

Immigration Act

But even when we say that, we cannot get away from the fact that people in other parts of the world are intensely sensitive to this sort of thing. They say: You retain on your statute books a law passed by your parliament embodying the right, the authorization to the governor in council to keep people out on the ground of their ethnic groupings and the geographical areas from which they come. As I said, it is inconsistent with our real policy and it ought to be eliminated.

I cannot follow why it should be necessary for us to wait for advice from anybody else. This paragraph can be eliminated without touching at all the practical administration of the law. I am quite sure that no informed person will say that our present regulations are based on this subsection (g). They are not based on subsection (g) but rather on other subsections in section 61, so we are not undermining the administration. All we are doing is asking the house to say at this time that we stand squarely against racial discrimination in our immigration laws.

I think the government and the house would gain great kudos if they would pass this rather simple bill I have introduced. It does not have to wait for an investigation. You do not need learned counsel to tell you that racial grounds for discrimination are wrong. We have solemnly affirmed that. Every nation of the United Nations has solemnly affirmed it. We do not need anything like that. Let us act; let us not go through this process of putting off.

I received a telegram today, and I dare say other members of the house did, inviting me to go to Toronto to take part in a parade at seven o'clock tonight. I was invited by students to go and parade as a protest against what is going on in the state of Alabama in the United States and perhaps in honour of a man who lost his life in battling against racial prejudices in that country. But as far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, this house and I myself would be doing more in this cause, more to aid the battle of those who throughout the world are fighting against the tragedy of racial discrimination, if we would pass this modest bill this afternoon and take the authority which we have as a parliament to eliminate something of which none of us can possibly approve, and which I know we do not approve.

I believe there is no one in the house who will not subscribe to the view that racial discrimination is a hideous and dangerous anachronism in the world in which we live

today. If this is so, let us take our part in eliminating from the laws for which we are responsible this blot upon the name of Canada.

Mr. Hubert Badanai (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the intent of the bill is to remove from the regulations authorized by section 61 of the Immigration Act those provisions which were mentioned by the hon. member, but in order to put the matter into perspective so far as all the regulations are concerned I believe I should perhaps quote the whole section.

Mr. Orlikow: It will only make it worse.

Mr. Badanai: I quote:

The governor in council may make regulations for carrying into effect the purposes and provisions of this act and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, may make regulations respecting,

(a) the terms and conditions under which persons who have received financial assistance to enable them to obtain passage to Canada or to assist them in obtaining admission to Canada may be admitted to Canada;

(b) literacy, medical and other examinations or tests and the prohibiting or limiting of admission of persons who are unable to pass them;

(c) the terms, conditions and requirements with respect to the possession of means of support or of passports, visas or other documents pertaining to admission;

(d) the admission to Canada of persons who have come to Canada otherwise than by continuous journey from the countries of which they are nationals or citizens;

(e) the prohibiting or limiting of admission of persons brought to Canada by any transportation company that fails to comply with any provision of this act or any regulation, order or direction made under it;

(f) the prohibiting or limiting of admission of persons who are nationals or citizens of a country that refuses to readmit any of its nationals or citizens who are ordered deported; and

(g) the prohibiting or limiting of admission of persons by reason of

(i) nationality, citizenship, ethnic group, occupation, class or geographical area of origin,

(ii) peculiar customs, habits, modes of life or methods of holding property,

(iii) unsuitability having regard to climatic, economic, social, industrial, educational, labour, health or other conditions or requirements existing, temporarily or otherwise, in Canada or in the area or country from or through which such persons come to Canada, or

(iv) probable inability to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time after their admission.

At this point, I should like to point out that within any one citizenship group there is no racial discrimination. For example, all citizens of France are treated alike, regardless of whether they are Chinese, Negro or of any other origin.