

*Immigration*

now no excuse for people who are in Canada illegally. Our regulations governing this have been in effect for some years now, and I submit anyone living here as an illegal resident is doing so deliberately and knowingly in contravention of our laws.

We are happy and, as I said, consider it a positive step to have enunciated in statute the fundamental objectives of Canadian immigration law. These objectives are family reunification, non-discrimination, concern for refugees, and the promotion of Canada's economic, social, demographic, and cultural goals. I think these are consistent with a position of enlightened self-interest and we commend the government for laying down our national objectives in such terms.

I feel that family reunification must continue to be a priority in our national objectives, and we should take every opportunity through diplomatic channels to achieve this end. I think every member of this House would applaud the minister's efforts to reassure those Canadians with relatives living in eastern Europe that, to use his words, "We shall continue our efforts to reunite their families and will apply our rules and procedures with compassion and flexibility." The family is the basic unit of our social system, and the condition of the family in our society is reflected in the condition of society in general. It is a natural, reasonable, and predictable response for people who come to Canada to want to bring their family here at some future date. Because we believe in the importance of the family, we must encourage and promote the reunification of our immigrant families.

A concern that is foremost in the minds of all Canadians, and I am sure is a concern of all members of this House, is that our immigration policy be non-discriminatory. A further concern should be that it be perceived as or believed to be non-discriminatory. The plain facts are that no immigration policy can be completely free from all discrimination, that everyone in the world, for example, has equal opportunity for making application to come to Canada. This was pointed out quite aptly by my colleague, the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander), in his speech on Tuesday, March 15, 1977.

As well we know that extra points have been given for educational level, special training, expertise in certain areas, personal assets, and so on. In a sense we are discriminating against individuals who do not have these certain characteristics. However, we do not call this process of selectivity discrimination, and the important thing we try to keep in mind and adhere to is that within the guidelines of educational status, special training and so on we do not favour one race more than another, or one language group more than another.

While it remains to be seen how the minister will interpret and administer the act and regulations, I feel most Canadians would be encouraged to see the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in statute law. I think that, on the whole, most Canadians would agree that in the past our policy in this area of non-discrimination has been fair and that those seeking to come to our country have been accorded reasonable and

equitable treatment. I hope it will remain that way in the future.

I do not want to take too much time to discuss refugees, because other members from this side have covered the topic quite well. I want to say, however, that since Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Refugees, it is about time our nation did something to formalize our commitment in this direction. Canadian statute law has never confirmed this principle in any way relating to immigration policy. The government may consider claims for refugee status on the basis of fear of persecution due to race, religion, ethnic origin, or membership in a particular social group or political opinion. This is as it should be, and the government ought to have a certain amount of flexibility in handling refugee situations as they arise.

In recent times, and here I think of the emigration to various parts of the world of refugees from Vietnam and Chile, there has been some controversy over what a refugee actually is; and, further, what role political affiliation ought to have when consideration is being given to asylum in Canada. My understanding is, as well, that provision is being made by this legislation for the establishment by regulation of special selection standards for refugees, to modify the criteria applicable to normal immigrants so that special assistance can be made available within Canada to assist in the refugees' successful establishment.

I now come to the discussion of the area that is of direct enlightened self-interest to Canada, the promotion of Canada's economic, social, demographic, and cultural goals. The other areas I have spoken of are in Canada's interest, but really in an indirect way. The demographic goals and the lack of government direction in reaching those goals were well dealt with by my colleague from Provencher when he spoke for the Official Opposition the day this bill was introduced.

I think that the provision to steer immigrants away from our already crowded urban areas like Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Ottawa is a positive one. My feeling is, as I stated earlier, that immigration is a privilege and that it should not be unreasonable to expect people coming to Canada to help us achieve our economic and demographic goals. The bill provides for a period of service where the immigrant's abilities could be used for six months. I think the hon. member for Palliser (Mr. Schumacher) said that it should be longer. I agree. It could be extended. Some choice could be provided within particular types of categories. In other words if, for example, dentists are needed for rural areas of Canada, give the immigrant dentist a choice of rural Manitoba, rural British Columbia, or rural Quebec. I suggest that the government should provide incentives for immigrants to settle in certain areas. Canada is certainly large enough and diversified enough to allow some choice of location under this particular requirement for residency for six months in a specified area.

Another part of our social, economic, demographic and cultural goals involves the participation of the provinces. I believe in the principle enunciated in this legislation that consultation with the provinces will take place. I hope this