

Immigration Act, 1976

and somehow, without qualifications or credentials, find yourself in the country with *de facto* admission for one, two, three or perhaps five years, they wonder whether the Government really is in control.

I take that question very seriously. If the Government and the legislature of a country are not really in charge, in what sense are we a country? If we do not have control over our own borders, what kind of country are we? That is the situation to which we have come in recent times and which we are attempting to correct, and not with any lack of justice or compassion for those who legitimately merit the term and designation "refugee".

I am sure that all other Members, like myself, have read the Convention of 1951. It is clear from that document, to which this country has been a signatory and to which the Government, like others before it, is committed, that a refugee has designated, covenanted rights. The ambiguity arises over who is a refugee and who determines that. It is quite clear that the country itself determines that refugee status in accordance with the terms of the covenant and its historic application.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Bill before us is in accordance with that and will stand the test of challenge. We have every right, indeed every duty as a Parliament, to put our *imprimatur* upon it and to make it the law of the land so that the Government, elected by the people, given a mandate to govern, will truly in this instance be in charge.

I am not unaware that this Bill, like any other that has been introduced in this House since 1867, might well be improved by this amendment or that. I think it would be approaching hypocrisy if either side of the House were allowed to suggest that there is nothing that could not be clarified, nothing that could not be refined. However, in debate on second reading we are talking about the principle of the Bill, the clear message, and of that there can be no doubt if we take the people of Canada seriously.

I am aware that the opposition Parties do not take the people of Canada seriously, that they are really elitist Parties that are with the people if the people are with them and their secret knowledge of the truth. I am appealing to them through you, Mr. Speaker, to listen to the ordinary Canadians, of whom they are apparently so fond, and take seriously what the ordinary Canadians are saying, namely, "give us some action, give us the rule of law, put the Government in charge again".

I have been impressed that the Liberal Opposition, for one, has opposed this Bill. It tried to give it a six-month hoist. I was impressed as well that less than a month ago the Liberals were saying that the Government was at fault because it had not turned the boat back. Now the Liberal Opposition wants to turn this legislation back. I ask them to be consistent, to be concerned, not about turning the boat back but about turning the clock ahead to today, to putting this nation in tune with the times, and to giving us legislation which can cope with this problem which is of this day and age.

The legislation and rules of the past are no longer adequate. To be fair to those who drafted them, they may have met the need then, but they do not meet it now. We have need for legislation which takes seriously an entirely unprecedented development. We have 12 million refugees in various centres in the world. We have frightening population pressures in various parts of the world. There are 5 billion people sharing this globe, many of them crowded into small conurbations—16 million, 18 million, or 20 million in a massed urban sprawl. We can appreciate that there will be great pressure for many years to come on persons to find new opportunities and to offer themselves as refugees when, according to the convention, they do not meet those criteria.

We have a need for this legislation. The Government was right to call this House back through the Speaker to deal with an emergency situation in an emergency way. I hope that we will see reason and pass the Bill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words about Bill C-55 and to support my party which considers that the bill provides no solution to the tragic situation and to the international problem raised by the determination of refugee status.

Instead of being consistent with the tradition of assistance to refugees Canada can be proud of, the provisions of Bill C-55 put a stop to any progressive initiative in that area. The proposed legislation does not allow for an accessible and quick mechanism for determination of the refugee status nor does it give sufficient protection through a hearing before a qualified board and through a fair appeal procedure.

The Liberal Party is opposed to Bill C-55 because it essentially provides for a new process for the determination of refugee status without taking into account the Plaut report and all suggestions made by organizations dealing with refugees.

If the Conservative Government is serious and honest about consulting those organizations regarding the reform of the refugee determination process, it should not try to pass legislation in which the basic principles of the future process are laid down.

Besides, this view is largely shared by immigration lawyers and many humanitarian agencies. There are, among others, the concertation group for refugees, SOS Refugees, the Civil Liberties Union, the *Société québécoise de solidarité internationale*, the Immigration Lawyers Association, l'*Association des juristes québécois*, the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees, the Standing Conference of Canadian Organization Concern for Refugees, Amnesty International and the Island Refugees Society of British Columbia.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party is not opposing Bill C-55 for the sake of filibustering. This is not a partisan issue but a matter of pure common sense. For instance, if you look at the pre-screening process, it builds up a wall all around the system that we claim to improve. The pre-