

*Supply—Manpower and Immigration*

able to ensure. I am moved to say, immodestly perhaps but sincerely, that I believe we have made a very long step forward in this difficult area of public policy.

● (3:30 p.m.)

The number of immigrants who came to Canada in 1966 was the second largest since the end of the war, 194,773 people. That number was exceeded only in 1957 when, as hon. members will recall, some very exceptional circumstances prevailed. A successful immigration movement of this size can be sustained only if we are successful in recruiting and training a high quality staff, particularly selection officers. We have improved our services and must continue to do so to get the full benefits of the new policy.

As I have stated on a number of occasions, I believe it is important to bring the flow of French speaking immigrants to Canada more into line with the language characteristics of our population. This is not going to be easy, but I am determined to achieve all the improvement possible.

Last year the number of immigrants from France, Switzerland and Belgium totalled over 12,000, an increase of about 45 per cent over the previous year and the highest figure on record. It will be higher this year. Over 11,000 have already arrived, but this still represents a much smaller percentage of our total immigration movement than we ought to be able to attract.

We cannot take the most effective action to stimulate a greater movement of immigrants from France and other French speaking countries until we know precisely what has been causing the small movement to date. Accordingly we have made arrangements with a group of social scientists at the University of Montreal to carry out a number of studies on the attitudes of people in some of these countries to Canada, on things which stimulate them to migrate, on the experiences in various parts of this country of those who do come to Canada, and on the way in which different groups in Canada regard and respond to such immigrants. We are just beginning to get findings from these studies, and I hope they will enable us to do more to continue the increase in the number of French speaking immigrants.

Another point I would like to make about our immigration activities concerns the steps we have taken to co-ordinate them with our manpower programs. This co-ordination is going forward in two important ways.

[Mr. Marchand.]

First, the build-up of our labour market information system includes provision for making data on our manpower needs available more frequently and more reliably to immigration officers throughout the world. Thus they will be in a better position to counsel those who wish to come to Canada about opportunities and occupational requirements.

Second, we have changed the way in which responsibilities for immigrants once they arrive in Canada are handled. The strengthening of our manpower services across Canada provides an opportunity to ensure that newcomers to this country who are seeking employment are able to obtain the same help as Canadians. This is both in their interest and in ours. Accordingly, the former settlement and placement services of the immigration division have been transferred to the manpower division of the department and integrated with our manpower services. This change has inevitably involved some minor administrative problems, but it is the way in which I believe we can soon render more effective services to immigrants.

I would not want that opinion to be interpreted complacently. On the contrary I would emphasize that there is room for considerable improvement in the help we give to immigrants to get settled in Canada, help which is well worth while in the national interest as well as in the interest of the individual. This is one of the important problems on which my department will try to make substantial progress next year.

At the same time I have to say that the increasing volume of international travel is taxing our existing staff and facilities to the limit. There is the same problem here as in our efforts to help Canadian workers find better jobs. If immigrants are to be fairly selected and are to make a maximum contribution to our economic growth, and if international visitors are to be treated with speed and courtesy, we must have adequate numbers of well trained and efficient staff.

I have referred throughout this review to many programs. But programs approved by parliament are in themselves only expressions of good will. To make them work requires money and people.

I have touched on the highlights of our activities for the period to which these estimates apply. We are trying to do many things, some of them unusually complex and difficult. We have encountered some problems and we will encounter more. We are doing