

Immigration Act

The minister in his opening remarks stated that the present immigration policy of the government is slow and steady. He and I, in that matter, are poles apart, because in my opinion this country needs, at the present time, an immigration policy that can only be described as bold and imaginative.

Now I will get down to the bill itself and try to stay within the rules. I welcome the bill because any time is a good time to correct a wrong. We in parliament refer to the Chinese Immigration Act. The Chinese government refer to it as the Chinese exclusion act, and the Chinese people in this country refer to it as the Chinese extermination act. We have been told that there are at present 34,627 Chinese people in this country, 30,713 males and 3,914 females. At the peak we had 60,000 Chinese in Canada, but over a period of time some have died, some have returned to China and the Chinese population has fallen away. From 1923 to 1946 we admitted only eight Chinese into this country. Even today it is well for this house to know that 82 per cent of the Chinese population in Canada is over forty years of age and approximately 60 per cent is over fifty. It is also worth while to remember that we invited these people to come here. We welcomed them. In this house today, to our credit, we have praised them for their virtues and for the contributions they have made to this country. Yet for almost a quarter of a century we have deprived them of family life here, deprived them of their wives, their children and their homes.

I think it is well for us in dealing with this matter that we ask ourselves a few pertinent questions. How do we justify our requiring these people to live an abnormal and unnatural life? Again we must ask ourselves, why do we enforce celibacy on them when we ourselves reject the practice? What right have we to mess up their lives? All that these people are asking is equal treatment by this country. Members of the house have already referred to Order in Council 695, which, in effect, says that those who are legally admitted to and resident in Canada may be permitted to bring in their wives and their children under certain conditions.

Mr. GREEN: P.C. 2115.

Mr. CROLL: No, P.C. 695. We are told, on the other hand, that that is applicable only to Europeans, and not to Asiatics. We are putting ourselves in this position that Austrian, Hungarian, German or Roumanian, nationals of countries that have been our enemies in two wars, may bring their families

[Mr. Croll.]

to Canada, where the Chinese who have been on our side in two wars find that their families are inadmissible to Canada. I think it is time for us to recognize the people who stood by our side. There is among the Asiatic peoples a great awakening that we cannot ignore. We need only look at India, Korea, China, Indo-China. We must learn something from what is happening in the world today. These people at the united nations have not only friends but allies, and it is within the knowledge of the members of this house that the Indian question which was raised by the Indian congress before the united nations was very embarrassing to South Africa and, I think, left a bad taste. The hon. member for Vancouver South called our attention to a festering sore in Canada that is being corrected in British Columbia. I think that, too, was brought to their attention by the Indian congress.

It seems to me that in our united foreign policy, the government and various groups in this house are going to be faced with this same problem, probably at the united nations, and unless we set our house in order I am sure that it will be high on the agenda at the next meeting of the united nations. We must have some explanation for it. At the moment I cannot think what our position will be, but we cannot ignore the fact that we pledged ourselves to oppose discrimination not only in theory but in practice when we signed the united nations charter, and unless we grant to these people a full measure of justice we shall have less reason to enjoy our own.

This country can afford to give mutual aid to the tune of almost \$4 billion; this country can afford to give almost limitless assistance to UNRRA; this country can afford to lend millions of dollars to nations in need, but this country cannot afford prejudice or the appearance of prejudice. We cannot afford to be less generous than the United States, which is a great competitor of ours in the Asiatic world.

I shall now refer to a press release which was read by the hon. member for Lake Centre, but not in full. It was issued by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and is as follows:

Mr. King said that, at an early stage of the session, the government intends to introduce a bill to repeal the Chinese Immigration Act which is regarded by the Chinese government as an exclusion act and in the nature of discrimination on grounds of race against a friendly and allied people. The effect of the repeal will be to remove all discrimination against the Chinese on account of race—