

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). It will be remembered that the hon. member for South Oxford asked for an explanatory statement from the Minister with reference to the policy of the Government in immigration matters, and it was thoroughly understood that the discussion was to be a general one as to the policy of the Government. We are discussing items under the heading of immigration, and the item following this is \$150,000 for immigration expenses. It was thought, however, more convenient that the general question should be discussed now, after we have had the statement from the Minister with reference to their policy as regards immigration. From that standpoint, my hon. friend has been pointing out that our immigration policy has been a total failure, and that unless certain reforms are introduced in other departments of our policy this expenditure will be useless. That is the basis on which the discussion is proceeding, and I must say, if you were to adhere as strictly as you did, Mr. Chairman, to the idea which I think was in your mind, that we were discussing this one item, it would be impossible to have any general discussion at all of the immigration policy. Surely Ministers will not take the point that at no period in the passage of these estimates are we to have the opportunity of a general discussion of the Government policy in regard to immigration. That was the desire expressed by the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright), and I would suggest to the Minister that it would tend to promote and to expedite business if that were done, because he may depend upon it that, if the Chair should rule that this general discussion is inopportune at this time, these questions will have to be worked in at some other time and perhaps in not so convenient a way. Gentlemen will not forego their undoubted right to discuss this matter, if not now, at some other time, when the discussion might be less effective. That, I think, is the view under which my hon. friend was proceeding, and possibly the Minister and the Chairman might agree that we should discuss the general policy now, and that the Chairman should review his decision that what we are discussing is the salary of the agent at Quebec.

Mr. FOSTER. There are two things which have been stated on the other side which I cannot allow to go unchallenged, and which I do not want to be understood as assented to on this side of the House. The one is the statement that we objected to the course pursued by hon. gentlemen because it was getting warm for this side of the House, and that the unpalatable truths which the hon. gentleman, in his opinion, was bringing forward grated very harshly on the ears of hon. gentlemen on this side. The hon. gentleman need not lay that flattering unction to his soul. We have heard all this before. We have heard those statements from year to year, we have lived under them, and we think we shall still live under their repeated infliction. It is not that we are afraid of having facts brought out. The other assertion is that we are afraid of a general discussion upon the immigration policy. We are not afraid of a general discussion of that policy, and while these items are proceeding is the time to take the general discussion of that policy, but what we objected to, and what the Chairman properly ruled upon, was that my hon. friend for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), in professing to discuss the general immigration policy, was altogether travelling out of the record.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON.

Mr. LAURIER. No.

Mr. FOSTER. I will appeal to my hon. friend himself. The hon. gentleman who provoked this debate says he was in order in going into certain matters in order to show that our policy of immigration and the expenditure for immigration was futile unless certain changes were made, and two of these things which he was discussing were the National Policy and the keeping of this country from what he calls its natural markets in the United States. He went on to assert that he had a perfect right, in discussing the immigration policy, to discuss the National Policy, which is a question of tariffs, and to discuss our relations commercially with the United States, which is a question outside of this altogether, because they had a remote bearing on this subject.

Mr. LAURIER. A direct bearing.

Mr. FOSTER. Well, a direct bearing—that is stronger still. Where would my hon. friend have him stop? If he can discuss these matters and justify their discussion on this vote, he can discuss anything in the wide world. He can discuss whether it is opportune now to declare that this House and this country had no confidence in the present Government. He can discuss whether or not it is better that we should remain an integral part of the British Empire. He can discuss whether or not we should become a part of the United States. He can justify the discussion of all those on the ground that they have a remote connection with the question under debate, because he might contend that if it is better for us to become a part of the United States it would tend to keep our people here, and, if it is better to cease our connection with Great Britain, he might say we would have greater inducements for bringing people here and retaining them in Canada. All we ask is that the rule of proper discussion should be carried out in committee. While we have no objection to fair discussion of the immigration policy, while we would welcome one single pertinent suggestion from that side of the House as to any better system of carrying out that policy, which we have not had from that side during the hours' discussion which has taken place and would probably not have during two or three hours' discussion to-night, still the subject itself should not be departed from. The hon. gentleman was simply making an attack upon the party regarding certain lines of policy entirely outside of the question before the committee. No person would welcome more than myself a temperate, fair, reasonable discussion of what is the best thing to do in connection with the immigration policy, and the wisdom of gentlemen on the other side of the House, if they would just simply confine it to this one topic and give us their suggestions and endeavour to show us what should be the right methods of immigration, would be welcomed by every member on this side and certainly by me. The item under discussion is item 76, which is a vote for the salaries of agents in this country, and, if one place better than another can be found where the general policy could be discussed it would be item 79 of \$150,000 which is the general vote for immigration purposes, where, of course, the general policy of the Government should be properly defined and debated. I am not, however, raising the point that we should not now discuss the general immigration policy, but let