

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Noseworthy: I am very happy to have the minister put that statement on the record.

I have one other question to raise with the minister regarding immigration. It is one that I have dealt with on other occasions. I am merely going to ask the minister to tell us what action, if any, the government has taken or proposes to take as the result of the brief presented to him during the latter part of April by the Negro Citizenship Association on behalf of immigrants from the West Indies, those British subjects who, by regulation of the immigration department, are not British subjects and cannot be classified as British subjects for immigration purposes. What consideration was given to that brief? I shall not take the time of the committee to put the points of that brief on the record. The minister has the brief. I merely ask him to comment on it.

Mr. Michener: I do not wish to repeat, and therefore I shall limit my statement as to the principles involved to an affirmation of my belief that immigration is desirable and necessary, and that its general effect is clearly to add to the sum total of employment, although in some places and at some time it may seem to have the opposite effect. The specific matters I wish to bring up are matters of practice and I do say that with some diffidence because my experience with the administration of the act is limited and these are impressions formed from that rather limited experience.

I appreciate there have been instances which perhaps have generated an attitude of over-caution if not suspicion in the administration of the act in order to be sure that the department is not deceived in enforcing the act and the policy of the government.

I would like to make a plea for a more sympathetic approach in certain cases. Those cases are the ones in which family relationships are involved. In the name of common humanity it seems to me that in these cases the utmost amount of sympathy should be displayed in the administration of the act. After all, the subject matter of the administration is human beings and not chattels or livestock. They are people who have family relationships and family feelings. I have in mind three different sorts of cases which will illustrate the type of approach I am suggesting.

First, there is the case of a wife in England of a Canadian citizen living in Canada and naturally she wishes to join him here. Her difficulty is a scar on her lung which naturally is a matter of concern from the medical point of view. After her case had

been deferred for some time and being in great anxiety to be accepted she visited private doctors and was examined apparently to their satisfaction, but permission is still being refused. That is a case of family separation and a case in which if there is any doubt I think a decision should be made in favour of family unity rather than the converse.

Then another type of case involves the nephew of a Polish Canadian resident engineer of reputation and standing who will shortly become a Canadian citizen. This case illustrates what I have in mind and regardless of the merits of the case I think it makes the point. This Polish uncle in Canada has no children and he and his wife established here wish to bring their nephew in and adopt and rear him as their own child. He is not an infant. He was behind the iron curtain as a young man in his late teens and he was so anxious to join his relatives that he shipped as a seaman on a Polish freighter and when he got into an English port he jumped overboard and swam ashore. He is in England now and would like to join his uncle. They would like to have him here. That is another case in which there are family ties involved and in which it seems to me a little different approach is needed than the cold and mechanical application of the immigration rules.

The third type of case is that of the children of Chinese Canadian citizens. Their plight has been dealt with sufficiently today and I wish to associate myself with what has been said on their behalf. There are not many involved and it seems to me that if any error is to be made in these cases it should be made, in cases where family ties are involved, in favour of unifying families rather than keeping them separated. If it is a matter of tipping the scales then I suggest that in such cases the scale ought to be tipped if necessary. It comes down to humanizing what might, where large numbers of people are involved, deteriorate into mechanical administration.

Another point in the administration of this act which involves thousands of decisions in the course of a year is the question of admittance. Since we had 168,000 admitted last year I think it would be fair to suppose that an equal number or perhaps even more were interviewed and not admitted. I realize this is a great administrative problem but it seems to me, as one who has been accustomed to the determination of truth in the