

Adjournment Debate

with death in Iran, whereupon he could be accorded refugee status. The Minister could offer a ministerial permit. By the very fact of such a permit, all security and medical clearances could be avoided and held after his arrival in Canada. A ministerial permit signed by bureaucrats, as well as by the Minister, would allow the immediate transportation of the individual to Canada because of health, safety or compassionate reasons, and then all the processing could take place from Canada.

The Minister cannot say that the regulations do not allow him to bring Mr. Moatamedi into Canada or that it is an American issue. There is power and authority in the Immigration Act to allow the person into Canada. After all, the five Soviet army defectors did not apply for such a transfer at the embassy. They did not fill in any application forms; obviously, they were in the middle of a war. What happened was that because of a ministerial permit, the five individuals were allowed to be air-lifted from Afghanistan into Canada, and now the processing is taking place.

A third option would be to allow the community of Yarmouth to sponsor the individual under the auspices of a refugee program. Again the Minister is avoiding reality. In 1986, 12,000 refugees from around the world were sponsored by the Government. An additional 6,000 refugees were sponsored. A community has to come forward with a number of guarantees in place to convince the Government that it is prepared to shelter and house those individuals properly and adequately. The Government can allow the community initiative that has already taken place. Mr. Miller from Yarmouth has already put up X amount of dollars showing his intent, but the Government has refused.

● (1830)

Rather than the Government hiding behind a facade of regulations, rather than the Government saying that it cannot do that, rather than the Government not allowing the community to sponsor this individual, it should state the reasons why the Government cannot, clearly and forthwith. The Government should not hide behind a pretence that it cannot do what it has already done hundreds and hundreds of times for other individuals, some of whom have been most questionable.

I look forward to the Parliamentary Secretary providing some real answers and solutions which are within the grasp of the Government. The Government should not say it is unable

and it should not call it an American issue. It is a Canadian issue sponsored by Canadian citizens.

Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to give the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) some accurate information. Unfortunately, the Member's premises are inaccurate. I would challenge him to try to be accurate when he makes representation on behalf of someone and ask him not to put forward information which might be misleading to Canadians who are listening.

Mr. Marchi: I challenge that statement.

Mr. Gurbin: I ask the Hon. Member to prove that any of the 10 people about whom he is talking have been treated in the way he indicates.

Mr. Marchi: Ask the United Nations.

Mr. Gurbin: We have investigated the issue. We found that none of the 10 people which the Hon. Member mentioned have faced any of the difficulties that he suggests. My time is very short, but let me tell him quickly that what we are doing is precisely what the Hon. Member said, namely, following the United Nations.

Canada received the Nansen Medal this year because of the actions of our Government and what we have done for refugees. We are following the suggestion of the United Nations High Commissioner that the Canadian Government should allow the case to be followed through the American courts. On December 1, application was made to the American courts on behalf of this particular candidate. We have been advised by the United Nations to let that process continue. If the Hon. Member has any other accurate information or if there is any other information that comes from any further investigation, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) and the Minister of State for Immigration (Mr. Weiner) have said that they are more than prepared to consider any other additional information that could affect our position.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 3(1).

At 6.33 p.m., the House adjourned.