

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

the minister gave, and I am sure he will remember them, it is indicated very clearly that the federal department is carrying on an aggressive policy, of which I am not critical, of encouraging skilled people which of course includes doctors.

We have a shortage in this country of medical doctors. We are encouraging doctors from Africa, Asia and the Philippines to come to this country, as we should. I know that the problem is not a simple one to solve. I know that the licensing of doctors comes under the jurisdiction of the provincial medical bodies responsible for this matter. For example, in the province of Ontario the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons is responsible. I am satisfied that if the minister will look at the records and at the correspondence between his departmental officials and the Ontario medical authorities, he will find that the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons is carrying on an open and deliberate policy of refusing to permit doctors from Africa and Asia to practise in Ontario. This is the worst kind of discrimination.

These doctors are encouraged to come to Ontario and to work in Ontario hospitals, to staff hospitals, to head departments and to do all kinds of work for which doctors get very little money and which other doctors do not want to do. But when a doctor from Asia or Africa wants to practise privately he is told that because his medical college does not have the qualifications of others he cannot even write the examinations which are set by the medical council.

It is not true that Asiatic and African colleges are not qualified to maintain high teaching standards. Records kept by the Medical Council of Canada indicate very clearly that doctors who have come from India and Pakistan and have written examinations here have constantly done better than many others. I am speaking from memory but I think that in the neighbourhood of 80 per cent or 85 per cent of these doctors who have written examinations have passed them and have been ready to practise and have been able to practise in every other province but Ontario. Doctors from other countries such as Germany and France have scored much lower marks, perhaps because of language difficulties though I do not know. But they have been permitted to write the examinations set by the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons and go into private practice in the province of Ontario if they so wished.

[Mr. Orlikow.]

I have before me a letter I received yesterday from a Dr. Conde. I am not going into details but I will send the minister copies of this correspondence. This doctor came to Canada after graduating from a university in the Philippines. He worked satisfactorily at the Hamilton General Hospital. He then practised in Manitoba, wrote examinations in British Columbia and then practised in British Columbia. He is now practising in the province of Manitoba.

● (7:20 p.m.)

Nevertheless, he has been refused permission by the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons to write their examinations and practise in Ontario. He has been told to go back to medical college, study there and then become an intern before he may be allowed to practice. This is at a time when this province like every other province in this country is crying for doctors, not in the cities, of course, but in the small towns and villages where no doctor can be induced to practise.

I recognize that this is primarily a responsibility of the provincial government. I know that the government of Ontario has set up a committee or commission to look into this question. But as long as the federal immigration department continues its present policy—and the answers I have received to my questions indicate that it will—it is not enough to wash our hands and say this is a provincial responsibility. As long as we are encouraging doctors to come to Canada we have a responsibility to see that every doctor who is qualified, regardless of whether his skin is red, black, yellow or white, will have the same right to practise as any other doctor.

I have tried to raise two or three questions which I think are important and which I hope the minister will examine with the energy and the ability I know he possesses. I hope that by the time the standing committee meets the white paper will be tabled and the amendments to the immigration law which have been so long awaited as well as the amendments to the regulations which are so necessary will be brought down so that a year from now the long and acrimonious, though necessary, discussions which have taken place when the estimates of this department have come before the committee in past years will no longer be needed.

Mr. Cowan: Are we on item 5 or on item 1?

An hon. Member: Item 1.

Mr. Cowan: I have a number of questions I should like to ask the minister. They relate