

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

me. On the contrary, I believe that we should try to restore the upset balance and to increase the French speaking element in this country. We should make an inventory of all French speaking sources of immigration, to make the required selection and see by how much we would be able to reinforce the French speaking element and hence, Canadian unity itself.

In addition, if confederation continues to operate artificially as at the present time, a certain split may occur, and that should be prevented and avoided at all costs.

It is also necessary to establish a cultural interdependence among all Canadians, regardless of their ethnic origin. We should also have a Canadian ideal.

I am convinced that strengthening French minorities outside Quebec would contribute to create Canadian unity; a Canadian atmosphere and ideal would unavoidably be created and thus cultural interdependence among all Canadians would be greater. This is the ideal which I have in view and this is the reason why I wish to go beyond the thought expressed by the hon. member for Lake St. John.

On the other hand, my hon. friend had an excellent idea when he suggested that Canada should tap immigration sources in Latin countries. We have a better chance in Quebec to assimilate people with a Latin culture. The hon. member suggested northern Italy as a place where our country could go for immigrants, and I would say that he is perfectly right.

I do not feel I am straying from the thinking of the party I represent in this house by stating that such is the aim or intention of the Liberal party since we kicked those ideas around and decided that something should be done sooner or later—no date has been set—to open an immigration office in northern Italy, specifically to get immigrants of good stock, good reputation. Besides, the minister might have the opportunity to announce shortly the opening of an immigration office in Marseilles or Bordeaux.

As a matter of fact, his predecessor, the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Favreau) had done so.

In this way, Mr. Chairman, our immigration policy would be sounder and more consistent.

I must add, in conclusion, that some will say: If you, French Canadians, complain of having been taken in with regard to immigration, it is surely your own fault.

It is true that at one time strangers were not welcome in the province of Quebec. This

attitude was denounced by several people who were anxious to improve our political position in the field of immigration.

I should like to refer to a statement made by the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe-Bagot (Mr. Ricard) who once worried about the coming of Algerians. Imagine. A few French speaking Algerians were coming to the province of Quebec to take our farmers' places.

It is this archaic, old-fashioned and backward mentality that put us on the downgrade in the province of Quebec. That is the reason why our immigration policy always made us the losers.

This is the prototype of those narrow-minded people unable to understand that Quebec is in full development, that it must develop and needs immigrants to achieve this aim. The stronger the French element, the stronger Canada will be, because we are all interdependent.

This must be the goal of all members of the house.

[Text]

Mr. Peters: I would be very brave indeed if I were to continue in the vein of the last speaker. No matter which side of that particular debate I took, I think I might be the loser. The immigration policy of a country is, in my opinion, probably the most important problem, especially in so far as a country like Canada is concerned. Most segments of the economy consider we will have to increase the population of our country by immigration by at least 50 per cent or more in the next ten years to provide the opportunities that are available to the Canadian people. We need a vast number of immigrants in this country.

I believe it would be very difficult to decide in Timiskaming, in fact in any part of northern Ontario in which I have had the opportunity of living and working, who the immigrants were going to be. It would be difficult to maintain an ethnic balance in northern Ontario because the independent countries from which a large segment of the population came no longer exist. This is true of some of the Scandinavian areas, the Slavic and Baltic areas. These people have brought many benefits to northern Ontario from those areas, benefits that cannot be duplicated. I do not believe it is necessary for us to maintain a balance, particularly when it is something that was unplanned in the first place.

We should be embarking on an immigration policy which is designed to increase invest-