

MEN FOR FARMS IS CHIEF AIM OF NEW IMMIGRATION BILL

Measure Will Bar Hutterites, Illiterates and Other Undesirables From Entering Canada.

Goes to Committee Stage in House With Practically no Debate on its Provisions.

In the House yesterday afternoon Hon. J. A. Calder's bill to amend the Immigration Act came up for second reading and passed into the committee stage with practically no debate.

The bill, which was explained by the Minister at considerable length, aims to improve the quality rather than increase the quantity of our immigration. It contains provisions under which emigrants intended for Canada shall undergo inspection in their home country rather than on their arrival here. Numerous "undesirables" such as enemy aliens, drunkards and mental or physical weaklings are specifically barred and generally the measure seeks to populate Canadian farms rather than the manufacturing centres of the country.

Introducing his bill, Mr. Calder said he had received many suggestions in regard to the immigration problem. Those suggestions were varied in their nature. Some people took the ground that Canada was for Canadians, and would admit no immigrants unless they were British citizens. Others advocated an open door with certain restrictions, while still others would exclude certain nationalities completely. He had no doubt the views of members of the House on the matter were widely divergent.

More People Our Need.

Mr. Calder said there was no doubt about Canada being able to take care of the burden of the war, but the question arose as to how it could be best taken care of and how the load could be decreased if possible. Increased population and increased production, he thought, was the answer. One million or two million more people would make the situation much easier. The object should be to secure as many people as possible. The railway burden was simply staggering—a colossal one, he said. Canada's railway system so far as transcontinental lines were concerned had been overdeveloped, but the time would come when every one of these transcontinentals would pay. There was only one solution—people and production. They must create traffic for these lines; they must fill up the vacant spaces. Branch lines were necessary for production in western Canada had been retarded because of the lack of them. In his judgment, one of the main reasons why Canadian industries were not established on such a sure basis as they should be, was because there was not a large enough home market, and the smaller manufacturers could not produce as economically as the larger industries.

Dealing with the question as to where Canada was going to get these people, Mr. Calder said that in the past Canada and the United States had kept the open door but the time had come when Canada should consider whether that policy was to continue. At all costs the citizenship of Canada should be protected.

Mr. Calder asked what in the past Canada had done for the emigrants she had invited and answered it by saying, "practically nothing. We invited these people here. We scattered them throughout Canada and left them entirely alone. We have done nothing to familiarise them with our laws. We have had no policy to Canadianise them." As an instance, Mr. Calder cited the Gallicians, who came mostly from Austria. Instead of being helped and advised they were allowed to drift. The policy of the future must be that if people were invited they should be given every possible assistance to enable them to become good Canadian citizens.

Must Choose Our Citizens.

Canada, Mr. Calder went on, should have an absolute right to determine for herself what her future citizenship was to be. She should not be tied down by any treaties or agreements that existed of which she had no knowledge or to which her consent had not been given. If there was any such treaties existing Canada should endeavour to get them out of the way just as quickly as possible.

Mr. Lemieux: "Are we not bound by the treaties of Great Britain?"

Mr. Calder: "We are bound. I say if any treaties of that nature stand in the way at the present time we should endeavor to have them removed in order to determine these matters for ourselves."

Prohibited Classes.

Under the bill, the prohibited classes—classes prohibited for medical reasons or for reasons of criminality—were extended. It was also intended to establish administrative machinery to see that the law in this respect was efficiently carried out.

Encourage Farmers.

Steps must be taken, Mr. Calder said, against increasing unemployment in Canada. Since the armistice the Government had been discouraging the entry of skilled and unskilled labor. "We have been shutting them out," he said, "on every pretext we could." The policy should be to encourage the immigration of farmers, with necessary capital to enable them to establish themselves. The Government believed that the time had come when for a time the entry of certain classes of people into the west should be limited.

Referring to the Japanese situation he said that some years ago an arrangement was made whereby the number of Japanese allowed to enter Canada should be limited. To day there were 400 fewer Japanese in Canada than in 1914. He thought a very great mistake had been made in placing a head tax on Chinese. By doing so they had simply commercialized that business. If there was no head tax there would be fewer Chinese in Canada. Young Chinese who were brought here by commercial enterprises, had to live in semi-slavery until the head tax and the expenses were paid off along with heavy interest. Probably one day they would have to remove that tax.

The Hutterites.

Mr. Calder referred to the immigration of Hutterites and Mennonites into the western provinces. He said that the policy of the Government was that it should be free to shut out any class of people who could not readily be assimilated into the population. If there were people whose mode of life made it impossible for them to become satisfactory citizens the Government should exclude them from the country.

He asked the Minister of the Government in regard to Hutterites

and Mennonites at present in the country.

Mr. Calder replied that those at present in Canada had come in under the existing law, and he did not think that they should be deported. Such action could only be taken under the War Measures Act.

There was no power in the law at present to exclude these people, but when the new bill passed the Government would be able to do this.

Bill in Committee.

The bill was given second reading, and the House went into committee to consider it clause by clause.

Mr. Hugh Cronyn said that the immigration system in this country during the past had been to say that everyone was welcome, and then to start excluding a certain people. He thought this a bad system.

Mr. S. W. Jacobs declared that the immigration of 1896 to 1911, under the Laurier Government, was the foundation of Canada's prosperity. Whatever might be said of Sir Clifford Sifton, his immigration policy was the right one for the country.

Referring to alien enemy immigrants, Mr. Jacobs argued that so long as the people brought in were law abiding, healthy citizens, that was practically all that was required. The enemy alien of today would be the friendly alien of tomorrow. It was possible that the friendly alien of today might become an enemy alien tomorrow. Mr. Jacobs doubted very much whether, under international law, Canada could legally say to the enemy alien "you cannot come into the country because you were once an enemy alien."

He said there was no particular rush for a bill of this kind just now, especially as the work of the Immigration Department was being done well. He could not see why it had been introduced except for the purpose of baring out the enemy alien which he regarded as undemocratic and contrary to international law.

Mr. Calder stated that there was no provision in the law to bar alien enemies.

Objects To Reading Text.

Mr. Jacobs objected also to barring persons who could not read. He said that under that provision, Abraham Lincoln's own mother would have been prevented coming into the country. If a man was a respectable, industrious and honest citizen that was enough. In the remote parts of England, Scotland and Ireland there were people who could not read, and Bolsheviks could not be kept out under that classification. They would only be keeping out the poor man, who, through no fault of his own had not learned the art. With the exception of the two clauses referred to, he would support the bill.

Mr. Donald Sutherland believed that in view of the restrictions imposed by the United States on immigration, it was important that the Government should bring in legislation this session; otherwise Canada would become the mecca for the outcasts of Europe. He said he was astonished at the plea put forward by Mr. Jacobs for the enemy alien, and the limit had been reached when a member of the House made such a plea. He regarded it as so serious that a statement of that kind should be an unpardonable offence. He, himself, had not reached the stage, he said, when he could forgive or forget.

Mr. Jacobs: "I am a better Christian than you."

Mr. Sutherland said he was not boasting about that, and went on to say that Canada would find herself short of labor. Many of the movements on foot to restrict desirable immigration should be stopped. He referred particularly to the antagonism expressed by some sections of labor. He said that agriculture was suffering from lack of help, and bad farming was in evidence as a consequence. This was the reason why the cost of living was going to remain high. He protested against the feeling that had been engineered in the cities against the people of the country. He said that meetings had been held right here in Ottawa to deal with the cost of living, and at these the farmers had been attacked. He thought the Government should be careful not to exclude desirable immigrants, but must act as though they were going to see that this country was a part of the British Empire. Men who had been overseas would see to it that a situation such as took place in the Canadian Parliament would never be enacted again.

Mr. Calder moved that the committee rise and report progress.

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