

Immigration

Mr. Epp: What are we looking at? It came primarily from two groups. If I have not sounded very positive, it is because I believe this is a retrograde step by a minister who is only concerned about his ego and image. I am referring to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp: I want to commend the Minister of Manpower and Immigration for one thing in this regard. Clause 5 in the 1952 bill had words such as "imbeciles" and "morons". Thank God that is now removed from the bill. Also epileptics are removed.

● (2120)

I again want to commend the minister. I want to indicate for the record, so that we do not forget, the fact that we received a commitment in the committee that those persons who are in Canada on the minister's order and who cannot be landed because they were epileptic will be contacted once the bill has been promulgated and given an opportunity to get landed immigrant status. It is high time they were. The Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded made a suggestion in their brief. It was not trying to negate the work of our medical officers, but it suggested that a person who is examined by a medical officer without the training of a psychiatrist or a psychologist and who does not pass the mental test should have the right to be examined by a specialist in that field. That is all we are asking for, but what this amendment would do would be to allow two medical officers to certify. The Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded said at page four of its brief:

If immigration officials are to be able to give proper consideration to cases involving mental retardation, in addition to medical assessments, they should have available psychological, psychometric, educational and social assessments carried out by qualified professionals including psychologists, social workers, education and rehabilitation specialists.

That is all we are asking for, but no, the Minister of National Health and Welfare does not like it, and when the Minister of National Health and Welfare does not like something, we change. There is no such thing as a judicial review. I have too much respect for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration to think that on his own he would give us that kind of information. I believe his heart was not in it.

I want to raise another matter which I think has escaped most hon. members, and that is the matter of Canadians who want to adopt children who are orphans in the developing world, because their parents are gone for one reason or another. Very often it is because of war, especially in the case of the disaster and the terrible things which happened in Vietnam. I want to bring this matter to the attention of the House because I believe it is important. In the last four years Kuan-Yin has been able to place some 600 orphans with parents in North America, but hardly any have been placed in Canada, despite the fact that there are Canadians who want to adopt children. An official of that organization told me today that every step of the way is a battle with the Department of National Health and Welfare. The organization tells me it is too expensive to hire legal help and to go through the red tape

[Mr. McKenzie.]

which is required to place a child in Canada. This is a sad testimonial.

Some hon. members opposite and some hon. members on this side of the House will understand what I say because of their experience in teaching. Children are given standard psychological tests. They are tested for their mental ability. Some children from deprived backgrounds often score low, not because of a lack of mental ability, but because they do not have the social experiences which would allow them to score higher. For example, one child scored an I.Q. of 67. I do not take for granted the fact that one test is definitive. I do not think anyone who does psychological testing does either. Children who do not understand the language used in these tests will score low. In one case a child from Asia was asked what a mailbox was used for. The poor child had never seen a mailbox.

Mr. Fairweather: We don't know what a mailbox is for either.

Mr. Epp: With the service we are getting, perhaps that is true. After that child had been in North America for two years his mental ability was tested, and his score was 115. All we are asking is that a psychologist or a psychiatrist who has ability in this field be allowed to do the testing. However, the Minister of National Health and Welfare says no. Therefore we cannot have that.

This amendment is retrogressive, it is arbitrary, and it is another indication of the absolute power the Minister of National Health and Welfare wants. I say the amendment is wrong, and if hon. members have any sense of fairness they should not support it. The amendments which were passed in the committee were a small step toward fairness for those people who are less fortunate than some of us.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that the hon. member for Niagara Falls (Mr. Young) wants to say a few words. I was surprised when the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) was explaining his amendments that the hon. member for Niagara Falls was arrogating for himself all the knowledge and wisdom.

Mr. Young: That wasn't my comment.

Mr. Orlikow: That is certainly what it sounded like. I want to put on the record some of the submissions made to the committee. If the hon. member for Niagara Falls had attended more than one or two committee meetings, he would have heard them. I wish the hon. member would either not interject, or at least interject loud enough so that I could hear him.

Mr. Young: I attended many more than one or two.

Mr. Orlikow: The hon. member may have attended, but he obviously did not listen. If the hon. member would refer to the minutes of the meeting of June 7, 1977, at page 32A:8 he would see the submissions of the Student Legal Aid Society and the Law Union of Ontario. I am not a lawyer, but these are organizations comprising lawyers and law students who