

DEC 9 1975



Manpower and Immigration

Main-d'oeuvre et Immigration

Your file

Votre référence

Our file

Notre référence

5850-3-525

OTTAWA, Ontario.  
K1A 0J9.

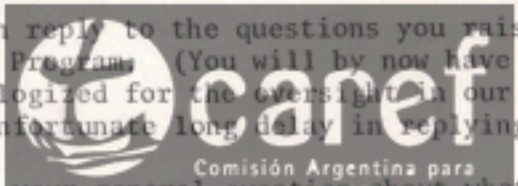
October 21, 1975.

Reverend T.E. Floyd Honey,  
General Secretary,  
Canadian Council of Churches,  
40 St. Clair Avenue East,  
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Reverend Honey:

Re: Chileans in Argentina

This is in reply to the questions you raised about the Special Chilean Immigration Program. (You will by now have received my interim note in which I apologized for the oversight in our Departmental records which led to this unfortunate long delay in replying.)



To answer your general question about what the Special Program means I will refer to the statement made in the House of Commons by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, the Hon. Robert Andras, on November 29, 1973 to launch the Program. He said:

"...many of the people caught up in the situation have not been seeking new homes to which to immigrate but rather a temporary safe haven in another country. From the outset, we have tried to assist those persons who want to make their homes in Canada. We are accordingly extending our refugee program to people to whom humanitarian considerations apply."

He went on to say:

"For those people who wish to settle in Canada as the result of the coup, the provisions of Canada's ongoing refugee program will be applied. These include:

- Relaxed selection criteria.
- Medical and background checks will be carried out.

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- Accelerated immigration processing.
- Language training and job placement services.
- Assistance to cover transportation costs.
- Financial assistance to provide for accommodation, winter clothing and other such special support necessary to facilitate early establishment.

This is comparable with the approach taken to past special movements to Canada."

The substance of this statement was subsequently issued in a press release.

The Government's policy was reiterated in the Minister's reply, dated November 22, to the brief entitled "Canadian Policy Toward Chile" presented by you and your associates on October 9, 1974. Items one and 11 are particularly germane in this context.

As you know there have also been several meetings between representatives of the Inter-Church Committee on Chile and officials of the Department. Our records indicate that in those meetings there was extensive discussion on the definition of refugees, on selection criteria for refugees, and on procedures for processing applications from Chilean refugees. Every effort has been made to apply the Government's stated policy.

I wish to re-emphasize in this context that any Chilean in Argentina or Peru who applies to the Embassy in Buenos Aires for immigration to Canada and who is documented as a refugee by the UNHCR or who otherwise claims to be a refugee is, without exception, given a personal interview before a decision is taken about whether he meets the criteria under the terms of the Special Program. Adolfo Perez Esquivel's remarks, in his letter of May 26, 1975, concerning the application of the point system and the alleged advantage of professionals over unskilled applicants are clearly based on a misapprehension; such preference never applies to refugees applying under the Special Chilean program. Refugee applicants are not assessed in the same way as "ordinary" applicants for immigration to Canada.

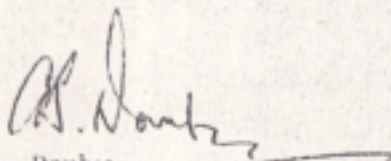
I might add that at present there is no backlog of refugee applicants awaiting interview in Buenos Aires. Some 20 cases which have been pending interview for a few weeks in Peru are scheduled to be seen this week.

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I hope that this information, though belated, serves to clarify any uncertainty you may still have with regard to the Government's policy and the Department's procedures as they apply to Chilean refugees in Argentina.

Yours sincerely,



C.B. Danby,  
Assistant Director General,  
Foreign Service.

