

*Immigration Act, 1976*

would have been easier to keep repeating during the whole hour that the situation is frightening, that there are abuses which must be eliminated, so we will come to grips with the problem and take firm action. I know the Minister feels that I am missing the point, but he knows how much I enjoy having rational and civilized discussions with him on these issues. I was trying to make Quebecers understand the importance of immigration, as well as the importance of the refugee program. I will not shirk my responsibility to say that if there is corruption we must take corrective measures. And corruption there is.

Toronto and Montreal consultants are now making a fortune telling prospective applicants that thanks to them they can rest assured that they will be given immigrant or refugee status if they follow their advice. Their fees are out of this world, and if there are abuses they must be eliminated. But what I would like to see is the Government and the Ministers responsible for immigration taking the initiative and telling the public at large all about the radical changes which Canada is experiencing with respect to immigrants and refugees. They have to tell the people that the problem we have in this country is a western problem.

Our once very high birth rate has fallen to new lows and our demographic situation is such that Canadians are growing ever older. What are the practical implications? This means that, until a few years ago, the life expectancy of Canadian women—and I can see my good friend, the former Minister of National Defence, who is in excellent shape. I have always said that one of the mistakes made by the Right Hon. Prime Minister was not to have appointed this man, and I mean Mr. McKinnon, Minister of National Defence because he has the knowledge, the level-headedness and the elegance required to have made an extraordinary minister. As I was saying, women who had a life expectancy of 62 a few years ago now have a life expectancy of 79.6. I look at our young pages who have just come in. A few years ago, they could have expected to live until the age of 62, but they can now expect to live until the age of 79. Men, who used to have a life expectancy of 60 a few years ago, can now hope to reach the age of 72. This means that we have an aging population. This means that our hospitalization, social security and pension costs will go on increasing.

On the other hand, we have to look at our birth rate. Quebec used to have the highest birth rate in Canada, North America and the Western world. Now, it has the lowest birth rate not only in Canada and North America, but also in the Western world. There is a widening gap between the two which can be narrowed only with a policy aimed at supporting a rising birth rate, but it would be very difficult to implement such a policy.

We shall therefore have to make up the difference with an appropriate immigration policy. If we want such an immigration policy, we have to look to those regions of the world which can produce immigrants. The Western world is facing the same problem as Canada and we shall therefore have to look for immigrants, not in Europe, but in the new world, in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. This is where we can find a pool of immigrants. The Minister of Immigration,

the Cabinet, myself and the other Members of Parliament shall therefore have to begin to educate the public and to prepare their hearts and minds to receive new Canadian citizens whose skin will not be the same colour as ours.

If we want to maintain on the one hand our social security system and on the other everything that is good in Canada, we shall need immigrants, and we therefore have to ask ourselves where they will come from. What I find regrettable about this Bill is that people are confusing everything. People say that there have been abuses. There have indeed been abuses, but people are confusing everything: immigrants, refugees, illegals and the illegal actions committed this summer and the previous one. After one boat, everyone went crazy. Yet, this incident seems rather innocent to me. If there is one thing I like about being a Canadian, and this might be true in the United States, but certainly not in the other Western countries, it is that when I look at my colleague who is now smiling at me, I know that he was not born in Canada. The greatest honour for a Canadian is to be elected to this House. I have always said so. It is not necessary to be appointed minister, but only to be elected to this House to represent fellow citizens. The fact that new Canadians can be elected to this House is rather indicative of the change in Canadian attitudes.

Of the 40 Members in this party, I would say there are six, seven, or eight who were not born in Canada and they are just as good MPs, just as good Canadians as those who claim to have been here since time immemorial.

Before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, what I would like or what I would hope is that we put an end to those abuses. With the legislation now before us there are abuses to be remedied—as much as we would like to support it, we do not understand why it was put together with such speed, and railroaded, to frighten people. It is that scary aspect I find offensive in this Bill. It is assumed that people will like it because we will be doing something and that we will be still more popular. That policy is short-sighted because once Canadians, once Quebecers have thought things over, a few months from now, they will see we panicked for nothing.

There were abuses that had to be stopped and they can be stopped, but not with the kind of shotgun approach that is taken in this legislation.

When we enter that debate as we will soon be doing—I have always been fond of concrete proposals, having already attended hearings across Canada on a piece of legislation, said to be a Green Paper on immigration. The then Government also had to deal with a problem. Instead of having a legislation, instead of having a White Paper, a statement of intent, because that is what a white paper is all about, people still have to be informed, and the Green Paper includes all the alternatives available to a government—they are brought before the people, or before a committee, which is asked to select those it finds most suitable. At that point the Government is not committing itself. So we travelled all across Canada, and that was a kind of experience I will never forget. I did the same thing on the constitutional issue, but on immigration matters I travelled across Canada. And it is my hope, in view of the Canadian public's frame of mind—