

*Immigration*

does not qualify and does not have much chance of being happy among us.

Consultation and cooperation with the provinces will now be statutory with the new bill, for instance to set the annual immigration level throughout the country in order to reduce the present trend whereby more than half of the newcomers settle in the metropolitan areas of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. When the immigrant settles down and becomes integrated in Canadian society he needs services often offered by provinces, which gives the latter a participating role recognized by the constitution.

Also, the federal government subsidizes several provincial activities particularly those of COFI. Some people have asked, probably without much thought, that provinces be given final control over the movements of immigrants. Several constitutional and practical reasons are against such a policy particularly the fact that we could not forbid the movement from a province to another. We might say that the new legislation wrongfully stipulates that some immigrants will have to agree to live for six months in some remote areas. But, as the Minister of Manpower and Immigration pointed out, we forget that otherwise those people would not be able to come to Canada because of an insufficient number of points. So it is for them a marvellous opportunity, to quote the minister, and once here they will have to live in such or such place for a short period of six months at most. But this does not mean that they will not be allowed to move, to travel as do thousands of Canadians who, for instance, go to work for the season at James Bay, in the Arctic or some other remote areas.

Mr. Speaker, the new legislation also mentions annual immigration levels. Once more, to those who wanted to speak of quotas, the minister explained that this last term had an American connotation that could make some people think that we practice discrimination by setting quotas for various countries. The levels will have an international connotation and will not impose a ceiling for one country or another and the annual goal mentioned by the minister, after consultation with the provinces, I repeat, will not prevent the coming of an additional number of unexpected immigrants of the family class or refugees in special circumstances. The new legislation is then more modern, more flexible, more humanitarian especially as it eliminates some restrictions that have become obsolete and unfair, such as the provisions concerning epileptics.

Unlike in the past, Canadians will now know in advance how many immigrants will be admitted during the following year. Some have claimed that this would prevent the entry of some 250,000 immigrants, maybe more, in the course of a year. On the contrary, if certain expert predictions materialize in a few years and Canada has a labour shortage justifying the entry of such a great number of foreigners, this new law will make it possible.

But in the meantime the government and all Canadians, who as citizens of this country have first and foremost the right to be considered and protected, agree that it is now desirable to limit immigration to our country, particularly for economic reasons. We do not wish to blame immigrants for

our unemployment problem, for they become an integral part of our economy and investigations show that they are an asset for our country. On the other hand, if a numerous population is all it takes to make a country very prosperous, countries like India, Pakistan and a great many others would have proven it long ago.

Canada must therefore accept as many immigrants as possible for economic and demographic reasons. Even if we were to accept as many as two million immigrants at a time from some of the most heavily populated countries in the world, we would not relieve in the least, not even for an instant, the problems of that country. But contrast this with all the problems pertaining to work, education, housing and language that would arise from the entry into Canada of these two million immigrants. Nonetheless that is what the few but vociferous protagonists of a control free immigration clamor for inconsiderately, saying that immigration is a universal right whereas it is in effect a privilege extended to a stranger. Indeed no country in the world authorizes strangers to cross its borders under conditions which are often as strict going in or coming out.

In fact Canada's policy is more generous than that of any other country in the world with regards to ordinary immigrants as well as refugees especially nowadays when the rare so-called immigration countries become more and more particular in the choice of their new citizens. With the passing of this new bill, assistance to refugees, under the terms of the Geneva convention, becomes statutory in Canada. Indeed Canada has a well established tradition in this area with its admission of post-war refugees. Then, there were Hungarians, Czechs, Tibetans, and Ugandans. More recently, there were the Vietnamese. In passing, I would like to note that of the 6,531 Vietnamese refugees admitted to Canada before September 30 last year, 5,107 or more than 78 per cent settled in Quebec, mostly because many of them speak French.

Canada also has an assistance program for Chilean refugees for which the target has recently been increased from 5,000 to 6,000 and under which more than 5,200 Chileans have been admitted to Canada, including the members of 100 families of political refugees freed from Chilean prisons under a special pilot program. Canada has already received more Chilean refugees than all Eastern European countries together. Besides these refugee programs, Canada has decided in the last few years to help the population of certain countries in which there have been civil wars, like Cyprus and Lebanon. In this last case, especially through the establishment of a special reception centre in Limassol, on the island of Cyprus, Canada has already admitted in 1976 alone through a special program of assistance and family reunification some 6,000 Lebanese most of whom will settle down or have already settled down in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, this generous action was taken not only by the Canadian government, but also by the Canadian people who have received these suffering people with sympathy as well as generosity. This has helped demonstrate the importance and the various aspects of a humane and realistic immigration, such as the new legislation will enable us to ensure.