

Establishment of Immigration Appeal Board

Questions immediately arise in their mind about what has been said of them or what the situation is. I believe it is imperative that those who have made applications and have been denied entry know exactly why and under what conditions their applications have been denied.

I am thinking as well of those who are desirous of coming to this country but who are in a country in which there are at the moment no facilities for processing their applications. One inquiry was made of me recently and I was advised that at the present time there are no facilities in that particular country for processing applications and there is no immediate prospect of any being established. These are some of the things which I believe ought to be considered when we are considering the administration of the department and overall immigration policy.

I believe the parliamentary secretary made reference to those who enter Canada illegally and then desire to stay in this country. This is certainly a field that requires attention. I understand, of course, that the appeal board will be able to handle such situations. I do not hold any brief, however, for those who for ulterior reasons gain entry into Canada and then seek to carry on illegal practices or illegal activities while they are in the country. Certainly these people should be deported to the country whence they came. Those who have entered Canada without knowledge of all the ramifications of the immigration law, who have perhaps come to this country seeking refuge from an intolerable situation in their own country, should receive the fullest consideration. I believe these are cases in which the warmth of human feeling and compassion ought to be evident. These people should be given every opportunity to prove themselves and to make their contribution to the development of our country.

These are the only general remarks I wish to make this afternoon. Once again let me say that this department is one of the most important departments of government. It is perhaps one the most difficult departments with which to deal because of the human element that is involved and the fact that individual cases and a variety of personalities are constantly being dealt with. It is a very difficult department, but no doubt when we have given attention to it we will finally arrive at a policy that will be adequate and fair and will be in the best interests of our nation and of those who would join us in building this country.

[Mr. Patterson.]

[Translation]

Hon. René Tremblay (Matapédia-Matane): Mr. Speaker, I was greatly pleased to see Bill No. C-220 coming back to the house for second reading.

When that bill was introduced, last July, I believe, I was away unfortunately and I was unable at that time to take part in the debate. I must say first of all that I am sincerely pleased to see the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand) submitting this bill to the house now for approval.

One knows that a white paper was prepared by the department of immigration on every aspect of the Immigration Act and that it is now under consideration by a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons. We are now awaiting its report to evaluate the amendments which will have to be made to the Immigration Act which has not been amended since 1953 and of which certain regulations have been amended from time to time by the successive ministers of immigration.

We can, therefore, expect that fundamental changes will be made in the Immigration Act after the publication of the white paper and the evidence given in committee. As drafted in 1953 that act met the particular needs of the time.

● (4:30 p.m.)

Since that time, major changes have occurred not only throughout the world, but in Canada also, and the method of dealing with the increasing number of immigrants to Canada is surely different from what it might have been in the past.

Before opening the debate on the Immigration Act in general, we have a special bill dealing with a particular aspect of immigration, namely the question of appeal in the field of immigration.

In order to understand clearly the reason for the present bill, it is perhaps necessary to review the history of this ministerial discretion which, in fact, the bill before us proposes to change substantially. This ministerial discretion is the very basis of the Immigration Act. There is not one section of the Immigration Act which does not show that the minister may, at his discretion, reverse decisions handed down previously at the administrative level. This went on for years and I was appointed minister of immigration at a time when this ministerial discretion, following various well-known events, was severely