

# DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

August 1993



(INTERCEDE)

## A Blow from the Federal Government

### **KIM CAMPBELL SHIFTS IMMIGRATION TO MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY**

Domestic workers and caregivers in the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) will now fall under a ministry in charge of criminal matters!

INTERCEDE members expressed disgust and dismay at this move by Canada's first woman Prime Minister, Kim Campbell, who has shifted most of immigration responsibilities to the Ministry of Public Security.

As a result of her decision to reorganize the federal government, the Canada Employment and Immigration ministry no longer exists. The Ministry of Public Security will take over policy, selection and enforcement related to immigration.

It was chilling news for women in the LCP who, because of the insecurity of their status during their first three to five years in Canada, always live in fear or dread of immigration authorities.

"It's like we are under suspicion of doing something wrong...but we just came to earn a living. Isn't that why we got admitted, because they need us to do live-in work?" one woman asked.

"It makes us feel more insecure!" - was an ironic comment from another.

### **What's in a name? Plenty!**

The Minister of Public Security, Doug Lewis, is responsible for the RCMP, criminal investigations, prisons and parole - mainly law enforcement and crime prevention.

Putting immigration policy in his hands "is an anti-immigrant move" according to the Canadian Council for Refugees, an organization of 130 groups, because it gives the message that immigrants or refugees are threats to public security.

*Cont'd Page 2 - Immigration Shifts*

## An Almost-Blow from the province

### **NDP WILL NOT END OHIP FOR LCP WORKERS, REFUGEES**

Shock waves in the immigrant and refugee communities followed the announcement by the Ontario Minister of Health, Ruth Grier, that temporary residents of the province could lose universal health coverage!

But in a meeting of Premier Bob Rae's cabinet to discuss the plan, it was decided that there would be no loss of OHIP coverage for refugees and temporary workers, including domestic and caregiver workers under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP).

In a telephone call to INTERCEDE, Marie Lorenzo, Policy Assistant to Minister Grier, assured that OHIP will continue covering "foreign workers", convention refugees and refugee claimants but that meanwhile, negotiations will be pursued with the Federal Government to take up health coverage for claimants.

"It would have been inexcusable for the NDP government to penalize the most vulnerable residents and workers in the province in order to reduce the health care budget!" said INTERCEDE president, Joan Grant-Cummings. Cummings is the executive director of Women's Health in Women's Hands, a community-based health organization that will be hit by the province's social contract provisions.

Premier Bob Rae's cabinet was considering a "tough" plan to require about 167,000 residents who are on temporary immigration status to pay for medical care.

Members and clients of INTERCEDE, their relatives and friends kept the phones busy at INTERCEDE's office inquiring about the news of Grier's announcement, expressing their disbelief and concern.

In a letter to Minister Grier, INTERCEDE had objected to eliminating OHIP coverage for 43,800 temporary workers, 93,000 refugees, 20,000 foreign students and 9,800 Minister's Permit holders residing in the province.

*Cont'd Page 2 - OHIP*

The monthly meeting will be on Sunday, August 8, 1993 at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street corner Spadina, from 3-5 p.m.

2-3 p.m. New Member Applications and Renewals. Members with ID numbers 92-1455 to 92-1532 must renew or be dropped from membership list.

3-5 p.m. **TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH - REDUCING STRESS**  
Speaker: Simone Hammond, Health Education Coordinator, Planned Parenthood

CLASP Legal Clinic will be open.

### From Page 1 - Immigration Shifts

"Prime Minister Kim Campbell thinks immigrants are in the same league as convicted criminals and potential troublemakers from whom the nation needs protection", the Toronto Star wrote in its editorial.

The Liberal Party's Immigration critic, Warren Allmand, "condemned" Campbell's decision that, he said, was made with no consultation nor proper planning, and that will "not result in greater efficiency nor saving".

### Negative images

Millions of migrants roam the world in search of a better life; domestic workers, like most immigrants in Canada, left their country because of economic and social devastation caused by unequal economic relations among countries. Refugees flee for their lives from wars and political turmoil that directly result from these economic and social imbalances.

However, there are many incorrect and racist images of immigrants and refugees. They are made scapegoats during hard economic times, when myths abound like "immigrants take away jobs" from "Canadians", where "immigrants" are usually pictured as people of colour, and "Canadians" as whites.

Making immigration the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Security aggravates false images of immigrants and refugees as terrorists, criminals and cheaters of the system.

No matter what the justification, by transferring immigration to Public Security, the message that Kim Campbell sends to Canadians is a negative image of immigrants, refugees, and women working under the Live-in Caregiver Program.

### From Page 1 - OHIP

"Eliminating OHIP will further aggravate the difficult conditions of life and work that foreign women are experiencing as live-in domestics and caregivers under the LCP," the letter said.

LCP is the Live-in Caregiver Program devised by the federal immigration ministry to meet the high demand in Canada for foreign women who will provide a combination of live-in housework and caregiving services.

More than 61 per cent of LCP applicants wind up in Ontario every year. The program allows these women to apply for permanent residence within Canada after they have completed 24 months of working as live-in nannies and caregivers.

But it has usually taken them an average of five years from their arrival before they become permanent residents. Because the LCP keeps domestic and caregiver workers on temporary status for that long, "eliminating access to universal health care services would penalize them through no fault of their own," the letter added.

Based on the number of LCP workers entering Canada yearly since 1989, INTERCEDE's rough estimate is that up to 18,300 domestic and caregiver workers may currently be temporary residents of Ontario. "These are the women who will have no medical coverage under OHIP if your Ministry's proposal is passed," the letter said.

Asking the Minister's assurance that OHIP coverage will continue for temporary workers in the LCP,

We wish to thank the Employment and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Secretary of State; Multiculturalism and Citizenship; Ontario Ministry of Citizenship; Ontario Women's Directorate; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); and the City of Toronto Grants Review Board for their continuing support.

**DID YOU CHANGE ADDRESS?**  
Please inform us by phone or mail so that you can continue getting your newsletter and we don't waste up to \$43 in postage expenses for returned mail!

**TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS (Does not apply to current members)**  
INTERESTED TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER? SEND THE FORM BELOW WITH PAYMENT.  
IF NO RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION BY END OF AUGUST, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

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MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

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Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$25.00

INTERCEDE rejected any justification for a "change in health policy that would penalize the most powerless people living in Ontario."

For now, LCP workers in Ontario can breathe a sigh of relief because they will continue to have access to health care services.

### **NEW REGULATIONS WILL KEEP OUT ACCUSED**

Loida (not her real name) was accused by her employer of stealing an old TV set. She still has to go to court to prove that the TV was a "gift" given her when her employers bought a new one.

Why did her employers do this? Because Loida could no longer tolerate working up to 15 hours a day and she decided to leave.

But even if Loida is innocent, immigration regulations being proposed to take effect this summer would not admit her for landed status.

In response to these proposed regulations, the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL), National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (NOIVIMC) and INTERCEDE jointly made a submission to Immigration.

In their submission, they noted that Canada's Immigration Act and the new regulations continue the bias against women who universally have less access to training, education, and health services.

For example the greater emphasis on language and education qualifications will "disadvantage female immigrants disproportionately."

**JOIN INTERCEDE TRIP TO NIAGARA FALLS**  
**Saturday, August 14, 1993**  
**9:30 am - 6:00 pm**  
Register and Pay on Aug 8 Monthly Meeting  
For more information call 324-8751  
INTERCEDE Members only \$10 - Show ID

**ORIENTATION FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS  
SPECIALLY NEWCOMERS**  
Live-In Caregiver Program and Labour Protection  
**Sunday, August 22, 1993**  
**10 am to 4:30 pm**  
Free Lunch provided,  
Reserve your space at monthly meeting  
or call 324-8751 to confirm place of meeting

In addition, how educational accreditation will be done is unclear. How ability to speak, write and read French or English will be assessed is also unclear and may give too much discretionary power to an immigration officer.

The submission "strongly objected to the regulations which would exclude people who are facing criminal charge" from being processed for landing.

It said: "In our experience, domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to false accusations from disgruntled employers where the domestic workers have sought to enforce their rights under employment standards legislations."

The regulations will discourage domestic workers from insisting on their lawful rights. But worse, they will give unscrupulous employers another weapon with which to threaten and exploit domestic workers.

### **NOTICE TO ALL INTERCEDE MEMBERS**

**Annual General Meeting**  
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1993**

Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street, corner Spadina

2-3 p.m.	Registration
3-4 p.m.	Business Meeting
4-5 p.m.	Program
	<b>Guest Speaker:</b>
	<b>Sunera Thobani, President</b>
	<b>National Action Committee on</b>
	<b>the Status of Women (NAC)</b>
5-6 p.m.	Refreshments

All with valid membership to July 1993 are qualified to vote upon presentation of INTERCEDE membership ID.

## MARK YOUR INTERCEDE CALENDAR

### Chinese Group Meeting

English Class with Rebecca Chong  
Sunday, August 15, 1993  
3 - 5 p.m.  
in Scarborough  
Call 324-8751 for address

### Caribbean Domestic Workers Meeting

Sunday, August 15, 1993  
3-5 p.m.  
Intercede Office  
Call Carol, 324-8751

### Pilipinas Group Meeting

Increasing Our Capacity to Enforce  
Workers' Rights  
Sunday, September 19, 1993  
12 noon - 3 p.m.  
Cecil Community Centre (Basement)  
58 Cecil Street  
Call 324-8751

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council	345-9312
Employment Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	323-9986
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933
OHIP	Toronto 482-1111
	Scarborough 1-800-263-3814
	Mississauga 275-2730
Ontario Human Rights Commission	326-9511
Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Workers' Compensation	927-9555
Revenue Canada (taxation)	869-1500

Toronto Rape Crisis Center (24 Hr line) 597-8808  
Assaulted Help Line 863-0511

### EMERGENCY HOUSING

Nellie's Hostel 461-1084  
Evangeline's 762-9636

### LEGAL SERVICES

Parkdale Community Legal Services 531-2411  
CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic 736-5029  
Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Serv. 924-4244  
Metro Tor. Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic 971-9674  
Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic 971-8832

### DOMESTICS' CROSS CULTURAL NEWS

#### c/o INTERCEDE

489 College Street, Suite 402  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6G 1A5

FIRST CLASS

### STAFF NOTES

by Columbia Tarape-Diaz

### Warning...

If you are house-sitting this summer and are left in charge while your employers are vacationing, follow the tips below:

- keep the lights on specially in the back of the house and other secluded areas;
- if there is an alarm system, keep it turned on;
- double-check basement windows, be sure they are securely locked;
- double-lock front and back doors;
- report to Police any unusual occurrences, strangers prowling in the vicinity;
- don't let too many people know that your employers are away.

### Thank you...

Carol and Mahmoud Mansour for your very generous donation to INTERCEDE.

### Clients wrote us...

"Thank you very much for the help you extended to me. I got the money my employer owed through the Ministry of Labour. More power to INTERCEDE and staff!" - Ella Mae

"Thank you not just once or twice but Thanks a Million" - Victoria

"Your support and assistance is highly appreciated. Thanks a lot." - Luz

### INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ont.  
Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm  
Tel: (416) 324-8751 Fax: (416) 324-8790

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