

*Government Orders*

jobs. They did it yesterday. They do it today and we are confident they will continue to do it tomorrow.

[*Translation*]

The amendments to the Immigration Act that we are dealing with today in Bill C-44 are designed to help get the undesirables out of the system and put some of the gleam back in the rainbow. Abuse of the system by a few has been cause for alarm. While the numbers of those causing the problem are small, the damage they have done is large.

We have read the reports, heard the stories, seen the pictures or maybe even attended a funeral. A criminal minority has used the immigration system to its own advantage. There has been slow enforcement and some of us have watched with growing anger while a justice and immigration appeals system was used as a stalling tactic to delay departure orders.

[*English*]

The problem of immigration enforcement is not unique to Canada. It did not start with this government or even the previous one. Instead it is a worldwide problem. To the south our neighbour has ongoing and very well documented enforcement problems. When Cuban jails opened, for instance, Florida was inundated. Barbed wire and armed men guard the Rio Grande. Africa has witnessed war, pestilence and famine resulting in the vast migration of peoples. Only a tiny portion of that tremendous movement of people comes to our shore, but it is significant nonetheless.

• (1205)

Last year almost 110 million people in Canada came through primary inspection points at our points of entry. In 1993-94 immigration officials examined over 3 million in detail, handled more than 100,000 immigration applications, conducted over 30,000 investigations and removed at the end some 9,000 people from Canada. In 1993 at the same time we also admitted some 81,000 skilled and/or business workers, some 24,000 refugees and reunited 134,000 people with their families.

We cannot and should not dismiss what is happening as a global phenomenon or excuse it as inevitable when large numbers of people overwhelm a system. When even a small number slip through with false papers, lies or simple misdirection they can cause tremendous pain and suffering, not to mention a backlash on the entire immigrant and refugee community.

It is a Canadian problem that demands a Canadian answer. Now is the time to face the issue and to provide Canadians with the answers.

We have before us today an accountability session in a legislative form for both the government and members of Parliament on all sides of the House. A number of MPs, as they

should, here today pride themselves on listening to their constituents. I hope they have been listening hard because I too have been doing a lot of listening. I know Canadians expect their members of Parliament, all members of Parliament regardless of their political affiliation, to move swiftly with this bill and get it right.

I hear immigrants and refugees telling us and the government to stop that tiny minority of criminals from reflecting badly on everybody else. I hear police chiefs and police officers telling us and the government to change the law to ensure that it is the innocent that are protected, and not the other way around.

I hear, as does my government, people from all across Canada telling us to prevent foreign criminals from infiltrating our country disguised as legitimate immigrants or legitimate refugees.

If we do not deal swiftly and crisply with both the perception and the reality of abuses to our immigration and refugee system, the integrity of the entire process is in jeopardy. When drug dealers or other thugs slip through the cracks of the enforcement or screening net they discredit a program that has made Canada the envy of the world.

[*Translation*]

So it is up to us to fix it. We do not have to take the system apart. We do not have to stop having one of the most progressive immigration and refugee policies in the world. We simply have to fix the system and make it tougher for criminals to claim they are refugees and to prevent thugs from using red tape or muddled intra-government communications to extend their stay in Canada.

When it comes to enforcement of immigration issues, we have to do a better job. The public expects better, the public deserves better, and the public will get better enforcement of immigration issues.

[*English*]

In a moment we can discuss how better enforcement procedures have already started to take place, but the amendments to the Immigration Act before the House are legal arrows for an enforcement quiver. The amendments help protect the true refugee and the average law-abiding immigrant should have no fear of Bill C-44. However the felon that has mistaken Canadian hospitality for a chance to loot the bill will find the doors to our country swing both ways. By strengthening the integrity of the system we will go a very long way toward restoring public trust and take ourselves further down the road toward building a better and a safer Canada. When the House approves these amendments I believe we will see a significant improvement in our enforcement procedures and the speed in which we can remove foreign criminals from our soil.