

Supply—External Affairs

how much more quickly those people were recovering and how much easier the integration was proving to be. But I think even more striking, sir, were the answers which the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration gave the other day to the questions I put on the order paper about the Hungarian refugee movement.

As the committee knows, we admitted to this country 37,727 Hungarian refugees, most of them without any medical examination whatsoever before they arrived in Canada. It is true they were given a medical examination for the purpose of determining after they got here whether they could be landed as immigrants or whether they would be admitted temporarily under other status. Now, it happens that 1,380 of those 37,000 were allowed entry as non-immigrants and, in most cases, they were allowed entry as non-immigrants for health reasons because they could not satisfy the medical requirements. Three years later there are only 17 of those people receiving help from the federal government out of a total of 37,700. Out of 1,380 who could not satisfy health requirements—I do not say they were all people who could not satisfy the health requirements but most of them would have been—there are 17 today, three years later, receiving help from the federal government.

If I may be permitted, sir, to refer to this, the other day I had the privilege of attending the tea given by the Hungarian-Canadian committee in Knox church, and I wish that every hon. member could have been there because that function was organized almost entirely not by the older Hungarian community, though they helped, but by people who came here three years ago without a thing except the clothes they were wearing and who today are as well dressed as anybody you would see in Ottawa. Most of them spoke very good English, and it was a function that anyone in any part of Canada would have been proud to have had a part in organizing. Now, sir, that was something that was possible because the Hungarian refugees did not moulder away for years in camps. There was enough action taken, enough co-operation and enough world interest to get them dealt with quickly. We can hardly expect quite as good results in the case of the residual population of those camps who have been there for so long; but surely that is all the more reason why we should do everything practicable that we can to make a really worth-while contribution to this refugee problem.

I do believe that there is plenty of voluntary enthusiasm for this refugee movement of a practical nature and that if we could get

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

rid of this one obstacle with regard to continuing health care—I do not say that the government should do it all; I think it would be quite reasonable to say that the sponsors should take that responsibility for the first year but I feel that the government can do what we did for the Hungarians—then after one year if the refugees cannot satisfy the normal municipal or provincial health and welfare requirements for such care as is publicly given by these provinces or municipalities, the federal government should in fact accept that residual responsibility. If that were done I venture to say that on that basis it would cost a very small sum indeed. It would remove the most irritating obstacle, and it is really not reasonable to expect the municipal and provincial governments to give commitments about this matter. I am sure that the Minister of Labour, who was once the mayor of one of the leading cities in Ontario, would agree, because I know he held those views some years ago when I was minister of immigration and he was a private member of this house. These people may live in a municipality and then go somewhere else, or they may not ever have been taxpayers of the municipality at all. There is migration from one province to another.

As a matter of fact, what we are trying to do here is to make a national contribution to this problem. All of us with experience know this will continue to be a practical obstacle to the movement of people, and it could be removed for a very small contribution. It does seem to me, sir, that it should and could be done and that the vast majority of the Canadian people would be very pleased indeed to see their government do it. I am sorry the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration are not here to listen to what I have to say. I am sure that with the experience they have had already they would find it very difficult to disagree with the opinion I have expressed.

I know from my experience that in the final analysis the barrier that has to be overcome is the barrier provided by the treasury board and its chairman. The chairman of the treasury board is in front of me, and I appeal to his large heart, as well as to his head, because I venture to say, sir, that most of these people who may require medical care now will be making a contribution five years from now to the production of this country out of all proportion to anything it will cost the taxpayers to carry out the suggestion I have made.

Mr. Pearson: I wonder whether the minister could give me some information as to the extent of this problem when world refugee