

intention of the government that, once that debate commences, it shall be pursued without intermission until its conclusion.

As hon. members will have seen from the order paper, next Monday is taken over for government business.

Mr. GRAYDON: Then will this be the last private members' day?

Mr. MACKENZIE: No; Wednesdays are still left, and there are the private members' hours on Tuesday and Friday evenings.

I think it is safe to say that the legislation of the government is practically all ready, and the length of the session will depend upon the length of the budget debate and the cooperation we receive from hon. gentlemen opposite in regard to private members' days. We have received excellent cooperation thus far, and I trust it will continue. If so, I think this session will be greatly shortened thereby.

At six o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.

Thursday, May 1, 1947

The house met at three o'clock.

IMMIGRATION

STATEMENT OF PRIME MINISTER AS TO CANADA'S POLICY

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, before the house resumes the debate on the second reading of the bill to amend the Immigration Act, I should like to set forth, in broad outline, the government's policy with respect to immigration.

The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration. The government will seek by legislation, regulation, and vigorous administration, to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of such numbers of immigrants as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy.

Like other major problems of today, the problem of immigration must be viewed in the light of the world situation as a whole. A wise and productive policy for Canada cannot be devised by studying only the situation within our own country. For example, temporary but effective limits on any policy that is to be applied immediately are created by the problem of providing ocean transportation and of establishing inspection facilities in certain countries to which access is difficult at present. Moreover, Canada's policy has to be related to the social, political and economic

[Mr. Mackenzie.]

circumstances resulting from the war. Among other considerations, it should take account of the urgent problem of the resettlement of persons who are displaced and homeless, as an aftermath of the world conflict.

Under existing circumstances, therefore, Canada's policy with respect to immigration falls, necessarily, into two parts: measures designed for immediate application, and a long-term programme.

Let me point out at once that with regard to immigration at the present time, there is confusion of two fundamental points; namely, the extent to which immigrants may legally enter Canada, and the extent to which they can physically get to Canada. At present, the limiting factor is not our legislation or regulations, but the shortage of transport. Through Canada's high commissioner in London, the government has kept in active touch with shipping authorities and transportation companies in the United Kingdom to see what may be possible in the way of special shipping services. As to what may prove feasible, I am unable to make a report at this time. Other countries interested in encouraging immigration face precisely the same conditions, and are experiencing the same difficulties. The problem of transportation is a very real one. It cannot be overcome in a week or a month, or indeed within the next year.

The shortage of shipping means that Canada cannot secure more immigrants simply by changing laws and regulations. Since those persons we would be glad to welcome will not all be able to come, the shortage of shipping also means that we have to decide to which immigrants prior opportunity to come to Canada is to be given.

Because of the limitations of transport, the government decided that, as respects immigration from Europe, the emphasis for the present should be on the admission of the relatives of persons who are already in Canada, and on assisting in the resettlement of displaced persons and refugees.

Up until the end of the war and since—under order in council P.C. 695 of March 21, 1931—four broad categories of persons were admissible to Canada. These were:

1. British subjects from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Newfoundland, New Zealand, Australia or the Union of South Africa, who possessed sufficient means to maintain themselves until employment was secured.
2. United States citizens, similarly possessed of means of maintenance.
3. Wives, unmarried children under 18, or fiancées of men resident in Canada.
4. Agriculturists with sufficient means to farm in Canada.