

Supply

This was one of those moments that one remembers. As politicians we take a lot of harassment and abuse but this was one of the moments that makes public life worth while when one realizes that through some action of oneself and one's colleagues, something very important has been done for another human being. The kind of appreciation and gratitude expressed by the Chong family at being in Canada and also by the sponsoring family for the opportunity to share in the experience of helping these families to come and settle here, is something that I shall never forget. Members of this house who have had similar experiences in their ridings will realize how very important and remarkable the refugee movement has been in the last two years.

But the problem is not over, Mr. Chairman. Now that 60,000 people have arrived we are not stopping there; another 16,000 refugees will arrive in the years to come because the problems of refugees in the world are so immense. A very great effort has to be made by Canadians to make sure that they are settled in this country with care and sensitivity. These people have different languages, different customs and will require special consideration, training in languages, and must be found jobs and places to live.

It is for those reasons that the immigration paper presented to Parliament last October stated that the emphasis of this government in the next year or two will be on the establishment of major resettlement programs. We have been working quite closely with the voluntary sector and we give direct grants to community organizations under the immigration settlements assistance program so that they can provide counselling and orientation to help people settle in the community. The program will be extended and we plan to have immigration offices available across Canada to help in this resettlement program. We are also working with the provinces to make sure that schooling and other services are provided. As a government, we intend to concentrate on our responsibility to make sure that people settle into the country.

I am a little fearful that we might simply bring people over, that the headlines would appear, and then they would be forgotten. We cannot forget, Mr. Chairman. We must work very hard at this. We will be able to rely upon that same degree of volunteerism and private participation, I hope, that enabled us to bring people over and to help them settle with a degree of grace, dignity and self-support.

I would urge those members who know of sponsoring families in their constituencies to use their good offices to ensure that this commitment and contribution continues. In some cases, we are into the much more difficult phase of ensuring that these people have a chance to become good Canadians.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: Mr. Chairman, I have listened with interest to the many questions from all sides of the House and am pleased to put a few myself. I should like to thank the minister for the co-operation I have received from his departmental officials. I do not always agree with their decisions, perhaps, but I appreciate their efforts.

There are two questions that I should like to put to the minister. Under the manpower training program, funds are provided for tuition in various vocations, trades and services and an allowance is made for people taking training. On the weekend it was brought to my attention that a particular service in which I have a peculiar interest, as I was a real estate broker for many years, is not covered. Real estate salesmen are not eligible under this program and I promised to try to find out why this is.

Anyone who wants to take this particular course in Parry Sound-Muskoka, some 100 miles north of Toronto, must go to Toronto and spend \$300 or \$400 for it as well as incur accommodation expenses. Five-week courses are to be offered by the community colleges early in the coming year. I wonder why these courses are not included in the program.

When I received my sales licence, I read the book through and then wrote an examination and that is about all there was to it. It is a lot more complicated now. The process of becoming a real estate broker is long and drawn out and I can only say thank the Lord I do not have to write the examination now. I should like the minister's comments on this.

I have listened to the questions posed to the minister on immigration—who gets in and who does not. A great many people contact me on this question. I wrote to the minister two or three days ago about the problem of a young Chinese girl from Hong Kong, a student who passed her examinations with outstanding results. She was given a work permit and is presently working in a Christian Horizon home in my village of Burks Falls where she is a counsellor. She certainly works more than 40 hours a week and certainly is not paid the highest wages. I believe she earns \$9600 per year. Her work permit has expired and she will now have to return to Hong Kong. She is in the best of health but maybe that is against her! She is paying her way and doing a great job. It seems unfortunate that ministerial discretion cannot be exercised in this case. It has been mentioned that there is a possibility of a “shuffle off to Buffalo”. I am delighted to hear that a plan is being suggested for a reciprocal arrangement whereby it would not be necessary for people to return to their native land, especially those from so far off. In this particular case, I wonder if the minister cannot take a second look.

I am well aware, as the minister has said himself, that as far as decisions are concerned, he is all powerful. He can certainly make a ministerial decision but letters from his officials convey the impression—“that is it; that is all there is to it; according to the rules this is not a hardship case”. And so forth.

Other members mentioned earlier that a great many applications from the British Isles do not seem to be approved. Several people have contacted me. I know the application is not here formally but this is a case about which we wrote to the department seven or eight months ago which was turned down. It concerned a retired RAF officer who is economically independent and young enough not to want to remain idle