

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

difficulty of an engineer getting employment in Canada. I would be surprised if that particular trade was one about which we had sent special instructions abroad. It may happen that this particular person has had the misfortune of not getting employment. I am sure our settlement officers will work overtime to get him another place as soon as possible.

Mr. Hamilton: In answering questions of the hon. member for Kamloops regarding the inaccessibility of certain information on which decisions are based, the minister left one point which at least to my satisfaction was not answered. I would like it explained just a little bit. I am speaking of a person seeking entry into Canada who is refused permission to come in as an immigrant without having the grounds on which that refusal is based given to him. Because of the condition of records in Europe and in other parts of the world, particularly in Europe, and with all of the uncertainties that occur in an investigation such as that, it is quite conceivable that the information procured by the department may be wrong. I am not speaking of a particular case. I know of many where it could be argued, but I would rather speak in general terms. It is conceivable that the information procured by the department may be wrong, may be completely erroneous.

As I see it at the present time this almost star chamber attitude on this particular aspect of the problem means that a person has no opportunity whatsoever to go to the minister and his department and give them information in order to pursue the matter further and perhaps correct any errors which may have crept into the information they have. Can the minister explain how that happens?

Mr. Harris: I am sure my hon. friend knows that we consider many cases six, seven and even eight times, and that the situation is not as simple as he makes it out to be. Indeed, far from there being a star chamber court of any kind, our officers abroad are there for the purpose of getting immigrants and not for preventing them coming to Canada, unless the circumstances are such that the people concerned are barred under the regulations. When we tell people they cannot come in there are not very many who get in touch with me and ask why. I seldom have appeals of this nature and I do not very often get letters except from members of parliament, and quite properly they write me and ask for an explanation. But I think in most cases the reason is usually fairly obvious and probably known to the disappointed applicant.

Nevertheless, I assure the hon. member that if a person has a good case and he is persistent about it we recognize that the information we have might be added to and other interpretations placed upon it so that the person who is rejected might very well convince us that he should be admitted.

Mr. Noseworthy: Can the minister answer my question regarding the operations of the Welch company in Canada?

Mr. Harris: I forgot about that, Mr. Chairman. The Welch company is an independent contractor which builds railway projects and as such it is independent of the railways. My hon. friend this afternoon made some reference to the relationship between persons going from the Canadian National Railways to the Welch company. As I indicated about something else, this is news to me. The Welch company is one of the few companies that accept contracts for the building of railways in remote areas and they are constantly asking us to provide immigrants because after checking with the national employment service they are unable to obtain labourers to go into these remote areas to work, and they contact the immigration office which supplies these people with immigrant workers. They pay wages which occasionally come under criticism in the press, but the wages are always within the standards set in each of the provinces in which this work is carried out and, in fact, in some cases I think they are fairly generous. We have had two or three complaints, one from Manitoba and one from British Columbia. We investigated both of them and we found that the conditions were not as outlined in the newspaper reports but were due to some exaggerated statements made by a discharged employee.

As far as I am concerned our relationship with the Welch company is a good one and we provide them with workers they could not otherwise obtain in order to carry out the work which I think helps the people of Canada generally.

Mr. Noseworthy: The minister says they bring in workers for railway projects because workers cannot be found in Canada. But just a couple of days ago I received a protest from the trades and labour council of Fort William protesting against the fact that the Welch company had brought in a number of immigrants from Portugal while the people of Fort William, who were looking for the jobs these immigrants from Portugal were given, could not obtain work.

Mr. Harris: I would point out, Mr. Chairman, that these are not maintenance workers on the railway. They are labourers carrying stones and other things about. They are not