

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 19, 1967

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

TRADE

TABLING OF NOTE RESPECTING RESTRICTIVE U.S. LEGISLATION

Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce): I beg leave to table a note from the Canadian government to the United States government which the Canadian ambassador in Washington presented to the Secretary of State on October 17 last. This note expresses the concern of the Canadian government regarding legislative proposals introduced in the United States congress which would have the effect of restricting trade.

Mr. Speaker: Does the minister have leave to table this document?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

IMMIGRATION

BERTRAM PETERSON—STATEMENT ON REQUEST TO REMAIN IN CANADA

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago I undertook to review the application of Mr. Bertram Peterson for permanent admission to Canada. It is hardly necessary to say that I would be as reluctant as anyone to send a coloured person back to South Africa. However, that is not the immediate issue. Suggestions have been made that Mr. Peterson should have been acceptable in the ordinary way and was refused because of racial bias. I have investigated the matter carefully and I must say this is an irresponsible charge against our officers, one entirely without foundation.

Mr. Peterson's application was properly and fairly assessed under the new immigration regulations. He failed to qualify by a substantial margin. I should say that the reporter who purported to make an assessment of his qualifications did not take the trouble to study the regulations carefully. For example, he wanted to give Mr. Peterson ten points for languages, whereas the maximum available for fluency in one of our

official languages is five. Again, he wanted to give credit for a relative, but the relative in question is not close enough to be covered by the regulations.

Above all, there seems to be a misunderstanding about the role of employment and occupational demand in our assessment of visitors who apply to stay in Canada. Mr. Peterson has been offered the position of a trainee—

Hon. Michael Starr (Leader of the Opposition): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to interrupt the minister but I should like to know whether he is enunciating government policy, speaking on a question of privilege or trying to straighten out a statement made in a television broadcast. I think we are entitled to know this because it is my view that the minister is certainly not enunciating government policy.

Mr. Speaker: My understanding is that the minister is making a statement on motions.

Mr. Starr: A statement of what, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Marchand: On Mr. Peterson's case, which was brought up here in the house. The answer is too long to give in the question period.

Mr. Starr: Mr. Speaker, I ask you to rule whether the minister's statement should be made on motions or whether it should be formulated as a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: It certainly cannot be a question of privilege. We have a difficult situation in which a member asks a question and the minister, I suppose heeding the admonitions of the Chair, rather than give the answer during the question period seeks to do it on motions. I assume this would have to be done with the consent of the house, otherwise I do not suppose the minister can answer the question asked.

• (2:40 p.m.)

Mr. Starr: I think the proper place to answer the question is on orders of the day. If it is too long to be answered at that time, then it should be done after ten o'clock.