

Immigration

approve. Different words mean different things to different people, and parliament cannot, and should not, be expected to make laws without knowing precisely what those laws mean.

I feel a little like the fellow who goes in to buy a car and is shown the paint job and the interior trim, but is not permitted to look at the engine or take the vehicle for a test run before making a decision on whether to sign on the dotted line. I would not want to buy a car in that way. I am sure I would not want to buy a used car from the minister. I am not sure I would even buy a new car under conditions like that. Not one of us would accept such an absurd situation, and yet this is what the government is asking us to do. The minister should tell us why he is taking this approach.

We are the representatives of the people. We have been charged with the responsibility for deciding how Canada's affairs will be managed. Why have we not been given the facts? Is it because the minister and his departmental officials do not know? This may sound absurd, but I wonder.

Several weeks ago, in preparation for this debate and the meetings that will follow, I asked the government to give me some routine information on the organization and management of the immigration branch. There was nothing unusual about it. I just wanted to know how the immigration branch was organized, who the people are, what they are supposed to do, and how the work flows through the department. These were questions that should have been answered in a few days. It was information that had to be available or the department could not function or prepare its financial estimates. A few days later I got a telephone call from an agitated departmental officer who told me it would be impossible to provide this information. When I insisted, I got nowhere. Then another person phoned and said that they would try, but it would be difficult. Of course I have not received any of the information I need.

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It is difficult to feel much confidence in the department if their officials cannot even tell us how they are organized or how they operate. It doesn't exactly give me confidence that they will be capable of administering the vague legislation now being proposed.

There is only one area in which the minister gives us a slight glimmer of his intention. The underlying assumption in the proposed legislation seems to be that the country and parliament should accept, without question, the principle that our immigration program should be non-discriminatory, and racially and culturally colour blind. Let's cut away this politically oriented nonsense.

About 25 per cent of our people are of French-speaking origin, and their spokesmen have consistently maintained that their share of the immigration flow be designed to sustain and enrich French-Canadian culture. This has even been emphasized in the proposed legislation. When these spokesmen give lip service to the pious platitudes contained in this bill, they are thinking of the rest of Canada, not Quebec. And let us not be fooled by the notion that this suddenly occurred after the

[Mr. Schumacher.]

election of the Parti Québécois. This has been going on for years, and it has been supported from external sources with questionable motives.

And what about the rest of Canada? Do hon. members really think we can accept the introduction of large numbers of culturally different people without changing our whole way of life? Of course not, and I doubt very much if such a view would be supported by the average Canadian from any ethnic background if he really knew what was going on.

Let us take a look a little further down the road and see where all of this may lead. Obviously the government will continue to cater to Quebec, so we will end up with a double-headed immigration policy. One head will be racist and narrow. That head will be for Quebec. The other will be middle-headed and damaging. It will be for the rest of Canada. Quebec will end up united and strong. The rest of the country will become divided and weak. It is not a pretty picture.

Our immigration policy must be based on our ability to absorb needed workers at rates consistent with productivity requirements, and without endangering or changing our cultural balance.

Let us use some common sense for a change before we become balkanized and lost. My parents came to this country because it provided us with a wonderful heritage of freedom and opportunity. I will not stand idly by and see this great society destroyed by short-range political greed and ambition.

Some time ago the government decided it would no longer record national or racial origin in its immigration statistics. Prior to this decision we were told how many people were entering Canada from various countries, but we were also told where they originally came from. For example, 5,000 immigrants might arrive from, say, Sweden. But this group might contain Englishmen, Italians and Ugandans, so this was broken down again to give us a clear picture of where our immigrants were originating. Suddenly this system was changed, and now we only know about the last country in which our immigrants were living before they set out for Canada.

What was the purpose of this change? The minister may say it was done because we do not discriminate, and because details about countries of origin or racial background are discriminatory. Surely this is the height of nonsense. Is anyone ashamed of his origins? Is a Scotsman ashamed of being a Scotsman? Is a German ashamed of being a German? Are Chinese, Phillipinos or Greeks ashamed of their national origins? Of course not.

These statistics were changed so that established Canadians would not really be aware of where immigrants were originating, and this was deceptive and unwarranted. When we are told the majority of immigrants originate in this or that country, the information is meaningless. How many of the last 50,000 immigrants who came here from the United Kingdom were English, Irish, Welsh or Scottish? And how many were West Indians, Pakistanis, or East Indians? We have a right to