

Manpower and Immigration Council

I believe this immigration council will soon be able to provide or suggest the machinery whereby this obstacle can be overcome so that we will be able to bring from countries such as Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia people that we need in this country, people about whose loyalty we would not have the slightest need to worry. A great deal of the future usefulness of this council depends, of course, upon the type of persons appointed to it. I hope the bill will ensure that we will have on the council people with the broadest experience. Those of us who were members of the special parliamentary committee on immigration know the wisdom and experience that were available to us from those who had themselves been immigrants and were active members of various ethnic organizations, from social workers in the Canadian Welfare Council to organizations such as the Canadian Labour Congress and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. I mention those organizations for the sake of achieving a balance. If groups such as these are represented on the council they will bring a wealth of information and advice to that body which will greatly assist us in achieving an intelligent immigration policy.

I conclude by saying that no matter how many councils we appoint and how effectively they do their job, this will not absolve parliament from its responsibility in this connection. I am not talking just about the department, because the minister is responsible for the administration of the department. I say that parliament will continue to have a responsibility for the careful surveillance of both these highly important fields, manpower and immigration.

One of the hon. members who spoke—I am not quite certain who it was—said that when the council was appointed we would perhaps not have to worry as much in this house about these problems. He said we would not have to worry so much about would-be immigrants and other problems of this sort. I think the hon. member is quite wrong. I believe it will continue to be necessary for members of this house, particularly those who come from industrial ridings in which most of the immigrants live, to continue to take an active interest in these matters. I believe there should be continuing activity by a parliamentary committee in reviewing the regulations from time to time and acting as a sort of corporate ombudsman.

I know there are many people on the government side of the house as well as on

[Mr. Brewin.]

the opposition side who are experienced and capable of constructive criticism of the administration of the act and the rules and regulations that exist, which by no means have reached perfection although I believe we are going forward in this respect. I do not think the existence of this council will in any way absolve us of the responsibility of maintaining an active parliamentary committee to deal with this matter.

With those observations, Mr. Chairman, and saying that I believe progress is being made in this field, I repeat that we in this party will support this legislation. We hope it will be successful and we look forward to the appointment of members of the council who will make that body independent and widely representative of all groups concerned with this question. We hope that independent, qualified people will be appointed to the council, which will be of real assistance in the better administration of the important subjects of manpower and immigration.

Mr. MacDonald (Prince): Mr. Chairman, like many of the other speakers today I shall not spend a great deal of time dealing with the resolution inasmuch as the information that we have on the nature and functions of this advisory board and its related committees is not very great. Yet I appreciate the opportunity, as have other hon. members who have spoken, to speak specifically to the information that is before us and relate it to some of the activities that have already taken place with regard to the developing responsibilities of the Department of Manpower and Immigration.

When we review the resolution as it is defined and the very short remarks of the minister we have something that seems imaginative in concept or, if not imaginative, at least necessary. But somehow we are tempted to suspect that it will be somewhat futile in its execution. The idea of councils being established to supply advice to various government departments is indeed most commendable. Certainly when one thinks about this government one has to agree that it is in great need of as much good advice as it can obtain.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacDonald (Prince): However, whether the instruments that are defined here will do the trick for this department remains to be seen. I for one have not been greatly encouraged by the activities, as I have been able to observe them over the past few