

Immigration

full and equal Canadian; that there are no master races in Canada. The full potential of this nation will be built upon the strength of immigrant peoples; and for all of them, from whatever shore they come, there must be full and absolute equality as Canadian citizens, not some secondary status which is subordinate to people of other origins.

What the minister has said about sponsored immigration causes me very considerable concern. The minister stated that he was making some basic changes, but what he said sounded to me excessively restrictive. It is clear that he has introduced into sponsored immigration the whole question of skills.

In order to get sponsorship on a balanced basis from all continents, what he has done is to take away from some. He said he has made no change. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when you examine his statement carefully it becomes quite clear that he has severely restricted sponsored immigration from certain of the countries where it is now at a very high level. If I understand the minister aright, and I think I do, there will be many heartbreaks and much anxiety and unrest over this new policy.

The minister during the last week publicly made some very inconsistent statements about skilled and unskilled immigration. Our immigration cannot be restricted solely to skilled persons. I wonder how many ancestors of the members of this house would ever have entered Canada if admission had then been restricted to skilled persons. I say, Mr. Speaker, that we must be realistic about this question of skills and sponsorship. There is a role for persons without special skills, and we must not by selective standards or restrictions on sponsorship discriminate in fact against admissions from many countries in the world.

I hope that in the committee there will be an exhaustive study and a vigorous discussion of the white paper. I also hope there will be vigorous discussion of this white paper by informed persons in all parts of Canada. But I suggest to the government that they should now introduce the bill to revise the Immigration Act so we would have it before us in the committee as well as the white paper. This would enable knowledgeable persons to be heard as witnesses and all would be given a chance to make a contribution, not only to the development of this policy but to its implementation, in a fully revised immigration act.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, we in this party welcome this white paper. If I may adopt the metaphor used by the hon. member for Carleton because of the very long period of gestation we would have been inclined to welcome it even if we had thought it was an ill favoured document. However, I must say that it is a white paper which should not be so described. I cannot help recalling that the various Conservative midwives failed to produce any white paper at all.

We promise and urge the most intensive scrutiny of this at the earliest possible time in the appropriate committee of the house, for the earliest possible embodiment of some of the proposals in the white paper in legislative form. We say this because we believe this bill may foretell a very serious and important improvement in immigration procedures in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome, first of all, the fact that this white paper is expansionist in outlook. This is as it should be. This country in the future, as in the past, must depend for its growth and prosperity on the welcome and intelligent expansionist policy in Canada to those whom we can attract to this country.

Second, we welcome that part of the bill which is non-discriminatory. This is very important to the good name of Canada, and this is something we have not achieved in the past. It is very important that we not only change the regulations in regard to sponsorship which the white paper suggests, but we should go further and change those provisions in the act which lend themselves to continued discrimination. Also, while mentioning this subject of sponsorship, there are some matters here that we want to look into very carefully.

I also notice in one part of the paper relating to this matter that it is suggested that non-citizens who are permanent residents will have the same sponsorship privileges for the next six years, but thereafter non-citizens may sponsor only dependent relatives. This seems an odd compromise. If it is a good policy it should not be for six years but should stay indefinitely. If it is bad policy it should not be in for six years. This is a compromise. We want to look into the sponsorship provision very carefully, because it is important to get skilled people here, and skilled people will not come to Canada unless they are given reasonable opportunity to sponsor their relatives into this country. We want to make sure we are not being discriminatory in that way.