

*Supply—Citizenship and Immigration*

Having decided they would remain a French entity on this North American continent, they had to settle in the back country, I might say, and stick to the land in order to survive. And during 100 years, they categorically opposed immigration because they knew that for them, immigration, in the situation then prevailing, was a threat to their very existence and meant assimilation sooner or later.

Since that time, 200 years have passed and during those 200 years, the French-Canadian group, as such, has laid strong foundations which practically ensure its survival. Indeed, I think that survival is no longer a problem.

What is a problem at this time is to maintain its percentage within Canada as a whole. I think that is where the federal government has a very serious responsibility, the responsibility to see about maintaining that percentage. That is not easy; it is even very difficult, I know, all the more so as my fellow citizens in the province of Quebec still have difficulty in understanding the problem, and especially in considering the solutions we may put forward in order to maintain that proportion of the French speaking element in Canada.

Personally, I have come to the conclusion that the people of Quebec should completely revise their philosophy concerning immigration.

Admittedly, if Quebec maintains its present position toward such immigration, we shall definitely see the percentage of French speaking Canadians diminish compared to that of English speaking Canadians.

In my opinion, the possibilities we have of maintaining that percentage are quite limited; we should therefore take full advantage of those possibilities if we really want to attain this objective.

Personally, after analysing the situation and scrutinizing the various aspects of the problem, I have come to the conclusion that the Quebec government should partake in the immigration policy of this country. Here, I would like to call the minister's attention to a positive suggestion I intend to make. The minister of education in Quebec, Hon. Paul Gérin-Lajoie, is, I believe a highly qualified and very broadminded man, and especially he is able to speak to the population of Quebec. By his initiatives, he proved that he had the ability and the qualifications.

It is very difficult to convince the people of the province of Quebec who are over 50 years of age that such a change is necessary in their attitude toward immigration; but it is not so difficult to convince the young

people. If we want this mentality to develop in the province of Quebec in the matter of immigration, we must work among those who, tomorrow, will become French Canada, that is to say our young people.

There should be, and I feel strongly about this, the closest relationship between the Quebec minister of education and the federal minister of immigration, so that together they may arrive at policies liable to give the results we are all hoping for, that is the maintenance of the present percentage of French speaking people in Canada.

There are very specific reasons, Mr. Chairman, for the maintenance of such a percentage. One of them arises from the present grievances on the part of this group of Canadians in Quebec against confederation and in favour of Quebec's withdrawal from confederation. That grievance, that separatism, since you want to call it that, also originates in immigration. We are afraid, because we realize the possibility of assimilation and we cannot see any solution to that threat other than the withdrawal of Quebec from confederation, so as to form a French state, independent from the rest of the country and able to control and maintain at the present percentage the French speaking people on the North American continent.

I believe that, in view of the facts, we should try to foster the coming to Quebec of immigrants with a Latin culture. I realize it is very difficult to attract to French Canada, or any other part of Canada, French people from France, and I understand this, because France is not overpopulated—it is a country that could be compared to a garden where people live in economic and climatic conditions that are practically ideal; it is very difficult to make a Frenchman leave his own country.

Therefore, if we cannot rely on French nationals to come to Canada or to Quebec to complement the natural increase in our population in order to maintain our percentage of French speaking people in Canada, we must look in another direction. I can only think of one solution, and that is Italy. Italy is overpopulated particularly in the north. It is a Latin country. We have considerable cultural affinity with the Italians. I think that we, Quebecers, should make a super-human effort in that direction.

I would like the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to study the situation very closely in order to see to what extent we should bring Italian citizens to Quebec at the present time, because I believe that if they