

criticized in this house and in newspapers throughout the country.

I became head of the department of immigration in February, 1964. It is no secret that I was to be placed in charge of the department of agriculture for eastern Canada and not at the head of the department of immigration. However, on February 4, 1964, I was sworn in as minister of immigration.

As was previously pointed out—I believe it was the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell) who made the statement—being responsible for the department of immigration under the present legislation, is one of the most difficult tasks, mainly because of the considerable amount of work involved. The minister must investigate all appeals and decisions, with respect to immigration matters and, in view of the human nature of problems involved in the field of immigration, he cannot always discharge his responsibilities in what could be called a mechanical way.

I do not think any minister of immigration has ever dealt carelessly with immigration records, knowing that the life and future of individuals, children and friends could be completely changed in just overnight because of a decision handed down by the Minister of Immigration. Reviewing immigration records is, therefore, a difficult and delicate task, where all factors, which are often contradictory, have to be taken into consideration. We have to consider security conditions in our country, economic requirements, social, human and political circumstances involving human beings.

But I know that that task must be performed and it has been by all the ministers who have assumed that responsibility. However, as someone said before and as the Sedgwick report states, that takes so much of the time and efforts of a minister of immigration that, very often, he is unable to devote enough time to the consideration of general problems concerning immigration policies.

When I assumed my office, the department included the Indian affairs division which, as you know, embraces a great deal of problems that are as human and complex as immigration. I say this merely to point out that, at the time I became head of the department of immigration, I was aware of taking upon myself a heavy and extremely delicate task.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that certain explanations are in order to make clear why the problem of ministerial discretion was at one point referred to Mr. Sedgwick who later prepared

*Establishment of Immigration Appeal Board* a report which was used as the basis for the bill now before us.

The first problems I encountered as minister of immigration—I refer here to the public aspect of the problem, later on, when I speak of security, I shall deal with specific security problems—concerned ship deserters, which gave rise to many debates in this house.

At that time, it was mainly a matter of Greek deserters, several of whom had been brought before the courts, particularly in the Toronto area.

One remembers the campaign initiated then by the Toronto press. The way they dealt with this problem; the scandalized approach which the Toronto press mainly the *Telegram*, followed by the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*, took to this problem of ship deserters who were rotting in jail, at the Toronto Don jail and whom the poor officers of the Department of Immigration in Toronto held in jail inhumanly. At that time, the Minister of Immigration was being held responsible for all the sins of Israel in regard to this problem of ship deserters.

In view of the opposition voiced in Toronto newspapers and in this house, the government decided, on my recommendation, in order to set matters straight, to appoint an investigating commissioner to look into all those cases brought up day after day on the orders of the day and to determine exactly if the good Toronto newspapers were justified in launching an attack against a Liberal government and a young minister who was just gaining his first experience in immigration.

The choice of Mr. Sedgwick was quite sensible and was commended by all parties in the house. He was an outstanding Conservative who had no reason to make things easy for the Liberal government, but he knew a great deal about immigration matters.

• (4:40 p.m.)

This was a man who had practised for many years and was still practising, and who was capable of judging facts objectively, without taking sides, and of giving a ruling based on the facts as represented.

I regret, Mr. Chairman, that the first part of the Sedgwick report which was tabled in the house on April 2, 1965, came in very late at a time when I was ill—my first illness, Mr. Chairman, not the second. I was in the hospital at that time, and the first Sedgwick report which I hold in my hand,