

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

the view, on the advice of my experienced officials, that there was no probability that it would be any easier for this young woman to get such a document to come to Canada than it would be to obtain such a document to return to the country of which she is a citizen. If she did obtain a document from the government of Hungary and go to Greece as has been suggested we have facilities there and we would examine her at once.

My personal opinion, is of course, that she would not be able to get any document to leave Hungary at all, but at any rate she does not have one or at least, we have never been told that she had and I would be very surprised if she could get one to come to Canada any more easily than she could secure one to go to Greece.

There may be some reason why she would not want to go back to Greece but perhaps if there is some reason that very reason would be one for which we would not want her to come to Canada. I think the hon. gentleman is perfectly well aware of the fact that, following the civil war that took place in Greece at the end of the world war, a certain number of young Greeks were taken from their families and a certain number of other young Greeks did go into those countries behind the iron curtain and that some of those young people had been thoroughly indoctrinated by the communists and would be just the kind of people we would not want to have in this country. I am not saying that this is one of those cases because I do not know. But we have been charged with the responsibility of trying as far as possible to see that such persons do not get into Canada and it is a responsibility that in some circumstances in some countries it is extremely difficult to discharge.

This is one case where it does seem to me this girl would be as likely to get permission to return to the country of which she is a citizen as to Canada, and if she can get permission from the Hungarian authorities to return to Greece I can assure hon. members I would be only too happy to give instructions that priority should be given to the examination of her case.

Mr. Zaplitny: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could give us some information with respect to next of kin or sponsored prospective immigrants who happen to live within the Soviet union itself. Following the general questions concerning next of kin I wish to ask about people who are behind the iron curtain who want to come to Canada. Specifically I would like to know what procedure is followed by the department when an application is received from such a person and what facilities Canada has in that part

of the world for the examination of such prospective immigrants and whether the granting of a visa is absolutely dependent upon the possession of a passport or whether there may be some methods by which a visa may be granted before a passport is in the hands of the prospective immigrants.

Mr. Pickersgill: The procedure, sir, is always the same as far as I know. We have always taken the view that there was some risk to people in the Soviet union in having their relatives in countries on this side of the iron curtain ask for them, and therefore we have always said that they must communicate with their own relatives and tell them what the situation is and advise them to get in touch with our embassy, and we give our embassy instructions that such a case would be approved if the person can satisfy the ordinary normal requirements, mainly medical of course. If the person then does communicate with our embassy we try to arrange as quickly as we can for medical examination and grant the visa but there again of course the essential document required to get out of the Soviet union legally is some kind of passport or exit permit or something of that sort. We have never thought it was a proper function of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to attempt any clandestine operations.

Mr. Zaplitny: Mr. Chairman, the reason I raised that question is this. As the minister probably knows, these cases sometimes reach a sort of impasse where on the one hand the Canadian authorities tell the sponsoring applicant that the granting of a visa is dependent on the possession of a passport and on the other hand the Soviet authorities tell the person concerned that if they can be shown evidence that Canada is willing to accept the person as an immigrant they will grant a passport. In other words it is a sort of international passing of the buck.

I am not suggesting for a moment that it is done deliberately as far as Canada is concerned but it certainly reaches that stage. I have case after case in my files where such an impasse has been reached. It seems to me someone has to make a move to break the impasse and it strikes me that it would be quite possible for the Canadian government, having satisfied itself that that person was a desirable person to allow into the country, to grant a conditional visa saying that as soon as the passport is available this visa will be operative and then that person will have something with which to confront the officials in the iron curtain country to prove that Canada is in fact willing to accept him as an immigrant.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]