



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## CANADA - A CREATION OF IMMIGRANTS

A Address to the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada, Toronto, on January 20, 1963, by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Mr. R.A. Bell.

...Canada has been built and sustained by the strength of immigrant people. Today, some 350 years after the first European adventurers settled on our shores, approximately one-sixth of our population was born in some other land. Indeed, in 1961 Canada had a slightly larger proportion than in 1951 of foreign-born residents - a reflection of the high level of immigration during the decade.

### More People Needed

Make no mistake, this country needs a larger population to achieve its full national potential. Our destiny cannot be fulfilled with only 18.7 million people. We simply do not have the population to develop the rich and vast resources of what is territorially one of the giant nations of the world. I would not hazard a guess as to what number of people is the balanced figure for our optimum national development, but we have ample room to grow in - that is certain! The question to be decided is not whether our population should grow - but at what pace it should grow.

Our Canadian birth rate of 27 per thousand of population is one of the highest of the developed nations of the world. But the historic fact is that the normal processes of population growth, taken by themselves, are not enough. Yes, Canada must have a much larger population and immigration must be a major factor in that population growth.

...I am not one of those timorous souls who believes that a balanced intake of well-selected immigrants is an impediment to economic growth in Canada. On the contrary, I believe that the introduction into Canada of properly selected and prepared immigrants provides a positive, direct and immediate stimulus to the economic growth of the country.

### Immigrant Contribution

New immigrants have made and will continue to make a vital contribution to our economic development, to our expansion. As consumers, they increase the demand for domestically-produced goods and this additional demand creates new employment opportunities, new income, further demand throughout the country. And the impetus to the expansion of our domestic consumer market encourages the development of more efficient units of production, the establishment of newer and more diversified industrial enterprises and the reduction of our dependence upon the vagaries and uncertainties of external trade.

All this is quite apart from the new capital, the new assets brought to Canada by those who settle on hundreds of farms, by those who establish new industries. In 1962, over \$100 million in cash and other assets have been added to our economic stream by immigrants.

### Ethnic Diversity

But look at the less mercenary aspect! The enrichment of Canadian life, the advancement of our culture! Each day I have reminders of how new arrivals, filled with enthusiasm, energy and the will to succeed have enriched our national culture, expanded our Canadian tradition in fields such as science, education, the arts -- yes, even in politics. As I look about the House of Commons, I am reminded of our ethnic diversity, from the present Prime Minister (the first Prime Minister not of Anglo-Saxon, or French origin), the delightful Minister of Labour, the many, many Members in whose veins flows the blood of many lands. Myself, something of an Irish rebel, I don't lament the tempering of Anglo-Saxon and Norman attitudes in politics by the spirit and enthusiasm of other bloods.

...I was not long on the job before I realized one thing - and it is at the very core of the administration of immigration which I intend to pursue. My task is to bring warm-hearted, human understanding to the cold print of immigration laws. The admission of immigrants, because of their economic contribution, because of factors which I might describe as economic opportunism - this cannot be the whole answer. Humanitarian and moral considerations are basic considerations to be respected, to be applied in the administration of our immigration laws. The fundamental task of any Minister of Immigration is to maintain a fair, impartial and non-discriminatory administration, coupled (and I emphasize that word coupled) with a warm and sympathetic understanding of the basic human problems involved.

### Setting Objectives

Dangerous perhaps it is to endeavour to say in any particular year what is a desirable level of immigration or to set long-range goals. But I believe, nonetheless, that we must step up our objectives, set targets for ourselves. In my view,

the present absorptive capacity of the Canadian economy is approximately one per cent of our population per annum. This, I emphasize, is a target, an objective, not necessarily to be achieved in 1963 or in 1964, but a target, an objective, which I believe is in the long-run interests of the Canadian nation -- one which will provide a genuine stimulus to our whole Canadian economy.

The "feast-or-famine" approach to immigration, the "tap on -- tap off", will not produce the economic growth which all of us so greatly desire. In my view, a satisfactory flow of immigrants to Canada, particularly from our traditional sources, requires a consistent and regular programme of information and promotion. We need to tell our story abroad, to spell out the opportunities which exist in Canada, to assure prospective immigrants of the fact that Canadians genuinely want them as fellow-citizens.

In my view, 1961 was the low point in our immigration. 1962 showed a slight upgrade and 1963 holds promise of very substantial improvement. Since the new Regulations came into effect last February 1, the number of applications received has increased by over 50 per cent and the trend is definitely upwards. I shall do my best to stimulate that movement.

These new Regulations have now had 11 months of trial. On the whole, they are working well and have opened new avenues to prospective immigrants. They remove from our immigration laws the last vestiges of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or creed. Indeed, Canada is one of the few countries of the world which can assert that it has made a genuine, an honest effort to remove discrimination from its immigration policy. That certainly will be the policy as long as I am the Minister.

#### Today's Basis for Choice

Selection today is on the basis of universal and uniform criteria applied everywhere in the world. The stress is upon education, training and skills as the principal conditions of admission. One of the problems which worries me is whether our definition of skills is adequate. There are certainly many difficulties in this field. For example, it is difficult to equate training in different parts of the world with that required for Canadian employment. How do you assess qualifications and decide what is equivalent to Canadian training, experience and qualifications? That is the difficult problem. And it is not enough for a visa officer overseas merely to make a routine assessment of skills in the narrow sense. Significant also is the assessment of such intangible qualities as resourcefulness, initiative, integrity, flexibility -- intangibles which cannot easily be reduced to precise assessment, but which are the real qualities which make a good immigrant for Canada.

There are those who raise doubts about immigration, who talk of "the babel of tongues" or use other discordant phrases. To them, I would suggest they first cast the mote out of their own eye. If there be any problem, it is one created very largely by those of us who are older immigrants to Canada, by our failure to extend a sufficiently warm welcome to the newcomers. This is one reason why your work is so significant.

Newcomers do not isolate themselves into cultural and linguistic ghettos by choice. No immigrant wants to live in isolation from the rest of us, but he will cling to what he knows until he feels secure in his new surroundings. It is up to us to help in giving him that feeling of security which will bring him out of his protective shell.

#### No Pure Canadian Culture

Personally, I reject the idea of a pure Canadian culture -- for that is what the expression "babel of tongues" seems to imply. It is as repugnant as Hitler's doctrine of Nordic superiority. Today, Canada is approximately one-third Anglo-Saxon, one-third French and one-third other in ethnic background. The Canadian culture in which I believe arises from the collectivity of the cultures of all these groups, the acceptance by each of the best of the cultures of others. Ours is and must always be a pluralist culture, made richer by the variety of its components. That is why it is right to speak of unity in diversity, that is why the full development of our nationhood requires the contributions of all Canadians whatever their background or heritage. And it is on that theory and principle that our immigration policy is based.

#### Refugee Policy

...What is not generally recognized is that Canada has the best record of any nation in the Western world in dealing with refugees. From the admission of veterans of the Polish Army after the Second World War, we have been in the forefront, the recognized champions of humanitarianism. The 37,000 Hungarian refugees admitted since 1957 constituted the greatest number of any country in the world, and I am glad to say that this movement was a definite success. Day by day, I see the applications being made by these refugees for citizenship and I learn of the way in which they have adjusted to Canadian life. It is a courageous story and a proud record.

Last year, Canada continued its policy of accepting unsponsored refugees from Europe without numerical limitation. Our normal immigrant selection criteria were relaxed, as has been the case during and since World Refugee Year, in order to permit any refugee with reasonable prospects of employment in Canada to migrate regardless of age or minor physical handicap. The educational and occupational requirements established under the new Immigration Regulations were also interpreted with special

leniency in the case of these refugees. Those who failed to meet even these limited standards were considered under the private-sponsorship scheme or the handicapped-refugee programme.

With the help of private organizations and individuals, the refugee private sponsorship scheme which began in World Refugee Year was also maintained in 1962. A number of other refugees were also admitted to Canada within the ordinary immigration provisions under the sponsorship of their close relatives in Canada.

### Special Projects

As well, special refugee programmes were carried out by the Government during 1962. A special authorization was granted for the admission of 50 families of stateless persons from the Middle East to be settled in Canada under private auspices. The majority of these families have already arrived in Canada and are being settled without difficulty.

Although there were no government-sponsored movements of refugees affected by tuberculosis last year, the treatment and integration of those who had arrived previously continued with success. The three movements which took place between December 1959 and March 1961 included 325 tubercular patients and their dependents for a total of 826 persons. Most of these persons have now succeeded in establishing themselves in Canada, and I consider that, on the whole, this movement has been very successful.

In May 1962, the Canadian Government decided to accept 100 families of Chinese refugees from Hong Kong. Some 76 families have already arrived in Canada and their settlement is proceeding satisfactorily with the co-operation of individuals and private organizations across the country. While this is a special movement, initiated against the background of the emergency in Hong Kong early last year, it must be borne in mind that Canada has, during the past 14 years, received under its normal immigration provisions approximately 25,000 Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, most of whom had fled mainland China.

### Handicapped Refugees

On an experimental basis, the Government initiated plans in 1962 for the movement to Canada of a number of handicapped refugees who were capable of obtaining employment. It was expected that careful advance preparation could enable these individuals and their families to establish themselves successfully without becoming a burden to their sponsors or without the need for extensive public assistance. A number of cases are at present under consideration, and it is hoped that some families will soon enter Canada.

In 1963, Canada's general refugee programme will be continued. Un-sponsored refugees from Europe will be admitted without numerical limitation and without applying the usual immigration standards of occupation and education. The refugee private-sponsorship programme will also be continued.

It is hoped that the experimental movement of handicapped but employable refugees under government auspices will progress satisfactorily in 1963. Naturally, although no figure has been set, the number of such cases accepted will depend on the ability of immigration settlement officers in Canada to find suitable employment and establishment opportunities. It should also be noted that approval has been granted for the admission to Canada, on the same basis as in 1962, of another 50 families of stateless persons from the Middle East.

These are some of the refugee-resettlement programmes which the Government intends to carry out in 1963. Other projects are under consideration.

It should be emphasized that, in addition to Canada's special refugee programmes, in which the normal immigrant-selection standards are greatly relaxed, the new Immigration Regulations permit refugees anywhere in the world to apply for admission to Canada as ordinary immigrants subject to the usual standards of selection....

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