

Routine Proceedings

which recognizes Quebec's exclusive right over the integration, reception and selection of immigrants.

As you all know, Quebec is a distinct society. It has its own official language and as the only French-speaking state in North America, it must protect and encourage francophone immigration. Neither does the minister's document show us how he intends to promote immigration to Canada. We know that there is a growing feeling of hostility to immigrants and especially refugees, but we believe that the Canadian government and the provinces will have to inform the public about the benefits and positive aspects of this immigration.

Immigration has made a tremendous contribution to Canada's economic prosperity. Immigration is necessary to deal with the demographic problems in Canada and Quebec. Immigration is necessary to renew our rapidly aging population. This must be explained. We must tell Canadians that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages, that despite all the propaganda to the contrary, immigrants make less use of social services in Canada, that the crime rate of immigrants is less than the crime rate of Canadians born here.

In his document, the minister does not say either how he will resolve the problem of appointments to the Immigration and Refugee Board. He continues to make appointments. Complaints are still coming from lawyers, immigration and refugee groups, clients and the public at large. Some appointments not based on competence are still being made. Some appointments are still purely political and we would have liked the minister to propose mechanisms for making non-partisan appointments.

Is it possible to create a committee of lawyers from the bar or immigration organizations so that there is a pre-selection before the commissioner is appointed? The minister does not deal with another problem, the backlog at the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Too many cases are outstanding, too many applications take months and even years. The minister unfortunately endorsed the Conservative Party's decision to set up a processing super centre in Vegreville, Alberta, and this has caused a great many problems.

People can no longer find their way around. Today you can no longer reach an official to explain the situation. You have to keep calling numbers which are always busy. It is not easy to obtain the documents to be completed and to submit an application.

• (1030)

Civil servants are not pleased with the system. Jobs were eliminated in Quebec and in all the other provinces. Services provided in French by the centre in Vegreville are not adequate.

The minister also says that he will table a bill on citizenship. We are waiting for that legislation. I ask the minister to reconsider the concept of dual citizenship. The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration has recommended to the

minister that dual citizenship be eliminated. Such a measure would be an unacceptable step back, considering that countries now recognize more and more the concept of dual or triple citizenship, and that the mobility of people has increased considerably throughout the world. We cannot eliminate such a precious right for all Canadians and particularly for those immigrants who want to keep a tie with their country of origin. This concept is good for Canada and also for immigrants, who can be good communicators with their country of origin and promote Canadian trade there. It is good that people can have this dual citizenship if they want it.

We are also concerned by the fact that, in some documents given to us today, the minister talks about occupational training and about promoting co-operation between his department and the Department of Human Resources Development, regarding immigrants. We, Bloc Quebecois members, have clearly said that occupational training falls under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. The federal government should not interfere in that sector. The provinces are closer to the client group. They are more aware of the needs in manpower training. The minister now says that his department will set up a vocational training centre for immigrants, in co-operation with the Department of Human Resources Development. This is unacceptable and the Bloc Quebecois strongly opposes this proposal by the minister.

I also want to say that the Bloc Quebecois is a pro-immigration party. More often than not, we do not share the somewhat exaggerated views of our friends from the Reform Party regarding immigration and citizenship issues. Quebec is, and remains, a country, a nation and a province open to immigration. There is a consensus in our province in favour of accepting immigrants. Incidentally, we anticipate that, for 1995, Quebec will maintain the objective of 40,000 new immigrants; for 1996, it will be 42,000, while for 1997, the number should reach 43,000. Bloc Quebecois members, as well as Quebec society as a whole, are open to immigration, which we consider to be a source of social, cultural and economic wealth.

I am proud to be an immigrant myself. I am proud to be a Quebecer and to be of Chilean origin.

• (1035)

[English]

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am dumbfounded and Canadians should be outraged over what has just been revealed here by the minister.

Almost a year ago this minister initiated a \$1 million consultation during which thousands of well meaning patriotic Canadians put time, talent and energy to work proposing changes to immigration. During the last several months this minister has engaged in a series of well planned media leaks, floating trial balloons, raising expectations, talking a tough line