

*Immigration Act, 1976*

have confidence in the direction and policy of this Government”.

Is it any wonder that Canadians are losing confidence in an immigration policy which is confusing in its definition and questionable in its direction, when 7,000 employees put their jobs on the line by signing a petition to the effect that they are losing confidence in this Government's immigration policy?

Mr. Speaker, why are all of the church and community groups saying that Bill C-55 should go back to the drawing board?

There are a number of very good reasons, and I should like to go through some of them right now.

The first one is that while the Government finally designed a refugee board which meets with the approval of most Canadians, it is not prepared to allow that board to work unfettered with the refugees. It built a barrier around that new refugee board, and the barrier is called a pre-screening process.

● (1640)

The Minister and the Government will now have two officers at border points who will make the determination on whether a refugee or claimant can go from the border to the refugee board to be heard by two competent members of the board. That is where they are washing their hands; that is where they are not allowing individuals to come forward, rightly or wrongly, to present their cases and to live with the decisions. They have two officers to do the pre-screening or the selection, as it were.

Upon what criteria would it be based when the two individuals do not have any discretionary authority under the legislation as printed?

Obviously there is a vacuum or a gulf of difference between what the Minister says and purports is in the Bill and what is in the actual piece of legislation. There may have been a breakdown between the Minister and what he wanted to do and government drafters in the Department and what they wanted to do and to control. Those two officers—and one can call them what one wants—are pre-screeners. The Minister knows that. I know that. The constituency know that. There is no need or requirement for them. In fact, they are building a separate bureaucracy across the country at various border points.

The Government should allow the claimants to come directly to the refugee board. I will support the board. I think Parliament would support the board. The constituency would support the board, but why will the Government not support it? It is because the Government is saying that the system will be more efficient by limiting refugees.

It is tantamount to hospital administrators saying that they will make hospitals more efficient by limiting the number of patients. That cannot be done. Either a patient is sick or not. If a patient is sick, he or she should have access to the hospital. Efficiency must be built upon reasons other than limitations

and accessibility handicaps. Limiting access was the centre-piece of the consultation process.

The second aspect is the safe third country concept which has been floating around for a month and a half. I have yet to hear the Minister in the House, in committee, or elsewhere in the country defend with any degree of satisfaction what in the name of God is a safe third country. How will it be determined? How will it meet new uprisings in the world? How will the list be drafted?

The Minister suggested that Cabinet would consult and draft the list of safe third countries. Let us consider the reversal of policies. Under a Liberal Government we had devised a B-1 list, a list of countries to which Canada would not deport people because of human rights violations. Clearly the onus was on the safety of life. We were not prepared to take the chance of sending someone to persecution and probable death. We were prepared to have those people remain here. Not only did the Conservative Government remove the B-1 list on February 20, which means that it is open season for everyone everywhere, it also instituted the safe third country concept—a list of countries to which the Government is prepared to deport people.

Where are the guarantees or the safeguards that those countries will in fact respect refugees? Where are the guarantees that once a person goes to Germany or Great Britain he or she will have access to becoming a citizen and entry into the refugee system? This piece of legislation does not guarantee that. Admission does not guarantee that.

I could be admitted to West Germany on one day and be booted out on the third day. There is no guarantee whatsoever. This is where the Pontius Pilate theory comes into play. They have sent people adrift. It is like a ping-pong game; they are sent to a country which sends them somewhere else, and then everyone does it.

In Question Period the Minister was prepared to say that he would get agreements with those countries. In *Hansard* on May 7, 1987, in answer to my question, the Minister said:

I can assure the Hon. Member that we will be very careful with every individual and will have an agreement in place before we do anything.

Some people might say that if we have an agreement with a country, that country must honour the agreement. However, what did he say last week in committee? He was not prepared to say that he would live up to an agreement. He said that Canada would follow an arrangement, which is even more nebulous or ambiguous than the safe third country concept. The Government prefers to be everything to everybody by being ambiguous. However, that is not a guarantee for a legitimate refugee. That is not a guarantee for the refugee constituency who are asking themselves: “What is a safe third country?”

The Minister has refused to answer. Is the United States, which deports Guatemalans or Salvadorans, a safe third country? Is Great Britain, which deports Tamils, a safe third country? Of course they are not, not for those individuals. Is