

Immigration Appeal Board Act

country because, first of all, having had a deportation order made against him he requires a ministerial permit to come in, notwithstanding that he has now the right of the ordinary application route.

A deportation order has been made against him. Why? Because he had an honest difference of opinion with an immigration officer concerning the assessment of points in respect of his qualification. I know I have been overly long, Mr. Speaker, in trying to establish this point, but if the minister and the government want to reduce the number of appeals I say they should carry out, shall we say, some natural justice in respect of potential immigrants. They are not all criminals. They are not all people who have tried to come into Canada by illegal means, and yet they are all classified the same under a deportation order; their rights are the same, no more, no less, and this is simply because they have an honest difference of opinion concerning their capabilities. These are band-aid and ad hoc proposals put forward by the minister to deal with a problem which arose, not in spite of the government but with the connivance of the government. The government should stand condemned for its practice during the last three years with regard to immigration.

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Verdun): Mr. Speaker, it is hardly my intention to become involved in a partisan debate with the hon. gentleman who just sat down because, surprisingly enough, I agree with many of the opinions he has expressed. I think it is a real shame that for a period of 11 years we have had no less than 10 ministers of immigration. It is hardly an indication that the government of the day really considered immigration as anything more than a necessary nuisance. It is ironic, for instance, despite the small attendance here today that there are no less than three of us present who at one time or another were ministers of immigration in recent years. I speak in a non-partisan manner from the lofty seat I have at the end of the row, what I might call the outside wing, or the flying wing or split end if we are talking in football parlance.

The other day some reporter, who I suppose needed filler for page 38, came to see me about which job gave me greatest satisfaction, labour or unemployment insurance, and I said neither. I said that the job which would give me the greatest satisfaction or greatest challenge if I were to be given the job of my choice would be that of Minister of Immigration. It would seem to me that the Department of Immigration should be separated entirely from the Department of Manpower. I never saw much logic in the two departments being together. It would seem to me that the statistics required by manpower and immigration in respect of the shortage of skills and things of this nature, should be readily available whether or not manpower and immigration were separate departments or under the same minister. I believe it would be much more logical to have manpower, labour and unemployment insurance together, and then to have citizenship and immigration in one department under the control of one minister.

If I say some things which may rub some of my colleagues the wrong way, they certainly are not directed at the present Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) or the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) who brought a great degree of humanitarianism to the

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

whole subject in cabinet. I want to speak really of my own experience in a non-partisan way, provided the opposition will let me do that. I hope what I say will be considered constructive criticism relating to a very important department of government. When I assumed the role of Minister of Immigration I also assumed an archaic, outmoded law which had been adopted in the year 1952. It was hardly a set of rules that was suitable to meet the challenge of a contemporary society. So, consequently, as some of the lawyers in this House know, including the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) and others, many of the practices of the past three years have been based on regulations rather than on any concrete, specific provision within the law of 1952.

Regulations do have a tendency to run well beyond the intent of the law. This present bill—and I should like to devote my attention to it for a moment—is a good bill. It is a good bill because it rectifies injustices in respect of innocent people who came to Canada when I, as Minister of Immigration, found it necessary on November 30 to close, rather abruptly and without prior notice, free access to Canada for those people who intended to come here and then apply from within Canada for immigrant status.

● (1500)

I was able to do that abruptly because that action was based not on law in the first case but on regulation, and by rescinding the regulation I was able at the time to prevent further people from coming to this country in good faith but ill-equipped, underfinanced, and semi-literate; the victims, as the minister stated in his opening remarks, of unscrupulous profiteers, airline companies, tourist bureaux, travel agencies and anybody who could tell the people who desired an opportunity to come to what they consider the land of plenty that if they got an airplane ticket or a steamboat ticket, once they got into Canada it was virtually impossible for them to be deported. So these people came naïvely and in the belief that once landed in Canada it was only a matter of time before they could get that desirable immigrant status.

Hon. members, however, can well remember the hysterics, the panic and the degree of racism that the press reflected in September and October during the election campaign. I do not trace this to the opposition; I have no concrete evidence of it, nor did I ever come across any particular statement during the election of any member opposite voicing this type of discrimination or prejudice. If I did, I would say so; I think most hon. members know this. But, when you look at the statistics of the last week of November—I think the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) quoted some of them the other day; I do not have time to look them up now—you will see it was obvious that in anticipation of some type of controls, as a result of public opinion, of public demand and of newspaper articles it was only a matter of time before we would have to remove this particular feature of our immigration policy, in order to take stock of the situation.

In order to do that we could hardly give anybody one week's notice, let alone one month's notice because it is obvious that we would have been flooded with more people, ill-equipped, as I mentioned, and ill-prepared to earn a living in this country.