

*Supply—Citizenship and Immigration*

at page 234 I was interested to read the following statement, which indicates that even during the depths of the depression the officials responsible had a somewhat guilty conscience concerning our half-hearted immigration program. The report says:

Were it not for the fact that the Canadian public has become accustomed to small immigration returns from year to year the statement now published that Canada, with its vast territory and immense natural resources, received last year only 1,300 newcomers per month would be a matter of comment, having in mind the contribution that immigration has made to the opening up of the dominion in the past.

That state of affairs persisted, as I have indicated, until 1947. Then because of external pressure, again in the first instance largely arising from the refugee problem created by world war II, the government of Canada reluctantly moved into more active immigration again. As you read the debates of the house on immigration in the immediate post-war years or in the last two years of the war, 1944, 1945, 1946 and 1947, you see there was a growing demand that Canada do something regarding the very urgent problem of the millions of refugees who had emerged out of the war situation. I came to the conclusion that members of parliament expressing public opinion were away ahead of the government with regard to the problem of displaced persons. As the result of the urgings of members, action was finally taken in 1947 and since that time we have had a fairly aggressive immigration program. However, I cannot help but comment that as the result of this historic reluctance to act in an aggressive manner, which has been characteristic of Canadian immigration policy right from the beginning of confederation, we missed out on a good many excellent potential Canadians. We missed out on a large number of refugee children, and I cannot help but think that if we had adopted, on a permanent basis, with respect to refugee children a policy similar to that which was adopted in the early years of the war when children were evacuated temporarily from the United Kingdom because of the spread of aerial bombardment, we would have made a great humanitarian gesture, a gesture that would have paid off in rich dividends in the future.

That is water under the bridge, but I refer to that situation because it is still typical of the attitude we find prevailing with respect to immigration policy at the present time. There is a lack of broad imagination and vision, although as the result of public opinion and parliamentary pressure we are beginning to move forward.

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

There is another aspect of immigration which interests me. It seems to me that we have largely ignored humanitarian considerations in our immigration program. The fact that we have waited for external pressure, instead of initiating any aggressive program in the past, is indicative of this situation. Our attitude towards deportation, which was outlined by the Leader of the Opposition and other speakers in this debate, is also typical of the lack of humanitarian concern. I think it is extremely unfortunate in view of the world situation in this mid-twentieth century period. There might have been some excuse for such an attitude in the past before the international concept of human activity emerged, but today we are forced to consider the age-old questions: Am I my brother's keeper? Who is my neighbour? Belief in the inherent inferiority and superiority of various races was fairly widely accepted even in Christian countries, notwithstanding the biblical dictum that He hath made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the earth. That belief in inherent inferiority and superiority was more or less generally accepted a few decades ago. But fortunately these ideas are tending to disappear under the pressure of circumstances as we are forced to rub shoulders more closely with the representatives of the various nations of the world.

Other members speaking today have referred to the broad principles and policy under which Canadian immigration is carried on, and I am not going to repeat what has already been said. I think all members of the house would agree that there must be some process of selection, on an ethnic basis, if you wish. You must keep out obvious undesirables, criminal types, mental incompetents and so forth, and the economic factor must be considered. But I am going to raise once more a subject that has been dealt with by almost every member who has spoken today, the question of the obvious discrimination towards Canadian citizens of Chinese origin. I feel that the legislation on our statute books respecting immigration is a carry-over from an attitude of mind that should have disappeared in our twentieth century civilization. I am not going to go into details concerning the Chinese problem, but it seems to me that the principle enunciated in the house on June 28, 1951, as recorded at page 4863 of *Hansard*, has not been applied as broadly as it might have been under the circumstances. At that time