

*Government Orders*

• (1315)

When 3,000 deportable criminals disappear into Canadian society in just one year, the potential for harm to the general public is tremendous. Justice cannot be served when the law cannot be enforced. If the deportation orders issued cannot be carried out then the immigration system has very little credibility in the eyes of the Canadian public.

These are the two main reasons other Reform MPs and I cannot bring ourselves to support this bill. But do not get us wrong. We think the intentions of the bill are dead on the mark. We are very pleased the government is listening to Reform Party members and putting some of our ideas into effect. We have been listening to the Canadian people on this issue and we are pleased the government is finally starting to do the same thing.

To be quite frank, my colleagues and I did consider giving qualified support to these measures. Our party believes the parliamentary system does not necessarily require opposition parties to always be adversarial. However, after scrutinizing the legislation we came to the conclusion that we could not in good conscience support the bill. We cannot give our support to legislation without teeth. If we fail to oppose this bill the government could claim to have dealt with the issue and simply moved on to other business. But the truth is that the Liberals have not dealt effectively with this bill. Their failure to do this could have terrible ramifications for the people whose interests we are elected to represent.

This bill is definitely well intentioned but it does not go far enough. The Canadian public expects elected officials to deliver a lot more than good intentions.

I believe I speak for the majority of Canadians when I say there are a number of problems with the current government's approach to immigration. The shortcomings of this particular legislation are just a small part of the larger problem. Quite frankly, public support for immigration policy in this country is at an all time low. Canadians have little faith in the current system and want to see changes made. This means that governments must stop serving special interests and instead make decisions in the interests of the country as a whole.

There are four main areas of immigration policy which the government must reform if it is to win back the trust of the Canadian people. These four areas are: enforcement; the growth of the so-called immigration industry; economic self-interest in selecting applicants; and the unacceptably high immigration levels.

I raised the topic of enforcement earlier in reference to deportation orders, but the issue goes much farther than that. When it comes to immigration there are many areas where the government has a policy to protect the needs and the interests of Canadians but simply does not follow through on enforcing this policy. An example is the breakdown of sponsorships.

Sponsorship is one of the cornerstones of the government's current immigration policy. It consists of an individual in this country supporting an immigrant and vouching that the immigrant will not become a burden on the Canadian social safety net. Sponsorship is an excellent idea. It remains a key component in the success of many newcomers coming to Canada. Unfortunately, sponsorship is just one component of our immigration policy in which an enforcement component is almost entirely lacking.

Mainstream media organizations such as the *Toronto Star* have been reporting on breakdowns in sponsorships for some time now but nothing has been done. What generally happens is that unable to find work, recent immigrants turn to Canada's social safety net rather than to the person who agreed to sponsor them. What are the ramifications of this? To my knowledge, very little is done to counteract this avoidance of responsibility. The end result is negative for all involved.

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For the Canadian taxpayer the promise of a productive contributing citizen is broken. It is replaced with yet another individual who will require the expenditure of already scarce government resources.

For provinces and municipalities, it is yet another form of offloading from the federal government. Provinces and municipalities bear the brunt of providing services such as social assistance. When an immigrant sponsorship breaks down, the responsibility falls to the province. It is forced to take responsibility for a situation it had no hand in creating.

The breakdown in immigrant sponsorship is especially an insult to the majority of immigrants who come to Canada, work hard to contribute to this country and remain true to their promise not to become a burden on Canada's social safety net. As is often the case, wrongdoing on the part of some members of a group results in the perception that the entire group is guilty.

That is why the federal government must make the enforcement of immigrant sponsorships a priority. It would greatly raise the credibility of the immigration system in the eyes of the Canadian public. It would also honour the efforts of those sponsored immigrants who work to maintain their sponsorships and remove an unwelcome burden from all taxpayers, both those who came to Canada and those who were born here.

Another area in which a lack of enforcement calls into question the credibility of the immigration system is business class immigrants. These are immigrants who have lived in this country because they have capital to invest and have promised to create new enterprises. This is another case where the government policy has the correct priority.

This country needs the influx of capital and the enterprising spirit brought by business class immigrants. The problem is there is not a very stringent enforcement of these regulations. Promises of investment and new jobs do Canada very little good