

Adjournment Debate

To conclude, I will say that one of the main objectives of Canada in the Uruguay Round is to improve GATT's trade rules. Our proposal on article XI brings us closer to our objective as it clarifies it and makes it fairer and more effective.

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, on October 9, 1991 I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration to increase the number of refugee women brought into Canada annually under this government's program called Women at Risk of which this government likes to boast.

The minister did not answer my question but instead boasted about other parts of Canada's refugee program. In fact, Canada has done very poorly on this program of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees that Canada undertook four years ago.

Women at Risk are those who the UNHCR has found to be real refugees. It also has found that they are especially at risk. I quote from the immigration manual of this government, section IS 3.13 as follows:

All Women at Risk applicants selected will be Convention refugees or members of the designated classes.

a) Women at Risk will be in precarious situations where the local authorities cannot ensure their safety. This includes women who are experiencing significant difficulties in refugee camps, such as harassment by local authorities or by members of their own communities. Urgent protection cases, such as women in physical danger, or in danger of refoulement are to be accorded first priority.

b) Women at Risk may also be applicants who are not in immediate peril, but who are existing in permanently unstable circumstances which allow for no other remedy. Because of a low level of skills, or because they are accompanied by small children, or other factors, these may be women who have been passed over by Canada or by other resettlement countries in the past.

That is this government's regulation. Yet in 1991 out of 540 convention refugees identified by the UNHCR as Women at Risk, Canada brought only 29. We brought only 29 of 540.

In the past four years Canada brought only 127. Why is this? Was there no more room in Canada's immigration plans? That is definitely not so. This government set a target of 13,000 refugees to be sponsored by the government from overseas in 1991. Yet it brought less than

8,000. Why the shortfall of more than 5,000? This government says it could not find enough refugees suitable for resettlement. It said the UNHCR did not provide them.

Yet the UNHCR had a list of 540 women at risk of which this government took only 29. For shame. What a hard heart toward the most vulnerable of refugees and what dishonesty for this government to claim it could not find them when the UNHCR had a list.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, to provide additional information concerning the questions raised by the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina in this House on October 9.

Canada was the first country to set up a special program to help refugee women. This program was well received. Moreover, it has been very successful, even though it is still very limited in scope.

There is no limit as to the number of applicants that can be selected each year under the Women at Risk program. In fact, as of September 20, 1991, more than 100 women had been admitted to Canada under that program.

The names of candidates likely to meet the requirements can be submitted to local offices by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, a Canadian visa office or a non-governmental organization.

If the hon. member knows a refugee woman who could avail herself of that program, Employment and Immigration Canada officials will examine the circumstances of her case and determine if she meets the requirements for admission under that program.

The member's comment that the government granted landing rights to only 32 women under that program is inaccurate. Here are the statistics on the number of women admitted so far: in 1988, 40 cases, 97 women in total; in 1989, 30 cases, 88 women in total; in 1990, 28 cases, 67 women in total; and in 1991, as of September 20, 46 cases, 102 women in total.