

Iranian denied permit to stay in Canada to be deported today

GORDON KENT
Journal Staff Writer

Edmonton

An Edmonton man is scheduled to be deported to Iran this morning after Immigration Minister Lucienne Robillard rejected his request for a permit to stay in Canada.

Manoocheher Moktarian, 41, was ordered to leave last fall after being denied refugee status.

He came to Edmonton on a work

visa in 1993, but claimed in 1994 he'd be in danger if he returned to Iran because he has distributed material for a group seeking reinstatement of the Iranian royal family.

He has worked since he arrived for a Nisku pipeline equipment company.

A federal committee was supposed to rule last week if people can be safely deported to Iran, but it hasn't made a decision yet, said Moktarian's lawyer Shirish



Moktarian

Chotalia.

She said an official in Robillard's office told her Tuesday that Moktarian wouldn't be given a permit so he could remain in Canada until the committee makes its decision. "We're really disap-

pointed. I'm surprised — Canada is known as a humanitarian country," she said.

"I don't know what harm it would have done to allow him to stay another 10-15 days ... the committee could make a decision tomorrow, but it would be too late."

He also wasn't allowed to apply to be an immigrant while in the country, she said.

Local supporters and members of the Iranian community demon-

strated outside the Edmonton immigration office after his arrest Feb. 20. The son of the late shah and the former Iranian president Abolhasan Bani-Sadr sent letters of support when Moktarian was granted bail a week later.

He'll be sent to Iran, where he has a wife and family, on a commercial airline, Chotalia said. "We don't think he will be safe when he gets there. That's why we're so concerned."