

*Supply—Citizenship and Immigration*

• (7:40 p.m.)

Walter Harris, then the present Minister of Transport who stayed until the government changed, then the present member for Kamloops, then Hon. Ellen Fairclough, then the hon. member for Carleton, then the present President of the Privy Council, then the present member for Matapédia-Matane, then the present Minister of Labour, and now we have the present Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. During the short time I have been in the house the list includes at least five or six ministers.

Every time the new ministers have risen, bright with promise, full of enthusiasm, and announced bold, new plans for a new Immigration Act that would remove all the troubles of the past. They have said they would publish new white papers and all difficulties would be removed. I say to the present minister that hope springs eternal. If he only stays in the job long enough, and I hope he insists on doing so, he finally may be able to produce the necessary changes in the Immigration Act, in the regulations, and in many of the practices carried on under the act.

Since the new minister has occupied his present position but briefly and no doubt thinks problems of manpower are vastly important, it would obviously be unfair to expect him to jump in and deal with all immigration problems, but I would tell him that the root of the troubles which have blackened this department for years has been the failure to adopt the basic principle of granting a proper hearing to would-be immigrants.

We have had the power of ministerial discretion and we have had so-called appeals. The courts have said that our procedures in immigration matters are hugger-mugger and farcical. The Supreme Court of Canada has dealt with these matters and has said that the way in which would-be immigrants have been treated has not been in conformity with the basic standard required by the act, namely, a fair hearing. Yet we are still continuing these farcical procedures.

We still have questions asked of would-be immigrants, such as, "Do you have an immigrant visa from the department", when everyone knows they have not got it because the department has not issued visas to them. In addition, the department will not tell them why. They just say, "You do not meet the regulations under the act". Whatever else is dealt with in the white paper I tell the minister this problem must be dealt with.

If we want to abandon the idea of giving any hearing, let us be honest and say so. Let us say that it is left to the minister's discretion and there is no such thing as a hearing but give the reasons for so saying. So long as we pretend to give consideration to bringing immigrants into the country and to people who are trying to bring their relatives here, if we are going to give them a hearing it must be a proper and fair hearing. The minister will find that there still is a section in the Act which includes the right to pass orders in council to exclude people of different ethnic origins. This is in the Act, but right in the regulations there is a double standard. If you come from Asia or Africa you are in a lower class; you can only bring in restricted relatives. It is not necessary now to go into the details of that. If you come from Europe or some parts of America you can bring in a wider range of relatives.

What possible justification can there be for this discrimination? I know it is not put on the ground of race but we know the people who live in Asia and Africa and we know those who live in the continent of Europe. We do not apply the same standards. This is in the regulations. I think it is regulation 33. To this very day some people do not have the right to bring a relative to this country and I believe this is a continuing discrimination. I wish the minister would take a careful look at this matter and I would hope that he would deal with it in the white paper.

One other thing in respect of immigration on which I hope we can obtain a decision from someone is this: As the minister will have found out, for many months now and perhaps a year or two the government have been saying they were going to make up their mind on what to do in the case of visitors who come into this country as visitors with non-immigrant visas, and apply to stay in this country. As the minister knows, there is a great backlog of cases awaiting decision while the department makes up its mind in respect of what to do with these visitors.

I know this problem contains difficulties. You do not necessarily want to have the same harsh rules in respect of the examination of those who come in as visitors but, on the other hand, once they come in as visitors, become engaged to a Canadian citizen, secure a job or are otherwise admissible there is the question of whether they must be sent back for a long period of waiting in their country of origin.