

Immigration Act

On December 31 last the Prime Minister said at a press conference, and I quote from a transcript of that conference:

I have asked the minister to prepare a white paper on immigration policy, immigration administration and immigration procedures, telling what has been done and what is in process, and to have that available if at all possible—and it is possible, I think—by the beginning of the next session of parliament.

The white paper will set forth the considerations which are relevant to the determination of a long term immigration policy for Canada. It will also deal with some of the major problems in an administrative nature on questions relating to legislation or procedure that are appropriate for parliamentary attention and consideration in due course. It is anticipated that the white paper will form the basis for consideration by parliament of the whole question of immigration policy and legislation. I would suggest therefore that in all fairness to the department, which is in the process of preparing a white paper, and to the government which is considering all questions relating to immigration, consideration of what the passing of Bill C-69 might achieve should be deferred.

I am confident that under the energetic leadership of the minister, whose interest in immigration is, I happen to know, unsurpassed by that of any other hon. member in this house, the appropriate amendments to the Immigration Act will be introduced in the not too distant future.

Mr. Reynold Rapp (Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale): I should like to take the opportunity to speak in this debate on Bill No. C-69 described as an act to amend the Immigration Act (racial discrimination).

The practice of discrimination on racial grounds is, of course, a vicious practice, particularly when followed by a state. In the first half of the present century we have witnessed many examples of racial discrimination, especially in time of war. Unfortunately such discrimination still exists today. With this in mind the bill states that its purpose is to remove the authority given to the governor general in council to regulate admissibility to Canada on racial grounds. With this object I am in full accord and I must congratulate the hon. member for Greenwood on having brought a bill of this nature before the house.

Canada is a land which needs immigrants. We have millions of acres of land which will provide many people with an oppor-

[Mr. Badanal.]

tunity to come here. Our history has shown that people who come to this country and who settle on our farms in particular make good immigrants and good citizens. If adopted, the terms of this bill would mean that in future such people could not be discriminated against on grounds of nationality, citizenship, ethnic origin, occupation, class or geographical area of origin.

In the past Canada has proved to be a haven for thousands of immigrants desirous of coming to this country, and I believe the bill before us would do much to ensure the continuation of such a fortunate record. It is my impression that in the past the Canadian government has never used racial discrimination to a great extent, though it is true that during the war—I am thinking of the 1939-45 war—steps had to be taken to ensure attention being paid to those people whose wish to visit Canada was not inspired by a genuine desire to settle here.

We have lived through a period when discrimination was shown against people from Asian countries. However, the record on the whole is not a bad one, and since this country does need many more immigrants I believe the bill before us would be a valuable addition to the statutes of Canada. I support it wholeheartedly and I hope the hon. member for Renfrew South (Mr. Greene) who usually talks out bills of this kind will take my observations into consideration and retain his seat.

Mr. Greene: Would the hon. member permit a question? I should like to ask the hon. member what he is doing at the present time.

Mr. Rapp: My object in speaking on this bill was to express my approval for the principle it contains. That is why I took the opportunity of asking the hon. member not to use the remaining ten minutes in order to talk out the measure.

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): The bill introduced by the hon. member for Greenwood and brought before the house this afternoon is a most important one. I believe the immigration policy established by any nation must to a considerable extent recognize the situation which exists within the boundaries of that country. It must take into consideration the national interest, for a haphazard and poorly directed policy would serve neither the country itself nor those who desire to make it their home.

For these reasons I believe it is not only desirable but essential that all the related