

capital to know a number of the citizenship judges who have taken their place in this aspect of the public service.

I want to mention a former judge, Mr. John Dawson, who happens to be a constituent of mine. He was an appointee of the government of my right hon. friend from Prince Albert. I also wish to call to the attention of the House the service which has been rendered to the whole field of citizenship and its importance in the scheme of things by Mr. Paul Tardiff, who at one time was a member of the House of Commons and who, if my memory serves me correctly, was appointed by the late Mr. Lester Pearson. Both these men have done a tremendous job, and it has been my privilege to sit in both their counts from time to time and watch the proceedings.

I believe it is important that the role of the citizenship court should not be downgraded. I have spoken to people who have appeared before these judges and they tell me that one of the most impressive and important days in their lives was when they appeared in a courtroom before a citizenship judge and passed the test. It was an emotional day for them in terms of their feelings for the country of their adoption. There seems to be an element in this statute which puts the functions of the citizenship court judge a little to one side, and substitutes therefor the functioning of the bureaucracy. This is one matter which ought to be examined. I have talked to many in this city, about which the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) speaks in such florid terms, who were impressed by the work of the court.

May I call it ten o'clock?

Mr. Blais: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the House would consent not to see the clock so that we could proceed with the consideration of this bill.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): May I call it ten o'clock, please.

● (2200)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—INQUIRY AS TO JUSTIFICATION FOR PROPOSED INCREASED IN PRICE OF PASSPORTS

Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight because of a question I asked last Wednesday, December 3. My oral question of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), was answered by the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp). As reported at page 9682 I asked:
It—

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That is, my question.

—pertains to the reported intention of the government to increase the price of passports issued to Canadian citizens from \$10 to \$12. Is this the government's intention, or policy, and if so how can the increase be justified?

The minister answered:

The question is under consideration. Any increase would be justified by the increased cost of supplying passports.

As a supplementary I asked:

Since the reported increase would amount to 20 per cent, thus exceeding the guidelines laid down by the Minister of Finance, how can such an increase be justified?

The minister replied:

The guidelines do not speak about percentages in the case of prices or fees. They talk about prices reflecting increases in costs. That is how we would justify any increase we might make.

What a lot of hypocrisy there was in the minister's last response! Right there they say, "Do as we say, but you cannot do as we do".

There are a few points I want to make in rebuttal of the answers I received to this seemingly insignificant and innocent little question. The acting minister said any increase would be justified by the increased cost of supplying passports. The country's passport office here in Ottawa never was a profit-making service. How are the actual costs increasing? No more than usual. True, the clerks are getting more money than they were five years ago, but they are also issuing more passports. The fees charged by an office of this kind should remain constant. They were originally statutory, but I do not believe the department should be allowed to raise the price at this time, especially considering the serious condition the country is in financially, primarily because of inflation.

I can point to other offices in this country to demonstrate my point that passports now being granted to Canadian citizens for \$10 should remain at that price. It is not very long ago that they were only \$5, but this is Liberalism, Mr. Speaker, Liberalism in action. The main thing they are noted for is being liberal with other people's money. In this vicious escalation of prices and fees there is one class of fees that should not rise, and that is government fees for documents of the nature that we are discussing this evening—passports.

Related to the point I am making, I was very pleased the other day when I visited the county registry office of the county of Lennox and Addington in Napanee, where I live. I wanted to search the registry concerning certain property, and when the service had been performed for me by the clerk in charge I asked her how much that would be, and she said 50 cents. That price has remained the same for 50 years, Mr. Speaker, yet the county level of government of Napanee also has increased costs the same as Ottawa. There is far more activity in the county registry, far more real estate activity that takes care of higher costs.

The same thing is happening in the Department of External Affairs. Any member of parliament in this House will tell you Mr. Speaker, that his or her requests from constituents for passport servicing are increasing by leaps and bounds. I hope the minister does not include the cost of the new "Taj Mahal" housing external affairs at Sussex Drive when he mentions increased costs. That is another