

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

to say about it with this remark. Taking it by and large, the Chinese people of this country are good citizens. I have found nearly all whom I have met good Canadian citizens. They are ready to take their responsibilities. I know the problem the minister is facing, but I do believe that on some occasions too little attention has been paid to the sworn statements purporting to establish relationships between prospective Canadian immigrants and Canadian citizens who have been in the country for many years.

I know something of the problems involved, but I keep coming back to the pertinent fact that in these things we are dealing with human beings who have just as poignant feelings, deep and tender emotions, as we have even though their skins may be a different colour. There are many borderline cases, difficult to handle. I know it is difficult, under present circumstances, to establish true relationships between the applicant for entry into Canada and Canadian citizens already here, but they are not so many in number. I believe because they are not so numerous we might perhaps relax a little bit in connection with some of these cases and allow the children to come in.

I know of cases, for example, where the wives of Canadian citizens remained in the old country, and when the communist revolution took place they went through untold suffering. Actually, some of them did adopt the children of brothers and sisters who were killed in the communist coup. In all respects it would seem to me that these children belong to the mother who took them, cared for them, and adopted them. It does seem to me that in the few cases that could be clearly established, even though those children may not be under the age limit, we could relax the act. I believe it would be wise to strain a point and let them come in with the mother and father and keep together. I believe they would make good Canadian citizens. As I say, they are so few in number, it would not complicate our problem here very much, if at all. Even though in their great care to fulfil the letter of the law I feel the departmental officials, in some cases, have been too discriminatory, nevertheless I have always found the immigration officials ready and willing to re-examine the facts. I have discovered that, and I want to pay that tribute to them. They have always been ready and willing to re-examine facts and, it seems to me, they have done a good job.

[Mr. Low.]

I do not want to take too much time because I realize we want to get to the end of this session. However, I would have liked time to refer to the Indian problem at some greater length, because I believe there is a real problem, and I would say only this to the minister, that that problem is in connection with band autonomy. I am sure he realizes that problem.

Some things have been said about granting Indian bands full autonomy, to determine who should be the members of bands and who should not. This matter is full of repercussions and dangers, and just how to handle the situation is not clear to me. I am afraid I cannot advise the minister on that point. I am sure however that it is something that will engage his attention because, now that bands are coming into some wealth—oil and other mineral wealth—it seems to me there is the inclination all too frequently that, in their exercise of autonomy, bands will try to limit their numbers unreasonably so as to make it possible for each member of a band to have more wealth.

That is a problem that will have to be faced. As I have said, I have not been able to determine just how it will be done. I would however ask that the minister give it his consideration, because it is a real problem.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, like the hon. member for Kamloops and others who have spoken, I regret that these important estimates have come so late in the session. It is a question of too little and too late—too little time to discuss them and too late to take advantage of that time.

I must say, in line with what some others have said, I am an immigrant. My parents were farming people in England, who came to this country and nearly froze to death on the prairies. Then we saw some magnificent advertising about British Columbia, the Kootenay country—apple trees in bloom half-way up the mountain. And when we got there, there were no trees in bloom, in fact no apple trees. I remember my father purchasing some settlers' effects in Winnipeg, and there was included in those effects 200 feet of inch-and-a-half rope to pull the trees down. Well, we spent a lot of our money, but fortunately for us, some of our relatives died in England, and we survived that rather difficult period.

I do think the present unemployment situation and the criticism from various places indicate certain weaknesses in the government's immigration policy. Let me say before proceeding further that I realize fully the difficulties of the minister's task.