

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION**

## SELECTION OF GUATEMALAN AND NICARAGUAN REFUGEES

**Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. As the Minister knows from her Department's figures, between January, '87, and March, '88, her Government sponsored only 568 Guatemalan refugees, that is from a country with civil war, guerrilla war, and death squads, but 1,177 from Nicaragua, a country with a declining war, a much better human rights record, and no death squads.

Will the Minister explain why, out of a limited allocation of refugees in total for Central America, her Government sponsors more than twice as many Nicaraguans as Guatemalans?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that Nicaragua is a country which does have refugees. There are refugee camps with Nicaraguans in them. It is not only our country which determines that there are people in Nicaragua in need of our help.

The Member also knows that we look at all of these things on a case by case basis. Each one is determined on its merits one at a time.

The Member also knows that people arriving at our borders and claiming refugee status themselves take far too long to get through our system. We need help with some of those things from the Hon. Member.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

**Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague on my far left has asked me to give the Minister some help. I will point out to her that I am not referring to people coming to our borders but people being selected by our embassy in San José and other such embassies.

The Minister also knows that Jean Roberge, the senior immigration officer at San José, has been quoted in the press as saying that refugee status does not depend on a person's being in danger. He said that we look at their settlement ability in Canada.

Will the Minister admit that these Nicaraguans are not being selected as refugees but are being selected as immigrants? Will she take them out of the allocation of 3,400 refugees for Central America and make room for genuine refugees from Guatemala and El Salvador?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I did not find the Hon. Member's question singularly helpful, any more than I find his approach on our refugee Bills singularly helpful.

Our process of selection abroad includes some other things. In our selection abroad we are able actively to screen out terrorists and people who have been involved in war crimes and war situations in their countries. That is why we have the screening process abroad.

We do the same thing once people arrive on our shores. But I can assure you that before people come to this country as selected refugees the dangerous ones are excluded.

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[Translation]

**AEROSPACE**

## SPACE AGENCY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Conservative Government about the way it is treating Quebec. I often hear people complaining on behalf of Quebec. On the weekend, Premier Bourassa cried foul, accusing the federal Government of dragging its feet, and he was referring more specifically to the long-awaited decision on the space agency . . .

Just listen to those Conservative Members who never bother to complain interrupt anyone who spears up for Quebec!

**Mr. Hudon:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Beauharnois—Salaberry may eventually get up enough courage to demand Quebec's due.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he could explain to the House what the President of the Treasury Board meant when he said on March 24, after he had been asked at least fifty times about the decision on the space agency: "The space agency is coming and it's coming fast!". What was that supposed to mean, when two months later we still have no decision and no hope that the Government is going to take any action soon?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism) and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)):** Mr. Speaker, what the Hon. Member did not say is that the President of the Treasury Board at the time also said that, as soon as a decision was made about the space agency's location, a number of things would happen. We know that decisions have been made by the Government in this respect. However, the Government is still considering the matter, and as we have said many times, I can understand the Hon. Member's frustration about not getting an answer as soon as possible, but as soon as the Government is in a position to make a decision and to announce it, it will do so.