

### *Government Orders*

Sometimes when the minister's metaphorical planes crash it costs Canadians outrageous amounts of money but sometimes it costs people their lives.

Suddenly things got a little too hot for the minister of immigration. He suddenly realized that he had to do something, anything, and he had to do it fast. He thought he needed to table something, needed to make it look as though he really made a change or had taken charge and was really cleaning up his act. He and his legislative assistants got together and hurriedly drafted Bill C-44.

Here it is, they told us, the panacea, the cure for the immigration problems. With C-44 they assured us they were getting tough and would not tolerate abuses in immigration. This would stop the tragedies that occurred last year and are just waiting, mark my words, to happen again.

Bill C-44 is an impressive looking document. It is pages and pages of thick legal text adding this to the Immigration Act. It strikes out some parts, redefines some things and reiterates others.

Bill C-44 is really a whole lot of nothing at all. Is it a cure all for immigration woes?—not even close. Does it tackle the serious problems of morale and under staffing in the immigration department, especially in the area of enforcement?—no, it does not. Does it take away the incentive or the means for lawyers and advocates to endlessly tie up the IRB and our courts with appeal after appeal?—no way.

Does it restore accountability to the immigration decision making process, a lack of accountability that has allowed the immigration minister to slither away from foul ups by saying: "What can I do, it is an independent board", or allowing the IRB to say it is accountable only to the courts?—not even close. Does it secure the front door, our ports of entry?—no.

Does it get to the root of virtually all the problems in immigration today, the problems of numbers, too many to be properly handled by the department under any circumstances with the degree of care and precision that would allow for careful and thorough screening of all applicants?—no, it does not.

Here is what C-44 does. It provides an easy out for the minister and the government who are utterly incapable of making real choices, exercising real leadership and taking action, who instead are always looking for the easy way out, the appearance of action, much ado about nothing, sound and fury signifying nothing. Bill C-44 is exactly that. It is a great deal of legislative sound and fury which signifies absolutely nothing to the average law-abiding Canadian who wants a sane immigration policy and to immigrants who just want to start a new life, obey the law and enjoy their new home.

• (1300)

The minister of immigration has often spoken of his lofty ideals for immigration. He has often presented to Canadians and this House his vision of what immigration should do for Canada and what Canada should do for immigrants.

The minister has tried to argue that high immigration levels, the IRB and other elements of Canada's immigration policy are good for Canada because they enhance Canada's economy. He said that immigrants put into the economy more than they take out. We do not argue that. He has argued that immigration is a Canadian legacy, that immigration built Canada, it continues to build Canada and should build Canada in the future. That is obvious. That is the Reform Party's position on these points, just as it is the Liberals' position, the Bloc's position and also the NDP's position. It is even the position of the previous government.

The minister of immigration is taking no high road when he talks about the history of immigration and the need for that continued tradition. However there is a huge difference in talking about the past, talking about broad universally shared ideals and putting those ideals and values into practice.

That is where this government and my party part company. We both agree that immigration is a vital part of the Canadian heritage. We both agree that immigrants are an asset to the economy.

It is time to get beyond the "we are for immigration but you are not" rhetoric. We are all for immigration. The Reform Party and the Liberal Party are for continued immigration. Frankly, we in the Reform Party think we speak for the Canadian people when we say that enough is enough of the name calling and mud slinging that surrounds the immigration debate. That is the sort of rhetoric the government likes to employ when discussing immigration.

As offensive as that sort of rhetoric is, the rhetoric contained in Bill C-44 is even more offensive. It is most offensive because it looks like legislation that could help. Only insiders, people who are intimately familiar with the workings of immigration in Canada, would know why this bill is of little value and why it is unnecessary.

As I said before, there is no disagreement over the value of immigration to Canada. The Reform Party says that Canada could do better when it comes to immigration policy. The Reform Party says that there are real solid immediate changes that could be made to Canada's immigration policy that would benefit not only Canadians but immigrants as well.

When the government thinks that the status quo, a status quo created by the former Conservative government, is the way to go with ultra high levels, levels that are more than twice as high as those in any other country on earth, astronomical levels in this day and age, levels that are simply too high for our immigration department to handle, is it any wonder that large numbers of