

*Immigration Act*

cialities which have nothing to do with attracting those very people to Canada.

I do not think this parliament should take any such step. During the course of the administration of the act, and particularly at such times of depression as these, which tend to bring out in bold relief matters that in more normal times would be dealt with and passed by as commonplace, it is very necessary to have no maudlin complex. Our great neighbour to the south has many thousands of cases with which the Department of Immigration is dealing every day, who, if we let down the bars, would be sent to Canada where they have no right to come. At times there are occasional cases which get into the press. I should like to say to those who represent the press here that while at times they have been just a little bit caustic with respect to the course I have had to adopt in certain cases, yet in the main I compliment them upon the way they have treated the department with respect to the administration of this most difficult statute.

My hon. friend from North Winnipeg has referred to some cases in which a hardship would appear to have been occasioned. I cannot call to mind at the moment any such case which has not been reviewed, not hastily by an officer at the border, but by a board of inquiry, where evidence has been taken under oath, and frequently an appeal has been referred to myself. I have under my hand cases which have been reported in the press, and I must say that the hon. member for Comox-Alberni is quite right when he suggests that for reasons of humanity the department has been reluctant to publish the names of the relatives of the persons concerned, or the details of these matters. It would only add to the misery of those who have suffered enough by reason of having to lose one of their family. There are very few cases where the relatives are not entirely satisfied that the deportee be returned to the country of origin, and that happens daily. It does not happen in Canada in the same percentage by any means as it happens in the United States of America.

It is not my purpose to discuss immigration matters at length at this moment, though I could continue for some time. However, I would ask the sponsor of this bill to review very carefully the effect the adoption of the bill would have, and to study and weigh very carefully the extent to which it takes away from the administrative officers of the Department of Immigration the power to deal with cases which may arise from time to time. The question is whether we should divest

[Mr. Gordon.]

those who are administering the laws of this country of the power to get rid of dangerous undesirables, no matter how long they have lived in Canada.

Mr. NEILL: Will the minister allow a question before he finishes? Would he mind saying a few words with regard to subsection 2, which seems to have some merit, and which seems more free from the objections he has taken to the principle of the bill?

Mr. GORDON: I thought I had conveyed the idea I had in mind without dealing separately with the two subsections. Subsection 2 provides that no immigrant who has resided in Canada for a continuous period of ten years, and who leaves voluntarily to reside elsewhere on the continent of North America, shall be refused reentry by reason of such absence. In my view this suggested amendment has little effect, if any, on the Immigration Act as it now stands. Absence from Canada does not create any disability on the part of a person desiring to return. It merely places the person back in the position he occupied when he applied for admission originally.

Mr. NEILL: But possibly the law may have been changed since he left.

Mr. GORDON: That may be so, and with all respect, I think that is as it should be. If we were to adopt a law which would make our country, with all its advantages, available at all times to all persons during good times; which would let them drift into another country when perhaps we would do well to have everyone of courage remain here, and encourage them to drift back when things have returned to normal, I think that would not be a desirable provision in any law of this country.

I do not know that I can add more to what I have said. Any general discussion of immigration I should prefer to postpone until some time later in the session.

Mr. S. W. JACOBS (Cartier): With a good deal of what my hon. friend the Minister of Immigration (Mr. Gordon) has said, I am in agreement. I think it would be a dangerous thing on the part of parliament to agree to the passing of this bill in its present form. The minister enumerated the prohibited classes who would get relief were this bill to become law. I do not think there is any member of this house who wants that class of person in this country. We do not want people who are in the habit of taking narcotics; we do not want people who live on