

That is not good enough for hon. members or for the people of Canada. They are entitled to a detailed statement from the head of the government, the Prime Minister, not merely a perfunctory seven-minute informal statement from the minister. Hon. members are entitled to more than that before being asked to vote on this question.

So far as it deals with Chinese immigration, the bill, as I have said, repeals the Chinese Immigration Act which has been in effect in Canada for twenty-three years. That act limited immigration to merchants and students. There is a good deal of talk of its being an exclusion act; but in reading the debates which took place in 1923 I notice that the prime minister of that day, who is the Prime Minister today, was careful to point out that it was really not an exclusion act at all because it did let in certain classes. He slithered around the suggestion that it was an exclusion act. Some people are very good at slithering around these difficult questions.

What should concern us is what policy is to replace the act. As I have said, we want to know that now. In the United States they had a Chinese Exclusion Act for many decades. On December 17, 1943, they repealed their act and put Chinese immigration on a quota basis. In other words they had a definite policy to substitute for their exclusion act. I hold in my hand the records having to do with the passing of the new act, and I shall quote from the senate miscellaneous reports No. 3, 78th congress, first session, 1943. I refer to proceedings of November 16, 1943, report No. 535. There we find a report from the committee on immigration of the senate. It points out that the purpose of the bill is as follows:

The legislation proposed in this bill is for the purpose of repealing the Chinese exclusion laws, to place Chinese persons on a small quota basis, and to make persons of the Chinese race eligible to become naturalized United States citizens.

Apparently they were not eligible for citizenship in the United States, but they have been eligible in Canada throughout.

The report contains a letter from Francis Biddle, Attorney General of the United States. From that letter I quote the following paragraph:

The Chinese exclusion laws were enacted during a period when immigration to this country was not restricted by any quota provisions, the quota limitation having been first introduced into the laws by the Immigration Act of 1924. The quota restrictions are a sufficient protection to this country against excessive immigration, generally, and against the possibility of an unreasonable number of immigrants from any one country. No useful purpose is being served by retaining the Chinese exclusion laws in effect since under the quota provisions the Chinese quota would be only 105 persons annually.

If Canada had a similar quota provision it would permit the immigration of about ten Chinese persons annually.

A letter from President Roosevelt is also found in this report; it reads in part as follows:

The Chinese quota would, therefore, be only about 100 immigrants a year. There can be no reasonable apprehension that any such number of immigrants will cause unemployment or provide competition in the search for jobs.

We find also this statement about the effect of the repeal of the exclusion act:

It should be stated at this point that no substantial gain accrues to the Chinese people, through the repeal of these laws from the standpoint of permitting Chinese to enter the country who are at present denied that privilege because other provisions of laws subsequently enacted effectively keep out persons of the Chinese race as well as persons of other races ineligible to citizenship. It does, however, eliminate the undesirable laws specifically designating Chinese as a race to be excluded from admission to the United States.

There is certainly merit in making our laws such that they do not specifically name the Chinese. I agree with that. Subsequently, I think on August 9 of last year, the United States passed a bill making some provision for the wives of United States citizens to come in from China on a non-quota basis. Their policy is clear. The citizens of the United States as well as the citizens of China know exactly what the law is.

What is Canada's future policy to be? I am here today in an inquiring frame of mind, asking questions. What is our policy to be? Are we to have an open door policy? Are we to have a quota system for Chinese and all other immigrants? If so, on what basis? What are the numbers concerned? We are entitled to know. Is Chinese immigration to be governed by order in council 2115, which I understand is now the order in council governing the immigration of all Asiatic races except Chinese and Japanese?

I would refer hon. members to section 38 of the Immigration Act. I will not read the section, but in effect it gives the governor in council power by proclamation or order to prohibit the landing in Canada of certain classes of immigrants on various grounds, such as that they are not going to be easily assimilated, that there is unemployment in Canada, and so on; there are several other grounds on which such an order in council can be passed. In 1930 an order in council was passed dealing with Asiatic immigration. The minister can correct me if I am wrong, but I understand that there are two such basic orders in council—P.C. 2115, passed on September 16, 1930, which deals with immi-