

Establishment of Immigration Appeal Board

Those representations were made by other members also. If the minister did that we should pass a bill of which he would be proud.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I waited during the remarks of my colleague from York South and the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell) to see what some hon. members on the other side of the house who were so vocal in the special committee dealing with the white paper and in their espousals of a fair system of immigration would say. I have waited to see whether hon. members like the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz), the hon. member for Fort William (Mr. Badanai), the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Macaluso) and the hon. member for Essex West (Mr. Gray) would rise to protest even mildly a provision in this bill which is to my mind contrary to the whole spirit of the immigration policy we have ostensibly espoused.

● (4:00 p.m.)

Amid great fanfare the government came to parliament with a white paper on immigration and this bill and announced that for the first time in Canada it was intended to eliminate the practices of the past whereby people from some countries were considered to be better than people from other countries, practices which gave citizens of Britain, France and other northern countries every opportunity to enter while making it much more difficult for prospective immigrants from countries farther south to do so. Government spokesmen said that additional provisions would be made. Educational qualifications and qualifications based on skills would be introduced but they would be the same for everybody. I believe I am right in saying there was almost unanimous agreement both in the house and in the country that this attitude was the correct one to take.

But lo and behold, here we have a clause which leads one to the conclusion that the statements made on behalf of the government did not really mean very much. The minister is proposing here that the government shall have the power to restrict the rights of certain people compared with other people. He says this provision is experimental and that as time goes by it will be made more liberal. If I could be sure that the present minister, for whom I have considerable regard, would stay in his job longer than past ministers of immigration have done, I might not be so worried about this clause as I am. But we have no assurance that this minister will be

[Mr. Bell (Carleton).]

on the job for very long. Nor have we any assurance that a future minister either in this or in some other government might not wish to use the power provided in this clause to impose a restrictionist policy as followed in the past. There would be nothing to prevent another minister getting an order in council passed to the effect that all non-white people who have the right to sponsor relatives shall not enjoy the right to appeal when the department says that the applicant sponsored may not enter this country. Or the minister could secure an order in council to the effect that no Italian who is sponsoring the entry of a relative into Canada should have the right to appeal an adverse ruling of the department.

This is wrong in principle. I am not saying the minister would propose anything of this kind. But having adopted a principle that there shall be no discrimination on the ground of race, colour, religion or nationality in respect of immigration, and having set up an appeal board so that a sponsor can appeal against a decision reached by the department, it seems to me completely wrong that the minister should be able to say by order in council at some future time that certain people who have the right to sponsor immigrants shall no longer have the right to appeal when the decision is one with which the department does not agree. This cannot be justified.

The minister says this is a temporary thing. But the provision in the bill is not temporary. It is not stated that the right of the minister to obtain an order in council shall exist for two, three or five years while the government considers how the system is working. For as long as the bill is in force the governor in council will have the right to decide what classes of people shall have the right to appeal. This kind of provision ought not to be approved and the minister should agree to remove this clause from the bill. As I say, I am surprised we have not heard from members on the government side who disagreed with such a provision in the committee. We have not heard any objection from them.

[Translation]

Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, like many of my colleagues I am somewhat reluctant to extend the debate, but things have been repeated which I think call for the repetition of certain arguments that are not in agreement with those advanced a while ago.

So, we have before us an amendment moved by one of our colleagues of the New