

*Government Orders*

The director for immigration for B.C. and the Yukon has stated: "Canada's immigration laws had to be changed because of enormous changes sweeping the world and the need to attract skilled people. Unfortunately this bill does not target skilled persons".

• (1630)

She also said: "Mainly because of civil wars there are 80 million people on the move around the world and many of them want to come to Canada". This is certainly true.

We must look at world conditions when we develop immigration policy and we must be as generous and humanitarian as possible in sharing our wonderful country with newcomers.

Despite the Reform Party and members of the Tory party who spout rhetoric to the contrary, immigration contributes to the wealth of Canada with human resources, people who are rich in skills, experience, enthusiasm and a drive to settle and make a good life for their families. They bring cultures from many lands, as well as contribute many economic advantages.

This bill denies all these benefits and must have full debate with extensive amendments. Better still, it should be withdrawn.

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, I have listened to the hon. member who was all over the place in her comments on the immigration proposal. She and many members here today, especially of that party, have talked about the investor program. She talked about the processing of categories of immigrants and she alleged priorities were being given in this bill to investors.

I would like her to explain to Canadians that in reality what we are proposing is that the streams of categories of immigrants recognize that in Canada family members will be reunited without limits, that refugees will be accepted without limits and that investors will be accepted in Canada without limits.

What is the hon. member trying to achieve here? All provincial governments are in favour of the investor program because it brings new Canadians with capital to regions of Canada in which they can create jobs, in which they create wealth for the Canadian people.

As principal applicants in 1981, investors represented less than 1 per cent of the movement of immigrants to Canada. Why make a big fuss about investors when they constitute less than 1 per cent of the number of immigrants?

She pictures these changes as trying to clamp down on refugees. Why would the United Nations high commissioner for refugees in Canada endorse these proposals if it meant less compassion and less attention to our Geneva Convention obligation of protecting refugees?

My last point is that in the last eight years we, this government, have increased the number of immigrants, the number of people we have welcomed to Canada from 88,000 in 1983 to 250,000. Surely that is not a sign of a government that does not care about the need for immigration for Canada.

**Ms. Mitchell:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the minister's comments.

The minister heard me, I hope, when I quoted—and I was quoting from reliable information—that the proposal in this bill, in his new policies, would have no limits on number and would fast-track wealthy investors, immediate family members and approved refugees.

It is not that we object to entrepreneurs. Of course there is a place for them. I would like to ask the minister why he is giving priority to fast-tracking wealthy investors and yet stream number three would limit the numbers on applicants who are business entrepreneurs and independent immigrants with skills that we need.

He is biasing it to the élite, to the moneyed élite, rather than to traditionally what has been a cross-section of people who would be coming to Canada. I do not know why wealthy investors should be fast-tracked any more than people who have a confirmed job or people who are business entrepreneurs. The family entrepreneurs are the strength of this country, the immigrants in particular.

He also talked about a clamp-down on refugees. I did not say that this bill was clamping down on refugees. Of course they are defined by the UN convention. What I was saying to the minister was that he personally was clamping down on the ability that he has as a minister to consider appeals on compassionate and humanitarian grounds.