

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION—IMPROVEMENT IN SERVICES
TO NEW CANADIANS ON ARRIVAL

Mr. Maurice Allard (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I put recently the following question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand):

As a result of an emergency situation created by the channelling of immigrants to certain areas of the country, has the minister received requests for assistance to new Canadians and is it his intention to take immediate steps to improve the scheduling of immigrant arrivals in various areas of Canada?

I know that the minister has received a brief from the Assistance Service to New Canadians in the county of Sherbrooke, which has proposed the five following recommendations:

The number of immigrants channelled to Sherbrooke and the area.

Selection according to profession and trade.

Certificates of qualification.

Hospital insurance.

The personnel specially dealing with immigrants.

In addition of Assistance Service to New Canadians in the Sherbrooke area—

—is asking that arrivals of immigrants be planned, taking into account the absorption capacity of the labour market in the area.

—the Service suggests that more attention could possibly be given to the guidance of immigrants, in order to ensure that job opportunities exist in the profession or trade of the applicants.

As an example, Mr. Lionel Bureau, president of the Assistance Service to New Canadians—

—for the Sherbrooke area—

—points out that a couple of months ago five welders were needed on the Sherbrooke market.

Ten heads of family were directed at once towards Sherbrooke. As a result, five of those persons obtained some work often at ridiculous wages in a trade which was not their own.

The Assistance Service of the Sherbrooke area—

—states that it has often noted the serious problems involved, for a skilled worker, in obtaining a competency card in the province of Quebec.

We believe—

—continues the brief sent to the Minister of Manpower—

—that renewed representations should be made to the professional and government organizations to facilitate the integration, in the various trades, of people already qualified in related fields.

Always as an example, Mr. Bureau notes that the competency card issued in Canada is the equivalent of a mere apprentice card when the worker involved often has 10 to 15 years of experience in his skill.

Indeed, several of these competency cards can only be obtained in Montreal.

[Mr. MacEachen.]

As far as hospital insurance is concerned, the service points out, and I am quoting the paragraphs of the brief presented to the minister—

• (10:00 p.m.)

As the Quebec hospital-insurance regulations do not provide for the payment of hospital bills for immigrants with less than 3 months residence in the country, some immigrant families struck by disease are in extremely hard circumstances if they are badly off financially when faced with several hundred dollars worth of hospital and doctors bills.

As another example, Mr. Bureau points out that an immigrant who came to Sherbrooke a little over a month ago owes a tremendous amount of money for medical care provided to two members of his family. Consequently, he will be in debt for a long time.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I draw these various grievances to the attention of the minister or his parliamentary secretary this evening. It is most important that Canada, which needs an ever greater number of immigrants in order to develop, should be able to channel its immigrants in an intelligent and rational way towards the various regions of Canada, without pushing them into human problems they cannot solve.

There is the problem of employment, of social factors, of hospital insurance, of health insurance. If we want Canada to become a great country, we must do more than have our immigration officers abroad attract immigrants by luring them with bright prospects in Canada. We must also, once they get here, guide them well and direct them to work that will allow them to fulfil themselves as Canadian human beings.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): The hon. Registrar General of Canada.

Hon. John N. Turner (Registrar General): I shall leave the floor to the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Mr. Knowles: In French.

[English]

Mr. J. C. Munro (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I was not here to hear the remarks of the hon. member, but I have an answer for his consideration. The timing of arrival of independent immigrants destined to the labour force is largely influenced by the seasonal nature of the Canadian labour market. This is achieved by