

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

citizenship act we have the right to keep them out.

I think I or somebody else asked a question in the house about that problem of the present Minister of National Health and Welfare, who was at that time steering the citizenship act through the house. The answer he gave led me at least to believe that these people born in Canada, and who had gone back to Japan under pressure, could in all probability come back to this country when things had settled down without any legal difficulties in that regard. I hope I am right in that respect. I have always felt that while we may honour princes and kings, we should at least treat humble citizens who come from the countries represented by these princes and kings as human beings and fellow members of the human race under the fatherhood of one God, if I may say so with all reverence.

What I really rose to say this afternoon was that the department of immigration at times seems to be very tardy in reaching decisions. Whether or not this is due to the fact that the department is inadequately staffed I do not know. I would join with others in the house in saying that any approaches I have made have been met with invariable courtesy. I do not want to be misunderstood in that regard, but on several occasions over the past number of years decisions have been tardy in many instances, and I think unnecessarily so.

Let me illustrate that by reference to a case I have before me at the moment. It is the case of a lady now resident in Montreal who made application to the department of immigration in order that her father and mother might come to Canada. Actually they are living at the present time in Venezuela. Her application was made to the department in the month of January, 1952. Several times since then the department has been approached. The lawyer concerned, whom I know very well—I do not want to mention his name, although I am quite prepared to give the name and also the letter to the minister if he so desires—approached the deputy minister and the inspector in chief in Montreal regarding this case on several occasions and he always got the same answer, namely that the department was still studying the application of the lawyer's clients.

The matter was brought to my attention and I wrote to the minister with respect to this case on March 6 of this year. I got the same answer. In his letter of March 12 the minister said in part:

In all cases of this nature, it is necessary to satisfactorily complete certain inquiries into the background of the proposed immigrants before a final decision may be reached. In this instance these inquiries were instituted at the time the application was submitted.

[Mr. Coldwell.]

That was some 14 months before I approached the minister.

While they are progressing, they are not yet complete. All possible steps have been taken to finalize this case with a minimum of delay, and action was again taken recently in order to hasten a decision.

Mr. Harris: What is the nationality of the mother and father?

Mr. Coldwell: At present they are in Venezuela, and I should think by the name that they are Polish. Yes, that is right; this daughter was a Polish immigrant. I know that careful inquiries should be made. In fact I am in favour of it, but I think an effort should be made to speed up decisions so that they may be reached in a period less than 14 or 15 months. That is the point I am making. If the minister does not have sufficient staff, then I think it is up to the house to provide him with the necessary appropriations to get such staff.

I am not complaining about investigations. In fact I would go so far as to say that in some respects I do not think our investigations are comprehensive enough. I do not think people who are opposed to our democratic institutions and our democratic way of life are likely to become good citizens of Canada after they have reached the adult stage. I say that whether they are communists or whether they are not. I have met immigrants who have been admitted to this country who are anti-communist but at the same time they are anti-democratic. I have had some of them tell me quite frankly that Hitler tried to do a good job in Germany, that after all Hitler was not a bad fellow, and that parliament was all right but we did not get things done. Such people should be carefully investigated.

Mr. Herridge: That is the very type of people about whom I was talking.

Mr. Coldwell: When we let people into this country we want to be sure that they are not nazis, neo-nazis or fascists, whether they come from Italy, Germany, Poland or any other country.

Mr. Murray (Cariboo): And no communists.

Mr. Coldwell: No communists, I agree. I think the communist is a danger to our democratic institutions, but the fascist and the nazi are equally dangerous. I am afraid that distinction is not always made by the department of immigration, and that we are in danger of bringing people into Canada who while anti-communist are entirely out of sympathy with our democratic way of life.

I do not say this because I am of British origin, but I should like to see more immigrants from northern and western Europe,