

op our country and society. Also in that same periodical it is pointed out that:

The value and need for a sustained immigration program as a continuing factor to a Canadian social and economic growth clearly manifests. Immigration has made a major contribution to the national objectives of our country in maintaining a sound population rate, economic growth and cultural development.

I know there are ongoing studies in respect of this matter. Mrs. Freda Hawkins has written a book titled "Canada and Immigration Public Policy and Public Concern" in which she tries to focus on this whole matter of immigration. I believe it is her job now to look into this matter for the minister. I should like to put some of her words from the preface on record. She says:

Beyond a small group of politicians and officials and a small number of voluntary organizations, very little is known about immigration in Canada. Few Canadians are aware of the exact nature of our immigration policy or how immigration is managed.

She goes on to state:

And since Canadian politicians of all parties maintain a decorous silence on this subject and the press examines it only intermittently, public discussion of immigration in Canada is minimal.

All one has to do is pick up *Hansard* in order to find that other than for a few questions directed to the minister, there has been a dismal show in respect of debates on immigration. This is most unfortunate because this is an important matter with which we as parliamentarians should be concerned. We are talking about the future of Canada, the kind of country we want and the kind of people we want here. These are the people who will come here to contribute to the development of our ultimate destiny.

Mrs. Hawkins further states in her preface:

—but that serious thought should now be given to the development of a population policy for Canada related to our future political, social, and environmental needs and to the role which immigration should play within it.

In the last paragraph she states this:

For this and other obvious reasons, it is urged in this study that Canada should contribute now, in a much more positive way than in the past, towards the development of increasing international communication and consultation in relation to migration, whether that migration be inter-country or intra-continental, permanent or temporary. It would help to improve the lot of immigrants and migrants and to lessen some of the political tensions involved in migration today, if information on this subject were shared to a much greater extent between the countries involved; and if common efforts were made towards the development of standards of good practice in employment and adjustment policies, immigration control, and in the protection of the individual and group rights of immigrants and migrants.

In conclusion, I can say that we accept this bill. We will vote for it and send it to the committee, always subject to the right to move amendments. I would point out that the removal of the restrictive principle in the prior regulation is our policy. I would indicate that this bill is really an admission of failure of government policy regarding immigration and the appeal board.

I have indicated to the minister privately and to other members that we are not going to unduly hold up this bill. I think it is necessary that we obtain the views of representatives from across the country in respect of what is happening. One or two other speakers from my party at most will suffice. After several important speeches, I hope

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we can send this bill to the committee where we can question the minister during our clause by clause study, with the hope of getting it back in time to avoid running into another thousand appeals in July.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, the least that can be said about Bill C-197 is that it is long overdue. We will support it and do our best to expedite its final passage. I cannot refrain, anymore than could the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander), who has just spoken, from castigating and rebuking the government for the years of neglect which has produced one of the most horrendous administrative messes that ever occurred in the whole history of government in this country or in any other country.

It has been increasingly obvious to anyone with eyes to see, and perhaps I should add biblically, or ears to hear, that the board was quite unable to keep up with the case load imposed on it by the act, yet a series of ministers, from which I gladly except the present minister, did absolutely nothing about it. There is really no excuse or explanation, except that they were not concerned or bothered by the whole problem of immigration, although they had responsibility in that field.

The extent of the backlog was indicated by the minister on May 17 of this year when he spoke to the parliamentary Committee on Labour Manpower and Immigration. We were told at that time, and I think I have the figures correct, there was a backlog of 15,000 appeals waiting to be heard. Assuming that no new cases were to turn up, and we completely cut off the right of appeal, at the rate of appeal board proceedings, 1,500 appeals a year, it would take 10 years to catch up on the backlog. This situation did not arise overnight. It was gradual and perfectly obvious, and fully reported by the appeal board to the minister's predecessor. It was obvious, however, that you could not cut off the right of appeal. In fact, appeals were flowing in at the rate of 1,000 a month and the board was disposing of the backlog of appeals at the rate of 125 a month. It was obvious, it seems to me, that the situation was desperate, as it affects two groups of people.

● (1710)

The first group is composed of those appellants who come before the board with deserving and bona fide appeals guaranteed to them by the laws passed by this Parliament. These people have to wait, and still will in many cases, for years before their status as immigrants into this country is finally determined. In the meantime, many of them would have been granted work permits and otherwise would have established roots in Canada which would perhaps be torn up years later resulting in great hardship and injustice. The other group which is treated unfairly is the people of Canada as a whole, because this whole question of unconscionable delays plays into the hands of those whose qualifications are minimal or do not exist. It plays into the hands of those who may be clearly prohibited for various good and serious reasons from admission to Canada. The present system, as the minister himself said, led to serious abuse. So, as I said before, this legislation is long overdue.

I want to devote myself more to what the legislation provides and say why we support it as long overdue, but