

been corrected long ago, and which would have had the support of all parties if the government had seen fit to propose the change.

I would have liked to have seen a proposal which would give the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) full authority to act in cases where humanitarian considerations are paramount in deportation proceedings. There have been cases where families have been separated to satisfy provisions in the law, where appeal court proceedings were too expensive for a person to undertake, or where the letter of the law took precedence over the humanitarian aspects of the case. There have been other cases, and there are likely to be more, where there was the very real threat of a person being executed for political crimes if he was deported to his country of origin.

Our courts should not be placed in the position of sending a person to his or her certain death to satisfy a provision in our own laws, especially where our laws either do not recognize that a crime has been committed, or where they do not impose such a serious penalty for the alleged offence.

I noted with great interest the statements made on this bill by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker), and especially where his remarks touched on the question of citizenship as a whole, and what he described as our very generous immigration policy. I must repeat that Canadian citizenship is a precious thing, very much to be desired and protected. It must not be represented as something available to anyone who can get to this country by hook or by crook and manage to remain here for a given number of years. I agree with the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton that it does a disservice to people who immigrate legally in the manner prescribed by law when any part of time spent illegally in Canada is allowed to count toward residence requirements for citizenship.

We have had a serious and long standing problem in this country with respect to illegal immigrants, and it has been said in this debate that we do not know today just how many people are living in Canada illegally. However, we do know that they are not abiding by the laws respecting employment, income taxes, and others, because if they were they could all be traced and apprehended.

I know that one of the reasons the government has decided to let these people earn half a day of residence for every day spent illegally in Canada is that they might be encouraged to come out of hiding and apply for landed immigrant status, but I wonder whether this is a good practice and whether it should be continued.

A few years ago the government declared a general amnesty and suspended penalties for all illegal immigrants in Canada who would come forward and apply for landed immigrant status. In actual fact this meant that people who slipped into Canada and should have been deported found it easier to acquire landed immigrant status than those people applying at the border or from their country of origin. It also meant that people who came to Canada on visitors' permits and faded into the underground after their permits expired could come forward and enjoy the full benefits of the immigration laws.

In spite of this very generous gesture on our part, no more than a fraction of the estimated illegals came for-

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ward. In spite of the fact that we stretched our immigration laws to the breaking point, it did not solve the problem. We still do not know how many people are living illegally in Canada, and worse still we have no way of knowing what they are doing. I have to say that we have been overly generous to a criminal element in our society, and it is time to take a more objective view of residence in our country.

Some hon. members have touched on the question of immigration policy as a companion policy to that of residence and citizenship, and I believe we have come to a point in the development of our country where we cannot any longer deal with these two problems in isolation. We cannot continue to use the open door as the symbol of immigration policy, and we have an obligation to inform the other peoples of the world that we too are faced with the prospect of over population. In a nutshell, for a number of very practical reasons we should be making it more difficult rather than easier for people to come to Canada and acquire citizenship.

On my recent tour as a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference I found that many of my fellow parliamentarians from other countries were amazed to learn that only a fraction of our three and a half million square miles of land could support habitation and agricultural production. There are still people in the world who believe that we have unlimited living space, and therefore they cannot understand how we could even consider limiting immigration. It is not fair of us to represent Canada as a vast and sparsely populated Utopia where there are unlimited opportunities for employment and the good life.

The plain fact is, as I stated earlier, that we do not provide jobs for a large percentage of our own people, about 800,000, to be reasonably precise, and so ours could hardly be described as the promised land. We have a tremendous obligation to people who live in Canada at the present time, and while I do not suggest that we should close our doors to all immigrants, we should nonetheless take a good hard look at the situation and establish priorities which take into account our own needs, present and future.

Some people might call this a selfish approach to the question of immigration, and I have to agree. If it is selfish to want to save what we have and to want to ensure that we can meet our own needs, wants, and aspirations, then I suggest that we simply steel ourselves to the criticism which might follow.

I mentioned earlier that some of the recommendations made by the Immigration Committee were inconsistent, and I should like to say a few words about that. One recommendation was that we continue to bar prostitutes as prospective immigrants, while at the same time it was suggested that we drop the restriction on allowing homosexuals to immigrate to Canada. I cannot accept that recommendation just because we have accepted the maxim that the government does not have any business in the bedrooms of the nation. It does not necessarily follow that we should not make an effort to raise the moral standards in our society.