

Disinformation campaign in Canada

Foreign Ministry to protest

by Prasad Gunewardene

The Foreign Office in Colombo is to protest to the Canadian government on the 'wilful, disinformation campaign carried out by Canadian Barrister and Solicitor Max Berger against the Sri Lankan government regarding the island's Tamils who seek refuge in other countries including Canada, authoritative sources disclosed yesterday.

Max Berger was distorting facts and carrying out a campaign to attack the Colombo government with the help of some Canadian Parliamentarians, these sources said.

Several Canadian Parliamentarians and Max Berger even extended invitations to Rural Industrial and Tourism Minister S. Thondaman to visit Ontario to initiate a dialogue to resolve the North-East crisis in Sri Lanka.

However, President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga advised Minister Thondaman that such a visit was unnecessary as external assistance was not needed to solve internal problems.

Max Berger in several communications to

Minister Thondaman and State Industries Minister M. S. Sellasamy alleged that there was torture of Tamils by the Sri Lankan Police and the security forces.

In his latest move, Max Berger wrote to the Head of the Department of Justice for Refugees in Switzerland to reconsider repatriating Sri Lankan Tamils.

Mr. Berger in his letter quoted an Amnesty International report prepared in February this year stating that the condition in Sri Lanka was not safe for Tamils to return. He also alleged that the Swiss Ambassador in Colombo was feeding the Swiss government with "inaccurate facts".

Foreign office sources in Colombo pointed out that thousands of Sri Lankan refugees in South India has already returned and more were expected to come back shortly. 'If the situation is not safe, the Indians will not send these people back', the sources explained.

Mr. Berger identifies himself as the "sole representative of Sri Lankan Tamils seeking refugee status in Canada".