

Immigration Act, 1976

that is, the imposition of heavy penalties for traffickers in illegal immigrants into this country.

Let us suppose that a group of people who genuinely suffered fear of persecution in El Salvador managed to find a fishing boat and persuade the captain of it to take them up the coast to Vancouver. Is the Hon. Member saying that the Navy should be sent out with guns blazing in order to sink that ship or send it back to a place where people would be subject to death squads? Is that what the Hon. Member is saying?

I do not think you can make a rule to cover every circumstance. I believe that people who are seeking refugee status are likely to be coming into Canada by all means. The transportation carriers and the passport control systems and so on are not such as to encourage or facilitate refugees moving from one place to another.

I am not happy about what happened on the coast of Nova Scotia. I am not insulated from it, as the Hon. Member has suggested. My office, like his, has received a number of calls. A number of people have spoken to me about this issue outside of my constituency during the last several weeks. People have expressed their concern that these people may be jumping the queue.

On a different point, the Hon. Member for Chambly said that we must have legislation not because of the security risk of people coming in in this particular way. An adjudicator has now processed all of the cases. The Government has put forward any evidence that it may have of a possible security risk. The adjudicator, who I assume the Hon. Member believes is a competent individual who would consider very seriously evidence from the Government, has judged that there was no substantive evidence that there was a security risk involved in this case.

We must look at this situation with some perspective. This was a rather dramatic case of 174 people made more dramatic because there was not a lot of other news at that particular time. It was perhaps dramatized as well because the people who came in happened to be Sikhs. They look different. They wear turbans and so on. The Hon. Member will be aware that Sikh Canadians right across the country are very productive members of Canadian society and make a great contribution to the country. We are not talking about people who will necessarily be prejudicial to Canadian society. We do not know that.

The question is whether we make law on the basis of a sudden, sharp reaction to one particular incident, or whether we make law in a measured way as was proposed by the standing committee more than two years ago. That is what should have happened. It is the mark of an incompetent and ineffective Government that it has panicked into action now when it should have acted a year and a half ago.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of brief questions for the Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy). Toward the end of his speech he referred to the backlog of

20,000 people who are seeking entry to Canada. What is there in Bill C-55 which will ensure that we will have the human resources necessary to speed up the process in order to keep the backlog at less than 20,000 so that people can go through the process without having to wait months and even years?

Second, what is there in Bill C-55 which will assist in the speeding up of the process without hiring more counsellors and other people to handle the processing of paper in the immigration department? What is there to make this process more streamlined? Do we still maintain the same protection against security risks and ensure that this faster, streamlined process allows genuine refugees to enter?

Mr. Crosby: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) directed a question to me and I am sure he would rather use the time by listening to my answer.

Mr. Cassidy: That is not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will allow the Hon. Member a supplementary question, but I would like the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) to answer the question of the Hon. Member for Humboldt—Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse).

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure about the question with regard to the security provisions in Bill C-55. However, I am sure that the question of resources is not adequately addressed. It is clear that if the Government believes, as it correctly should, that the backlog is too great and the process is taking too long, then this matter requires not only legislation but also a commitment of adequate resources.

As the Minister indicated, Canada devotes over \$150 million a year to refugee resettlement and that kind of thing. I believe most Canadians support that. If we have to find an extra portion of resources, one which would be much smaller than that already allocated, in order to ensure expeditious handling of people seeking refugee status, I believe that most Canadians would also agree with that. I regret that the Government is seeking to turn public disdain on to people seeking refugee status rather than dealing in a compassionate and humanitarian way with persons seeking refugee status here in Canada.

It is also worth noting that under the present process there is provision which is often used whereby a person who does not meet the UN convention definition of a refugee is still allowed to stay in Canada for humanitarian reasons. Humanitarian reasons have no place in Bill C-55. I believe that is a matter for regret. In other words, persons who are now consistently being allowed to stay in Canada for humanitarian reasons would be rejected under the proposals of Bill C-55.

Are we wrong to accept them now? If we are not wrong, why does Bill C-55 in essence say that in the future we will not accept persons for humanitarian reasons which appear to be justified at this time?