

plane, whether the qualification period be a week or five years should be considered very carefully.

While the immigrant is here under landed immigrant status he has all the rights and privileges of any other Canadian citizen except the right to vote. In a short five years he assumes the full right of Canadian citizenship and surely it is not too long a time in which to understand the traditions of his new homeland. Indeed for many people the five years give them time to reflect on whether or not they wish to renounce their citizenship of the country from which they came. In fact even if the bill does allow this, and assuming that an American, for instance, loses his citizenship at home, there is still time for him to reflect.

I am struck by the fact that I have talked to a good number of Canadians who have emigrated to the United States for various reasons, such as their professions, work, etc., and who fully expected to remain in the United States for the rest of their lives. But circumstances changed their views. Perhaps the pull of family, of relations, or a change in their professional direction caused them to return to Canada. Sometimes such people did not like the United States, the new country in which they expected to live. A good many were happy that United States citizenship took five years to attain, as during that five years many made up their minds that they did not wish to take out U.S. citizenship. Certainly this is true in Canada.

Many who come to Canada from Europe return to their homelands, where living standards are quite comparable with standards in this country. Some do not like our cold climate, or our distances, and wish to return to their countries of origin. If these people were forced to wait five years for citizenship, they could not be stampeded into the early assumption of a new citizenship which they may well later regret. I suggest that there is merit to conferring citizenship only after five years' domicile, as those who stay for five years will very likely spend the rest of their lives in this country. In any case, in the practical sense the five-year wait would mean that the prospective citizen loses the privilege perhaps of not voting in one federal or one provincial election. The right to vote is the only advantage which citizenship confers as compared with landed immigrant status.

● (1750)

In our experience immigrants have generally come from Europe. Sometimes they brought with them a different language and different customs; yet most had a considerable basic background in the democratic system which western Europe gave the world. For example, most understood what was meant by the institution of the monarchy, or the institution of the head of the republic, which is basically the same thing. Basically, they all had some idea of the democratic institution of parliamentary government. They understood the party system, to some extent at least. They knew that although the parties may be different, parties represent the democratic tradition that the state and the individual are the concern of all parties. In the riding it is my honour to represent, Dauphin, there are Slavic, Ukrainian, and Polish peoples who came to this country before the first world war, at a time when the Czar

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ruled Russia. They understood what we mean by democratic government and democratic traditions.

But what about the many immigrants from third world countries whose views on the value of citizenship and the state are entirely different? Often they have no knowledge of the democratic process. Many think that Canada should welcome them, that they should be given free entry and allowed to carry on unimpeded their activities promoting international Marxism and Communism. As the previous speaker said, they look on Canada as a land sparsely populated, which it is if you consider our population density per square mile. In practice our population tends to concentrate in certain well defined areas where the land can sustain them. These third world immigrants are entirely different from the traditional immigrants of western Europe.

I suppose that in time the mix of Canadians will change. Yet I doubt if there is any advantage to encouraging vast numbers of third world people to come to this country—and we will encourage them if we enact “easy” immigration laws, treat illegal immigrants leniently, and confer almost automatic citizenship after three years' domicile.

We cannot ease the burdens of overpopulation of the third world by taking in large numbers of their immigrants. For example, how can Canada, by taking in immigrants, help India, where the populations increases by 12 million every year? There are many other similar countries where the population is dense and rapidly rising. True, their population is not as large as India's, but they suffer from overpopulation nonetheless. For example, consider countries in the Caribbean.

At the moment the standard of living in Canada is high; yet owing to the rapidly rising cost of energy, and because we as a country consume so much energy, we can expect a prolonged period of slow growth. Bringing large numbers of immigrants to Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and other Canadian cities makes no sense, particularly as they will only increase the pressure on supplies of already scarce resources and housing.

As I said previously, Mr. Speaker, the advantage of a citizen is that he has the right to vote. That advantage is denied the landed immigrant. The three-year rule has this severe shortcoming: it could happen that an individual would be called upon to cast his ballot before observing adequately the workings of the electoral system. For many immigrants their first election is their first chance to observe the workings of the democratic process. On the other hand if we retain the five-year rule it would mean that immigrants coming from the United States, Britain, western European countries, and other countries where the electoral system is highly developed would sit out only one election.

Indeed, almost every citizen of this country misses the right to exercise his franchise at least once in a lifetime owing to the calls of work, ill health, or to being away on election day. Surely delaying citizenship for five years would impose no great hardship on the immigrant. In any event the immigrant is better able to observe the workings of our political system in a five-year period and thus can better appreciate the privilege of citizenship.