

Immigration

would ordinarily provide a large block of labour, are returning to university and secondary schools. It is wrong for the government to feel that we do not need offshore labour because students will be available. There are many students who do not want to work on farms. I do not quarrel with this. However, many are prepared to do so, but the school term begins early in September.

What do primary producers do? How do they obtain labour? Many of them have encouraged offshore labour over the years which comes from three sources, the Caribbean, Portugal and Mexico. We need this labour, Mr. Chairman, and these people are used to working in the heat. They are used to working in agriculture, and they are satisfied with the pay scale. Everybody is satisfied: the workers are satisfied, the primary producers are satisfied and the consumers of Canada are satisfied because we are getting the crops harvested. Everybody is satisfied but the Department of Manpower and Immigration. They will not grant work visas now to people from Portugal or to people from Mexico. They say they have made an arrangement to grant visas to Caribbean workers. That is fine. We get very good workers from the Caribbean—we also get poor workers from the Caribbean—but they are not available through a sufficient number of outlets. We need more.

Mr. Chairman, the reason I am so serious about this matter is that we have crops right now that are not being harvested because we cannot get enough labour: it is not available. I talked to a primary producer yesterday who said that in the last week he had hired 45 workers sent by the local Manpower centre to work at his establishment. They came and they left. It was not a matter of wages; they just did not want to work.

We brought in labourers from other regions of Canada. This was encouraged by the government, and I give them full marks for it. But what did they say when they got here? When they were on the job they said, "The work is fine. We shall work from eight until ten, from two until four, and if you need us from seven until nine it will involve overtime pay." How in the world can the producers of this nation make food available to Canadians at reasonable prices under conditions like that?

So, Mr. Chairman, my question to the minister is this: Why not bring this question to parliament and let the men and women of this nation who represent the agricultural industry, and the consumers, have a voice in determining what the regulations shall be and whether there shall be offshore labour imported into this country? I feel that Canadians should provide work for Canadians wherever possible; Canadians should have the first opportunity to work. But, Mr. Chairman, if Canadians do not want to work at this job—many of them do not, and have expressed this feeling in no uncertain terms—then I say that the producers of this nation are entitled to offshore, competent labour from wherever it may come, if these people are willing to work under the conditions prevailing in Canada today and produce crops for Canadian consumers.

This is my quarrel with the minister. I do not think he sees this point or understands the situation, so I take this opportunity to bring it to his attention once more. We must have a solution, and we must have it now.

[Mr. Danforth.]

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Chairman, the minister last night said that the effect of the Federal Court decision would apply to 10,000 cases which are before the Immigration Appeal Board at the moment, and the effect of the Immigration Appeal Board decision would apply to 1,752 cases. This is approximately 12,000 cases that may be affected by the two decisions. I should like to ask the minister what the state of those cases is now, whether they will be proceeding with them or waiting until this law is passed before proceeding with them under the adjustment of status program set forth in Bill C-197. That is the first question.

● (1240)

My second question is this: What about the two cases which have been referred to, the Immigration Appeal Board decision and the Federal Court decision? What will be the effect on the appellants in those cases? If the board has no jurisdiction to deal with these people, what is their present status? They would not be landed immigrants unless the board directs that they become landed immigrants. I ask the minister, what has happened to those two cases affected by the present legislation?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Chairman, I will do my best to respond to the various points and questions which have been raised. I will deal first with those raised by the hon. member for Peace River. I find myself agreeing greatly with many of the suggestions he made. We have already stated the substance of what we planned to do today in reviewing immigration policy. I said that on a previous occasion, in another forum of parliament, when I spoke before the standing committee on June 20:

I can now announce that the government has undertaken a review of the whole field of immigration policy and it is intended to meet the needs of Canada a decade from now as well as those of today. Proposals based on this review will be written into a policy paper for submission to parliament and the Canadian people as a springboard for public examination and debate. That should precede the drafting of a new act.

This policy paper has been labelled by some as a green paper. That is fine with me; I am not concerned about any colour definition.

We intend to proceed as quickly as possible with the development of such a position paper and intend to place it before parliament in an appropriate manner. At the moment I assume we shall place it before a standing committee. It could be the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration. We shall put it before the committee for examination and discussion with a view to its perhaps being debated in this House. I hope to go further than that in the sense of consulting with interested groups, parties and individuals in this country on the development of a new and contemporary immigration policy that will serve for several years to come.

In that connection I would agree with the hon. member for Peace River regarding another comment he made about provincial interest in this field. Not being a lawyer and not being a constitutional expert, I would not want at the moment to ask the House to listen to my views on the exact legality or constitutionality of where we stand vis-à-vis the provinces on this matter. I certainly understand that they have a constitutional interest in this field, although I think the federal jurisdiction is paramount. Whether that is the case or not, I bring to this question