away because their ship had refuelled along the way. That was used as a pretext to turn them away.

Is Canada adopting legislation which theoretically may not be racist but which in practice effectively means refugees from countries other than eastern Europe have little or no chance of coming to Canada? I believe that is the result of Bill C-55 in its present form.

These parts of the Bill I believe most Canadians would find repugnant. They would say that is not what I meant. The polls show that most Canadians are in favour of Canada being a place of refuge for genuine refugees. Of course they do not want the system abused. No one does.

We have problems with some people who seek refugee status as a way of coming to Canada. However, as I said before, if they could only come to Canada for a few months and then be turned away, very quickly the word would get back to Brazil, Portugal, Turkey, or other places where things which may look like scams have taken place and these people would stop coming here. They would not spend their life savings just for the chance of being in Canada for two or three months. Their relatives or friends would tell them it was not working.

I call on the Government to recognize the concerns of immigrants and refugee assistance groups who reject Bill C-55. It has to recognize that you cannot turn to people and say, if you do not announce you are going to be a refugee the moment you come into Canada you cannot claim that status again. Refugees are scared to death. That is why they left the countries from which they came. To turn around and say they did not meet the requirements and therefore we are going to turn them back to that regime is unacceptable.

There is a lot of passion and concern here, but Canadians should beware manipulation by the Government. We in this Party are certainly prepared to see measures which would ensure just, fair and expeditious handling of refugee claims. It is wrong that we have 20,000 people backed up in the queue right now when the Government had the choice of putting resources to work in order to shorten the queue. For three years it had the means of putting in place the legislation which would have ensured that we would not be facing a crisis now. If there is any crisis now, it is not because of the opposition Parties, it is because of the inaction and incompetence of the Conservative Government of the Prime Minister and his colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments.

Mr. Crosby: Mr. Speaker, I have a comment and then I would like to ask the Hon. Member a question. My comment relates to his remarks at the outset of his speech when he referred to the Government and presumably members of the Progressive Conservative Party inciting the people of Canada with respect to legislation to control the entry of refugees into Canada. I realize the Hon. Member lives in the insulated atmosphere of Ottawa Centre, but the people in my constituency of Halifax West, and my colleagues from across Canada with similar experience, tell me very clearly that the people of Canada were not incited by anything other than the sight of 174 people gaining illegal entry into Canada in apparent defiance of the law. That is what incited the people of Canada, not members of the Progressive Conservative Party or this Parliament.

We are all elected to this Chamber as representatives of the people and we participate in debate. We expect to be hit in the give and take of debate. However, the Hon. Member has no basis for insulting the intelligence of the people of Canada who read this situation very clearly and reacted to it. They said to their Members of Parliament, get back to Ottawa and do something about the situation. The incitement did not come from elected Members of Parliament.

There is a very real feeling among the people of Canada that something has to be done. I am shocked and ashamed that the Hon. Member would stand in this place and deny the feelings of the people of Canada, insult their intelligence, and claim they are merely being incited. Those people feel very strongly about this and the Member's defiance in standing in this House and insulting the intelligence of the people of Canada because of the attitude they honestly hold is ridiculous.

I want to ask the Hon. Member if he believes people should be allowed to enter Canada in the way these 174 Asians did when they landed on the shores of Nova Scotia? Does he believe that the law governing that situation should allow them to stay here, notwithstanding that they have not shown in any way, shape or form that they are legitimate refugees? Does he agree with that law? Does he want that law maintained? Is that the reason his Party supported a six-month hoist of Bill C-55? Is that why it wanted consideration of the Bill in the House of Commons delayed for six months and passed into oblivion? Members of his Party agree with the current state of the law. They want this to happen and they want it to happen again and again and again. Is that what they want?

• (1320)

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond in a more calm way than that in which the Hon. Member has just spoken. We had a similar incident a year ago when a group of Tamils were deposited on the coast of Newfoundland by lifeboats. If the Government was as concerned at that time as the Hon. Member indicates that he is now, it had every opportunity to bring legislation forward.

There was a model put forward by the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration which, as I suggested in my speech, had general support and would have ensured that people seeking refugee status would have been dealt with quickly.

In addition, at that time the Government had the opportunity, and failed to do so, of bringing forward legislation along the lines of what I understand is being proposed in Bill C-84,