

*Supply—Citizenship and Immigration*

department of people of Chinese origin, both under the present minister and his immediate three or four predecessors.

A couple of years ago I made some inquiries about the number of people of Chinese origin who had had their citizenship certificates delayed in transmission to them after they had passed the appropriate examinations, and it transpired that there was an inordinately long delay, in some cases ranging up to three years, between the time these people had passed their examinations and the time the citizenship certificates were transmitted to them. Subsequent to that I asked for some information covering part of the period of time during which this government has been in office. I asked how many certificates had been granted to people of Chinese origin for each month since July 1, 1962—this was up to and including December 18 of last year—and what period of time elapsed between the passing of the examination for citizenship before a judge and the actual issuance of the certificate. In normal cases this is a relatively short period—a month, or something of that nature. But with respect to the Chinese people, during the period from July 1, 1962, to the end of September, 1963, there were 1,698 citizenship certificates granted, and one of these certificates had been delayed for a period of six years. Six years had elapsed between the time this person passed his examination and the time he received the certificate. Five of the individuals concerned had to wait more than five years. Seven of them had to wait for more than four years. Eighty five of them had to wait more than three years before certificates were given to them, and 42 per cent of the total had to wait for longer than a year before receiving their certificates. As I say, the delay is normally a matter of weeks or months.

The information I have just given reflects the extent of the harassment, the extent of the unfairness which is displayed toward people of Chinese origin, not only with respect to their attempts to come to Canada in the first place but after they have indicated their desire to remain in this country by applying for citizenship so as to become Canadians in the full sense of the word. Even after they have passed the examinations there is delay, further investigation and procrastination in the minister's department before these people are granted the piece of paper they have spent so many years seeking to obtain. I think this situation is a disgraceful blot upon the operations of a department of government which deals with human beings—

[Mr. Howard.]

a department which I for one would like to see eliminated at the earliest possible date.

I have drawn attention to the Liberal campaign policy of 1935 which was based on racial discrimination against people of Chinese origin merely to show that in the past, even before 1935, it has been the official policy of government to adopt a different attitude toward people who were born in Asian countries. This is one of the reasons why these people encounter the difficulties they now experience. It is one of the reasons the department appears to pay an undue amount of attention in a discriminatory way to people of Chinese origin. The minister's predecessor, who is now the Minister of Justice, received a brief almost a year ago to the day, on September 23, 1963, in the Hotel Vancouver in Vancouver, British Columbia—a brief from the Chinese Canadian citizenship association presented by Mr. Foon Sien who was at that time national executive secretary and special representative of the Chinese Canadian citizenship association. In this brief the association made extensive observations about the interpretation of the regulations as they existed then and as they exist now, pointing out that there is discrimination in the application of the regulations. This matter has been dealt with at great length by my hon. friend from Greenwood. The presentation also contained a request for a changed attitude by the government in relation to immigration matters.

I realize we are not dealing with this particular item at the moment so I will not discuss it further, except to say that briefs of this sort affecting people of Chinese origin have in the past been presented to governments on what is virtually an annual basis, each of them saying in effect the same thing, namely that the policy of the government as it relates to people of Chinese or Asiatic origin is different from the policy followed in relation to people coming from other parts of the world.

Even though I do not have any immediate hopes he will be able to accomplish this with the speed and alacrity many would like to see, I ask the minister to look into the citizenship section of this department and ascertain why it is that people of Chinese origin have had to wait in some instances for five and six years between the time they indicate their desire to become Canadian citizens and the time they are given the official document saying they have been accepted. One could discuss this question at great length. In essence, this discrimination exists and it has