

Immigration

the provinces, the specifics with respect to the Francophone community in Canada, and particularly in Quebec, are really neglected.

Most significant of all, perhaps, is the question of the actual numbers of people who will come. We are told very clearly that there will be an arrival of a definite number of immigrants after the appropriate kind of consultation, and that the minister will announce that figure. Mr. Speaker, I presume I do not have to remind the minister of the fact, but the special joint committee said very clearly that if this was to be seen to be a fair and just policy there would have to be some kind of parliamentary approval, likely by resolution. There should be a presentation delivered by the minister, not only of a target figure for the immediate year but also some kind of projection for a three-to-five year period. Then there should be some kind of resolution which would give parliamentary acceptance, and perhaps a referral as well to a committee of the House which would examine the proposals of the minister in detail. Again, there has been no willingness on the part of the minister to provide the House through this bill with that kind of opportunity.

Indeed, I suppose if one were to tackle this piece of legislation and its presentation by the minister, its greatest point of weakness would be that when you look at the opening pages of the introduction to the green paper and the final result in the bill before us, there is literally no explanation yet, no indication as yet from the minister as to what is the long-term demographic policy of this government. The references which are made in the minister's speech on the demographic question are fleeting, at best. They refer to establishing some kind of moderate growth by selecting a figure of somewhere between 140,000 and 150,000 immigrants annually. Surely the minister can do much better than that. If he has seen reports similar to the one which was presented to the committee, well over a year and a half ago now, on the demographic objectives for Canada, which indicated the implications of various immigration levels in relationship to the present fertility level in Canada, he would know that the figure he proposes is one of the lowest in terms of whether or not there will be any substantial growth in the population of the country, and indeed of whether or not there would be a fairly dramatic shift in terms of dependency groups toward the latter part of this century. For the minister not to tell us in greater detail what the conclusion and projections of the government are with respect to the responsibility for various dependency groups in this society, the way in which Canada's population should grow over the 10 to 50 year period, is really to have no kind of demographic policy at all.

I was shocked, quite frankly, when the minister was asked on February 1 by my colleague, the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp), whether or not, in line with the recommendations of the special joint committee, there would be a basic statement on the government's demographic policy. He asked whether the minister would table the government's demographic studies on which its well-hidden national population policy is based, in order that the information might be at the disposal of the House during second reading of Bill C-24. The

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

minister replied "I will consider it." That was over a month and a half ago, and I presume the minister is still considering it. I say quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that is not very good.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Perhaps he is still looking for it.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Maybe that is true. I will be happy to send him some of the documents that we on the standing committee received some time ago. But if that is the best the minister can do he has little justification in asking the House or the Canadian people to accept the measure before us.

We have before us a proposal which calls itself an immigration act. It has no definite policy attached to it. We have been given no hint whatsoever as to what regulations will apply or be enforced. We have the experience of the special committee to know how difficult it has been in the past to obtain a full and frank insight from the minister's own officials into how our immigration procedures operate on a day-to-day basis. As I said at the outset, this is one of the most important pieces of legislation which we will have to consider in this parliament. The minister has really shortchanged this House and the people of Canada in providing us with so little information on the basic question behind the establishment of this new Immigration Act.

● (2020)

I want to close by reading two brief quotations which I take from appearances before our committee, and which I repeated in my own minority comments at the time of the tabling of the report. The Council of Religious Sisters of the diocese of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, said this:

What we need in Canada is a people policy, a policy that gives greater priority to the welfare of human beings than to material resources. We need a new economic order based on justice which is concerned about the people of our own country, and those of others.

Finally, I agree with the Young Progressive Conservatives of British Columbia when they stated before our committee:

If we look at the long range problem of immigration, we believe that our general principles governing policy-making should be generally unselfish and world-wide in context.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Bill C-25 may I say at the outset that it is not a question of what the bill says but of what the bill does not say. I have either heard or read what other speakers on this bill have said, and every one of them have said that, after all, this country has been made up of immigrants from all parts of the world. So far as western Canada is concerned, they came from all European and Asiatic countries and settled there.

When we first developed the west we were a rural-oriented area; now we are like the rest of Canada and have become fairly urban. It was people who came from the Ukraine, Hungary, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom who settled on the land, and the first and second generations of these immigrants became professional and business people and built up our towns, villages and cities.