

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Fulton: The number 24,000 in one year is not very many, really.

Mr. Harris: Perhaps not, but my hon. friend heard his colleague from Gloucester this afternoon urge upon the government that families should not be broken up, and that we should have these people come forward to the head of the family at the earliest possible moment; and you must make that allowance.

Mr. Fulton: I was not objecting here at all; I was trying to put this in proper perspective.

Mr. Harris: The proper perspective is that you must have both. The other arguments I made I think are still valid. The persons who came forward as displaced persons, totalling 165,000 since the war, were persons who were subsidized, as my hon. friend says. They were subsidized for the reason he gave (a) they had no money whatever, but (b) they were a problem which was on the doorstep of the United Nations, something which was wholly removed from migration as a national policy. It was an international situation in which humanity came into play, in which self-interest required that a problem had to be solved, and I do not think these people can be used as an argument as to the normal course of migration in any form.

On the other question, when you enter into an agreement with respect to persons who will come to Canada and you subsidize them, it is inevitable at once that the other party to the agreement should be given some consideration. In other words, if you make an agreement with another party, in common courtesy you have to hear his opinions and perhaps agree to them on occasion. I am not suggesting that it would not be proper that they be agreed to. At the present time our offices abroad choose the persons who can come provided they meet the standards we impose, and under those circumstances we accept full responsibility for any mistakes that may be made. I think we are getting the type of immigrant most suitable to this country. If it is found that the policy is not working out satisfactorily we can change it immediately parliament indicates its dissatisfaction.

Mr. Herridge: The hon. member for Vancouver East has been called out of the chamber, and he asked me to ask the minister a question on his behalf. I understand that the hon. member asked some questions this afternoon with regard to the policy of the department in connection with certain Japanese who were repatriated to Japan

[Mr. Harris.]

and now wish to return to Canada. Can the minister answer the hon. member's question?

Mr. Harris: I think that question could be better asked either in the external affairs committee or on the external affairs estimates, because if those persons are citizens of Canada we do not handle the mechanics of admitting them; it is done through external affairs. If they are not citizens of Canada they would be admissible upon application under P.C. 2115 by anyone here who could claim the proper relationship as set out in that order. I think my hon. friend is referring to a group of persons who may be claiming to be Canadian citizens, and they would come forward upon application to external affairs, not to immigration.

Mr. McLure: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a suggestion to the minister under this item. I have not said anything on immigration or citizenship because the time has been all taken up. Some \$26 million is to be spent on immigration and citizenship, but what I would like to see for Prince Edward Island is a policy to end migration. Through the fault of the government we lose a lot of our population every year, and these people could easily be kept there. If the same support were given to the people of the province, in different ways, that is given to bringing immigrants into the province we could retain at least a thousand people a year who are now leaving the province to go to other places.

I have nothing to say against immigration, but I urge upon the government through this department that they adopt some plan, especially for a province like ours, to keep people at home instead of bringing in other people to replace them. This could be in the form of loans to farmers' sons. In most cases a farmer's son cannot get as good a place or as large a loan as the person coming from outside.

Mr. Ferguson: Mr. Chairman, this country is a member of the United Nations and it is really amusing at times to listen to the variety of ideas we hear on immigration. In my opinion immigration is one of the greatest factors that must be considered by Canada. I lived in the United States for a number of years, and a very able man who had started as a coal miner in Virginia and amassed a vast fortune through the desire to work advised me to return to my native land. He said to me, "You have a country there with tremendous undeveloped resources; it is the last great country in the world that offers what it does." Yet we have men in this country and in this parliament who want to put the brakes on prosperity, who want to put the brakes on