

an example of previous United States catch rates, in the 1977 area 7 and 7A fishery seines took 53,000 gillnets took 23,000.

For the first time it appears that real progress has been made in obtaining co-operation from the United States on conservation measures.

IMMIGRATION—LACK OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES
FOR CHILDREN OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parkdale-High Park): Mr. Speaker, on April 3, 1981 I posed a question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) about the lack of education and health services for children of illegal immigrant parents. In the same question I asked him what steps he intends to take to stop the increase of this illegal population in Canada. Canadians have for many decades been able to take pride in the fact that in Canada we have a just society. In the best of all possible worlds, Canadians have endeavoured to develop a system of justice, well-being, and general fairness to all. However, there are times that, with all our good intentions, we still manage to overlook certain sections of our society.

● (2210)

It is on this note that I draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the thousands of children across Canada, who live surrounded by anxiety and fear because they are either born in Canada to parents with illegal immigrant status, or brought into the country illegally as small youngsters. In fact, the majority of these innocent victims are not only unable to register in schools, but they are also denied the proper medical attention most of us take for granted.

As an ex-principal of several public schools in Toronto, I am fully aware of the moral dilemma that principals and school boards are often faced with when confronted with immigrants with illegal status.

On the one hand, the administrators would like to demonstrate humanitarianism and register these children in schools to ensure that they receive proper education, knowing very well that the longer these children remain in hiding, the more difficult it will be for them to ever catch up academically and socially with no education and limited exposure to our Canadian culture.

On the other hand, the policy of most boards of education is that they cannot accept any children into the school system who do not produce proof of permanent residence or proof of application being made for landed immigrant status.

Thus, these children grow up as non-persons legally, without school records, registration numbers and other identification everyone else takes for granted. When they are old enough, they are unable to secure employment and unable to receive welfare because they lack the necessary papers and official identity.

Unfortunately, only crime or illegal employment offers them a way to make a living without questions being put to them about legal status. To no one's surprise today, thousands of these immigrants without legal status are frequently exploited

Adjournment Debate

by unscrupulous employers who deny them medical care, pensions, and the other benefits normally available to Canadians and landed immigrants.

Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to confirm the number of such children, I have been quoted figures that range from 3,000 to 30,000. However, even if the figure were 300, the problem is critical because these children are growing up in Canada illiterate, emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted.

I am not advocating an amnesty program, especially when one considers that the previous amnesty, for a three month period in 1973, brought out more than 20,000 illegal immigrants who were in hiding. Yes, it would be very undesirable to permit amnesties to become regular and predictable features of our immigration policy. Rather, I suggest that as a compassionate nation, we take the appropriate steps to bring in tougher regulations and systems of immigration security. To some, this may seem harsh and cruel, but we do now have a most critical situation on our hands that must be alleviated. I am sure these stricter regulations are kind and more humane in the long run.

In this context, I congratulate the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) for establishing a task force to look into improvements in the procedures of the Immigration Act and regulations, as he said in his answer on April 3. However, the minister failed to answer my question of April 3, 1981, when I asked him what he intends to do to stop future immigrants from entering Canada illegally. None of the past ministers of employment and immigration had a solution to this problem either. Therefore, I propose a solution for the government's consideration.

All visitors coming into Canada should be required to complete in duplicate a simple identification card including name, address, date of birth and destination. Such slips could be completed on the plane or ship just prior to arrival at a Canadian port of entry. One copy of the identification slip would be handed to the customs upon arrival in Canada, the other handed to the customs upon leaving Canada. With the use of computers, officials would be able to run a monthly or annual check as to which visitors remain illegally in Canada.

● (2215)

I should like to hear from the minister whether such a system could be considered by the government to curb the number of illegal immigrants entering Canada.

Mr. Norman Kelly (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy), to assure the hon. member for Parkdale-High Park (Mr. Flis) that all steps possible under the Immigration Act and regulations are being taken to control illegal immigration to Canada. In spite of these efforts, there are still those persons who knowingly enter and remain in Canada illegally; in many cases accompanied by their children. As a result of the actions of their parents or guard-