

Routine Proceedings

broadest range of organizations and individuals ever put together from different walks of life and with varying perspectives on immigration.

There are clearly many points of view across Canada on how many immigrants we should accept, the type of immigrants we should encourage and the programs and services that we should provide. Of course, there are finite limits to our ability and to our resources.

As a government, we must make the difficult choices that are necessary to balance the range of opinions, the range of interests and the motives of all Canadians, and still live within our budgetary and other constraints.

To ensure that our choices are good for Canada, we spent close to two years examining the range of options available to us, against the backdrop of our domestic needs, our international obligations, our moral obligations to our own values and our ability to accommodate people coming to Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have made these choices well. We propose a moderate increase in total immigration over the next five years rising from 200,000 people this year to 220,000 next year and to a maximum of 250,000 in 1992 and beyond.

[Translation]

In allowing that moderate growth, we propose to restore the traditional proportional balance among the three streams of immigration—the family, refugee, and independent categories. To accomplish this balance, we have been required to re-examine the nature of family immigration and to re-define “the family” using the criterion of real dependency.

In practical terms, this means that Canadians will be allowed to sponsor spouses and fiancé (e)s; all dependent children, regardless of their age or marital status; all parents, regardless of age or their sponsor’s length of residence in Canada; and all adopted children, regardless of age, who are legitimately dependent on their parents.

• (1110)

To allow for these new provisions, we have been forced to exclude adult, non-dependent children. But they may still be eligible to immigrate to Canada under the assisted relatives class.

[English]

We will also discontinue the “retirees” program in 1990, since most retirees who were born in Canada and who wish to return in the retirement will be able to do so under other categories.

We have also chosen to continue Canada’s fine record of humanitarianism by providing for generous numbers of government and privately-sponsored refugees, in addition to the people who will have their claims accepted within Canada.

Finally, we will be making a number of adjustments in the independent category to ensure that skilled workers are selected in accordance with both national and provincial economic needs and objectives.

While our choices as a government are difficult, they are no more difficult than the individual choices of those people who choose to come to Canada, who have come here to build new lives. As Canadians we must do everything possible to ensure that we understand both the challenges and the opportunities that immigration provides for us. We must each play a part to ensure that we provide a genuine welcome to those who have chosen Canada as their new home.

In tabling this report, I look around and see the faces of many people who either directly or through a family member know the reality of the immigration experience. It was that reality that directed our choices and our planning. It is that genuine understanding of the people affected that will govern our actions during the course of this plan.

[Translation]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the minister for having given us a chance to analyse the document she just tabled in this House, her five-year plan.

Mr. Speaker, it was a good try by the minister, considering she had to convince both her cabinet colleagues and the Tory caucus, who so often recommended freezing the number of immigration admissions to our country.

The minister is to be commended for moving slowly but surely towards the 1 per cent rate we Liberals have been demanding for several years.

However, Mr. Speaker, we can hardly rely on the figures given in this shiny new five-year plan, because so far, the minister’s projections have never been realized.