

*Immigration Act, 1976*

deliberations. Perhaps there is nothing better outlining that confusion than what the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has stated. I quote from an article in *The Montreal Gazette* where he is reported as saying:

This country shall always be a haven for refugees and immigrants seeking tolerance and prosperity. We want a tolerant and a growing and a sympathetic and a warm country.

With respect to the recent boat arrivals, the Prime Minister stated in an article in the *Canadian Press* dated July 31, 1987:

These people are by and large illegal aliens. They are people jumping the queue and taking the place of other immigrants.

Therein lies the confusion from the Prime Minister who, whether intentionally or not, is confusing the issue between refugees and immigrants. During the past two years in committee and in debates in the House we tried to distinguish between the line-up of landed immigrants who are legitimately seeking to come to Canada, and the line-up of refugees who are legitimately seeking to come to Canada. After due processing, those found to be illegitimate obviously have to leave our country.

But for the Prime Minister to confuse refugees and immigrants, and then to render a decision by stating, claiming, and judging that those individuals are illegal aliens before they have gone one step into the processing, raises the question and perhaps provides the answer for the Minister of State for Immigration (Mr. Weiner) who this morning stated that Canadians are receiving mixed signals and are mixed up. The Minister must ask himself why.

In terms of challenge, there is the challenge to match the Government's intention with its legislation. The Prime Minister speaks passionately and warmly about immigrants and refugees and the manner in which this country was built, and relays his own personal and family experiences, which is moving. Then the Prime Minister's Government produces refugee legislation in Bill C-84 and Bill C-55 which runs counter to those sentiments, and runs roughshod over those aspirations. Therefore, there is a clear gap between intentions and the law. This country will have to abide by the law, and not by the intentions or speeches made by the Prime Minister or the Minister.

Mrs. Helga Kutz-Harder from the United Church of Canada, and a member of the Inter-Church Committee, who appeared before the legislative committee studying Bill C-55, ended her remarks with a very moving definition of what her intentions would be for our country and this Government.

I wish to begin my speech with her conclusion:

Our response as a nation to refugees is a matter that reaches far, far beyond immigration control. Your committee is charged with considering the effects your recommendations may ultimately have on human lives. The Christian community charges you to place the human person first and foremost in all of your deliberations. We will do anything we need to do as churches to hold Canada and the Canadian Government up to their very, very best. Our policies are not dictated by mood swings or public opinion polls. Our mandate is the eternal universal gospel of love and social justice. Our focus in this arena is on the stranger at our gates who we are commanded to love and to cherish.

I think those words are well advised. Perhaps those would set out the parameters of the constraints by which we should be drafting our legislation and enacting a new refugee determination system.

Bill C-55 is a very important Bill. It is a Bill that will reshape and reform the structure of our refugee process. It is of pre-eminent importance. It is far more important than Bill C-84 which this Party did not accept, and for which we still have very serious reservations. Bill C-55 with Bill C-84 will become the entire new system.

Perhaps it would be helpful if we look at why we need a good piece of legislation rather than simply passing Bill C-55 in quick order. We need a system that will be fair and expedient. We must avoid the line-ups and the backlogs that we have had in Canada. We need an inland processing system because the refugee movements have changed in the world. We are no longer living in the 1960s where we had the luxury of selecting our refugees from refugee camps across the world. We sent our immigration visa officers to those camps to select men, women and children based on certain criteria, and to do our part within the United Nations Convention and the international community to ease the plight of world refugees.

• (1150)

That has changed. The refugees are no longer waiting in those refugee camps to be selected by the visa officers from Canada, the United States, Belgium and other countries in the world. Those refugees are not moving solely into the camps but are going to various countries in the world, including Canada, and asking for refugee status. Therefore, there is a transition in the refugee movements that was not present when we only had government sponsored refugees.

Our refugee determination system has to be changed because the system which was there before was not able to meet the numbers which wanted to come to our country. That system was only able to handle the number of refugees who would complement the struggles we undertook to have refugees from the various camps come to this country.

When the Conservative Government took office there was a very urgent need to reform the system. There was a very urgent need to put in place a system that would be able to evolve with the transition in refugee movements. One has to ask oneself why the Government waited nearly three years before introducing Bill C-55, before moving on the reform. Rabbi Plaut was mandated by the previous administration to study and make recommendations on a new refugee determination system. We must keep in mind that we have had four different Ministers of Immigration under the present Conservative Government, all of whom said, upon being sworn in as Minister, that refugee reform was one of their first priorities as Ministers. We must keep in mind that the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration made a number of very moving recommendations, concluding that reform was needed. Many of the Plaut recommendations were