

News from Senator BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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DOLE URGES CLOSE WATCH ON CANADIAN CUSTOM CUTTERS-- CAUTIONS AGAINST RELAXATION OF U.S. FOREIGN LABOR LAWS

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole today urged the Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to closely monitor Canadian custom combine crews entering the U.S. to participate in this year's harvest. In his letter to Commissioner Alan Nelson, Senator Dole encouraged the Administration not to relax newly initiated U.S. immigration standards and risk disadvantaging the domestic farm labor force.

"There may be enough business to justify some of the Canadian crews coming down for this year's harvest," said Dole. "But making a blanket exception would just open a legal loophole big enough to drive all of those combines through."

Dear Mr. Commissioner:

One year ago, I wrote you to express my concern that an agreement between the U.S. and Canada, negotiated in 1942 during the labor shortage caused by World War II, was continuing to afford Canadian custom harvesters unrestricted access to the U.S. harvest market. I also asked that the Immigration and Naturalization Service review allegations that Canadian policies are preventing equal access for U.S. harvesters to the Canadian market.

INS subsequently agreed that the terms of the 1942 agreement were no longer appropriate, and revised the immigration regulations for Canadian crews from B-1 to H-2 status. H-2 immigrants require certification by the Department of Labor that U.S. workers cannot adequately fill identified local labor needs.

The revised policy still allows Canadian owner-operators to enter the U.S. under B-1 status to attempt to contract out their services. Recent reports indicate that Canadian officials are objecting to the labor certification requirements which these representatives must satisfy before Canadian crews can enter the U.S.

I am concerned that Canada may be preparing to request either a parole period during the 1984 U.S. harvest or a continuation of past practices providing Canadian crews with B-1 immigrant status. I encourage you to carefully consider the possible adverse impact which relaxing the revised immigration regulations could have on the domestic farm labor force and hope INS will closely monitor this situation during the coming harvest period.

Bob Dole
U.S.S.

"My office will remain in close contact with the Department of Labor's regional office in Denver, which has jurisdiction in Kansas, to help monitor the revised INS policy," Senator Dole said. "Farmers interested in hiring Canadian crews, or U.S. custom cutters concerned that proper procedures are being followed, should contact their local Job Service Center or their local employment offices."