

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

open court where the parties are represented, that something of that procedure might well be applied to the department of immigration.

I am not well enough versed in the administration of the act to know whether counsel are allowed to appear with an applicant, but I do know in many cases it is difficult for the party involved to determine why a decision has been what it was. Very often if the applicant knew he could answer the objection, and it seems to me that what is in issue in these proceedings is of equal importance to the issues in criminal prosecutions or civil suits involving personal and property rights, and it warrants the same sort of treatment as a Canadian or foreign citizen can get under the judicial process.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, what I suggest is that the minister, who is also a lawyer, should look into the possibility of regularizing the procedure in a way in which those parties who come before administration officers for a decision involving their admission to Canada know the basis on which a decision will be taken, have the right to be represented, and the right to know that decision so that the whole matter be dealt with as far as possible in a judicial manner.

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Chairman, inasmuch as the hour is getting late I trust the minister will excuse me if I make my remarks almost in point form in order to save a little time.

First of all, I would like to say that in my dealings with the officers of the department I have always found the minister and his officials most considerate and they have always looked into any matters I have had occasion to inquire about with courtesy and promptness.

On the question of immigration I think we all agree, as many speakers have pointed out, that we must have more people in order to develop our country, create more employment and more markets. But I think the method of obtaining these people might be somewhat altered. I should like to say at the present time that very many fine people have come into this country, and in my own riding we have a great many people from The Netherlands about whom I would like to say that they are just about as fine a type of citizen as we have got from any place.

In regard to the policy of immigration there are one or two suggestions I would like to make. We have heard a great deal during this session and within the last few days about seasonal unemployment in Canada, and this seems to take place mainly

during the months of December, January, February, and March. I imagine this suggestion has probably been explored by the department but if not I suggest that the minister look into the possibility of this suggestion. I suggest that immigrants should be brought into this country in months other than December, January, February, and March if at all possible because during these months seasonal unemployment is at its worst and it simply makes it more difficult to absorb these people into jobs.

The next thing about which I should like to make some brief remarks is the matter of the secrecy in which a good deal of the departmental work seems to go on. I fully realize that in matters of screening people that are coming into Canada and the methods that are used to do this naturally must be secret and cannot be open to the public. But in other things I cannot see why this great secrecy must prevail.

As a brief example, may I say that I had a case recently where a lady came over from Germany under an agreement to marry a man, but when she came here she did not marry him. She did not wish to do so and I understand she intimated that she did not wish to do so because she did not think he had sufficient finances; and she was looking for another more affluent husband. That may or may not have been true. Those are the reports that I received. I looked into the matter rather carefully. The department investigated the matter and probably did so much more carefully than I did. I made some inquiries of the department through the deputy minister. I said I should like to find out the results of their investigation. In a letter received from the deputy minister on June 2 last the following paragraph appeared:

You ask that you be permitted to see the reports obtained in this case with reference to the failure to marry. Departmental records are strictly confidential and it is therefore impossible for me to accede to your request.

As I say, in matters of screening for national security I can see that those reports must be confidential. But in matters like this I can see no reason for keeping it in confidence. There is a question in this particular case whether people suitable or not suitable are being brought into this country. I think in those matters, where national security is not at stake, that these reports should be open to people who are interested in the case and in particular to members of the House of Commons.

There is one other remark that I should like to make at this time. I should like to put this in the form of a question to the minister. He may be familiar with the