

incredible conditions in order to scrape a living and to survive. Others were escaping persecution and seeking freedom. All were intent on building a new nation.

• (1350)

The examples abound. History has recorded the extraordinary contribution of immigrants from many backgrounds, races and cultures who have built this country. From the Montreal harbour to the Toronto skyline, from the building of the railways to the development of our prairie wheat fields, immigrants' labour helped to build Canada.

Where are today's success stories? Are there no such success stories today? Are we now bereft of immigrants improving and enriching Canada?

What I find distressing in this discussion is the lack of recognition of the continuing contribution of newcomers to this country. What I find disturbing is the emphasis that is placed on the negative, destructive aspects of the modern immigration experience. What I find unacceptable is the distorted impression that this lack of recognition and negative depiction of immigrants sometimes leaves in the minds of the Canadian public. Think about it.

Where can we read of present day success stories? Where can we learn of the accomplishments and contributions of recent immigrants? Where can we find out about the achievements of newcomers? Not on the front pages of our newspapers. It is not standard news on the radio and it certainly is not the ordinary fare of television newscasts.

If positive information ever appears it is on the back pages. It is a late radio filler, it is an afterthought buried deep in a television program on a low rating day. Apparently good news about immigrants is not a good enough sell. It is simply not marketable news, and because they are not glamorous, another more sensational picture of the immigrant experience receives the lion's share of the media spotlight.

It is the minuscule minority of immigrants who operate as petty hoods that grabs the media attention and dominate the headlines. It is the small number of immigrants who enter the criminal world that captures the radio news clips. It is the tiny band of fraud artists who come here under false pretences that catches the attention of television reporters. A distorted public picture of modern immigrants is the unfortunate result.

The real story, the whole story, is either too big or too boring for the tabloid headlines. The real story is really about hard working immigrants, entrepreneurs providing jobs and benefits to this country, immigrant students winning scholarships, or it is about immigrant scientists pioneering innovative techniques to alleviate pain and suffering. It is the negative story that most

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often dominates public reports and it is this information that confounds the public's understanding of immigration and its impact on Canada today. It is the kind of story we hear from across the way.

I doubt very much that any of us can persuade the media away from the idea that bad news should dominate good news at every turn, or even now and then. What we can do is change what is out there about immigration to report, and that is where Bill C-44 comes into play.

Bill C-44 promises to play a pivotal role in diminishing opportunities for the minority of criminals who immigrate to Canada to steal, to deal, to intimidate, to extort, or even to injure and kill. Quite simply, Bill C-44 makes it easier for us to remove unwanted elements that none of us, whether we be descendants of immigrants, old immigrants or relatively new immigrants, want here in the first place.

I would suggest that the changes incorporated in Bill C-44 will not solve the problems of crime in Canadian society but it will help us accomplish our goal of preserving public confidence in Canada's immigration program. More than that, the measures in this bill will also help us rid our country of those people who have little interest in contributing to our society in a positive way.

• (1355)

All our statistics show that newcomers are, if anything, more law-abiding than Canadians born here, even though the scanty minority of exceptions loom lopsidedly large in the public eye and in the media. As the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration explained to the Canadian association of police chiefs in Montreal this past August, his department has been directed to use three means of strengthening our enforcement activities; legislative changes, administrative reforms and closer co-operation with other law enforcement agencies to locate people who would abuse our generosity.

At the same time, I was particularly pleased to see the minister declare that the Immigration Act will continue to serve as the foundation of our system. This act was amended with utmost care. It was altered only after it was determined that the amendments would both protect the public and promote continued public confidence in our progressive immigration policies at the same time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary but I have an announcement to make. She will have 10 minutes left at the end of Question Period.

The amendment presented by the hon. member for Cariboo—Chilcotin is acceptable.