify family trees as a great many refugees created artificial families in order to take advantage of the Canadian sponsorship program. Although refugees, in some cases, seek to have their relatives admitted as DC1s or DC3s, a substantial number are prepared to undertake the sponsorship themselves. Increasingly, refugees are able to meet the requirements of sponsorship without relying on outside assistance or, where this is not possible, to form local groups and thus distribute the financial burden.

Estimates provided by CIC officials have placed the "seeding" ratio in a range extending from 1:1 up to 1:5 with most of the estimates concentrated at the lower end (that is one refugee would bring in one other family member). While the ultimate volume of admissions depends on the political situation abroad, the potential for a large secondary movement clearly exists.

V. THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES:

Because the act of settlement touches on almost every aspect of life, a complete settlement strategy cuts across the mandate of individual agencies and involves the coordination of services at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government as well as services provided by social and voluntary agencies. Despite this overlap in responsibilities, the precise roles of the various actors are not defined in an orderly fashion and agencies operate both in concert and in competition with the Commission. The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that the Commission does not have well articulated settlement objectives or even a clearly delineated target population for its programs.

The confusion that characterizes the settlement field manifests itself at several levels:

- (a) Coordination problems within the Commission;
- (b) Coordination problems with other levels of government;
- (c) Coordination with social and voluntary agencies;

a) Coordination problems within the Commission:

Many of the problems that plagued the Commission can be attributed to the sheer volume of refugees. Included in this set of difficulties are the timing of arrivals, last minute notifications, a lack of appropriate counselling material and the failure to make full use of labour market information in assigning DCIs to their destinations. By and large, these problems would arise in any organization, especially one so large as the Commission. More troubling and considerably more interesting from an evaluation point of view are systemic disorders.

Although the various immigration programs can be grouped conceptually, they are delivered by two distinctly separate structures within the Commission. This division includes the private Group

Sponsorship Program which is administered by Canada Immigration Centres.

The division of responsibility for settlement programs has imposed a schizophrenic mode of operation on the Commission. Although immigration policy is centrally determined by the Immigration and Demographic Policy Division, settlement services are delivered by the CECs. The introduction of the private Group Sponsorship Program radically changed this picture and placed Immigration Centres squarely in the settlement field.

While the assignment of responsibility for the Group Sponsorship Program to CICs relieved the employment centres of an additional burden, it resulted in a different type of organizational stress. In order to effectively carry out their new mandate, immigration centres were required to counsel sponsors and act as trouble shooters in the event of sponsor-refugee difficulties. These duties, in turn, required familiarity with the complex mix of private and public settlement activities. In many cases, the resulting demands exceeded the capabilities of Immigration Officers and limited their usefulness to sponsors and refugees alike.

In large measure, the problems experienced by CICs could have been avoided by forging stronger links at the working level with the employment side of the Commission, however, in a significant number of cases, this did not materialize. Instead, information was exchanged at the regional level involving the Chief of Settlement. This did not always prove adequate as expertise on one side of the Commission was not channelled to the other side.

The introduction of the RLO function was, to a certain extent, seen as a device for bridging the gap between CICs and CECs as well as a means by which immigration centres could avail themselves of private support. British Columbia and, to a lesser extent, Ontario benefitted from this initiative - the RLO attached to the CIC in Kelowna, for example, maintained close contact with the CECs and was instrumental in developing a number of organizations that provided services to both

refugees and sponsors. In particular, the organizations helped DC1 clients by providing support services not otherwise available. Especially noteworthy was the emphasis on developing counselling skills among lay workers and the refugees themselves.

A less successful deployment of RLOs was observed in Quebec. The RLOs were again attached to the CICs but were responsible only for monitoring sponsorship arrangements. As a result, the information gleaned from the interviews was not fed back to officers engaged in counselling and reinforced the lack of involvement by CICs in the settlement field. This arrangement also contributed to, and further distorted, the existing imbalance in the provision of orientation services to DC3s and DC1s.

In Manitoba, where RLOs reported to the Chief of settlement, similar problems developed. In particular, there was an apparent lack of contact between RLOs and the field.

Unless the links between CICs and CECs are considerably strengthened at all levels within the Commission, there does not appear to be a strong rationale for continuing the present division of responsibility for refugee settlement. Indeed, a strong case can be made for transferring the private Group Sponsorship Program from the immigration to the employment side of the Commission. This is especially so where specialized immigrant reception centres are in place. The addition of an RLO function, attached to the CECs, would allow the Commission to further rationalize its settlement activities with the private sector and correct the current shortfall in orientation services for DC1 clients.

b) Coordination problems with other levels of government:

Responsibility for settlement is vested in a wide number of public agencies. At the federal level the chief actors are the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission and the Department of the Secretary of State while, at the provincial level, departments of labour, human resources, citizenship and education are frequently involved. In addition, programs from such diverse sources as National Health and Welfare Canada (NH&W) and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) are implicated. In such a complex environment, tension, duplication of service and a lack of coordination are virtually inevitable.

Four main problems in the public field were identified in the course of the interviews.

- 1) Coordination problems with NH&W over the transfer, availability and timeliness of medical information was the most frequently identified problem. Counsellors and sponsor groups needed medical records to establish whether or not the refugees required treatment or if they could be placed in particular jobs, for example, the food industry. Frequently, the transfer of these records lagged far behind the physical transfer of the refugee population and, in some provinces, led to provincial duplication of the federal efforts. Closer coordination between the Commission and NH&W would have ameliorated this difficulty.
- 2) The special situation in Quebec led to continuing tension between the Commission and the Quebec Ministry of Immigration. This has contributed to diminished control over service provided by private social organizations in receipt of ISAP funds. An evaluation of ISAP effectiveness is warranted along with the imposition of more detailed accountability criteria.

In addition to competition over the control of federal settlement expenditures, the provincial decision to curtail language training in all but three COFI institutions implies that refugees in Quebec will receive highly uneven treatment. This decision will require a review of the Commission's demographic policies and the distribution of DCIs in Quebec.

- 3) The federal restrictions on AAP and provincial welfare policies create a situation whereby refugees can be left without support. This occurs where a destitute refugee moves from his initial destination or in the event that a refugee loses his job within a year of arriving in Canada. In both instances, a programming vacuum exists with the federal and provincial governments disavowing responsibility. In practice, the gap has been filled by stretching the AAP funding criteria, however, some type of federal-provincial accord is required to avoid the dilemma and allow refugees to escape intolerable situations.
- 4) The Department of the Secretary of State and the Employment and Immigration Commission are jointly involved in funding private social organizations and in securing language training. While a certain amount of coordination exists at a field level, the distinctions are blurred by such factors as the newly introduced RLO function. In Manitoba, for example, it was apparent that the two agencies overlapped and that the Commission mounted activities in areas where the Department of the Secretary of State did not appear to exercise its mandate. A further source of confusion concerns the extension of ISAP services to immigrants in their first three years in Canada.

Measures to rationalize federal adjustment programs should be undertaken by the two agencies.

c) Coordination with social and voluntary agencies:

The services provided by social and voluntary organizations included reception, translation, orientation, counselling and referral to other agencies. In Kamloops, for example, the Vietnamese Centre had paid staff to help in finding accommodation and furniture; in Sudbury, volunteers escorted refugees to jobs. Not only did the various social agencies provide CECs and CICs with assistance, in many cases, they carried the bulk of the settlement effort.

In view of their contribution to settlement, a separate study has been commissioned of voluntary and social organizations. It is, nevertheless, important to determine the relationship of these agencies to the Commission. Several factors are important in this regard:

First, without the support of social organizations, CECs and CICs would not have been able to carry out their functions as effectively. The importance of private sector support was stressed in virtually every interview, particularly by those CECs who considered their primary mandate to be in the employment field. In addition to the employment and immigration centres, sponsor groups also relied heavily on these organizations to provide support and a forum in which to exchange views.

Second, a certain amount of tension was evident between the Commission and private agencies in the provision of services that were traditionally deemed to fall in the Commission's primary area of responsibility, especially jobs. Generally, counsellors felt that the private organizations did not place sufficient emphasis on occupational matching and sought to make placements at any cost, regardless of whether or not the work was seasonal or part-time. This view was expressed strongly in Toronto with regard to Operation Lifeline.

Third, the Commission's shift from a passive to a pro-active stance in the development of social organizations raises the question of an appropriate division of responsibility. This question derives its legitimacy from the fact that, to a certain extent, the activities of the Commission and those of private organizations are

substitutable. Accordingly, it becomes important to determine which of the two alternate courses - direct service or support of private institutions - is more cost effective.

While no ready consensus emerged from the interviews, in a majority of cases, counsellors, especially in the CICs, were inclined towards the provision of orientation and cultural services by private, social institutions. The CECs and CICs, in their opinion, lacked the resources, expertise and flexibility required to undertake the "complete" range of settlement activities. In most cases, however, it was felt that the traditional undertakings of the Commission, job placement and employment counselling of refugees should be retained.

In a minority of cases, interviewees advanced the position that the Commission should expand its settlement activities because it provided a higher and more consistent level of service. Augmented settlement programs were seen as a device whereby the government could redefine its role to include a more human face.

The emergence of these contrasting positions suggests that careful attention should be given to mixed strategies such as the host or friendship family system that was particularly effective in both Kelowna and London. The integration of voluntary and government initiatives afforded by these programs provided refugees with support that was not otherwise available to DCIs while retaining the advantages of direct government involvement to ensure uniform standards of service.

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