

Manpower and Immigration Council

areas. There may be a real possibility of bringing in people who are not the best educated and are not those most desperately needed back home. In this way we could possibly repair some of the damage done to countries which need the trained and expert people we so gladly receive in our own land.

As a young and developing nation we must, I feel, pursue an open immigration policy but I hope that through the wisdom of the council and the advisory boards it will be a just policy and one which will show consideration for the needs of the rest of the world as well as for our own immediate needs.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Mr. Chairman, this resolution could be mere windowdressing, a hollow façade, or it could represent a move toward a constructive and intelligent community involvement in the significant work of the Department of Manpower and Immigration at the national, regional and local levels. The minister's brief and relatively uninformative statement this afternoon certainly gave us no indication which of these alternatives is likely to result from the resolution before us. Consequently it seems to me we must defer judgment and await the bill itself for a more elaborate explanation of its purpose before reaching a final conclusion.

I wish to make only two comments at this stage. The first is that the more community involvement there can be in government procedures at this level, the better it will be for government and the better it will be for manpower policy generally. We are in the days of big government—I fear this is inevitable—and it is more than ever important to get at local and regional levels a genuine committee involvement of dedicated persons who are prepared to give their time and energy in helping to formulate policy. This is important even at the staffing level.

One of the results of the creation of the new Canada manpower centres has been grave dissatisfaction on the part of the staff in some of these offices. I hope the minister will do something soon to remove the discrimination which exists as a result of the policies of his department and the policies of the Public Service Commission. I say to him this afternoon as we resume this session of parliament that unless decisive action is taken to remove discrimination against public servants in various offices of the manpower centres across the country he will have a tough time before the session ends.

With respect to the minister's observations about the local committees being involved in

the adjustment of immigrants to Canada, I think the minister would agree with me that we have not done as much as we ought to have done in this connection nor has there been sufficient co-ordination at the provincial and municipal levels. I hope that settlement policies will in future be co-ordinated more closely than has been the case at any time in the past. I, for one, will be looking forward to what I hope will be constructive results from these local committees which are to deal, in the words the minister used, with the adjustment of immigrants to Canada.

The second point I should like to make is that I am concerned lest under this proposal for a Canada manpower and immigration council, immigration policy may become subordinate or subservient to manpower policy. This, the minister may remember, is precisely the fear I expressed at the time the reorganization bill was under discussion in the house when the Department of Manpower and Immigration was created—a fear lest immigration policy might become at all times conditioned exclusively to what might be the economic circumstances or the economic whims within this country during a particular period.

This committee and the house have listened frequently to my contention that immigration is a stimulus to the economy, that it is a genuine stimulus in a period of economic recession just as it is in a period of economic growth. I reject completely any tap on, tap off policy or any attempt to relate long-range immigration objectives to immediate changes in our economic climate. So the warning I give this afternoon as the minister introduces his resolution is clear and definitive. I hope he will give us his assurance, and I hope the council will remember, that it is not the intention of this house that immigration policy shall be merely subservient to manpower policy and that we should only bring in immigrants when there are precise places available for their employment.

I disagree with the view expressed a short time ago by the hon. member for Chapleau. I believe it is a shortsighted view, one which will not permit this country to grow as rapidly as it ought. We need to set targets and objectives for immigration and go forward to meet those goals in the belief that the very bringing in of immigrants in maximum numbers will provide employment for more people in this country by providing an important stimulus.