

*Introduction of Bills*

was Raoul Wallenberg chosen in the U.S? Because a Hungarian person of Jewish faith was saved by Raoul Wallenberg. He later on became a Congressman and for years and years begged his colleagues to proclaim Raoul Wallenberg an honorary American citizen. He succeeded, and today in the U.S. you have two honorary citizens, Sir Winston Churchill and Raoul Wallenberg. This country is unique because there is only one.

I remember the debate because at that time I was asking everyone how one becomes an honorary Canadian citizen. I wanted to propose Mother Teresa, who would also qualify very well as an honorary Canadian citizen. I was not told how to do it and I am still working on it. Some day I will come to the House and ask for the indulgence of the House to accept her. I do not think technically I am wrong in saying that Raoul Wallenberg is already an honorary Canadian citizen. If this was the first time, I would vote the same way for the same reason I did on December 9, 1985.

If I may make a very personal comment, I did not very much appreciate the last comment of the Hon. NDP Member who profited from that occasion to make a little bit of what I call Soviet-bashing, and I do not like Soviet-bashing when you are talking about a very important issue like this one.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, first I want to indicate to my hon. friend that he is correct. He described the process that the House of Commons and the Senate went through back in 1985 in a rather extraordinary session of the upper House. As he indicated, that motion on that day proclaimed Raoul Wallenberg an honorary citizen of Canada. What that means in essence is that from that point onward, if Raoul Wallenberg decided to become a Canadian citizen he would not have to go through the normal process. He would simply apply and become a citizen. The Bill that I introduced today takes that further. As a result of a new statute it makes Mr. Raoul Wallenberg a citizen of Canada. He does not have to apply. Upon passage of this Bill he becomes a citizen of Canada, an honorary citizen of Canada.

The comments made by my hon. friend were correct, but Raoul Wallenberg is not an honorary citizen of Canada today and I want to make that very clear. If he applies, he can forgo the usual process and become a citizen. This Bill is not what some Conservative Members would want us to believe. This Bill becomes a statute of Canada and makes Raoul Wallenberg a citizen of our country.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself and I think government Members with the remarks of the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme). I do not think Canadians will be interested in all the technicalities but everyone realizes the great service that Raoul Wallenberg rendered for civil rights throughout the world. I would just suggest that it is a shame that the NDP has seen fit to denigrate his memory.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I take considerable offence at that suggestion questioning my motives. As you know, I filed this Bill on the Notice Paper some time ago. I gave ample notice to all Members of the House that at the appropriate time I would be rising to introduce the Bill for consideration. As an executive member on the Committee on Soviet Jewry I take considerable offence at the suggestion made by the Government Deputy House Leader.

**Mr. Holtmann:** Why did you force a vote?

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Speaker, I just want it noted that I was in the House and in my seat when the second vote was called. I did not get up to vote a second time.

I want to associate myself with the comments of the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme). I think he has reminded us of something very important. I also want to say that if the intent is simply to get a Private Members' Bill forward, that is done every day and very simply. It does not call for these kinds of votes. I refused to vote, not because of the issue at hand. What we are doing now, which is why I refused to get up, is playing silly games in order to deny the Government an opportunity to get on with its business. That is why I refused to stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** This might go on for quite a long time and I think I might exercise some good sense here and move on to other matters.

All Hon. Members and the public ought to know that the Bill voted on this morning, dealing with a matter of importance, has been on the Order Paper for a long time. The votes which took place this morning are procedurally correct and I do not think it is for the Speaker to comment beyond that. However, I do not think it is in the interests of the House to proceed with any more points of order on this particular matter.

**Mr. Riis:** I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I need some guidance. Is it at this point that I have an opportunity to explain briefly the content of this Bill?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, that should have been done earlier. It could only be done now on the basis of unanimous consent.

**Some Hon. Members:** No!

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I would be happy to give unanimous consent to allow the NDP House Leader to explain his Bill. It is clear from what has been said in the House that we consider this Bill to be very important, and I think we would be denying the importance of the matter if the House Leader for the NDP were not allowed to put on the record briefly the reason he introduced the measure.