

Immigration

here, why treat them as if they were objects or animals? What nonsense!

There is another case that I should like to report, a humanitarian case to which I already referred in the House by the way, namely that of the Valdez family. Mr. Speaker, I will not be nasty towards the parliamentary secretary, but I might be towards the department itself. As regards the Valdez family, after making numerous representations to the department and to the parliamentary secretary, I understand that the government said: Listen, our official has decided such and such a thing and the matter went before the appeal court.

But when I read, for instance, a letter from the departmental assistant who in closing says, and here I quote: I am sorry that I have to send you such sad news—speaking of deportation—but it seems to me it would be cowardly to let that family believe there is a happy solution when none has ever existed. If it never existed, why then did the department let them appeal the decision? That is the question I ask myself. There again I feel there is a contradiction. Today, whether you want to believe it or not, because of the department the Valdez family lives in utter poverty in London. That woman is now sick. Naturally we are trying to get the children over here whose studies have already been paid for, but the fact remains that the mother will stay in London with the baby and the rest of the family, while the father has flown the coop. This is what we have done. We have put a family, a woman and her children in such a situation. Why? Not because the act was completely inadequate, but because we forgot to consider the humanitarian side of the problem, in spite of my representations. We simply bowed to the decision of the official who had the future of these people in his hands and we left it at that. Of course, I hope that the new act will be more flexible in such cases in the future.

I also hope that the department will finally become more responsible in immigration matters. I have another suggestion to make to the parliamentary secretary, which he might convey to the minister: Why not abolish this type of appeal procedure which is quite ineffective and replace it, for example, by something more worthwhile, such as a kind of ombudsman, a type of mechanism which may be much more equitable and less expensive for the State.

I could keep on for a long time, Mr. Speaker, but since I have to attend an important committee which will sit in camera, I shall only deal with a few more points. I am going to discuss the matter of provincial responsibility. The provinces are to be more fully consulted, so they say. This is not good enough, in my opinion. In any case, I will have the opportunity to move an amendment to the legislation so that the provinces will be given more decision-making powers with regard to the acceptance of immigrants on their territory.

When I consider the province of Quebec, its culture and its language, I think it should have more say in the matter. The same applies to the other provinces, of course, but since the Francophone majority is in Quebec, I feel it is normal that we should be asking for a greater participation on the part of that province.

[Mr. Lavoie.]

In the departmental statistics for 1976, I believe, I find the list of countries from which immigrants come to Canada, the percentage of Francophones compared to other ethnic groups which speak more English than French. Mind you, I do not want to discriminate in any way, but I wish nevertheless to deal with the preservation of the Quebec culture. I think that if we examine the whole matter we realize that there are many more people speaking foreign languages than French-speaking people who come to Canada. Of course I believe that the immigrant selection is also determined by demographic, economic and social criteria. But as I indicated, for Quebec there is also the question of language and culture.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one last suggestion to the government. Many times, we say: What does the federal government do for an immigrant? When coming here he does get a few things but it seems that when leaving his country of origin, all he is given is an ice cream cone with a nice cherry on top of it. On his way to Canada he eats the cherry and when he lands here there is no more ice cream. Why? Because he is not provided with the right information.

I think the government should print booklets in the various languages of countries where we seek immigrants; then the immigrant would know that in Quebec, for instance, French is spoken but that English is spoken as well. One works in French, but one can also work in English. In Quebec, he would get some social, economic and cultural benefits. In another province too. It seems to me that if all those details were given for each province and if the immigrant had the opportunity to read them before leaving his country he could choose between Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, and so on. It would then be possible, it seems, to prevent all those language problems we have in Quebec, what with legislation such as Bills 63, 22 and what next, I do not know.

It seems to me that if the individual who wants to settle in Quebec has previous knowledge of this, he will learn French because he will want to integrate into the French culture, he will want to live with Francophones. So it seems to me this would be the best. Anyway, this would at least provide adequate information, and whenever someone came to apply at an embassy or immigration office abroad, he would be given that booklet and when he came here he would know where he stands, he would know his rights. This might indeed avoid cases where immigrants are being exploited, a real agony for which there is not much help forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, I still have a lot to say, but I will have an opportunity to speak on this in committee or at the third reading stage. To conclude, I hope that these suggestions will be considered.

● (2100)

Mr. Armand Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I would like first to indicate that I was pleased to hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Portelance), and also the hon. member for Hochelaga (Mr. Lavoie). The parliamentary secretary suggested that certainly work could be found for some immigrants in James