

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

the minister. But on the other hand I think it is not unfair to say also that it is almost wholly negative. You are more or less like the fly on the wheel. You are circling around; you are keeping track of what is going on and fitting yourself into that, but it seems to me there is no evidence there of a taking hold of the situation, of any lead of any kind. In a sense there is really no policy except the policy of trying to mesh in with what is going on.

I admit that in a sense that is a policy, but it is perhaps not unfair to call it a policy of negation, in a way. It is very different, from example, from the policy of Australia which has been outlined, although I am not sure their policy is perfect by any means. But one aspect of the negation seems to be that we have had two entirely different views presented to us. One of them was contained in the very interesting speech of the hon. member for Cape Breton South, in which he pretty well wound up by criticizing the government. I shall read these words:

Our selection of immigrants should be along the lines of the requirements of the country, but in the last year we have imported unskilled labour when we should have been bringing in skilled people to fill vacancies that already exist at the employment offices.

Then the hon. member for Moose Jaw indicated that Canada is very short of people with different kinds of knowledge, including hardware men.

This leads me to ask the minister one or two questions, the answers to which I hope will throw some light on the practical outcome of the approach which he has suggested. For example, he has made reference to our arrangements abroad, and has spoken about our having an agreement with the Netherlands. He says, after referring to other countries:

There is one exception to the above; that is in the Netherlands, with which country we have an agreement for the selection of immigrants.

I would ask the minister to tell us two things. First of all would he give us the nature of that agreement. It seems to me, on the face of it, sensible to have an agreement; and the minister, as I gather from the tenor of his speech, thinks well of it too. He thinks it is a very sensible and workman-like position to be in. Will he say something about the working agreement, and will he tell us also why, apparently, we have an agreement only with the Netherlands?

Mr. Harris: At the end of the war the government of the Netherlands decided that they would serve their interests best by encouraging migration out of their country.

An agreement was entered into in the spring of 1947 with the government of Canada whereby an institution called the Netherlands foundation was established for the purpose of processing would-be emigrants from the Netherlands.

We agreed at that time to take numbers which would be agreed upon from time to time of farm workers and farm settlers. In essence the terms have remained much the same. We indicate in advance approximately the number of persons from that country we think we could absorb during the coming shipping year. We have our offices in The Hague and, in conjunction with the Netherlands foundation, who find the people and send them to us, we process them. There has been some variation, I may say, in that while it started out to be wholly agricultural in content, it is not entirely that way now. The total figures for last year were, I believe, 22,000, of whom about 15,000 would have been agricultural, although I am not sure of the exact number.

It is the only country with which we have such an agreement; and it is peculiar to that country because they desire out of their own funds to do the finding of the immigrants and deliver them to us for examination with in their country.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Have we tried to make any other such arrangement?

Mr. Harris: No; but I think I might add that most other European countries, with the exception of Germany, are not particularly anxious to encourage migration.

Mr. Fulton: What about the United Kingdom? Could not an agreement along those lines be made under their settlement act?

Mr. Harris: I suppose an agreement of that kind could be made. But it has been traditional for the government of Canada, and in fact for some provincial governments, to maintain offices in London for the purpose of soliciting people to come to this country.

Mr. Brooks: Is the Netherlands foundation sponsored by the government, or is it a privately sponsored organization?

Mr. Harris: It consists of various private organizations; but it is established by the government, and carries out the duty of selecting migrants not only to Canada but to Australia and other countries, under the assistance and with the approval of the Netherlands government.

Mr. Cardiff: I should like to ask a question, but if it is not convenient to answer I might