

true of this government; they have more miserable characters than the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald).

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: But usually the minister of finance is widely perceived to be the most miserable character because he has to keep the finances under control. Everybody is against him because he is stopping their pet projects. I was on the treasury board in Newfoundland for three years, and I had to do that. You have to have a pretty thick skin, Mr. Speaker. When the minister of justice came year after year to ask us for money to construct proper court house facilities and improve the facilities for judges in courts in Newfoundland, we had to say no because there were other things that had to come ahead of this, even though the judicial system is so important.

So on behalf of my colleagues in the government of Newfoundland I make this point to the Minister of Justice who, I am sure, will consider it with some sympathy because, as I said when I started, the minister has a good name and reputation. The case that I mentioned this afternoon was not one that originated with him. He has only been Minister of Justice for perhaps two years—I forget the exact length of time. This case goes back to a previous minister of justice. I addressed these points to the present minister because he is now Minister of Justice. I ask him now, as soon as he gets a chance, to give us the full details on that matter so that it can lie, if everything is satisfactorily explained, or so it can be dealt with properly.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to support this bill because it has improvements in it to help the judicial system in Canada and in Newfoundland. I am happy to see that there will be a chief justice of the district courts in Newfoundland. That will give us eight district court judges. In Newfoundland we have some very fine district court judges now. This will be a good step forward, and I wish the minister well in this continuing evolution of the judicial system.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Halton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, by most standards I should not enter this debate because I am not a lawyer, but I want to say a few words on this bill because of a particular case with which I am dealing which is related to family courts. The matter also involves what is alleged to be an international kidnapping. I think the case was well publicized in the newspapers of this country last year. Briefly, it is this: a Canadian citizen married a man from Iran who was given landed immigrant status and subsequently fathered her child, also a Canadian citizen.

This gentleman then went to the Iranian embassy and registered his wife and his child as Iranian citizens. A short time later he separated from his wife, a divorce was granted and the courts of Ontario gave the wife custody of the child. The husband was gone for six years from Canada; he went back to Iran. Under the court order, the wife had custody of the child. There was some correspondence back and forth in which he demanded that the child be sent to Iran to visit him. The judge of the circuit court of Ontario looked into the details of the case and advised the wife against sending the

child to Iran because apparently under Iranian law she was a Iranian citizen.

The husband returned to Canada and under order of the court had visiting privileges from nine to six in the daytime. He visited the home, took the child with him, boarded a taxi, went to Montreal and boarded an aeroplane for New York. From New York he went to Paris, London and then to Teheran. The distraught mother called the RCMP, and they said, "We cannot deal with it because it is a family court matter". Subsequently she called the FBI. They were not able to deal with it because they did not have a request from the RCMP. Then she called Scotland Yard in London, England, who agreed that if they came in contact with the child they would detain her so that her status could be clarified. The point here is that here is a woman and a child who are Canadian citizens and who have had their citizenship denied them. The woman considered going to Iran but was advised against it because she was an Iranian citizen by the mere fact of her husband going to the embassy and registering her that way.

What I would like the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) to look into is whether in such cases—and there are several of them—our embassies overseas can make representations to the courts in the other country so that this matter can be adjudicated.

There are human considerations here. The young girl in question, who is 11 years old, has contacted her mother by telephone and by letter in which she made heart-rending comments such as, "I am fighting for my life. Please help". I am not being critical of our Department of External Affairs.

May I call it five o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of the adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz)—Trade—GATT negotiations—Request that Canada not take position endangering employment; the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens)—The Canadian economy—Level of inflation by end of year—Restraint on spending by all levels of government; the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave)—Agriculture—Potential drought in western Canada—Suggested discussions with United States on joint action.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, private bills, notices of motions, papers, and public bills.