

*Immigration Policy*

only be the act of a friendly nation for Canada to consult with the United States government about the effects of such a policy as it might relate to the government of that country, and those who desert from the United States armed forces.

However, this is not the time for debate. I ask the minister whether this kind of policy is the right policy for Canada to be taking, even having regard for the fact that down through the centuries of our history Canada has been a refuge for people from all parts of the world.

I need only mention the United Empire Loyalists and the situation which existed during the United States civil war, both of which hardly relate to military deserters. In spite of this, in the present situation it seems to me that the least the government of Canada could have done was to consult with the governments of countries whose nationals might be seeking refuge here after deserting the armed forces.

**Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, the government's decision on this question is one with which free and civilized men everywhere will agree.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Members of the New Democratic party—

**Some hon. Members:** More flower power.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Perhaps those on my right would listen to my comments. Members of the New Democratic party, in contrast to some others, have a profound commitment to small "l" liberalism and to the free movement of people throughout the world. On this question we have said that the government's distinction between draft dodgers and deserters in terms of justice did not make sense and that in terms of Canada's immigration law it was unwarranted. We have said that a man's military status in a foreign country, whether the United States or Czechoslovakia, should have no bearing on his desirability as a citizen of this nation.

It is clear that some deserters and draft dodgers would not make good citizens. It is equally clear that many of them would make excellent citizens. The important point is that a military record as such, whether in the United States or anywhere else in the world, should have no bearing whatsoever on the question.

[Mr. Thompson.]

Contrary to the minister's assertion, however—and this is my only point of criticism—we repeat that we do not believe there is any innovation here in terms of Canadian law. As my party sees it, if the act had been properly interpreted in the first place the distinction made in recent years between deserters and draft dodgers would not have been made to begin with. We are pleased that the government has finally taken the position which should have prevailed in the first place. Just as one does not compliment a man who is normally a thief for not stealing a car, so at this time I do not feel strongly obliged to compliment the government for doing both what our law and civilized behaviour require.

Our tradition of welcoming those who are essentially political refugees goes back, as the hon. member to my right has just said, to the days of the United Empire Loyalists. I am pleased to see that this sound Canadian tradition has been restored.

[Translation]

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** Mr. Speaker, at first sight, we would indeed be in favour of banning any discrimination in the choice of immigrants, but if we take time to consider the actual reasons which led the government to change its attitude slightly, we must ask ourselves quite serious questions and our duty is to impart them to the house.

Our new policy, which concerns United States servicemen in particular should not one way or other embitter our relationship with our neighbours to the South.

We should remember other extremely important factors. Are the reasons which lead immigrants to become Canadian citizens strong enough? Are the applicants sufficiently qualified to be eligible? Is it desirable to admit people who come to Canada not because they like our country but because they feel compelled to disobey the laws of their own country? This is a factor that must be considered.

There are also other reasons with regard to this type of immigrants. We remember, as if it had happened yesterday, the conscription of 1942, and we know how deserters were treated. They were outlawed and run down by the authorities. Now, this is precisely the type of people we are going to accept in Canada.

For all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I believe we cannot fully support this new government action.