

pressures hamper the effectiveness of the program and leave people dissatisfied.

As waiting lists grow longer and the time to process legitimate applicants drags on, the temptation to abuse the system also grows. Our very openness and generosity make the system vulnerable to abuse. Abuse which erodes confidence in the system ultimately threatens the very integrity of the program. Without the tools to manage the program effectively in the 1990s, we run the risk of losing the support of the public and the economic and social benefits which immigration brings to Canada.

The Minister of Employment and Immigration has proposed a series of changes which will ensure a healthy balance among those traditional cornerstone groups of our immigration program.

While the program will continue to favour the family class and provide strong support for refugees fleeing persecution, we will also place a renewed emphasis on the independent and business class immigrant whose skills, talents and acumen are so necessary to our economic prosperity.

What the changes will do is allow us to control the categories and numbers of new immigrants more effectively. We will achieve more certainty in our planning. Greater certainty means fewer delays in processing, more predictable processing times and greater fairness for newcomers.

Specifically, we are proposing the introduction of three management streams for selecting immigrants. Our objective is to eliminate backlogs which drain our resources and reduce our flexibility to assist others.

Stream one would be open-ended, with no fixed limit on the number of applicants. The department would be committed to processing individuals according to specific time frames. Spouses and dependent children will benefit most from this change.

Streams two and three would have established ceilings for groups within each stream and have limited commitments to processing times. Once ceilings were reached, no more applications would be accepted.

We also intend to take steps which will accelerate the refugee status determination process. A single-stage hearing process will reduce processing times, cut admin-

istrative costs and allow the independent Immigration and Refugee Board to target its resources more effectively. This is a change recommended by Canada's Auditor General and supported by the chairman of the IRB.

Genuine refugees should be able to get on with their lives as quickly as possible. The sooner decisions are made on claimants' status, the sooner refugees can get off social assistance programs and become fully contributing members of their community.

The new procedures will allow convention refugees to be "landed" more quickly and take up employment sooner. The proposals would permit the spouse and dependent children of the applicant to be processed at the same time as the successful claimant.

The department hopes to cut the processing time for landed status to an average of six months.

The changes we are proposing will ensure that we have a fair, balanced and effective immigration system attuned to the realities of the 1990s, which continues to satisfy our compassionate instincts as a people and meets our pragmatic requirements as a nation.

[English]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the minister. In his speech nowhere did he deal with any of the major, specific issues in the bill. He is supporting the bill.

For example, I would like to ask him, in the bill authority is given to the government to impose a place of residence on an immigrant coming to this country as a condition in the immigration visa. We have always had incentives to encourage immigrants to go to certain parts of the country where their trades and professions were needed and that is acceptable.

I ask the minister, how can he support a clause in the bill which would impose on the immigrant that he or she must live in a certain city or district of Canada when the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in article 6 says that a citizen or a permanent resident can live in any part of Canada, can work in any part of Canada, can move to any part of Canada?

I ask him that question and I hope that he can give us a good answer.