

is, however, an economic tool which cannot be used when we have large scale unemployment, and is it only natural that in times like that there is a demand for a restriction on the admission of immigrants. But the immigration policy, as others have said and perhaps it is trite to say so, is far more than a mere matter of economic policy. It is a matter of dealing with humanity. I am not in favour, and I doubt if any member of the House is in favour, of completely unselective standards in allowing people to come to this country. Such a thing would be impossible. So long as we have selective standards, it is necessary that those standards be generous, not only for the sake of the people concerned but for the sake of Canada as a whole.

● (1720)

We have been immensely enriched culturally and economically by the immigrants who have come to the country on a reasonably generous, non-discriminatory system of immigration. But we must always remember that we are dealing with individuals, and so we should always be vigilant to ensure that not only our rules as to procedures but our practices in regard to the individuals who are seeking to come to the country are such as to reflect credit on the sense of humanity and the generosity of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to delay the business of the House, but simply to express our viewpoint on this legislation that we find appropriate in principle. However, I think that this legislation improves an act that the minister recognizes as obsolete. In fact, it gives immigrants already in Canada the opportunity of straightening their situation.

As the minister said, this can also eliminate present and future delays of appeals made before the Immigration Appeal Board and, finally, change the operation of the appeal system.

This bill tends to give, once and for all, those who are not yet landed immigrants but who were in Canada on November 30, 1972 and have since stayed there constantly, the opportunity of applying for the status of landed immigrant, subject to the requirement that this application be received within 60 days following the promulgation of the act.

We agree with the hon. Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) when he says that we must adjust as soon as possible the status of immigrants who have been waiting in illegality for one, two or three years and even more.

In his comments, the minister said that his bill is designed to authorize the temporary appointment of a sufficient number of board members in order to eliminate the backlog of appeals and ensure the appointment of seven new IAP, members for terms of up to two years.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, like other hon. members, whether a two-year mandate is enough, considering that there is a backlog of some 17,000 cases and that more are coming in every day.

So, the hon. minister says, and I quote:

—enable appeals to be determined by single members of the Appeal Board pending the elimination of the backlog.

Immigration Appeal Board Act

They want to appoint seven members for two years; we have an idea of what the public service is, what are the problems, especially as regards immigration. I suggest that a more rational selection should be done so that immigrants know what they are to expect when arriving in Canada.

Last year, I went to Vancouver and saw something which disappointed me about some immigrants who come to settle in Canada. Mr. Speaker, I met some individuals lying in parks—and I say it frankly—who have been here for four or five years, without legal immigrant status, with \$5 or \$6 in their pockets, without anything to eat and no job. Moreover these people can hardly speak our language. I think the department staff should inform those who want to emigrate to Canada, regardless of the country of origin, if they are not refugees, as to what to expect in Canada, the language we speak and how they are going to earn their living.

The minister also said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

Applications . . . will be judged in the light of such criteria as length of residence in this country, family relationships, employment record and compelling grounds for compassionate consideration.

The opportunity for adjustment of status is not open to persons who are in this country now on a minister's permit, who are here as students under contractual relations with their home country, or seasonal workers from abroad who came here under agreement to return.

Mr. Speaker, we have a somewhat different opinion from the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. If a student from another country wants to stay in Canada after having worked here two or three months a year, for two years, he should be allowed to do so because he is already used to our way of life. This could perhaps constitute a very valuable contribution to the Canadian nation and we should think of giving a chance to young people who want to stay here and become full-fledged Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I am so anxious for this bill to be given second reading, to be sent to committee and become the law of the land, that I will resist the temptation to indulge in rhetoric on immigration in Canada. It is a subject, as the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) has said, that needs a great deal more examination and action in order to help Canadians understand that we need a new policy and far greater insights into immigration than the public now appreciates. Let me just say that on our side we are of course going to support this bill because it is precisely the type of measure for which we have been calling.

Ever since November 3, 1972, many members on this side of the House have pointed out the unfairness of the retroactive feature of the November 3 regulation. Today, the minister said that he wants to see this bill passed so that we can start the 60 day period running and clean up the backlog. He said he wants to see this happen very soon. Of course, we want to see it happen soon. I can only say to the minister that if he had spoken in the same tones of urgency that he used today in answering the questions we put to him during the winter and spring months, we would have proceeded a lot faster in cleaning up this enormous backlog.