

future we follow the same guidelines that guided us in the past. In the past Canada successfully paved the way for hundreds of thousands of immigrants and refugees coming to this country. Unfortunately it was during the mandate of this Government that we detected shortcomings in our policies, inefficient administration and needless recourse to drama. What is needed is a clear-cut and fair policy which comes to grips with the problem, not the hysteria and panic so patently demonstrated by the Conservative Government.

● (1650)

[English]

For the New Democratic Party, as for the people of Canada, Bill C-84 is unacceptable, either because it does not deal with the refugee problems that are of concern to Canadians or because it violates the spirit and perhaps the letter of our own Charter of Rights. We in this Party want the problems that are felt seriously and are real, to be dealt with but we want these problems dealt with clearly within the principles of law and totally consistent with our own Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I would like to talk about three crucial areas. Canadians have been legitimately concerned about the abuse of our very civilized refugee law and of our very civilized, tolerant and humane implementation of that refugee law. Canadians do not want that law abused and abuses there have been.

From my conversations with men and women of my constituency and from what I have heard from others by correspondence, as have all Members, I find that Canadians who themselves are recent immigrants and had to wait often for many years to become immigrants or who have relatives back in their countries of origin whom they want one day to be settled as Canadian citizens are the ones who are particularly sensitive to the reality and find offensive those people who have abused our immigration and refugee laws. We in this Party totally sympathize with those Canadians who find these practices offensive and we want to do everything we can to put an end to those violations.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** Canadians know that there are people who, through a variety of schemes, have got in by claiming, on highly bogus grounds, to be refugees. They have then managed to stay in Canada for a number of years and then, once again through a variety of stratagems, have gained the right to stay here permanently. That is not a fair process. It is not just and it is not what we in Parliament who created the present law had in mind.

There have been abuses with which we as parliamentarians have to deal. In our view, there have been many suggestions for dealing with these abuses. We have received a variety of reports including that of the Robinson task force and the admirable, lucid, humane and efficacious report made by Gunther Plaut. More recently, suggestions have been made by

#### *Immigration Act, 1976*

the Hon. Member for La Prairie (Mr. Jourdenais), the Chairperson of the employment and immigration committee of the House.

On behalf of my own Party, I wrote to the Minister last February to suggest some very concrete measures the Government could have acted upon if it wanted to deal with this abuse in an effective and humane way. Speaking on behalf of my caucus at that time, I relied almost entirely on what had been proposed by the Canadian Council of Churches. A thoughtful study was done by church leaders from across Canada, church leaders who are concerned about the twin goals of having a fair and humane refugee policy on the one hand and curbing abuses on the other.

What did the Canadian Council of Churches recommend that I passed on to the Minister in writing and to which I have not yet received a reply? It recommended a process that would have reduced the time required to consider the application for refugee status and finally to reach a determination. I will not go into all the details of the proposals now, but I would like to mention some of the key elements of them.

The council proposed a process that was fair and accessible and included hearings and appeals. It is a process which would have reduced the timeframe from the three or four years it is now to a matter of months.

In our view, if these proposals had been acted upon or indeed if they were acted upon now, the process would work. The process would deal with abuse for the very good reason that there are people who use a variety of scams and gambles to get into the country. Indeed, if these people are here for two, three or four years, marry and establish some kind of roots, they rely on the good will of the Canadian Government to accept them as immigrants. Many have taken this gamble. They have gambled in coming in with a process that has gone on for that long. Yet the same people, it has been argued in report after report with cogency, I believe, would not so gamble if they knew they were going to reside just a few months in this country and if they were not bona fide refugees they would be kicked out. That is clearly the conclusion reached by a variety of sensible and practical people who have looked at this matter, and that is the precise recommendation we in the NDP made to the Minister. It is one that we think he should be acting upon today.

● (1700)

Instead of responding to what its own Members have said, instead of responding to Gunther Plaut or the NDP or church leaders, what is the Government doing? It is turning quite upside down the promise made by the Prime Minister (Mr Mulroney) almost one year ago to the day. When the Tamils arrived off our shores about a year ago, the Prime Minister said people who arrive in lifeboats off our shores are not going to be turned away. "We are not", he said, "in the business of turning away refugees and", he added, "we never will under this Government". That promise was kept for all of one year.