

West German couple told to leave Cape Breton

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Staff Reporter

A West German couple, who want to live and work in Nova Scotia, were told, as the last pieces of their landed immigrant applications were near completion, that they must leave Cape Breton and re-open their immigration files in Bonn, West Germany.

The case has become a battle with Canada immigration officials and a committee of concerned citizens is about to be set up to assist the couple.

Peter Rudt and his wife Ingeborg Norres-Rudt applied for permanent residence in Canada in 1980. The two-year process to apply for landing documents included medical and security screening and the submission of a business proposal.

Their lawyer, Davies Bagambiire, believes bureaucratic incompetence led to their present dilemma. He said the Rudts were encouraged that their applications would be successful and to make plans for departure to Canada. The couple was given an application for social insurance numbers before their landing documents had been issued, he said.

Their troubles started in West Germany last May when the Rudts were told their landing documents would be in Bonn in a matter of days. They were advised by embassy officials to sell their Wolfsburg home and leave their jobs.

Complications compounded again at the Canadian Embassy in Bonn, where, enroute to Halifax, the Rudts were told Canada Immigration had refused their application for landing documents. They were advised to go to Halifax anyway. The Rudts arrived at their newly acquired home in Point Cross, about five kilometers from Cheticamp, and started a six-month process to fight for landing documents.

Mr. Bagambiire said it appeared that the reason the Rudts were not granted landed immigrant status was because of their business proposal. The couple wanted to set up a pottery and tile-making business.

With the help of the Federal Business Development Bank, a new proposal was revised. The proposal was submitted to special committee of officials from the department of regional economic expansion, the provincial department of development and the department of immigration in late September.

Two months later the committee informed the Rudts that the business proposal had been accepted.

However, their troubles were not over. The Rudts still had to get working visas before they could legally set up business in Canada. Now, the couple live on savings in Point Cross. Their visitors visas have been extended three times and are due to expire Dec. 30.

"We love this country," Mr. Rudt said. "The feeling is growing. We love it here."

Mr. Bagambiire said he was told that the couple had to return to Bonn and file a new application for landing documents. The file was old and Rudts' medical applications, which last for six months, had expired.

He said Bonn informed him the file had been closed in May, 1982 and the application process would have to start again.

"The end result is clear," Mr. Bagambiire said. "They're eventually going to be allowed to immigrate."

Mr. Bagambiire said the trip to Germany is unnecessary and would cause moral and financial hardship for his client.

"It is unfair to send them back in the hands of the same immigration officer (who had dealt with them before)," he said.

Mr. Bagambiire said he is trying to convince immigration people that the couple only needs to go to the United States to re-enter the country with working visas.

A second alternative would be a minister's permit, a temporary permit for foreigners who are changing their immigration status in Canada. Mr. Bagambiire said the permit would allow the couple to work pending the process of their application.

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