

Government Orders

it into an immigration inquiry hearing and proceed with the evidence provided before that tribunal.

• (1210)

If the information we receive is validated, that individual will be subject to deportation rather than any refugee hearing. Again, it is a practical response to some of the cases that over the last number of years have certainly caused much public attention and some public grief.

Four, this legislation will also give immigration officers the authority to seize identity documents from international mail if it is clear they are meant to be used to circumvent immigration and other Canadian requirements. As well, senior immigration officials will also be able to turn formerly deported people away from our borders if those individuals are attempting to come back to Canada without proper permission. This will now be done without having to go through the inquiry procedure that at present is mandated on those officials.

[Translation]

Fifth, it will ensure that persons with summary convictions, whether obtained inside Canada or abroad, would be inadmissible.

[English]

Furthermore, thanks to the co-operative spirit shown in this House by members opposite in allowing me to propose a new amendment at report stage, this legislation will prevent the release on day parole and unescorted temporary absences of inmates who face deportation following the completion of their sentences.

It is our firm belief that because these foreign criminals are not going to be reintegrated into Canadian society, there is no need to let them work slowly back into our Canadian communities. Once again, this is a common sense practical step forward. For this I would also like to thank for their co-operation Canada's Solicitor General and Canada's Minister of Justice.

Bill C-44 will also allow us to stop the processing of citizenship while that same person is undergoing an immigration inquiry. Once again, this is a practical step forward in which the right and the left hands will work in conjunction with each other as opposed to being in a vacuum apart from each other.

As I mentioned earlier, this government is prone to listen before it acts. As a result of our listening to the committee work, there are also a number of changes before the House today. Some involve the transition while others are designed to prevent costly and time consuming court challenges based on the scope of authority the bill gives to senior immigration officials.

Of a more substantive nature is the definition of what constitutes a serious crime. We propose to remove the right of appeal to the immigration refugee board on all grounds—I underline all grounds—for individuals certified to be a danger to the public. This means that those who have committed a crime involving violence, weapons, sexual assault or drug offences that are punishable with a sentence of 10 years or more will no longer be able to tie up our system.

They would retain their right to seek judicial review in the federal court. Of course humanitarian issues would be considered by the minister or the minister's designate when a decision has been rendered.

Persons not considered such a danger would retain their right of appeal on all grounds, including the humanitarian grounds, to the immigration appeal division.

[Translation]

This is good legislation and it will go a long way to removing the stigma that a few wrongdoers have placed on all immigrants. There is no welcome mat in this country for thugs and evildoers. They can stay right where they are.

[English]

We know that Canadians are a tolerant and compassionate people. These are some of the values that have allowed us to build the kind of society we are, distinguishing us from other countries and societies.

• (1215)

The public frustration and exacerbation expressed from time to time are very much aimed at those who have twisted the rules or those who have broken covenants with Canada. Accordingly Bill C-44 targets those people.

The problems we faced required the legislative action we are taking today. Let me be very clear: the porch light is on and the welcome mat is out for those who are genuine refugees, those who are escaping brutality and torture in their countries, individuals who are not only seeking out Canada as some would have us believe but seeking out other countries of the world. They are seeking no more or no less than the things we have in abundance in Canada. The porch light is on and the welcome mat is out for those who want to help us create jobs and continue to build this great nation.

Let us get on with it, for there is much nation building to be done.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my best wishes for the New Year to all my colleagues in this House.

Today, we are going back to work after a seven-week break. Before speaking to Bill C-44, I would like to salute and congratulate my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, the leader of the Bloc Quebecois and Leader of