

Oral Questions

● (1450)

Officials of my Department have met the Ambassador from Burundi. A representative of the Government of Canada was in the country last week, has just returned to Rwanda and is reporting to us. We are meeting today with representatives of the Hutu population in the region. We will work through the Francophonie and other organizations to try to change the practices that have so shocked the world.

I have noted that the European Community has suggested that it would be helpful to have an independent commission of inquiry. That was rejected initially by the Government of Burundi. We hope that it will reconsider that reaction.

We think that the first step should be to get facts as to how we might resolve the problem and then countries like Canada should certainly be exercising all our influence to try to achieve an atmosphere of peace and justice that would endure.

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IMMIGRATION**SCHEDULED DEPORTATION ON BASIS OF MARITAL STATUS INFORMATION**

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration who also happens to be the Minister responsible for the status of women.

The Minister has just told the House that she will be investigating the deportation order served on a 45-year old Filipino seamstress, a landed immigrant, because she provided incorrect information on her marital status. That deportation order is to take effect tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. With all due respect I suggest that simply investigating is not an answer to this case.

Since the employer of this woman, the Manitoba Fashion Institute, like many others in the garment industry, regularly recruits foreign women workers with the condition that they must be single, which in turn forces them to circumvent an employment criterion which clearly violates our federal human rights legislation, will the Minister immediately suspend the deportation order and investigate the Espineli case, a case which involves problems faced by so many other immigrant women, so that we can be sure that our immigration policy is not going to continue to contradict and violate our federal human rights legislation on the books of our own Government?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the law on the books of the Government is not new.

I did not say that I will be investigating—I am investigating. We are looking very seriously at this matter.

I recognize that women immigrants or potential immigrants have particular problems in a range of fields which are long-standing, problems which we are also investigating. I take my responsibilities both for women within the immigration system and on the human rights side very seriously.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, it is very ironic that the Government procrastinated for 10 months before starting deportation proceedings with regard to a convicted terrorist but swoops in, to use her colleague's words, on a 45-year old helpless woman with a case file that has national repercussions.

Since the Canadian Human Rights Commission is investigating this case, and since the Commissioner has said that it will have to bring this woman back at Canadian taxpayers' expense if she is deported, why does the Minister not do the appropriate thing, stay the deportation order and allow the Commission to make a determination not on this one case file but on the many case files of so many immigrant women about whom the Minister has so passionately spoken? Here is a human rights story that cries out for her sensitivity as a woman and as a Minister.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as a woman, as a Minister and as a member of this Government I am not only aware of my responsibilities but I am very aware of the human conditions that we deal with every day, not just the ones that the Hon. Member chooses to raise from time to time. We deal with them every single day. We deal with them humanely and well. We also have some regard for the system which involves the Federal Court and the Immigration Appeal Board. We are actively investigating this file.

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CHILD CARE**TORONTO—DAY CARE NEEDS**

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Day Care Connection, a child care organization in my constituency, received some 4,000 calls last year alone from families needing day care. That is over 10 calls a day, 365 days of the year.

Last week the Mayor of Toronto said that child care in Toronto is in a state of crisis. He is right.

I want to ask the Minister whether or not he is aware that in Metropolitan Toronto newly planned subsidized child care spaces have had to be cut back as a result of the Government's planned legislation on child care. Will the Minister not agree that there is something seriously flawed with that legislation and that he should go back to the drawing-board?