

The REPORTER

40 cents

Second Class Mail
Registration No. 5445

Immigration Ordeal Over For Rudts

by Joan O'Gonnor

Peter and Ingerborg Rudt, a West German couple, who have been foiled and confused countless times in their efforts to emigrate to Canada have finally been granted a Minister's Permit to remain and work in Canada. Peter and Ingerborg made application for emmigration to Canada two years ago. They had travelled in Canada since 1977, and even wintered here to experience the climate.

Of all the areas they had visited, the couple fell in love with Cheticamp. Peter says, "You have it all here, the mountains, the ocean, everything." And now it seems the Rudts will finally be able to set up the pottery and tile making business they had dreamed about.

The couple are flabbergasted at the amount of help they have received here since their emmigration ordeal began. Neighbours, politicians, and even the press have been willing to help. Peter says, "In Germany, we were nobody, just two working people. Now, CBC, The Toronto Globe & Mail, and other media are writing our story."

They are also incredulous at the ac-

cessibility of politicians here. When Allan MacEachen visited his constituency in November, Peter and Ingerborg were urged to talk with him to try to elicit his support. Their experience of politicians in West Germany was of the quick hand shake before election variety. This meeting with the external affairs minister might have been the single most important effort made by the couple in their attempts to emmigrate.

They had applied to emigrate to Canada in Bonn in 1980 and finally last March an official in Bonn told them that before they could emmigrate, they would need a) a medical check up, b) a certificate of good conduct and c) more information on their pottery business proposal to Canadian officials. But officials wanted to know what they could do *besides* making pottery to bring down the cost of living. Ingerborg told them she would make bread, have a vegetable patch and raise poultry.

An official somewhere apparently confused this and interpreted their business proposal to read "poultry raising," rather than "pottery making."

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The confusion began. Next, results of the medical tests were held up for two months, so Peter went to Bonn from their town 400 kilometers away. An official there told him all was in order, except for medical results, and they should be ready to depart for Canada by the end of May.

Since six weeks' notice had to be given at their jobs before they could leave, and only two departure dates were open to them, they were becoming anxious about results of their medical tests. After many phone calls, officials in Bonn told them everything seemed okay, so Peter quit his job as an engineer with Volkswagon and booked their flights. But visas still weren't forthcoming so they asked Bonn if they could stop there enroute to Halifax to pick up the visas, and officials agreed to this. The Rudts had sold their house by this time and so hadn't much choice but to wait in Bonn for word on their visas.

Word came in the form of a telex from Halifax which said their "poultry raising" proposal was not acceptable. The Rudts were confused, their jobs, home and belongings were gone, they'd spent the previous two weeks using camp chairs as furniture and now they were stuck in Bonn because of a bureaucratic mix-up.

Officials there told Peter and Ingerborg to go on to Halifax and try to clear things up from that end, because their medical exams were only valid in Canada for six months. They decided to leave. They had already bought land and begun construction of a house at Point Cross.

The couple went to immigration upon arrival in Halifax where they inquired about their status. Nobody there seemed to know of their case, but said they would try to help.

Another informal business proposal was written, but six weeks later they still didn't know anything, so they saw immigration officials here, who told them again their "poultry business" was not an adequate proposal. They hired a lawyer, then, who said their issue was not a legal one, and who began to solicit help from politicians and the media to clear up the "poultry-pottery" business.

By this time, however, their visitor status was running out, and Bagambiire obtained an extension for them, but only long enough to work on their business proposal. With help from the Federal Business Development Bank (F.B.D.B.), they began to draft a new proposal. F.B.D.B. studied their proposal and found it was viable and could employ more people when it got off the ground.

The media, publicity and helpful letters to politicians from neighbours in Point Cross, added to F.B.D.B.'s findings should have been a boost, but time was still passing and no finalization was coming. The Rudts were at a low ebb, spiritually and financially.

Responding to advice from friend, the Rudts visited Allan MacEachern last month. They do not know what happened after this or why, but they received word their business proposal was accepted at Halifax.

Unfortunately, by this time their medical tests were no longer valid and officials told the couple they

would have to go to Bonn for the check-up. They phoned Bonn. Officials there said their file had been closed in May and they would have to go back to Germany and re-apply to emigrate. Bagambiire told them to stay put or they might never be able to return due to the foul-ups in Bonn. Peter said at that point he felt there were only two recourses: one, to investigate step by step where the foul up was in Bonn, and two, to go to the U.S. where they could get a visa.

There was nothing left for them in Germany, and apparently nothing here. Without working papers, they would soon be broke. But, once again, friends intervened and wrote to Ottawa, and finally they have received word that they have been accepted.

Inverness County councillor Charlie MacArthur phoned last week and said, "You can go to bed and sleep now, Mr. Rudt."

And Friday William Ham, an immigration official here, informed the couple they had been given a Minister's Permit. Ham says this permit will allow the Rudts to remain and work in Canada, but they will probably have to re-apply for immigration outside of the country to be formally accepted.

The Rudts are very deeply moved by the help they have received from so many sources here and say if they had formerly had reservations about moving to a strange country, they have been completely dispelled.