

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for ~~Domestic~~ Workers' Rights

May 1991

INTERCEDE)

McDougall no longer Immigration Minister

More Delay for Recommendations To Improve FDM?

Minister Barbara McDougall has been transferred out of the Employment and Immigration ministry with no decisions announced regarding the recommendations made by INTERCEDE and other groups to change and improve the Foreign Domestic Movement program (FDM).

The recent Mulroney cabinet reshuffle may cause further delays and set back INTERCEDE's effort to improve conditions for foreign domestic workers in Canada.

INTERCEDE submitted its recommendations to Minister McDougall in December 1989 seeking, among others, to make the live-in requirement an option, to eliminate onerous criteria for permanent residence and to admit foreign domestic workers as landed immigrants to this country.

A petition, postcard and letter-writing campaign launched by INTERCEDE in 1990 was capped by a dialogue held with Minister McDougall last October during which she

assured that her ministry's review of the FDM would soon lead to improvements in the program.

INTERCEDE and other advocates for domestic workers have been anticipating an announcement from her office but none came until her transfer to the Ministry of External Affairs recently.

Minister Bernard Valcourt has replaced McDougall as head of Employment and Immigration from his former post as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Pura Velasco, current INTERCEDE President, expressed the hope that the transfer of McDougall out of Immigration and the appointment of a new minister will not be used to justify further delays in responding to INTERCEDE's recommendations. "We want the new Minister of Immigration to know that we have waited too long already," she said, "and our hope is flickering that the Mulroney government will do justice by our demands."

***Come to INTERCEDE monthly meeting on Sunday, May 5, 1991
from 3:00-5:00 p.m. at the Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street
(near corner Spadina) for a theatrical presentation about anti-racism by***

The Company of Sirens:

"No Problems Here"

***There will be CLASP Legal Clinic. Also available is Career/Job Search
Counselling and help in resume preparation. Call INTERCEDE office for
appointment. Applicants for membership or renewal must come at 2 p.m.;
we do not accept applications by mail.***

New Immigration Mail-in Procedures Meant to Eliminate Long Line-ups

From April 2, 1991, foreign domestic workers in Ontario don't have to go personally to Immigration offices, but instead they will send by mail their application:

- to renew their employment authorization (work permit),
- to get a student permit,
- to apply for open employment authorization (open work permit),
- and to apply for landed immigrant or permanent resident status.

The mail-in system is meant to improve Immigration's delivery and quality of service, according to a news release sent to INTERCEDE. Immigration officials believe that using the postal service for applications will eliminate the long line-ups that domestic workers and other clients have complained about, as well as crowded waiting rooms, repeated visits and delays that result in travel expenses and lost wages.

Foreign domestic workers have indeed complained bitterly about waiting in long line-ups from 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, especially during winter, just to be able to get a "number" and be served at Immigration centres.

They have also often complained about finding it difficult to negotiate with employers to get off work just to go to Immigration, much less to make repeated visits when they are encountering problems.

INTERCEDE has been meeting with Immigration officials to clarify questions and make suggestions for facilitating the mail-in system for domestic workers in the FDM. Clients have been coming to INTERCEDE for assistance in understanding and filling the new application forms.

To receive comments and answer questions about the mail-in procedures, Wilma Jenkins, acting Manager of Immigration at 4900 Yonge, has agreed to provide resource people from her office to come to INTERCEDE's June 2nd monthly meeting.

Input from members and clients using the system will be gathered by INTERCEDE and discussed with Immigration to further facilitate the mail-in procedures. Domestic's Cross-Cultural News, INTERCEDE's newsletter, will regularly print information about the mail-in forms and other Immigration matters, starting with this issue.

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

NEW SUBSCRIPTION: CHANGE OF ADDRESS: RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION:

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

Please send DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS to:

NAME: Member IDNo:

ADDRESS:

CITY/PROVINCE:

POSTAL CODE: TELEPHONE:

SUBSCRIPTION IS FOR 1991 ONLY.

Intercede Members:	FREE	Non-member Domestic	\$ 5.00
Non-Profit Organizations	FREE	Others	\$10.00

?QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS?

About Immigration's New Mail-in System

Question: *My employment authorization (work permit) will expire soon, how do I get the application form to renew my employment authorization?*

Answer: Call 973-4444, at least one to two months before the expiry of your present employment authorization to order an application form for a renewal of your employment authorization.

You must mail your application (together with all required documents and a fee of \$75) at least two weeks before the expiry date of your present employment authorization. At the latest, it must be postmarked on the day before the expiry or brought to the appropriate Immigration office and dropped in the drop-off box there on the day of expiry and no later.

INTERCEDE advises that you read all instructions very carefully and attach all necessary documents and fees before mailing your application.

Question: *My employer terminated me and I need a new employment authorization, how do I get one?*

Answer: Call 973-4444 to get an application form similar to the one for the questioner above. Send copy of a reference letter from your former employer along with your application. As indicated, you must include a confirmation of offer of employment from your prospective employer.

Question: *I was scheduled for my second assessment but I was notified to just mail my application for permanent residence and the required fee. Can I send a personal cheque?*

Answer: Effective April 2, 1991, Ontario clients applying for permanent residence (or also called visa exemption) will be asked to do so by mail.

If you don't have the application form, call 973-4444 at least three months before the date of the 2nd year anniversary of your arrival in Canada as a domestic worker in the FDM.

This application form together with all required documents and fee must be post-marked or mailed or dropped off at the Immigration Centre at 4900 Yonge on the very day of your anniversary and not before.

The current application fee is \$350 payable with a certified cheque or money order NOT with a personal cheque. Domestic workers who arrived in Canada under the FDM before April 30, 1989 will still pay the old application fee of \$250.

NOTE: Even if you have finished your second year in the FDM and have mailed an application for visa exemption (landed status), you must still have a valid visa to stay in Canada, so you must make sure that you renew your visitor's visa before it expires. You must also make sure that you are never working without a valid employment authorization and must renew this (since you continue working) before it expires.

In other words, domestic workers in the FDM must not let their visa expire so they can remain legally in Canada; and they must not let their employment authorization expire so they can work legally in Canada.

Question: *Is it true that domestic workers will no longer be called for personal assessment after two years in the FDM?*

Answer: There has been no change announced about the criteria under the FDM program so the same criteria are still effective for a foreign domestic worker to apply for landed status after two years.

However, in the new mail-in system, you can mail your application for visa exemption (landed status) without being called for an assessment or personal interview. You may or may not be called for an interview depending on your application and attached documents.

Question: *My employer will be releasing me from employment before I complete my second year in the FDM, how will this affect my application for landed status?*

Answer: Make sure you are not working without a valid employment authorization and make sure your visa as a visitor in Canada is not expired. If necessary, follow the mail-in system for any of these and pay the required fee as usual. Then on the day you complete your second year, mail your application for visa exemption (landed status).

If anyone mails her application for visa exemption (or landed status) before the day of the second anniversary of arrival under the FDM, all documents will be returned so it will be better to follow this rule in order to avoid any delay.

Question: *If I have an open employment authorization (open work permit) and I go home to Manila, will I have any problems about coming back?*

Answer: Since April 1, 1991, Filipino domestic workers on open employment authorization have been required to pay \$50 at the Canadian consulate in Makati, for a reentry (visitor's) visa back to Canada. For other legal technical reasons, it is not advisable to leave Canada when you are on open employment authorization.

**INTERESTED IN EMERGENCY
FIRST AID or CPR?**

St. John Ambulance will give INTERCEDE a group discount rate of \$27 for Emergency First Aid and \$13 for CPR for each person if we can get a group of 12 people to take any of these one-day courses and earn a certificate.

Call and submit your name to Eva at 324-8751.

**ATTENTION DOMESTIC
WORKERS IN NORTH YORK**

There will be an afternoon of refreshments and discussions sponsored by North York Community House and INTERCEDE on Sunday, May 26, 1991 from 3-5 p.m. at North York Community House, 3101 Bathurst St. (2 blocks north of Lawrence)

COCO'S CALENDAR

Welcome back...

Pura Velasco, our president, and our coordinator Fely Villasin were invited to the First National Conference on Women Overseas Workers - Focus on Domestic Workers in Manila last March 20, 1991. They also attended the Second Go-NGO Conference on Women apart from doing initial work on an orientation brochure for Canada-bound domestic workers.

You are invited by...

Co-staffer Karen Serwonka to a group exhibit of Photography for Community Action entitled "Committed Photography", where Karen will be displaying some of her photographs along with other participants in The Moment Project's course on photography for social change. This is on Sunday, May 12, from 4-6 p.m. at Cecil Community Centre.

Announcing...

INTERCEDE Service Unit will be taking up all the space at Suite 402 starting in May. This means more privacy for counselling, more waiting room space for clients, a larger meeting room for Board and volunteers.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council	971-5893
Employment Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	367-1388
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
Revenue Canada (Taxation)	869-1500
Toronto Rape Crisis Centre (24-hour line)	597-8808
Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Workers' Compensation	927-9555
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.	363-0304
Metro Tor. Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic	971-9674
Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic	971-8832

INTERCEDE SERVICE

Place: 489 College St.
Time: Monday - Friday
Telephone: (416) 324-8751

INTERCEDE STAFF

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FIRST CLASS