

Establishment of Immigration Appeal Board

I say to the minister, with the respect which all of us have for him, that I am afraid this is what has happened in the case of this bill. A genuinely humanitarian objective has been truncated by the fears to which I have referred and the result is a bill which has not achieved its objectives but provides even greater difficulties for many of the people concerned than they had before.

The hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell) was absolutely right that when we hand these final powers to a board and set out with great meticulousness the limits of their authority we do not increase the chances that human considerations will play a part; we decrease them. Whatever minister we have had to deal with, whether the hon. member for Carleton when he was minister of immigration, Mrs. Fairclough who was minister of immigration during the preceding government, the hon. member for Matapédia-Matane (Mr. Tremblay), the present Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill), the present Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand), or the present Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson), my experience has been that when a matter reached them, whether they agreed with it or not one was certain that human factors were given weight. One cannot be certain that this will be the case under this legislation. The results under this legislation may be less desirable than they were when the minister had discretion in respect of the final decision in such matters.

I hope with all my heart, therefore, that when the bill comes before the committee of the whole some of the objections I have raised which I believe to be important and valid, if I may say so, will find a responsive ear on the part of the minister and that some attempt will be made by all of us to amend this legislation so that the desirable objectives we had in the first place will be fulfilled.

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, we now are considering a bill which has to do with what I believe is one of the most important aspects of government administration, namely, immigration to Canada and the development of our national economy. I am sure too that many members of this house recognize the importance of a continuous stream of new immigrants. There are several reasons for this, one being the fact that we have an extremely large land area and a very limited population. It would seem to me that the only way we can hope to continue to develop our country and make it what it ought to be is by having an increasing

[Mr. Lewis.]

population to accept the challenges that exist and to work together to achieve the development that we all desire. On the other hand, I think we must recognize the fact that with an area such as ours and in view of the very crowded conditions in other parts of the world, we cannot expect to keep such a large land area confined to such a small population. Therefore it would seem to me that we must recognize our responsibility to open our doors to immigration and accept into our country those who desire to come here.

• (4:10 p.m.)

Of course, we must also realize the importance of some guiding principles in the acceptance of immigrants. I do not believe we can adopt a wide-open door policy. This would be a disservice not only to our country but to those who seek to enter Canada. But with the conditions that exist in Canada I feel that if government policies were established and implemented to facilitate the absorption into our economic and social life of those who desire to come here, there is no reason why we should not continue a very vigorous program of immigration.

We must acknowledge the fact that those who have come to our shores have made a tremendous contribution to our country in practically every area of life, in industry, agriculture, commerce and finance, as well as the contribution they have made in the sharing of their various cultures. On numbers of occasions in this house statistics have been placed on the record to indicate how Canada and the lives of Canadians have been enriched by these new Canadians. We know this situation will continue as we accept them into our country.

Suggestions have been made from time to time to the effect that our economy is being adversely affected by the entry of those from abroad. I do not believe this is so. In times past our immigration policies have been so restrictive that I do not think there has been any indication that the country has been adversely affected by their entry. Therefore I believe that a broadminded and widely implemented immigration policy will continue to admit an increasing number of people into Canada and will result in nothing but good for them and for us.

However, I believe there have been some contradictions or paradoxes in the various government policies in relation to immigration and their effect upon immigration as a whole. I should like first of all to refer to a statement made by Professor Eastman in his