

*Supply—Citizenship and Immigration*

bad unemployment problem. I think the whole matter of immigration should be predicated on developing the country, not just bringing them in and laying them down in the centres where there is employment. If we are going to develop Canada it must be opened up. You cannot continue to concentrate in the centres as we are doing at the present time.

There are many angles to this question of immigration, and I do not intend to tell the minister that I know them all. However, I have done some thinking about these matters because I am interested in the future of Canada and in Canada doing the best possible job in all fields. It is just not possible to discuss the whole question of immigration in fifteen or twenty minutes, or even in a 40-minute speech. I have condensed some of the thoughts I have had on the subject, and I am going to leave them with the minister.

In order to have a reasonable discussion of immigration it is necessary at the outset to clear our minds of two widely held false notions. One is the lump of work theory, that there is only a fixed amount of work to go around. You find the opinion widely held that if we bring in more people there will be just that much less work for everybody.

The other is that population in itself means prosperity, that the more people we bring in the richer everybody will be. Extra people are not just extra stomachs. They can mean extra production, but that does not necessarily mean extra production. An empty stomach is not a customer unless its owner can pay for what he needs to fill it. During the depression years we had hundreds of thousands of people who were just extra stomachs that could produce nothing. We should guard carefully against a repetition of that kind of situation.

We must not forget that from 1940 up to and including the present year we have been living in a false prosperity, in a war economy. If we are successful in arriving at a peace that is sure and certain, if fear of war is removed, we will have to do some serious thinking in the matter of keeping our equilibrium on this continent in an economic peace. By and large the working population of this country and many of the heads of industry who are managing our economy on the outside have grown up in that false economy. If they have to reverse their gears and get back into a peace economy they will require a lot of training, and there may be a lot of dislocation before that is brought about.

These are things that should be kept in mind by the department of immigration. They should see that immigrants coming into this country are not brought into areas where

housing is poor or where there is no housing, or into the big industrial sections where employment is fairly tight. These immigrants should have a fairly good idea of what they are coming into when they come to Canada. I think in many cases a rosy picture is painted and when the immigrant is here a short time he becomes rather disappointed that this is not the utopia he thought he was going to.

In my judgment the physical size of this country has almost nothing to do with its capacity to absorb immigrants. Much of our territory is economically worthless or hard to do anything with. Peopling a country is not like packing sardines into a tin; it is a matter of economic, not physical capacity. It is not simply what we can produce but how much it costs us, whether we can sell it, and for how much. It is also a matter of the standard of living. If we are willing to drop our standard of living we can support an enormous population; if we are not, we cannot. I think that was clearly indicated this afternoon and evening in the discussion on the trade and commerce estimates. The Minister of Trade and Commerce is a good salesman who has been all over the globe finding markets. We export a large percentage of what we produce, and I do not think we are prepared to drop our sights or our standards.

The government's immigration policy is based officially on our absorptive capacity. I think in the short statement he made the minister indicated that the thinking of the government is: How many people can we absorb? What we can absorb is anybody's guess. No one can answer that precisely. If he could answer, his answer might be out of date within minutes after it was uttered. It depends on the whole economic situation. A new scientific discovery, a higher or lower United States tariff, fresh import cuts by the sterling areas, and easing of the European dollar shortage; these and a thousand other factors may change our absorptive capacity from day to day.

What the government professes to do is bring in only the kind of labour we are short of, when we are short and where we are short. But that is not always as easy as it looks. The national employment service may report a shortage of such and such a kind of labour today and may even predict that the shortage is likely to last for some time. But by the time the immigrants have been found, selected and shipped in, the shortage may have vanished or may even have turned into a surplus. Sometimes at the right time shipping is short, and at the wrong time it is long. To cap it all, immigration really comes under two government departments—that is what I was pointing out a few minutes ago—labour and citizen-