

Immigration Security Act

able suggestion and I find the reasoning of the minister somewhat difficult to understand.

There was another point I wanted to cover, but it has slipped my mind for the moment. Perhaps it will come back to me later. In the meantime, I will yield the floor to other hon. members who want, and have, the right to speak on this matter.

[Translation]

Mr. Lachance: The minister said there was no doubt in his mind that the powers Bill C-85 gives him were absolutely necessary to fight possible abuses that could occur during the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal if known terrorists had access to the olympic site, for example, via the US-Canada border which is relatively easy to cross.

My question is as follows. First, since this bill is meant to cover the 1976 Olympic Games and to protect both athletes and Canadians in 1976 why—and it would seem the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) knows the answer but we on this side do not—why is the expiry date of Bill C-85 December 31, 1976 rather than the actual end of the Olympics? I do not know that date. Will it be in late July or early August? And second, does the minister consider—he did not say in his remarks—that the powers granted under Bill C-85 could be included in the new version of the Immigration Act that should be before the House at the end of the year—a revised and corrected version, of course, and hopefully with sophisticated powers? Furthermore, is consideration being given to including those powers in the future Immigration Act because I consider it to be necessary for the protection of Canadian citizens to control arbitrarily the entry into Canada of terrorists or other undesirable aliens?

● (1640)

[English]

Mr. Andras: Madam Chairman, I think earlier I indicated the answer to that question. I believe the hon. member has in his final comments indicated the reasons. This weakness in the act, if it is a weakness—and of course we were stimulated by our concern about the Olympics particularly and primarily, and Habitat, as well as some other events scheduled for this year—is because we wanted to bridge that period until such time as this House could deal permanently with the matter.

This is emergency legislation, but we have made the commitment—and I feel very definitely that the commitment will be met—that we will be placing before this forum the more profound immigration bill and new policies which are being developed now. Unquestionably, this area of concern will have to be dealt with. I want the House to have the opportunity to deal with it in a broader context than this particular situation permits, or the time or emergency permits, and indeed I want to bridge that period but with a definite expiry date which is December 31, 1976. With this time-frame and these conditions and events, we had in mind the setting of the date. We looked at 60 days, or even precisely the end of the Olympics. We felt we needed a clean-up period and thought it would be wise to provide for the other bill to come in, at which time the matter in broader context than this will be placed before the House.

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with what I think is at the heart of the minister's objection to placing in this particular legislative provision some protection against abuse. At one point in his speech the minister, in speaking to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Greenwood, said his problem was that he cannot in this current situation reveal either the nature, the source or the type of information he would have with regard to the possible exercise of this provision. I think that is at the heart of what we are trying to deal with this afternoon. The minister stated this as being the prime reason for requesting these Draconian powers.

I think he is assuming something all members of the House are supposed to assume, which is that indeed the sources and the information in themselves would be impeccable. I think this is what disturbs many members and quite a few people in the country. We know only too well that what is being dealt with often by way of information that would come to the minister is not in fact information that would come from convictions, from events that would be well known and for which individuals would have been convicted in their own country. We are not, I expect, in effect dealing with people who are so well known to the police authorities that it would be obvious they are people who should not be admitted to our country.

What we will be dealing with, and what I suspect the minister is dealing with in the way of privileged information given to him by his officials, is in the nature of dossiers, information and reports acquired not only by police officials but by various kinds of informers in other countries. It is not necessary to mention the countries from which this information comes.

We know that in many instances the information that is relayed is information as much of a political nature as of a criminal nature. This is what makes the exercise of this act so difficult. We are being asked to give the minister power in respect of information which can, and frankly will, be coloured by the nature of political opinions and political authorities in a host of different countries. The minister receives this information, often filtered as well by those who exercise positions of responsibility, particularly in situations where there may be a considerable amount of political turmoil in their country, which suggests to the minister that certain people are not appropriate to be admitted to this country and could in fact endanger the lives of others.

Of course, the minister will have to take his responsibility. No one, certainly not myself, would deny him the full ability to take that responsibility. What concerns many of us, I believe, is the very fact that the minister feels there might be a certain endangering of our citizens in making this information public—I know he must be very concerned about this—and that he could on occasion in fact not only be poorly advised but could be given information which could be, in effect, largely untrue.

In trying to deal with this legislation, I attempted to see whether there was no other way to get around this problem. I had hoped that the minister's consultations with the law officers of the Crown, and independent legal advice, would have indicated that he had some safeguards for these difficulties. He might have suggested, perhaps in place of the recommendation of the hon. member for