

## **More Portables at FRCC**

The installation of six new portable units at a Maple Ridge men's prison has the union that represents prison guards in B.C. worrying the province is preparing for another influx of refugees.

The containers were installed at the Fraser Regional Correctional Centre last month in an area which already houses men who fled Sri Lanka and arrived last summer on the MV Sun Sea.

The holding area has also received upgrades to wiring and its satellite system.

"Our concern is there are two more boats of 500 migrants on their way," said Dean Purdy, chair of the corrections and sheriffs services component of the B.C. Government and Service Employees Union.

"They are pretty strong rumours. Usually when there isn't going to be anything, you see them downgrade things, so it leads us to believe that the rumours that are out there are true."

The possibility of adding more people to the already overcrowded facility on 256th Street has the union very concerned.

Built to hold 254 inmates, Fraser regional is 200 per cent over capacity, said Purdy.

"It's only going to make our current situation more difficult to deal with."

The Canadian Border Service Agency confirmed that the portables were brought in at their request, but assures they are only being installed to house staff.

"It is actually CBSA working space," said spokesperson Shakila Manzoor.

"It improves their working conditions."

She would not say if the agency is aware that more ships with asylum seekers are headed to Canada.

As of Monday, the CBSA had released 337 adults who arrived on the MV Sun Sea from custody.

That means 112 still remain in detention, 12 of those on federal court stays.

Of those 112, 106 men and six are women.

Manzoor couldn't say how soon the 112 people will be processed.

"It's on a case by case basis."

Conservative MP Randy Kamp is not aware of any imminent arrivals, but said federal government agencies are keeping an eye on human smuggling activities overseas.

"I've heard the weather conditions are such that a ship probably wouldn't try to make that voyage until later in the spring," he added. "We hope there are no more on their way and I haven't heard of any."

Besides working with countries like Thailand, Kamp said, the federal government has proposed Bill C-45 as a way to curb human smuggling. The bill calls for a five-year waiting period before those who arrive by smuggling can apply for permanent residency and allows for jailing for up to a year while their status is determined.

“It is putting pressure on our resources and the integrity of our immigration system and that’s why we felt like we need to introduce legislation that address it,” said Kamp.

Opposition parties, however, have said they won’t support the bill in its current form.