

*Government Orders*

• (1540)

[English]

In a similar way immigration policy addresses public concerns about prosperity, a central objective of that policy. The objective over our 125 years as a nation is to attract to Canada people with the skills and talents we require to build a prosperous country.

At different times in our history the economic rationale for immigration has been more obvious than at other times. For example, at the turn of the century we deliberately recruited immigrants to open the west and less than 50 years later a new wave of builders arrived to participate in the post-war industrialization of Canada.

The bottom line today is the same as the bottom line of more than a century ago. Immigration is essential to prosperity. Immigration contributes to both the soul and sinew of Canada. Responding to the social and humanitarian concerns of Canadians and meeting our economic needs are central objectives of the policy. Managing the balance between these two faces of immigration is the key to a successful program that best serves the interest of all Canadians. We cannot have one without the other. The program would be incomplete.

The same logic holds true for the great debate that engages us today as a nation. Unity and prosperity are inseparable. I am confident that Canadians understand this logic. I am equally certain that immigration will continue to contribute to our unity and prosperity.

Like Canada itself, our country's immigration and refugee programs face important challenges as we move through the nineties. The world is changing around us and that change is placing new and mounting pressure on our programs.

Just a few weeks *The Toronto Star* ran two news stories side by side. They were prominently displayed. The stories touched a nerve which many of us will recognize. The first story described in typically dramatic fashion the recent United Nations report on global population. In big, dark letters the headline read: "Immigrant tide to grow higher. Throngs to flee poverty and turmoil of Third World".

The second story, the headline not quite so big, said: "Toronto woman faces 20 charges in immigrant scam". In 40 column inches of space *The Toronto Star* managed to capture the scope of our immigration challenge and the nature of some of the obstacles we face in meeting that challenge.

Those headlines were also typically provocative. They transmitted a sense of anxiety about the value and effectiveness of immigration. They represent yet another dimension of the challenge we face in sustaining the public's confidence in these essential programs for Canada.

[Translation]

This Chamber of elected representatives, this government whose role as steward is dependent upon the will of the Canadian public, has an obligation, indeed a fundamental responsibility to preserve and improve a vital national program in the face of increasing international and domestic pressures.

What are these pressures? How do they exhibit themselves?

We do not have to look too far to see evidence of change. The 1980s mark the start of a period of great migration.

Today, some experts suggest that as many as 80 million people are on the move throughout the world. Prompted by political and economic instability, environmental disasters or the simple desire for a new beginning, individuals and families have uprooted themselves in search of new homes.

Other factors contribute to that movement. Modern communication technologies spread images of the affluent west around the world. The growth of an international labour market has opened up opportunities for those with the special skills sought after by developed and developing countries. The scale of that movement can be startling to consider. For example, in 1983, approximately 95,000 people sought refugee status in all OECD countries. By last year, that number was more than 700,000 individuals, an increase of approximately 800 per cent. In 1983, Canada received 1,500 claims for refugee status; last year, it received 30,000.

In Europe this year, the Germans alone expect some 400,000 people to claim refugee status in their country. This large scale, unpredictable movement of people is a phenomenon to which industrialized nations like Canada have been required to respond. It is a phenomenon that is not going to disappear soon. A recent United Nations report on global population predicts an explosive rate of growth in the next decade. Most of those births will take place in the Third World, the primary source of today's immigration.