

[Translation]

Through its response, the Government will be providing improved service in Canada for sponsors of immigrants belonging to the family group. From now on, it will be easier to complete a sponsorship application form because the people concerned will be encouraged to complete those forms themselves. The waiting period for an interview for sponsorship purposes will be greatly reduced. Moreover, a better service will be made available to immigrants abroad following a more efficient control of records as well as improved medical procedures.

If the time allows it, early in the New Year, I hope the Committee will be anxious to review the progress made as a result of our response.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I am pleased to have the opportunity so early in my term of office to table in this House a paper indicating not only the commitment of this Government to improve the quality of life but also the result of a fruitful dialogue between members of all parties in this House.

[English]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, as the critic for my Party on immigration matters, and as a member of the Standing Committee, I am pleased to respond to the Minister. Let me say at the outset that I commend the Minister for at least having the detailed analysis on a recommendation by recommendation basis. That is certainly something that lacked such detail under his predecessor. However, I do not think that the ambitious remarks noted by the Minister will be translated into the affirmative responses to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Employment and Immigration.

It should be well noted that the stimulus for the committee report came from that most frustrating aspect of immigration practices and regulations in this country, as articulated by Members from all sides of the House, namely that Canadians were unsuccessfully able to sponsor their relatives, or if they were, there were great delays in the system, in some cases as long as two, three, and even four years. We have individual cases that go undocumented and unresponded to by our immigration officials abroad for up to periods of one year. Therefore, the question before the committee was how do we enable the system to facilitate the requests generated from Canadians here in Canada for the successful application of their relatives and loved ones throughout the world?

On the basis of the three corner-stones of the recommendations, the Minister has failed to adopt those recommendations as outlined by the committee.

First, the recommendations of the committee said basically that if we are to speed up the system in relation to family assistance applications there has to be a reallocation and a redesign of the classifications into priorities. The first priority is spouses and dependants; the second is parents with dependants, siblings and non-dependent children, as well as people who wish to adopt children who have been left homeless and

Statements by Ministers

without parents. Therefore, we gave a priority listing that would ensure that the immigration officials processed applications on a priority by priority basis relating to those classifications. I regret that the Minister has not chosen to embrace that recommendation.

As well, we suggested that points should be increased to those immigrants who have family members in Canada. We said basically in our report that if we are to take seriously the fact that an immigrant, or potential immigrant, has family in Canada, then we should elevate that consideration to the same points level as education, or having a job. Let us admit that having family members in Canada counts culturally, socially, and financially, and that such a person coming to Canada can expect support financially, culturally, and socially. Therefore, the Canadian state would not have to provide those services. The Minister, once again, did not accept our recommendation of giving additional points to those people.

The second recommendation was to shift resources throughout the world in relation to demand, and how that is being triggered in this country. That is to say, there are more demands being placed on the system in India and Hong Kong today than there are in Great Britain, yet there are more resources in the more traditional parts of the world. The Minister and the Government know that you control the flow of immigrants and the number of applications by the number of resources provided.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Hon. Member to close off his remarks as quickly as possible.

Mr. Marchi: My last remark under the third corner-stone is, since the family class is the most important aspect of the immigration program, as articulated by the report, we do not think it should be undermined by any other segment of the program. Unfortunately, that is happening. A good example is the entrepreneurial program, where immigration officials abroad in Hong Kong and the Philippines, which I visited, are shifting personnel away from family class processing to meet the entrepreneur—

Mr. Speaker: I very much regret that the Hon. Member's time has expired. The Hon. Member has made his points. I am sure the three corner-stones were noted by all Members in the House.

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the Minister on his timely report, his timely response to the committee's report—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Heap: And if the Liberals would shut up, I have a few more points to make.

Although it is a timely report, and although he covers a good deal of ground in a very encouraging way, there are four serious gaps in his report. Some of them have already been touched upon. I want to point out that in his failure to give any