

*Immigration Act, 1976*

Perhaps the Parliamentary Secretary will respond to those observations. I expect he is with us in ear as well as in spirit. He may have some observations of his own on the suggestion that it is bad ideas that we will keep out without regard to the persons who happen to hold those ideas, and that somehow human life, which I have no doubt he would hold very sacred, would be maimed or lost because he is preoccupied with ideology. That tells us a good deal about attitudes that are behind the Government's Bill.

Perhaps you will remember, Madam Speaker, that about 17 months ago I had to say something in the House that was not pleasant and which aroused a certain amount of reaction when the then Minister for Employment and Immigration made a free-time speech on television in the Province of Quebec in which he was celebrating his own area, very close to where the by-election is currently under way, and he spoke of a region in which people are rather untouched by immigration and some of the other world realities. I suppose there is some truth to that, perhaps there is a great deal of truth to that. I do not think it is the total truth for the Lac St. Jean—Saguenay region of the Province of Quebec. No part of the country is free of persons from other continents of this world who have come to find refuge. I know there are multicultural organizations in that area to which the Minister might have been sensitive.

When the Minister went on to talk about an area that was demographically pure in population he aroused terrible fears in many people. I know very definitely that for members of Canada's Jewish community these were reminders of what had been said in the Nuremberg trials. What is most distressing is that requests from the Canadian Jewish Congress to withdraw those statements were not acted upon. I do not know what was in the Minister's mind in refusing to do so, but the fact that he insisted on standing by those statements for some reason of lack of support for any withdrawal on the part of his colleagues in the Quebec caucus of the Conservative Party, I find quite troubling, as I expect you would also, Madam Speaker, as someone who is very well acquainted with many members of that caucus.

● (1240)

The possibility of racism in Canada, supported and expressed in legislation such as this, is something people of many backgrounds across this country find intensely troubling. The woman who is now Minister for Employment and Immigration (Mrs. McDougall) cannot say that the constituency she represents in Metropolitan Toronto is free of the knowledge of the diversity of our country and the needs of people who are in danger of life and limb in other parts of the world. That makes it all the more distressing that she can become Minister, carry these Bills, and refuse to take up with her colleagues significant changes. Her comments in presenting the Bill are found in *Hansard* of June 3, 1988, page 16095. She said:

These two vital Bills, which I consider a complementary package, have been considered from every possible angle by parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations, legal experts, the media and many others. As a Government, we have encouraged the scrutiny and appreciate the efforts and sincere concerns of those who have contributed to the examination of these Bills.

She does not say that practically every person who appeared and practically every organization which made a representation to the committee—and I have this on the authority of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Spadina—and he can correct me if I am exaggerating—was opposed to this Bill. Practically every presentation was profoundly critical of what the Government was doing. How can one, in all honour and with any kind of integrity, say the words I have just read and not recognize that this process of consultation was profoundly critical of the legislation and called for fundamental changes which the Government has refused to carry through? How is it possible for an honourable Minister to do that?

We have lost a great deal in time and we have suffered damage in the attitudes of Canadians by reason of what the Government has done. The Government promised a campaign against racism in the fall of 1986. One would expect that sometime in 1987 it would be accomplished. But instead of such a campaign being undertaken, there was a whipping up of feeling, after a ship of Sikh refugee claimants landed on the Nova Scotia coast. The Canadian Government whipped up that feeling and there were incredible responses. I lived in astonishment and distress for days having heard what the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) said in apparent acceptance of the Government's suggestion that these people should be sent away. It took days before he changed his stance. Such a yielding to racism in this country, may I say with care, is not surprising coming from someone who represents a Vancouver riding, because on the West Coast these feelings of concern about Asians coming to Canada have existed for a long, long time. I am sure the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition would eschew any such motive in himself, but that was just one demonstration of the effect of the Government's actions.

We have seen more than a year pass without anything like a campaign against racism. The present Minister for Multiculturalism promised, trying for some support for the Government in the context of the upcoming election, whenever it happens to be, more money for multiculturalism, and a good chunk of that money, a couple of million dollars, perhaps, will be put into the area of work on race relations. This Government shamefully neglected race relations for most of the time from September 17, 1984. It left a couple of people in the area, but there was no program, no strategy, no resources to do anything. Now when the next election draws near, after the Government has done its damage with this legislation, it will belatedly spend some money in this area to try, if it can, to rescue things. It is terribly late to do that.

All those persons across the country who recognize what the Government is doing with Bill C-55 and Bill C-84, and who have been hoping that at some point the presentations by all those groups, by churches and by those concerned about