

Ministers of Citizenship and Immigration, three Deputy Ministers and one long time Acting Deputy Minister, to realize the handicaps under which the department has laboured. No one has had the opportunity to take firm command, to give force and direction to policies and practices.

Since this government took office there have been four ministers, one Acting Deputy Minister and two Deputy Ministers. The hon. member for Papineau held the portfolio for something like nine and a half months. Then the hon. member for Matapedia-Matane was the incumbent for slightly over 16 months, after which the hon. member for Vancouver Centre was vouchsafed only about five and a half months.

● (5:50 p.m.)

These changes, sir, were not made in the interests of the department or in the interests of the advancement of immigration policy, but solely for partisan reasons in an attempt to solve internal problems within the Liberal Party. What sort of game of ministerial musical chairs is this to play in such a vitally important portfolio? Not one of the ministers, no matter how talented he might be, has been given the opportunity by the Prime Minister to become more than vaguely acquainted with the fringes of the department. It is even more significant that only the hon. member for Vancouver Centre actually believes in immigration as an instrument of national policy, and only he had the enthusiasm and the zeal to seek to formulate consistent policy for the department.

Then, Mr. Chairman, I have the gravest reservations about the absorption of the old Department of Citizenship and Immigration into a new department of manpower and the appointment of a new deputy minister. Far be it from me to object to the appointment of any individual on the ground of active participation in politics. I have never believed that political types should be eliminated from advancement, but the new deputy minister is a figure so controversial by nature, so prone to attract attack, so lacking in knowledge or understanding of immigration, that I confess to believing his appointment a grave mistake and a genuine blow to the public service of Canada.

However, more important than the personality of any individual is the proposed structure of the new department of manpower. When the establishing legislation is before the house I shall have considerable to say on this subject. I want to say only this now in

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an attempt at this late date to try to convince the Prime Minister that the submerging of immigration into what is basically a labour portfolio is a grave error in national policy.

From my own experience in the portfolio, I know that it was the Department of Labour which consistently and persistently brought pressures to bear to reduce immigration, to cut back, to hold down, and at a time when, in my view, the economy needed the stimulus of expanded immigration. Last year I had the privilege of visiting both New Zealand and Australia and spending considerable time with the ministers responsible for immigration in those countries, and much more time in detailed discussions with their departmental staffs. I was treated with the most exceptional courtesy in both countries, and therefore I hesitate to make any comparisons, certainly ones which would be invidious.

In New Zealand the immigration portfolio is an adjunct of the labour portfolio, both being held by a dynamic and very able minister, Mr. Tom Shand. But in retrospect I am unable to escape the feeling that immigration is much subdued as an instrument of national policy by comparison with Australia, where it is a separate portfolio. Of this I intend to have considerably more to say when the legislation is before the house.

One of the highly unfortunate by-products of this game of musical chairs with the portfolio of citizenship and immigration has been the delay in a white paper on immigration. I believe it was on December 31, 1964 at a press conference when the Prime Minister promised a white paper. He used these words:

I have asked the Minister to prepare a white paper on immigration policy, immigration administration and immigration procedures, telling what has been done and what is in process, and to have that available if at all possible—and I believe it is possible—at the beginning of the next session of parliament.

That next session has come and has been dissolved, Mr. Chairman, and we are well launched into the next session of parliament. Fifteen months have passed and still no white paper, though the Prime Minister was convinced that it could be ready before the opening of the last session.

The fault is not with the officials of the department. The fault is with the procession of ministers which we have had since December 31, 1964, and the long range interests of Canada have suffered, in my view, by the delays and the neglect in this regard.