

Mr. S. H. KNOWLES (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I am sorry to interrupt the discussion between the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the leader of the opposition (Mr. Graydon), but I have been rather anxious to speak for a few moments to-night with respect to one matter which has been brought to the attention of the committee.

Before doing so, however, I should like to associate myself with the views expressed this afternoon by the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell), the leader of this group. We of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation are firmly of the opinion that, just as a nation is strong when its people are free, so does the strength of the British commonwealth of nations lie in the freedom and autonomy of the nations which make up its membership. I hope that this principle will be extended into the world at large in the years which lie ahead, and that more and more we shall have free and autonomous peoples associated together in the building of an ever wider community of nations, so that we may build a world of permanent peace, and freedom from fear and want for all mankind.

Another matter was raised to-day about which I should like to make passing comment, and that is the discussion we have had about Canadian citizens of Japanese origin. All I wish to say about that is this: I was encouraged a few weeks ago by the evidence we had that the heart of the Canadian people is essentially sound on this matter of racial discrimination. It is clear that the great majority of our people want none of it. I shall not again go into the argument with respect to a section of bill No. 135 to which some of us objected. But it was a source of encouragement for some of us to discover that when the fact that that section had been inserted in bill No. 135 became public property there was a great deal of opposition to it from one end of Canada to the other. This shows, in reply to some of the comments we have heard in the chamber to-day, that on this question of racial discrimination the heart of the Canadian people—even in war-time—is essentially sound, and I am glad that that is so.

The matter to which I wish to direct particular attention for a few minutes is the one raised this evening by the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Roebuck). I congratulate him upon the speech he made and upon the manner in which he presented his case. A little over a year ago when I drew the attention of the house to the terrible plight of the Jewish people, I was greeted with a caustic comment from the other side. That comment is to be found in the pages of *Hansard*. I am glad to notice that there is a slightly different attitude

in the chamber to-night toward the suffering of these oppressed people. We have heard several references to their situation, and I hope the Prime Minister will give heed to the appeal made by the hon. member for Trinity.

I refer in particular to that phase of this subject concerning which there is some immediacy, namely the fact that Admiral Horthy has made it clear that some 400,000 Jewish refugees in Hungary will be permitted to leave that country if provision can be made for their entry into Palestine, or their protection somewhere else. As I understand it, there are about 20,000—there might be a few more than that, but not many—visas in blank form left over from the period prior to March 31 of this year, when the British white paper of 1939 came into full effect and resulted in the closing of the doors of Palestine to Jewish immigration. But those 20,000 blank visas will not go very far toward helping to find a place of refuge for 400,000 who could now be placed somewhere else than in occupied Europe. I urge upon the Prime Minister to recall the language of the Balfour declaration which referred to the establishment of a home for Jewish people in Palestine. These people feel it is hardly consistent with the term "home" to have it declared now that the doors of that place called "home" are closed to the children of that land.

I hope the Prime Minister will realize that when we are speaking about this matter we are fully conscious of the fact that the mandatory power is in the United Kingdom. That does not mean we are suggesting that as an outside nation we should try to bring pressure upon another power in connection with a matter which is not our business. I emphasize, as I have said before, that this matter is our business. The mandate of the United Kingdom over Palestine was incorporated into the covenant of the League of Nations to which Canada was a signatory. In the years both prior to and following the announcement of the Balfour declaration, Canada, the United States and other allied nations in the last war were consulted. The Balfour declaration is in reality a joint proposition, and I feel, not as a matter of exerting pressure but rather as a matter of stating our position as one of those countries concerned, that the Prime Minister should do all he can to try to secure reconsideration of the white paper of 1939, and that an effort should be made along those lines right away, owing to the immediacy of the situation created by the announcement made recently by Admiral Horthy.

In this connection there is a question I should like to ask the Prime Minister. It is possible he might be able to answer it in