

Government Orders

the present you will find that the proportion of family class and extended family class base immigrants is much smaller than prior to 1984.

There is a very good reason for that. Previous Liberal administrations founded their policy on the cornerstone of family class immigration. There was good reason for it. We believe that it causes an immigrant to be a lot more at ease with himself or herself. You will have a more successful immigrant. You will have the family playing a role that sometimes the state is asked to play and you will have a more successful process of immigration.

The Chair mentioned that my time is limited. My third component is going to be the refugee component. This government really makes an art out of trying to pick on the most vulnerable in our society by returning to the safe third country concept and also by trying to make it more difficult to obtain refugee status.

I had wanted to say a lot more about this third element because what it is trying to do when it says streamline is minimize the number of applications in the refugee determination system. That is not the goal nor should it be the objective of the legislation. The goal of the legislation should be to have a good system in order to arbitrate who is and who is not a refugee and not to eliminate or streamline based on forbidding a number of people access. It is like saying we want to improve the hospitals by saying who we are going to admit as a person who needs help and who we are not going to admit.

I suggest that you cannot do that.

I would care to go on longer, if the House sees fit, or take any questions from members.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member with great interest and I agree with him that there are a tremendous amount of myths out there and not facts on immigration. I agree wholeheartedly with what he said about immigration creating employment and being very important for our country, coming from an area like Brampton which is probably one of the fastest growing areas of Canada today and largely because of immigration which is very positive for the area.

He is right that a lot of people have misconceptions of immigration.

The hon. member was a little critical of the management of our refugee system, which we have had difficulties with. I am the first one to admit it. This is to try and alleviate some of the problems that we have experienced over the years in the refugee process. It was not only our government, it was the previous government as well that had a tremendous backlog of refugees when it left office. It is not only the current administration. We have had these problems.

The hon. member will know that other countries are having the same problems. Refugees are on the move today like never before. What we are trying to do is assure ourselves, and I think Canadians want to be assured, that the people who are coming in to Canada are legitimate refugees. There are a tremendous number of what we call economic refugees who do not fit into the United Nations definition of a refugee. What we are trying to do is assure that those who come here are legitimate refugees.

I think the hon. member will agree—coming from Toronto he knows—that there have been some problems there with fraud, not only in the immigration end of things but from that it goes into welfare fraud. That has been a major concern to the municipalities which have asked for some of the parts of this particular bill, especially the identification of those who are coming in. Heretofore we had no way of keeping track of them.

I want to ask the hon. member one specific question. He is absolutely right that immigration creates employment, economic activity and so on, and yet he criticizes this government and he talks about entrepreneurial class and so on.

Would he give the figures from 1991 to the House on family class, on refugees and on entrepreneurial class? If he does not have them on hand I will make sure he gets them. Second, can he explain why the Liberal government in 1984 cut back immigration to 80,000 people, whereas our goal this year is 250,000 and last year 200,000 new immigrants came to Canada?

If it is so important, and the Conservatives have bungled it as he likes to portray, can he tell us why the Liberals cut back so dramatically?