

individuals whose heritage lies in other countries of the world and who still maintain close family ties with those countries. These individuals make up the ethnocultural mosaic of our country. I am proud to say that Parkdale-High Park has one of the largest multicultural mixes in Canada. In view of this, I am approached on a regular basis with requests for assistance in the immigration of friends and relatives to Canada. Often these individuals encounter difficulties and call on me for help in expediting their case.

Since June, 1979, when my constituency office opened in Toronto, I have become involved in 390 cases directly concerning immigration and involving such countries as the United States, England, Poland, the Philippines, India, the West Indies, Austria, China, Germany and the Soviet Union. As a result, I have worked closely with the Department of Employment and Immigration, and most recently together with the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

I applaud and appreciate the very difficult portfolio which the Minister of Employment and Immigration holds. If there are so many cases in only one constituency, one must only multiply that number by 282 members of Parliament to appreciate the immensity and responsibilities of the post.

I wish to compliment the minister on the humanitarian approach he has taken toward helping to resolve difficult immigration appeals, particularly in the case of family reunification from such areas as the east European countries and the Soviet Union.

Canada has come to be regarded as a compassionate country, and it is through programs and regulations included in the Immigration Act, as well as the decisiveness of our Minister of Employment and Immigration that we will continue to maintain the enviable position we hold in the world. By listening to and understanding the pleas of these many individuals throughout the world, as well as to the groups representing them here in Canada, I feel we can accomplish our goal. This concern was recently shown in my own riding, when the hon. minister visited Toronto to meet and discuss many factors concerning immigration with representatives from the Canadian Polish Congress.

I have had the opportunity many times to ask questions of the minister, through correspondence or in committee. I receive numerous complaints and inquiries from constituents and have often found the need for official clarification or explanation on points of law concerning the Immigration Act. I must thank the minister for the replies I have received to these many questions and for the positive suggestions and actions he has put forth.

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One example of this is a letter I sent to the minister in July of this year requesting information on whether the self-exiled designated class regulation which was due to expire on January 1, 1981, would be extended to allow many east European refugees to resettle in Canada. This regulation gives individuals who are unable to return to their homelands or those who have escaped political and personal harassment the opportunity

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to resettle in Canada, on special humanitarian grounds, in cases where they would not be eligible for immigration under normal circumstances. The minister replied to my letter positively by extending the regulation until January 1, 1983, thus maintaining the opportunity for these unfortunate people to take advantage of this special program.

I also received extensive information from the minister which provided statistical data on such topics as the number of refugees from Asia and eastern Europe seeking resettlement in Canada, the number of individuals given permission to remain in Canada under special minister's permits, the numbers of individuals deported from Canada for various reasons over the last five years and the number of immigrants destined to the Toronto area who would be enrolling children in the school system.

I was able to pass this information on to interested departments at the Toronto Board of Education for their use. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Toronto Board of Education on its excellent programs for new Canadian children. The Toronto Board of Education has provided reception classes for students who have just arrived in Canada, English classes, translation and interpretation services in practically every language of the world, heritage language classes and other programs which I do not have time to mention here. However, in Toronto multiculturalism is a reality.

In addition, I have obtained from the minister information on major funding available for services which provide immigration counselling and assistance on a private basis in Toronto. Again I thank the minister for providing me with such useful information.

There is substantial interest among members of the public concerning immigration, particularly among the people I mentioned who have families who remain in other parts of the world. This was demonstrated in my own riding when I held an immigration seminar at which top officials from the local office of the Department of Employment and Immigration were present to meet the public and to answer many questions. Over 200 people took time from their own schedules to attend this meeting. This just illustrates how much concern and interest exist within our community in the area of immigration.

There are, however, several questions which continue to be asked and about which I would appreciate receiving clarification from the minister. These problems occur frequently in the cases presented to me, and I am seeking ways to resolve some of them.

Does the minister have any plans to reduce the number of illegal immigrants in Canada—the number of immigrants who are living underground and of whom we know nothing of their whereabouts? Many of these individuals are afraid to send their children to school because of the fear that they will be recognized. However, many of them have remained in Canada for many years and have settled well. I would appreciate knowing whether special consideration will be given to these individuals when deciding whether they should be allowed to remain in Canada.