

Oral Questions

mention themselves. They cynically feel that where they failed others should not be permitted to succeed, notwithstanding the national interest.

A Canada without Quebec more imperils Atlantic Canada than a Newfoundland without the codfish.

Without Quebec in Canada, what becomes of the maritimes? Clearly, Quebec can make it no its own economically. Can we? Outside of Confederation, how will Newfoundland export its power to the United States? Will the maritimes become the East Pakistan of North America?

Let us say yes to Canada, a Canada with Ontario, with the west, with the north, with Atlantic Canada, and with Quebec.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. In her absence, perhaps I can direct the question to the Deputy Prime Minister.

On October 18, 1989, in announcing her 1990 immigration plan, the minister said:

Family reunification remains the cornerstone of the current immigration program. Immigrants make a valuable contribution to Canada,—enrich our society and our economy and—they help us maintain our tradition of tolerance which is envied by all.

Today, we are dismayed to learn that the government has backed down on this commitment. Only last month in a directive the government sent to all immigration posts abroad, it said:

Global targets have been set to produce 173,000 landings from abroad. Posts must/must adhere to within 5/5 per cent of their targets.

Surely this amounts to a new quota system, and I ask the Deputy Prime Minister why this reversal of our longstanding policy against quotas? Why are we no longer concerned with family reunification and encouraging immigrants to this country with needed skills?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, our policy favours all the components of our program and of our immigration level. As you know, we had to make up for lost time due to the backlog resulting from previous policies. We are respecting our timetable and especially the major components of this immigration level which show that Canada is a welcoming country. The Family Reunification Program has been greatly improved in recent years. We definitely intend to continue to reunite families and improve this program as part of our immigration.

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the minister is attempting to say that the government has not introduced a new quota system. How can she say this when the directive, sent only last month to all our overseas immigration posts, says:

Management should be exercised at the front end by managing the number of cases scheduled for interview or otherwise put into active processing.

What this means is that the minister's department will be turning away potential immigrants with needed skills and people who want to be reunited with their families before they can even get into the front door of our immigration posts.

Why has the government abandoned our longstanding policy against quotas for this new type of quota system, as made clear by the government's own directive to its immigration posts?

• (1420)

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, it is completely wrong to suggest to this House that we decided to reduce immigration quotas and I especially want to say that our policy is open and known. We respect the quotas and certainly have no hidden quotas.

Mr. Marchi: That is false!

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the issue is not has she reduced what even the minister calls "quotas", but has a directive been given