

Immigration Act, 1976

government benches who lives and breathes immigration policy day after day has said that we should not pass this Bill.

Who is it that wants to pass this Bill? Who supports this Bill? This so-called thoughtful person when it comes to these matters has yet to be identified.

I simply say that there are areas in the Bill which are inappropriate and have been severely criticized for what they do. I do not need to repeat what my colleagues have stated on a number of occasions, but I want to bring one problem area into focus. Those people—and almost inevitably they are church people—who are motivated by compassion and humanitarian concerns have most recently seen people in South America fleeing death squads, torture, death, and persecution and coming to Canada. Such people do not often leave with all their documents in order. They appear at our borders documentless because they are fleeing a horror story in their communities and villages in Central America. As a result of this Bill, the people who assist them, and Central Americans, by taking them to the nearest immigration office, will be supporting what is now described as a criminal act, an act which is illegal. They will be subject to years in jail or thousands of dollars in fines. Those men and women who want to help people come to Canada, people who are escaping death and torture, will now be liable to imprisonment or fines. Is that the kind of country Canada ought to be? No, it is not.

It is for these reasons and many others that we oppose this piece of legislation. Quite frankly, I am proud today to be part of a caucus which says that it is quite prepared to deal with the problems associated with refugee claimants. We know how to deal with them; we have had advice laid out by knowledgeable people. However, we are not prepared to co-operate on a Bill which can only be described by one term—extremely Draconian.

● (1250)

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I want to make one comment about what was said by the Hon. Member for Crowfoot (Mr. Malone) on the immigration policies of the New Democratic Party. In response to his allegations here in the House, I have checked and I have had staff check the policy of the New Democratic Party since the foundation of the Party in 1961. There is no reference at all to the question of population relocation—I made a note of the Member's words—or to any desire by the New Democratic Party to force immigrants who come into Canada to go to a particular part of the country. Nor can I conceivably imagine how that kind of reference could have been made.

I believe that reference made by the Member for Crowfoot is not only false but is also demeaning to this House and to his Party. I believe as well that it is open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding within ethnocultural communities. I would call on the Member for Crowfoot, if he cannot substantiate his

allegations, to withdraw them and to withdraw them immediately. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to intervene with the Member for Crowfoot in order to ensure that he does that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair feels that this is a matter of debate, and the Chair does not intend to intervene.

Questions and comments.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, how would the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) compare the legislation that we have before us, which he points out would make it possible for the Government to charge and prosecute and for the courts to fine people who are members of various churches who help refugees settle in Canada and would be guilty of breaking a provision of this Bill, with the situation in the United States? There is legislation in the U.S. under which members of various churches involved with what is called the sanctuary movement, which is a movement where refugees from Central America coming to the southern American States, such as New Mexico, Arizona and California, are helped by members of various religious denominations, the Mennonites, the Roman Catholics and certain Protestant churches, have already been charged, brought to trial and I think found guilty.

Does the Member think that what is included in this Bill is similar to the legislation in the United States which may well lead to the same kinds of results?

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow). The point was raised by a number of witnesses during the legislative committee hearings that the very repugnant situation that exists in some parts of the United States would be permitted in Canada and would almost be encouraged and facilitated as a result of this legislation. It is that type of accusation by those with expertise in this area that caused a great deal of concern among members of the committee studying the legislation, particularly the chairperson of the Standing Committee for Immigration. During conversations I have had with him this was an area of some concern, something which this Bill would not rule heavily against. As some have indicated, it would encourage and virtually facilitate the situation.

That is one reason that I feel, as do Members of the NDP caucus, that this Bill ought not to be passed in its present form. Some of the amendments put forward by the Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap) would have dealt with this issue, but amendment after amendment was rejected as Members tried to improve the legislation. I thought the purpose of the legislative committees' work was to improve drafted legislation.

As the Hon. Member for Edmonton—Strathcona (Mr. Kilgour) indicated, this Bill was drafted in a hotel room over a weekend and its very drafters have said they drafted it in a hurry on the assumption that it would be improved through