

*Immigration Act, 1976*

the free trade agreement or the Meech Lake Accord, they do not ordinarily write to express their views as they have done on this issue.

Let me give some examples of the comments I have received. One states in part:

I am writing to you to express my displeasure at the way the Canadian Government is responding to the . . . migrants who are attempting to enter our country in an improper manner.

I have been fortunate to travel all over the world and it is heartbreaking to see people waiting at the doors of our embassies and consulates with desperation in their eyes trying to immigrate to Canada.

What distresses me about the current situation is that these people are just "queue-jumpers" and "system-beaters"—They are showing, by example, what kind of citizens they will make and if allowed in, will try to find a way around every law and regulation we have—

That is the feeling of many Canadians. Those trying to enter this country illegally or by lying are establishing an example of their future behaviour.

Let me quote another letter which I am sure is similar to letters all of us have received:

Send the boatloads home, and let them apply legally. There is no reason why the boatloads should be given preference over other people—who have applied through the regular channels and are awaiting processing.

Another states:

As an immigrant who came to Canada in 1969 having been subject to scrutiny, lots of paperwork, screening, delays, denials, and finally after many months acceptance into Canada, I want to know what policies we now have for people to enter the country.

—anyone who can somehow creep ashore at night, be left wallowing in our territorial seas or concoct any other plan to circumvent the normal entry process is soon housed, fed, given money and other hand-outs, lawyers, et cetera at taxpayers' expense, and then set free into the community.

Finally:

If it can be proven a person is a genuine refugee then yes, Canada has room for such desperate people, but the applicant must prove his case beyond a question of a doubt. Otherwise, people without a valid case claiming "refugee" status can enter Canada illegally, stay here for months or years while an investigation goes on, and thus make a mockery out of the entire immigration system.

Those are the kinds of concerns I have been hearing over the past three weeks. That is what led me to suggest that this situation must be addressed and why, on July 17, I wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) asking for the recall of Parliament. I want to share what I said in that letter because it was a culmination of what I was hearing from my constituents and how I wanted to represent their views to the Deputy Prime Minister. I wrote:

After several days of discussion with many of my constituents regarding the arrival of 174 persons last weekend by boat to Canada claiming refugee status, and much personal reflection, I am writing to you to urge the early recall of Parliament for the consideration and passage of Bill C-55 (amendments to the Immigration Act).

I believe that this is a matter of national urgency and importance calling for action by our Government.

Canadians in Capilano, and across the country, are deeply concerned about this matter. They are angry and frustrated by what appears to be the inability of government to act swiftly to determine whether or not recent arrivals have a

legitimate claim to refugee status and where they do not, to be removed from Canada.

The proposed amendments contained in Bill C-55 would give us the tools to be much more effective in dealing with refugee claims while ensuring fairness and justice.

I believe Canadians are generous of spirit and are willing to accept a fair share of genuine refugees who wish to contribute to this country; however, they cannot accept persons who enter this country by illegitimate means, or make false claims, while many others must wait their turn through established immigration channels.

We must show our support for the generosity of Canadians but not allow it to be abused. Lack of action will lead to unacceptable levels of frustration and cynicism.

By moving to put in place the proposed legislative changes quickly, rather than waiting until the fall, we will exhibit our good faith by discouraging those who might seek to enter our country illegally.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

• (1340)

I must compliment the Government for responding favourably to the request, which I know was made by other Members of my party as well, which brings us back here today to deal with the situation. We will be dealing with Bill C-55, which is the process by which claims are judged, as well as new legislation to much more effectively deter by tough penalties, up to \$1 million and 10 years in jail, for those who would seek to bring in people to this country illegitimately. There is a right to seize and sell the vehicles, the boats, planes and, I guess, perhaps even a train which might be used to transport such people illegally, and there is a right to detain those who would enter the country until such time as their identification can be verified. Where there are any questions of serious criminal background, we will have the right to remove that person quickly from Canada.

Those measures are important given the reality in which we now live. It is not a happy global reality, we all recognize that. There are many millions of people, many millions of legitimate refugees, who are seeking to leave these countries. However, there are also many others who wish to seek access to a country where they might have a better life, a greater economic advantage. Certainly we all understand the motivation of these people who would like to come to Canada. However, we also recognize that immigration procedures must be done in a fair way, and that we as Canadians must have control over our immigration policy so that we have control over our destiny.

Bill C-55 will help to give us the tools to deal with those claims quickly and I believe that is what Canadians want. We all know the problems in the existing system which was developed 10 years ago in a different era when these kinds of global movements did not occur as they do now. We now need legislation to deal with the reality in which we live today.

Certainly Canadians to whom I talked, who are not professionals or lawyers, but ordinary Canadians, want to be sure that the system is fair and that it is expeditious. So we see in Bill C-55 a new and streamlined system. Within a period of 72 hours of a person entering the country and claiming refugee