

*Government Orders*

Today, while we are thinking about and moving in the positive direction of increasing our transportation loans, let us also stop to think that we should be increasing the speed and velocity of the decisions that have been in purgatory for four, five or six years in some cases.

Therefore, if we can take the spirit of these transportation loans which is in essence family reunification, if there are no security or health problems with these individuals and if they are clearly not flagrantly abusing our laws, what is the problem in accepting them and having them begin a life of normalcy, the same that you and I, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues enjoy seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year in this beautiful country?

Because it is also available to those who wish to join families, not as refugees but as family class members, there is a great deal of frustration. We see it in our constituency offices where members cannot either successfully or quickly enough sponsor relatives from abroad.

There is a situation in India, for instance. We have a one consular operation in New Delhi. How long does it take for a constituent who is a Canadian to have an uncle, a nephew, or a niece from that part of the world come to join him or her? A year? Two years? Maybe three years or longer? We have had those cases.

As well, what I am suggesting is that on the family class basis, there is a frustration because, over-all, the percentage of family class immigration has gone down in recent years compared to being roughly 50 per cent of immigration. Therefore, if it is in the low thirties, that 20 per cent buffer is causing that frustration. Compounded on that is the time that is required for those individuals, particularly where we have not shifted resources quickly enough. One knows that there is a great deal of anguish and pain.

The message should also be very evident to the government of the day. We need to speed up those decisions; we need to give Canadians greater satisfaction, but not automatic satisfaction. I am not saying you simply have an absolute open door where there are no checks and balances. That is not what Canadians are asking for. That is not what any country should do.

• (1150)

We must have integrity in the system. We must protect our borders and our flanks. There is a legitimate need for continued immigration in this country. We have a dwindling birth rate and aging population. There are 70,000 people who leave our country every single year and do not return. Our economy in certain sectors still needs individuals that our schools are not producing. We still go to England to get our tool and die makers because we are not producing them in Canada. If you look at the relatively small population base for the size of our country, by the year 2000, unless we step things up or unless the birth rate goes up, we are going to be going backward in terms of population. That will have detrimental effects on the life and society as we know it.

Therefore, if those are facts of nation-building consequences—and they are—and if we know them today, then let us not deny our future by being complacent in the present. Let us be honest about our future challenges. Let us discuss with Canadians the needs of a positive immigration program. Let us begin to destroy the myths that embrace immigration. We know what those myths are. Let us be up front. If we do, there will be Canadians who will have greater understanding and awareness of our needs. There will be greater understanding and tolerance of new Canadians, and greater strength will be given to Canadians who have family with them in this great country.

At the time we are discussing these loans I suggest that the essence of it is to have families reunited. If we are supporting the unification of families, whether they be refugees or family class members, then we almost support a speedier determination for our refugee applicants, a speedier, more successful, more fair system for determination in sponsoring our applicants from abroad.

I take that signal from the government. I am indicating today that we will be supporting Bill C-77. We are hopeful that the government will support the amendment I will move at Committee of the Whole. We look forward to passage of this bill in this sitting on this day so that the minister can have an increased travel loans budget and have the flexibility to augment family reunification where it is required.