

time and again in this House during every session, that the greatest want of this Dominion to-day is people; we must have population. I have heard leaders of political life in Canada twenty and twenty-five years ago predict, that in ten years we would have from ten to fifteen millions of people; in twenty years we would get probably twenty millions of people, and so on. But how have those predictions been fulfilled? It is over twenty-four years since I entered this parliament, and I am not satisfied with the growth of population that has taken place in that quarter of a century. I do not think any Canadian is satisfied, and there is a consensus of opinion that we want people. There never was an opportunity such as is presented to-day for getting them. The great trouble in the past in getting people to this country was the competition of the United States. Immigrants were drawn there by the tales of prosperity they heard and, of course, by the large population abiding there. Now the doors are closed, the quota law is in effect, and it is most difficult for people to leave European countries and enter the United States. The law will become more stringent as time goes on. Now is our opportunity to choose, to select, to reject if we so desire. But if on the one hand we are told we cannot bring any people into this country to work as artisans or mechanics or labourers, and on the other hand that we cannot bring any in as farmers what are we going to do? What class are we going to bring in, I ask you? I do not believe that the ocean rate has any appreciable effect upon the question of immigration to this country to-day. I have been informed by officials of the department during the present session that if the bars were raised we could bring to Canada any number of people we desired. It is true, there is no doubt about it. But we keep the bars down, and I think the time has come when there should be some very great relaxation of these restrictions.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Has the minister no comment to make? I do not know that there is a more important subject before the people of Canada to-day than the one we are now considering, and yet we have had no discussion on it to amount to anything this session. I should like to know from the minister what classes we could admit to Canada now were we willing? Perhaps I had better put my question this way so as not to embarrass the minister at all: If we raise the bars now in any way what classes would he first admit to this country who are ready to come? The

minister understands what I mean. There are certain classes that we all know would come, of course.

Mr. ROBB: My right hon. friend means what classes are ready to come?

Mr. MEIGHEN: No. I know pretty well what classes are ready—some of them anyway. What I want to know is this: If the minister were to raise the bars now, and had his chance of selection, what class ready to come would he first admit who are now rejected. I mean to say were he opening the door just a little who are those now rejected that he would admit?

Mr. ROBB: General labourers, without going into nationalities.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Of what country?

Mr. ROBB: General labourers.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Not all general labourers.

Mr. ROBB: Well, my hon. friend from South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) was quite right. If we relax the restriction and allow people to come in and take care of themselves—regardless of those who say they do not want any more people on the land and those who say they do not want any more labour to come in—there are many people of all nationalities prepared to come to this country, nationalities that have made good in Canada, that have paid their way, have paid their municipal taxes, and have produced traffic for the railways; a fair type of citizens from Germany, Ukraina, Galicia and Hungary. My right hon. friend was in the department and he knows the type that come in.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I never was in the department although I have acted as Minister of Immigration. Immigration was not under the Interior department in my time. We will concede, to get closer to the point, that so far as geography goes, and nationality too for that matter, the immigrants we want are those from northern Europe.

Mr. ROBB: Yes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Because that climate breeds the stock which does best in this northern part of America. Very well, what classes could we get from northern Europe which we do not admit? The minister says there is an agitation against artisans, an agitation against farmers, even, and there is an agitation against the common labourer. Could we get artisans? Could we get the common labourers? I know that the minister