

Supply—Immigration

If there is any suspicion in the mind of any hon. member with regard to the matter, I would ask as a personal favour that a committee of the House be appointed to examine this volume and report.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I do not know whether my hon. friend wants a word from me, but if he thinks I intended to cast any reflection on him personally, I am very sorry he gathered that impression; I had not the slightest intention of so doing. The volume I had in my hand, which he sent over to me, had a distinct cleavage in it at the place the pages were missing, and it did look to me as though these pages had been taken out, and I so expressed myself. I would be glad to have any member of the House examine the volume, but I did not mean to say my hon. friend had taken the pages out. He made a great deal of the missing pages. I did not make any reflection whatever.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: The statement of the Prime Minister has made it more apparent than ever that it would be advisable to have a committee appointed to examine the volume.

Mr. MACLEAN (York): I looked at the copy and saw the pages were missing—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order, order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the incident is closed. The Prime Minister says he did not cast any reflection.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: I must respectfully object to any insinuation as to any cutting being done. The expert evidence is altogether to the contrary.

SUPPLY

IMMIGRATION AND COLONIZATION

The House in Committee of Supply. Mr. Gordon in the Chair.

Immigration—outside service, salaries, \$700,000.

Mr. MANION: I would like to ask the minister for a statement in regard to the whole immigration policy in general. I understood we were to have such a statement.

Hon. CHARLES STEWART (Acting Minister of Immigration and Colonization): Immigration is probably one of the most discussed subjects in Canada, and in a brief way I hope this afternoon to cover some of the important points, at least so far as I am able to see them, and the recommendations that have been made to the government with respect to this very important matter.

[Mr. Sutherland.]

I think, Mr. Chairman, that one can best begin a discussion of this subject by giving a review of opinion in our own country. I have heard a great many different views expressed during the past summer with respect to this question. Some people are of the opinion that we should take steps to bring a huge tide of immigration to Canada; and not only that, but that we should follow some method such as that adopted for the settlement of our returned soldiers,—borrowing large sums of money for the purpose of settling upon our vacant lands people who will come to us from the various parts of the world. Others oppose that idea, and many Canadian agriculturists feel—and they have so expressed their feeling to me—that it is our first business to make the people already on the land prosperous before bringing more upon the land and placing them in a similar condition.

I want to take the middle course between the two extremes. I think I may preface my remarks by saying that with the problem that Canada has to face, with the financial obligations that the people of Canada now have to shoulder, it is imperative that we get more people to assist with this burden that is bearing rather heavily upon our shoulders to-day. Sometimes, one cannot help comparing today's conditions with those of eight, ten or fifteen years ago when we had, perhaps not so large a flow of immigration, as is sometimes stated, but a flow annually that would be regarded as reasonable. While I adopt the middle position, I am not unmindful of the fact, as I said before, that it is imperative to add to the population of Canada; but that addition should be made with care, with a view to the assimilation of the people who will come amongst us and the making of a Canadian citizenship that we shall be proud of. That leads one to this point, and I will not enlarge very greatly upon it. Having all these things in mind, what class of people can we take into Canada and absorb most readily to-day, and who are the most desirable people to come amongst us? After a survey of conditions in Canada, one is led to the conclusion that there is not a great need of immigrants in our cities, particularly in the larger centres. The records of the past year or two have shown that we have had unemployment and that additions to the urban population of very large numbers would create a situation that would not be well for Canada. Not only that, but we must admit that for the past year or two, from the urban centres of Canada a very considerable number of people have left us and gone across the line to the United States. That