

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

member of parliament who is asked to look after the case is entitled to know, even in confidence, the reason for refusal.

• (8:40 p.m.)

There are three people in my constituency whose relatives would like to get visitors' permits to see their mothers, sisters or brothers, and when the answer is no surely they are entitled to know the reason or, if necessary, their member of parliament should be given the reason in confidence. This matter has concerned me during the 13 years I have been in this chamber. It is absolutely unfair that a person should be denied citizenship after spending five years in Canada and that his relatives should also be denied the right to visit Canada on visitors' visas.

There was one case I tried to handle for five or six years. I could not get anywhere but the present Minister of Labour, when he was minister of citizenship and immigration, showed his humanity and said the persons involved should be let in and they were. I am asking that this trend be continued by the new minister or at least he should give us the reasons people are denied their rights and found guilty without the opportunity to answer the charge that must have been laid against them.

Mr. Macaluso: Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with Citizenship Courts first. I must echo the words of the hon. member for Skeena and say, speaking from my own experience in the Hamilton-Niagara peninsula area, that I completely agree with them. I have before me a booklet entitled "Guide to Canadian Citizenship," some 90 pages long. At the end of each chapter there is a list of questions, the answers to which an immigrant is supposed to know. In the preface it states:

When your examination takes place the judge may ask you questions on any of these subjects as a means of testing your knowledge of Canada and Canadian institutions.

At the end of each section of the booklet you will find a number of questions. The answers to many of these questions will be found in the text of the booklet. Other answers you may discover by reading or asking your friends.

That is very illuminating.

It is most important for you to understand that the questions in this booklet are not necessarily the ones that will be used by the judge in your court examination. They are simply to test your knowledge of what you have read.

And at the bottom it says "Good luck". I say that many of the people who appear before Citizenship Courts need all the luck they can get to pass the examinations because

[Mr. Winch.]

there are some questions to which not even the Court Presidents know the answers. I tell the minister and the minister-designate that a serious look must be taken to ensure uniformity across the country concerning questions asked by Citizenship Court Presidents.

I submit that some of the qualifications of these Court Presidents are certainly not ones which fit them for the posts to which they have been appointed. If you think I am being overly harsh, Mr. Chairman, let me state that I intend to be in some respects. I have complained for three years about the Citizenship Court in my area and from personal knowledge I say a serious look must be taken at the appointments made to the presidencies of these courts.

From personal experience I know of the very arrogant approach which some Court Presidents have taken to immigrants, so arrogant that the immigrants' friends and relatives refuse to apply for citizenship because of the insults received. I know of a case where only one question was asked of the applicant but he was turned down and abused. I can understand the qualifications so far as language is concerned, but when the county court judges were handling citizenship applications we did not receive the complaints we are receiving today. There is a difference. Many representations have been made on this matter. I am sure the hon. member for Carleton, when he was minister of citizenship and immigration, was aware of the complaints made regarding Presidents of Citizenship Courts. I know personally that such complaints were made to him by a former member. This is a matter which I intend to bring up in a more detailed manner when the estimates of the department next come before us.

Something else which has been bothering me for many years is the question of Chinese immigration from Hong Kong. Not too long ago a statement was made in the House of Commons providing for an amnesty and an extension of time to enable Chinese people to come forward and clarify their status. Many of the Canadian Chinese community did so voluntarily, but an incongruous situation has arisen when these self-same people, having clarified their status and having received their certificates of Canadian citizenship, try to bring their relatives from Hong Kong. They are told they do not meet the requirements of the Act because they made a false statement at the time the sponsoring relative came to Canada. Even though the sponsor's status has been clarified, the proposed immigrants are