

and after he was promised more than \$100,000 of public money, although he had not completed even one year on the job.

The minister never really explained what happened in this rather embarrassing case for the government. It bought the silence of this deputy chairperson of the board with a substantial amount of money, while cutting payments to the unemployed, welfare recipients and the neediest in our society.

• (1250)

Worse, with this outlandish settlement, the minister prevented the judge from looking into the board's mismanagement. The Bloc Quebecois has asked for, and will continue to demand, a public inquiry into the operations of the IRB which, at the very least, is going through a serious crisis. The Bloc Quebecois will continue to denounce patronage appointments by the minister and his government. We will demand a review of all future appointments by the committee. It is high time that the minister put into practice the recommendations contained in Professor Hathaway's report, that he personally commissioned.

I ask the minister and his government, instead of blindly and stubbornly defending Bill C-44, to try to counter the rise of anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment in Canada. We must promote better understanding among Canadians, regardless of their origin.

On many occasions, in this House, I have decried the climate of hostility towards newcomers which is spreading across this country. I also reminded members that we have to meet our international humanitarian obligations and provide a safe haven for victims of political, religious or social persecution.

Unfortunately, immigrants, and especially refugees, are increasingly being used as scapegoats for the social and economic problems Canada is facing. In this context, Bill C-44 only serves to reinforce prejudices linking crime to immigration.

As an immigrant, and the official opposition critic for immigration and citizenship for over a year, I have noticed that Canada is becoming increasingly less generous and welcoming with refugees, in spite of the commitment made by the Liberal government in the red book to develop a humanitarian refugee policy and to admit a fair share of them.

I will point out that Canada is only taking in less than 0.25 per cent of persecuted and displaced people throughout the world. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are more than 100 million of these people. Therefore, I ask the minister and his government to promote a more humane and more generous attitude toward newcomers, especially refugees, instead of defending Bill C-44 which is so full of injustices and will lead to abuses.

Government Orders

In this international year of tolerance, the government should organize an awareness campaign highlighting the contributions of immigrants to Canadian society and the benefits of immigration.

For these reasons, I will vote against the bill.

[English]

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, here we are again back to debating a bill which there really need not be much debate on. Bill C-44 was a poor piece of legislation several months ago when we began debate and it remains a bad piece of legislation today.

When this bill was introduced we examined it carefully and came to the conclusion that it, not unlike the party and the minister who proposed it, was all talk and no action, big on words, short on effect.

Bill C-44 is snake oil. It is being marketed as a cure all, a fix to the national mess that we call immigration policy.

Last year people died because of poor enforcement of the immigration policy. People who did not deserve to be residents of Canada remained residents of Canada. People who should never have been allowed to enter this country were allowed to enter.

The Immigration and Refugee Board laughed in the collective face of Canadians and ignored the needs of thousands of suffering refugees around the world by jacking up inland acceptance rates, granting hearings to even the most outrageous claims, overturning the deportation orders of dangerous, violent repeat offenders and suckering taxpayers out of a billion dollars or more all in the name of their brand of compassion.

• (1255)

In response to these and many other outrages that were splashed across the front pages of papers across the country and which rightly angered Canadians who felt that our immigration system was out of control, the minister responded by saying: "No problem. Don't look at the planes that crash, most of them don't". He said we need to pay more attention to the planes that land, the success stories, and ignore the rest.

We and millions of Canadians did not ignore the planes that crashed. Every time one of the minister's metaphorical planes crashed, every time the Immigration and Refugee Board screwed up, every time the immigration enforcement fell down on the job and every time the court system was abused by queue jumpers it hurt Canadians, it hurt immigrants across the country and it hurt the tens of thousands of genuine refugees who are overseas and need our help but cannot get it because we have left it up to the Immigration and Refugee Board to award scarce places to those who manage to show up, get a legal aid attorney to plead their case and push the right politically correct buttons of the IRB.