

Immigration Decline

Immigration flow is influenced, often significantly, by external factors as well as domestic conditions. There have been variations in the past and there will be variations in the future.

For our part, we pledge to continue our efforts to keep the number of new arrivals as steady and consistent as possible with Canada's requirements and economic circumstances.

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, I feel I would be remiss if I did not preface my remarks on the minister's statement by welcoming him back to active participation in the affairs of the House. For too long we have been denied one of his oratorical displays and his sharp partisan spirit in debate. It has been so long, in fact, that many of us were beginning to wonder if there really was a Minister of Manpower and Immigration in this government.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the hon. member knows that in commenting on the minister's statement he should try to keep to the subject. It seems to me that he is now making rather extraneous comments.

An hon. Member: But truthful.

Mr. Speaker: I advise the hon. member accordingly, as required by the rules, to stay on the subject matter of the statement.

Mr. Paproski: Having said this, I must say also that it is far from reassuring to listen to his statement on recent trends in immigration. It is obvious from what he has just said that the period of his long silence and immersion in the affairs of his department has produced little that is encouraging in Canada's immigration picture. The Cape Breton mountain has laboured and brought forth a West Indian mouse.

● (2:20 p.m.)

I would be the last person to criticize, on grounds of race or colour, an immigration policy that emphasized the bringing in of West Indian and Asiatic immigrants. I do not believe these are valid grounds for judging the suitability of immigrants. But I do believe it is legitimate to criticize a policy that concentrates on immigrants who, by reason of climatic conditions in their country of origin and by reason of their standards of skill and training, inevitably pose great problems for everyone concerned with their relocation in a radically different, highly sophisticated, industrialized, urban society such as ours.

It is of interest to recall the many recent stories in the press about Australia's immigration policy. If I recollect correctly, one story last week said that Americans were entering Australia as new settlers at the rate of 4,000 a month. Other stories tell of heavy emigration from Great Britain, the Low Countries, Germany and Scandinavia to Australia. The reason given is the expansionist policy of the present Australian government and the heavy accent on resource development and economic growth "down under".

Certainly any skilled European worker, professional man or person with capital to invest in a small enterprise would look twice at the Canada of today before deciding to come here permanently. We are being bypassed by the most desirable type of immigrant because Canada today presents a picture of a dormant economy, a country obsessed with social welfare and constitutional programs, where economic expansion is at a standstill and taxes are multiplying in increasingly burdensome tiers.

Mr. Trudeau: Talk about bringing forth a mouse!

Mr. Paproski: It appears from what the minister has just told us that our manpower and immigration teams abroad have lost their effectiveness. Either they are unable to make Canada appear sufficiently attractive or they lack sufficient incentive. Perhaps the current austerity drive has weakened their effectiveness.

I would welcome a further statement from the minister at an early date that would explain how our once potent lure for immigrants has suddenly gone sour.

Mr. Trudeau: Guys like you.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Paproski: You are nobody until somebody loves you—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Paproski:—and you are nobody until somebody cares, and that is exactly what I expect from the right hon. gentleman.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I am not against immigrants coming to Canada from Asia, the Middle East or the West Indies. I simply feel that the current flow of immigrants has been thrown out of balance to the point where immigrants from those areas are a flood and immigrants from Northern Europe a trickle.