

grants. The Canada Council has instant artists like you wouldn't believe. One need only scratch out a few lines of so-called poetry and, voilà, another poet! Now we have moved to instant citizenship; citizenship made easy.

The previous speaker mentioned Professor Head who appeared before the special parliamentary committee studying the green paper. I well recall when he met with that committee. I recall him saying that for him it was not necessary to wait five years. It was not even necessary to wait three years. He was ready after one year. I have no doubt that after one year Professor Head was ready to adopt Canadian citizenship. There may be others like him who, after one year, are fully convinced that this is the country they want as their homeland. However, Mr. Speaker, many others are not ready after one year or even three years to decide whether this is going to be their homeland. One could argue very easily that even though there is a three-year requirement they are not obliged to take out citizenship after three years. But when you face the peer pressure, the feeling this is something they ought to do, who knows how many citizens will decide that because three-year citizenship is available it is something they ought to do? It is so easy to shift from the possible to the "ought-to."

● (2030)

The bill also raises the question of whether citizenship is a right or a privilege. If it is a right, then the legislation becomes a contradiction in terms because, if citizenship is a right, it ought to be a right as soon as they land here. It seems to me we are running into a conception we could term a qualified right. Then immediately one has to ask what that is. It seems to me that a right is not something which can be qualified, but that it is absolute. Why pass legislation making people wait even three years for something which is theirs by right of existence, guaranteed by the Bill of Rights? On the other hand, if it is a privilege, the host country has a responsibility for establishing criteria for the welfare of both the immigrant, or the applicant, and the host country itself.

There are some needs we must consider on behalf of the applicant. Most of all, an applicant needs to feel welcome. When an immigrant comes here it is his right to feel welcome. This, I suggest, has nothing to do with citizenship. I might add that authority for establishing welcoming committees and immigration services was originally under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State. Evidently he was not doing this well, so it was taken away from him and placed under the aegis of the Minister of Immigration. I wonder whether the minister is really concerned about that feature of this bill. Immigration services, welcoming services, are something we have to work on diligently.

Over and over again as the committee toured the country attention was called to the need to make immigrants feel welcome as soon as they landed on these shores. If an immigrant's first need is to feel welcome, this is something which ought to take place long before citizenship, and it will not necessarily be met by the fact of citizenship. Naturalization will not necessarily make an immigrant feel more welcome. If citizens do not reach out and make the immigrant feel at home, just acquiring citizenship status will not make him feel that way.

Citizenship

I suggest the second need which every immigrant and every applicant has is a need to feel a sense of worth, a sense that he has something to offer this country. Here again this is not related to naturalization or citizenship; it is something we must encourage within an applicant, and he will contribute out of the wellspring of his being provided we create a climate for him. It has nothing to do with citizenship.

Third, I think all of us, including the applicant or the immigrant, need to experience a healthy quality of anticipation. This is one area of life which is being taken away from us. More and more each year society is pressing in closer upon us. The media, Madison Avenue advertising techniques, are crowding us more and more so that there is nothing to anticipate any longer. Not only young people but even adults are expected not to have to wait for anything. A great deal of humanizing can take place within all of us if we experience some healthy anticipation. There are many immigrants who have acquired citizenship over the years and who, in retrospect, realize that though at the time they were waiting for citizenship they were in a hurry and would like to have had it a lot sooner, once they had it it was a good experience to wait, and waiting did not hurt them at all—as a matter of fact the experience of anticipation was a good one.

The minister says a five-year limit is arbitrary. Let us assume that it is so. If that is the case, a three-year limit is also arbitrary. Any limit would be arbitrary if we accept his premise. However, I am not sure it would be wise to accept the statement the minister has made. Changing scenes in the world today have so altered the conditions of society that a five-year wait for citizenship is a good experience.

I suggest, as others have done, that the bill has been introduced in order to mollify the feelings of immigrants who have come from the British Isles as they themselves are called on to experience the process of citizenship. There was a time when British subjects did not have to become citizens of Canada. Those were the days of the British Commonwealth, later known as the Commonwealth. There was a kind of universality of experience among those who were members of the British Commonwealth. There was a common experience which all of them shared. Their experience was portable, as it were. They had experienced the parliamentary system, the whole spectrum of British culture in any country within the British empire, and they could take those experiences with them to any other part of the British empire. But all that has changed.

We do not have the British empire any more. We do not even have the Commonwealth in that sense of the word any more. Not only has the Commonwealth changed but conditions within the countries which at one time were British Commonwealth countries have changed, and the experience those countries share is no longer as universal as it was. So to expect immigrants who come to Canada to be able to bring with them the common experience of those nations and make them applicable here is to expect far too much of these people. It is not their fault and it is not our fault. It is one of the facts of life.

As the nature of the world changes, so has the nature of immigration changed, and the immigrants who are coming