

# Immigration Reformer

Michael Aloysius Feighan

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—“Mike Feighan isn't the most likely fellow I can think of to be responsible for an important immigration reform bill like this,” a Government official said the other day, “but by God he's done it.” He was referring to the bill, which the House of Representatives began debating today, that would outlaw the national origins quota system.

**Man  
in the  
News**

Under House protocol the bill bears the name of the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Emanuel Celler of Brooklyn. But in a very real sense it is the bill of Michael Aloysius Feighan of Ohio, who largely shaped it and guided it through more than 12 weeks of labor to unanimous approval of the Judiciary Immigration subcommittee, of which he is chairman.

The surprise over Mr. Feighan's role stems from the fact that the Cleveland Democrat has not been numbered until recently among those favoring immigration reform. Rather, he has been an intellectual bedfellow of the conservative and patriotic groups who have most stoutly defended the status quo.

Three reasons are given for Mr. Feighan's change of view.

One, according to close associates, was a gradual acceptance of the belief that the national origins system was failing.

Also, Mr. Feighan began to feel the irate heat of his constituency, which consists largely of Poles, Hungarians, Slovaks and Byelo Russians.

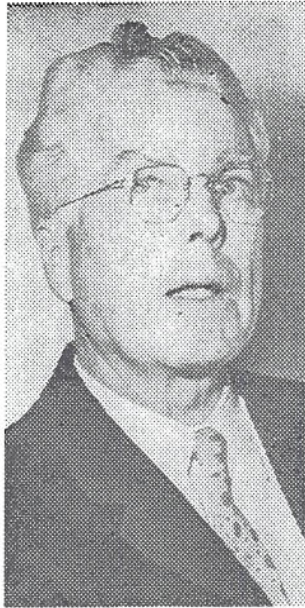
#### President Steps In

Finally, President Johnson put Mike Feighan on his list for “the treatment.” The taciturn, 12-term Democrat was invited to White House conferences and dinners and for trips on the Presidential jet.

Mr. Feighan got the message and the President got his bill.

Mr. Feighan is tall and spare with a handsome crest of gray hair. He has a dour, humorless expression and nearly always wears a look of worried preoccupation.

He has rarely before been in the center of major legislative developments, and his infrequent speeches on the floor have often been directed at such peripheral issues as opposing the inclusion of Yugoslavia (and other Com-



United Press International

*He got the word*

munist nations) in the foreign aid program, and in demanding that the State Department revoke the visa of Richard Burton, the British actor who is the husband of Elizabeth Taylor, on moral grounds.

In the last couple of years he has made a number of emotional and intemperate floor speeches attacking Mr. Celler, whom he suspects of attempting to undercut his influence on the Judiciary Committee.

#### Linked to Right Wing

Many of Mr. Feighan's colleagues regard him as temperamental and unpredictable and bracket him vaguely with “the right wing cranks.” Actually, his voting record of the last few years, according to Congressional quarterly, shows him lining up better than 75 per cent of the time with Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

Mr. Feighan was born Feb. 16, 1905, in Lakewood, Ohio. He was graduated from Princeton in 1927 and took his LL.B. at Harvard Law School in 1931. He entered the Ohio State Legislature in 1937 and was first elected to Congress in 1942. He has been re-elected by comfortable margins for each succeeding term.

He and Mrs. Feighan live quietly in the spacious Westchester Apartments with their daughter, Fleur, who is a graduate student at Georgetown University.

A married son, William, practices law in Cleveland and is in his third term in the state legislature.