

Immigration Act

Under this clause, could the minister give a permit for the entry of a Chinese? The language is pretty broad. Of course, the Chinese Exclusion Act is in force, but the section says the minister may issue a written permit authorizing any person to enter Canada.

Mr. ROBB: The Chinese are governed by a special act.

Mr. GUTHRIE: But under this section permits might be granted to Chinese to enter.

Mr. NEILL: Under section 79 of the Immigration Act, it is specially provided that where its provisions do not conflict with the Chinese Immigration Act, they shall apply as well to persons of Chinese origin. So as the hon. member for South Wellington says, this section would give the minister power to allow any man, black, brown, white or yellow, to come into this country and stay for any unlimited period. There are no limitations whatever. The hon. member for South Wellington says, it may only be used in doubtful cases, but it can be used in any case whatsoever. It is a very wide and a very drastic power to put into the hands of any minister. The hon. member for South Wellington said that the time might come, if it had not come yet, when we should lower the bars of immigration, but you do not need any further reductions when you have this. This gives the minister a perfectly blank cheque to sign. All he has to do is to write at the bottom and he can let anyone in for two, three, four or five years, without any question whatever, without any qualification, without any appeal. He may issue a written permit authorizing any person to enter Canada, or having entered to remain therein, without being subject to the provisions of this act. As I have said, it applies equally to the Chinese also, and I do think it is not asking too much to restrict the power in such a very moderate way as I have suggested. It is not even restricting the minister's powers; it is only limiting them to this period. There is nothing to prevent him at the end of six months from renewing that permit for reasons validly given. What I would suggest as an improved amendment—it is really the same thing—is to add after the word "writing" the words "the whole of such period, including extensions thereof, shall not exceed six months in all." I am willing to leave it, of course I must leave it, to the judgment of the House, but I fail to see where any harm can be done by inserting this amendment.

[Mr. Guthrie.]

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I think I know cases that the hon. member for Comox-Alberni has reference to, and there is a great deal in what he says; but there is another kind of case which affects us more down here in the East, and which probably would be adversely affected by the application of that principle without any qualification at all. I have in mind the case of a young man from Germany, who had no proper entry into Canada; he was here on probation. It developed that he knew all about dyes and was an expert tanner. He is now engaged in introducing a new process of tanning hides. The minister has given him the right to stay here for a year for the purpose of completing this work. I think it is good the minister had the right in that case.

Mr. NEILL: I do not deny giving him the right, but with some limitations.

Mr. ROBB: I think my hon. friends are unduly alarmed. The practice of the department for many years has never been to give a permit for more than a year at a time, and generally it is for a much shorter period; so I think my hon. friend is placing unwarranted restrictions upon those whose experience has satisfied them that this is the proper thing.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Are they ever used in case of the Chinese? That is the real difficulty.

Mr. ROBB: Not that the commissioner can recall at the moment.

Mr. NEILL: I would ask the minister if this section we are discussing is not the only possible way by which the presence of these Chinese in Nova Scotia can be justified? Their presence can be justified under no other section that I know of.

Mr. ROBB: The Chinese Immigration Act neither permits nor prohibits what has been done in the case of those men on the Atlantic coast. But may I point out that those men were not landed in Canada. They are working on the ships and a bond of \$105,000 was given that they would not land in Canada, but would be returned. I am not so sure that it is a detriment to the people of Nova Scotia who are working in the mines producing coal to have these Chinamen working on these boats if that means the boats can run and carry that coal to market. We looked into the McDonald case my hon. friend brought up very carefully, and found that there had been a misunderstanding and that McDonald had been reinstated and was quite satisfied.

Mr. NEILL: The minister has told us that these Chinese were not brought into Canada. Therefore, they are not in Canada now?