Commonwealth Parliamentary Debate: The Immigration Minister on Professor Blainey

Stewart West, MHR, Labor Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs

8 May 1984

I now want to address my attention to the remarks by Professor Blainey. I said that he had a right to say what he liked and that the community and this House would judge him. He said that the Government is letting in too many Asians. I say that that is a result of non-discriminatory policies in family reunion and refugee policies and in other areas such as skilled migration, lesser programs and business migration. Professor Blainey is really saying to me, in reply, 'Well, if that is so it may very well be, but what I want you to do, because it is producing that result, is change the components, change the intake, change the set-up altogether, so that you do not get too many Asians'. He is saying that if we do not apply all of these selection procedures globally and there is discrimination with the result it produces too many Asians, we should simply change the situation. What he is saying is 'Cut out the refugees, turn them down to a negligible number and reduce the family reunion program', or else he is saying 'Let us have quotas or tougher selection measures'.

Because I know that my own people support me I say to the Opposition, 'The day there is a government, any government of any colour, in this nation which goes back to imposing quotas under a global migration program, say, a family reunion program, or makes the selection procedure tougher for brothers and sisters, spouses, aged parents or non-dependent children to enter this country, or imposes a tougher system of selection on Asian people within those categories that apply for Europeans then we are gone. We are half way back to white Australia.' We cannot have that. Just what are the members of the Opposition saying? What would they like us to do? Would they like us to cut the family reunion program and the refugee program?