

There the hon. member for Lake Centre stopped. I continue to read, and these words are, I think, most important:

—and to bring Chinese persons under the general provisions of the Immigration Act and no longer under legislation applying exclusively to persons of Chinese origin.

The only general Immigration Act that I know of is covered by Order in Council 695. On the other hand, we are told today by the minister that it is the intention to bring these people under Order in Council 2115, passed on September 30, 1930, which provides that Asiatics must be citizens rather than residents before they are permitted to bring their families into the country.

I refer to another privy council order. On June 17, 1931, Order in Council 1378 was passed, which provided that no Chinese resident could become a Canadian citizen without the consent of the Chinese government. It was applicable to both Chinese and Japanese. That is one of the reasons why the Chinese are not citizens. There was a reason for that at that time. In those days France, Britain and the United States had some extraterritorial rights in China. It was common practice for Chinese nationals to become either British subjects, French subjects or United States subjects if that were possible, and then they were no longer subject to Chinese law. If they were criminals they could not be apprehended by the Chinese authorities. In doing away with the extraterritorial rights, the Chinese attempted to meet the situation. I said that that order in council was passed in June, 1931. Under pressure from the Japanese government, that order in council with respect to Japanese was rescinded in August, 1934, and some other form was retained which was suitable to them. I recall vividly that last year Russia attempted to tell her nationals in this country what they ought to do under a certain set of circumstances, and this government was quick to tell their residents of this country, whether they be Russians or whoever they may be, what their rights were. The same thing was true of Poland. The only fair thing for the government to do at the moment is to see that Order in Council 1378 is rescinded as quickly as possible so as to leave the choice of citizenship to individuals rather than to the country of their origin.

On its face the measure seems acceptable. It speaks of repealing the Chinese Immigration Act; but when the bill is fully scrutinized one can only come to the conclusion that it is a half measure; it is a measure which lacks in generosity and does not do away with the discriminatory practices. In passing this

measure, I feel a sense of guilt that we are not carrying out what I think is the feeling of the people of Canada or the intent of the Prime Minister.

The act seems unreal because it does not do what I think the people of Canada want it to do. So far as I am concerned, I make this simple statement. I want people of colour in Canada to enjoy the same rights that I enjoy. For that reason, today I think we are doing the wrong thing when we could easily do the right thing and do it graciously and generously. In bringing in this bill in its present form, we are retreating in disorder to what I believe is not a previously prepared position. We shall have to deal with this problem again, and we shall probably keep the question alive much longer than we should.

I am for the bill at the present time. That is as far as I can go. I hope that when the government has more time it will give the problem of immigration, as well as this particular problem, that consideration which is due to it, so that we may have something that we can deal with before the session has concluded.

Hon. HUMPHREY MITCHELL (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the bill in question has been dealt with in an able manner by the different speakers in the debate. I was not here this afternoon when the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) made some reference to the recent movement from Italy of our allies, the Polish people. He made some reference to the medical examination there and said that he was given to understand that there was none at all. Although the medical aspect of the matter did not come under my jurisdiction, let me say to him that these Polish soldiers who fought the enemy, might I say, from the beginning of the war—

Mr. SINCLAIR (Vancouver North): And very bravely.

Mr. MITCHELL: And very bravely, as the hon. member for Vancouver North (Mr. Sinclair) has said.

Mr. FERGUSON: So did the Canadians.

Mr. MITCHELL: I shall come to my hon. friend and the Canadians in a minute.

Mr. FERGUSON: The minister is always boosting the foreigners.

Mr. MITCHELL: My hon. friend's ancestors were foreigners before they came here.

Mr. FERGUSON: No, they were not; they were British, the same as the minister's.