

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

bringing enough people to Canada this past year or so. I certainly believe that our immigration policy should be based on our absorptive capacity. But I am going to suggest that certainly in the last year that absorptive capacity has not been reached.

Certain remarks have been made in the house today that we have to watch unemployment. Of course that is sensible, but I repeat what I have said earlier, that every time a person picks up a daily newspaper he finds not columns of "help wanted" advertisements but page after page. I have in my hand at the moment today's *Toronto Telegram* and there are six or seven pages of help wanted advertisements seeking bricklayers, electricians, painters, domestics, unskilled workers, shippers, service station attendants, teachers, chauffeurs, bookkeepers and so on.

An hon. Member: Hardware men.

Mr. Thatcher: Yes, certainly; hardware men are wanted.

An hon. Member: Hardware merchants.

Mr. Thatcher: In my opinion, no matter what city you mention, there is an acute and all-pervading labour shortage today. Many schools in my province are closed, and I believe also in other provinces, because teachers cannot be obtained. We have hospitals that are having great difficulty in carrying on operations, because they cannot get nurses and attendants. As has been mentioned by the hon. member for Springfield, many farmers cannot get farm help. Factories have had to curtail operations because in some cases they cannot obtain skilled workers.

I think there is room in Canada for thousands of domestics. I believe there is also room for a great many more unskilled workers. The way our industry is expanding today, there are not even enough workmen for those industries that are past the blueprint stage, let alone enough men for future expansion. Suppose the Minister of Defence Production decides this year that the nation is going to go ahead with the St. Lawrence seaway. Where would we get the men to build it? What would happen if the Minister of Agriculture decided to go ahead with the South Saskatchewan river project? Where would he get 10,000 workmen to build it? What if our gold mines should open again? Where are we going to get men to operate them?

An hon. Member: From the unemployed.

Mr. Thatcher: I say it is folly for Canada to be short of workmen as we are today, when there are so many people in western Europe who want to emigrate to Canada.

During the current session of parliament I have heard two main problems discussed again and again; the loss of our overseas markets for farm products, and high taxation. I think immigration can help solve both these problems or at least alleviate them. If we brought more people to our country we would have a larger and more stable domestic market for our farm products, at a time when we have lost many of our English markets. I also think that if immigration were more extensive the fantastic tax burden which Canadians are called upon to bear today could be spread out among more people. If the tax bill against production in Canada cannot be lowered, and apparently the government feels it cannot, then it seems to me it is sensible for us to step up production by immigration. It seems logical to me that the more rapidly our population increases, the sooner we can expect tax relief.

We have heard a great deal about the problems of the railroads during this session. I suggest that a larger population would ease some of the problems they are facing. I think greater immigration is needed for reasons of defence. In view of these facts, I suggest that the minister should set his immigration target for 1953 at a higher level than last year. I do not want to be too radical, so what I suggest is that we accept the suggestion made in Toronto last night by Mr. C. H. Millard, the head of one of our largest trade unions. Mr. Millard was speaking at a panel discussion held for the benefit of the Toronto business and professional club. In this morning's *Globe and Mail* there is the following report:

Mr. Millard, who insisted on seeking some concrete conclusion from the discussion, finally suggested Canada in the next ten years should admit about 2 per cent of its present population annually in immigration.

I believe that would work out to between 280,000 and 300,000 persons per year. I should like to suggest that our immediate objective for this year should be at least 300,000 people. In making that suggestion, I am very pleased to have the company of Mr. Millard, that eminent trade union leader.

There are only one or two other things I would suggest to the minister. I believe that the number of emigrants from Great Britain to this country fell down very badly last year. We only brought out 44,000 people. There are two reasons for that. The first is that the minister has withdrawn a good deal of the assistance on transportation which was formerly provided. The second is that the British government will not allow emigrants from that country to take out sufficient money. I think the minister should be more generous with assisted passages. At