

shown the same sympathetic attitude on this question, the same conditions could have obtained here.

May I point out that the Right Hon. R. B. Bennett, speaking in Saint John, New Brunswick, only on Thursday last, said that we owed a debt of gratitude to these refugees and that we should accept our quota of them. There is in this country as a whole a very large body of opinion to the effect that the government should extend the hand of brotherhood and friendship to these people. It is they who have been the first victims of fascist tyranny and oppression; who knows who will be the next?

I make this plea on broad humanitarian grounds, not for any one sect or creed but for all victims of persecution. It pained me last week, Mr. Speaker, to hear hon. members deny the plea of the refugee to the right of asylum. It seemed so inhuman. I am in a sense proud to have this opportunity of making such a plea and in a humble way to follow the teaching of ancient and modern religious thought so beautifully expressed in the words, "Do unto others as ye would have them do unto you;" and if I may be permitted to add one further quotation familiar to us all, let us if possible have peace on earth, goodwill towards men.

I have no desire to follow at length this line of argument, but I do wish to call attention to certain remarks that were made in Montreal on the twentieth of this month by the Secretary of State. I quote his words as reported in the *Montreal Gazette*:

Despite all sentiments of humanity, so long as Canada has an unemployment problem there will be no "open door" for political refugees here, Hon. Fernand Rinfret, Secretary of State, declared last night in an address before the St. James Young Liberals Association.

The government of Canada, Mr. Rinfret said, has decided to date that restrictions on immigration from foreign countries are to be maintained. There is no intention, he added, to diminish those restrictions and as long as there is an unemployment problem the government will be opposed to doing so. "This is not only my personal opinion," the Secretary of State said, "but the policy of the government to which I belong."

Possibly with a cheering and admiring audience the minister's enthusiasm ran away with his discretion, as so very often happens. My criticism in the first place is that it is a most unusual procedure for a cabinet minister to declare the government policy at a meeting in a constituency, especially when it relates to a department not under his control. Further, and of more importance, any statement of government policy should be made on the floor of the house itself, and particularly so when the house is in session. I have already

referred to the fact that the Secretary of State was a member of the subcommittee, had been present at a meeting with members of the house and knew what the actual requests were. He knew that no request had ever been made from any responsible source for a policy of the "open door" in regard to immigration, or even in respect to refugees. Such being the case the minister has, to say the least, been guilty of misstating the facts, and has created a wholly erroneous impression amongst his followers. Already many of his supporters from Quebec have taken the cue from the speech of the minister and have drawn inferences which are wholly incorrect and not in accordance with the facts. Statements have been made in the house which tend to create discord between the different races in Canada. It is exactly this kind of talk that is not desirable in the dominion at the present time. Anything which tends to create discord among our people is an obstacle to real progress.

A recent statement made within the past few weeks on behalf of His Holiness the Pope may appropriately be quoted at this point:

The thoughts and feelings of the holy Father Pope Pius XI will be correctly interpreted by declaring that he looks with human and Christian approval on every effort to show charity and to give effective assistance to all those who are innocent victims in these sad times of distress.

Thus the head of the great Roman Catholic church joins with other Christian leaders in a plea for aid to the victims of cruelty such as the world has seldom seen.

The first few words that the Secretary of State used were these: "Despite all sentiments of humanity." I can hardly believe that anyone could have used language which sounds so harsh and brutal; yet it is given as a statement of government policy. Am I to assume that the government as a whole are devoid of sentiments of humanity? I can hardly believe such to be the case; it seems almost libellous on some members of the government whom I know. I do not think there is a more humane and considerate member in this chamber than the Prime Minister. I have met him under all sorts of conditions, and I know his kindness and thoughtfulness for others. For a cabinet minister to claim that the members of the cabinet are devoid of all human sentiments is a rash statement which I think cannot go unchallenged.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The Secretary of State is not here at present, but I cannot imagine his having made a statement of that