

*Immigration*

the number of immigrants who arrived. We could spend a lot of time canvassing the various reasons why this occurred—the dynamism, employment opportunities, attractiveness of very rapidly growing urban centres in this country which absorbed a higher percentage of the immigrants who have arrived this century.

Whether the factors be those or others, we do know that immigration has not followed an even pattern. In fact if one were to look at the present situation, it is an extremely uneven pattern. A high proportion of the immigrants coming to this country are concentrated within one province; indeed, they are concentrated within one specific geographic area.

I am concerned on two fronts, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned that with the recognition of demographic goals set out in the objectives there will be a much greater consciousness on a longer term basis, on the part not only of public officials but the general public itself, of the implication of immigration, not just on an immediate basis in terms of the economic situation—which is uppermost in our minds at the present time—but on a longer term basis in terms of the evolution and development of the country.

What concerns me, and I think should concern the minister, is that when he recognizes the importance of trying to achieve demographic goals I am sure he must also recognize that this is not something which can be achieved unilaterally. Surely the lesson we have learned in recent years is that the federal government cannot by itself establish demographic policy. It would run into enormous difficulty if it sought to do so.

I know the minister has no such intention and has indicated so clearly. I also know that the present demographic group which is set up to co-ordinate the fact finding and projections on the part of a number of key departments in the federal government is also working closely with the provinces. But I think it must be clearly stated in law that this is one of the very clear objectives, namely, that the demographic goals which are to be evolved over the next few years, for the life of this legislation, will be evolved in full consultation with the other legitimate authority—the provinces—and other organizations and even individuals who have something important to contribute to this very important process in community and country building.

Unless that commitment is clearly stated in the objectives, then surely the minister is not attempting to put on the statute books a law which is both realistic and fair so far as the evolution of this country is concerned. I hope that the minister will give serious consideration to this amendment submitted by my colleague from Provencher and will see it within his power to accept it as reasonable and right.

With regard to motion No. 7 moved by my colleague from Greenwood, which raises the whole issue of the multicultural nature of Canada, I do not think the argument really needs to be reiterated. I think it was very clearly stated. We are both a bilingual country in terms of our origins and the evolution of this country since Confederation, and multicultural in character. I could wax eloquent about the multicultural aspects of Prince Edward Island but I realize that that is not the purpose

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

of this debate this afternoon. If this is to be a modern and relevant piece of legislation, and if it is to be clearly stated in the objectives that it is the character of this country which has to be preserved and enhanced, then it is only reasonable and right that, in addition to the bilingual characteristic which is now increasingly and generally recognized, its multicultural nature should also be included.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to my own motion, No. 8, which refers to the clause which clearly states that we are to have a non-discriminatory policy. I refer to Clause 3(f) which provides:

—to ensure that any person who seeks admission to Canada on either a permanent or temporary basis is subject to standards of admission that do not discriminate on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion or sex;

This is a time when increasingly authorities, national governments, even agencies under the purview of the United Nations are making clear the position that there is the concept of equity and equality. If we fail to state this, there is always the possibility, hopefully less than probably, that acts of discrimination will take place, particularly against those who may seek admission to this country. There were a number of predecessors to the present immigration minister who declared in this House, since I have been a member, that we would have a non-discriminatory policy. The late Prime Minister Lester Pearson made it very clear, in support of that concept, that Canada would adopt a policy of non-discrimination in its immigration program. Those on the special joint committee and those who have studied immigration closely take the view that only in recent years, really only within the last decade, can Canada rightfully say that its immigration policy is non-discriminatory. What I am asking for in this amendment is that it be realistic in terms of potential discrimination which exists both in this country and in the world today. We must recognize that in the past there has been discrimination on the basis of race and creed. These are no longer acceptable as bases of discrimination in the type of democratic society which is existent in Canada today.

● (1750)

We have left uncovered an area of increasing potential for discrimination. The world in which we have moved in the late sixties and early seventies is one increasingly polarized with respect to strong political opinions and activities. There have been instances within our own society of actions being taken which were based on a person's political point of view. Unfortunately in one or two instances I have encountered discrimination with respect to political opinion, which is something we must be very careful to guard against. In a highly complicated technocratic society it is dangerous to start narrowing the borders of accepted and legitimate political activity and opinion.

During the last few years we have seen a number of countries which previously enjoyed democratic and parliamentary institutions such as our own, lose those institutions because of intolerance and a regime which eliminated free political expression and activity. It is not encouraging to realize that there are fewer parliamentary groups and fewer