

Immigration Act, 1976

I wish to say on the basis of what the rules state and on the basis of the practice followed in the past and what is intended by the rules that it is clear that the Deputy Government House Leader has not followed the rules or the practice on which the rules are based. Clearly, his notice is out of order.

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I believe we are at a very important juncture. The Minister of State was recently appointed to his new position. I think that it is in the best interests of everyone concerned that we very quickly develop a good working relationship. We will be in the House of Commons for many months, perhaps for as long as another two years. It is important that, while the opposition Parties and the Government fulfil their responsibilities and obligations in terms of the parliamentary tradition, there be an understanding that we will facilitate the business of the House as much as we can.

The motion before you, Madam Speaker, states that an agreement could not be reached. I know that my hon. friend knows that we had no discussions with respect to whether or not an agreement could be reached. As a matter of fact, he should have suggested that there be a House Leaders' meeting to discuss whether or not we could agree on some allotment of time to facilitate the completion of this stage of Bill C-84. If that is impossible then I think it is fair to say that an agreement could not be reached and the Government could then take whatever steps it feels appropriate under the circumstances.

I ask you, Madam Speaker, in your position as a person who is obviously interested in facilitating the business of the House in the most positive and creative way to rule that this particular motion is out of order and, in terms of carrying out the future business of the House to the best of our ability, that we in fact have a House Leaders' meeting to discuss whether or not an agreement can be reached.

● (1750)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Obviously the Chair wishes to facilitate the proceedings of the House. At this time it is a rather difficult decision to make. The Standing Order does not state exactly what consultation or discussion should imply. The Chair would also like a little more time to examine the notice itself. The manner in which the notice is written, the actual form of it, is causing some difficulty.

With the approval of the House, I would like to reserve on this and discuss it with Mr. Speaker.

Continuing debate with the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Madam Speaker, I did not intend to take part in the debate, and this is true, I have no notes but—

[*English*]

In order to assist in your deliberations, and in order to assist the new Deputy House Leader who seems to be agonizing with

our House Leader, and the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, I will try to be helpful and make a few comments in order that tomorrow they may meet and, therefore, of course, the question on the Bill will not be put today.

It is true that almost everything has been said, but I wish to make some personal comments on the Bill.

For the past 25 years I have been involved in matters relating to immigration and refugees. Publicly, I would state today that a recent book published in New York told those who wished to read it of my involvement a long time ago with the American deserters and draft dodgers. It is true that I was highly involved. I must have helped a few thousand, most likely without knowing, to come to Canada who are now extraordinarily good Canadians.

Recently I attended some of the meetings run by my distinguished colleague, the official critic for immigration. Something that fascinated me one morning was that 10 Conservative Members were present when the Hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) was present. That Minister had voted for the abolition of the death penalty. But when I started looking around at those who were attending the meeting I suddenly thought it was strange that this gentleman had made a very vigorous speech, which is true to democracy, for the death penalty.

I called my office and asked them to send me the list of those who voted for the death penalty and those who voted against the death penalty. Coincidentally, the 10 Conservative Members present, with not one exception, from the very distinguished Chairman, who is a good colleague of mine, to the Vice-Chairman of the Management and Members' Services Committee, and to every other Member present, were all Members who had voted for the death penalty. That is only a coincidence, but it does indicate a feeling that not one Member out of ten who was present that morning to question the Minister had voted for the abolition of the death penalty. What is the link? The link is that a Member who voted against the death penalty may have had more understanding of what a refugee has to go through.

In my evaluation, we in my Party are no fools. There is abuse and there are people who abuse the good laws of Canada. Those people should be punished. There are people who come to this country in the most illegal fashion. They may not even be refugees. They should be punished. But it is the manner in which it was done. This type of urgency reminds me of the role of a Minister. When I was the critic, I remember stating to the Hon. Member for Frontenac (Mr. Masse) when he was the Minister of Communications that he had a duty not only to be a good administrator, but also to be a good communicator. He had to be a good educator and explain to Canadians the importance of the artist, the importance of CBC, our national symbol, and not only attend in Cabinet and