

very good and I know some government Members attempted to sell the Bill on that premise.

Speaking about the incident which occurred on the East Coast early in the summer and that which was happening in other areas of the world where boat people were arriving by the tens of thousands, the Government created the impression that there was an exodus of refugees from various parts of the globe heading to Canada by any possible means of transportation. They said that there was a national emergency for which Parliament must be recalled, that we must pass laws to stop these hordes of refugees heading toward Canada.

It is worth recalling the number of refugees which Canada accepted during the late 1970s and early 1980s from Southeast Asia, the boat people. Over 40,000 of those refugees were happily taken into the homes and communities of Canadians from coast to coast. Every province participated in giving assistance to the boat people. In many communities in my own constituency it turned out to be a very happy and progressive opportunity for us to learn more about what was going on in various areas of the world.

With regard to rescue at sea, the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said:

It is recalled that there is a fundamental obligation under international law for ships' masters to rescue any persons in distress at sea, including asylum seekers, and to render them all necessary assistance. Seafaring States should take all appropriate measures to ensure that masters of vessels observe this obligation strictly.

Why would the Government propose to do completely the opposite of what has been agreed by the UN? As we all know, most countries of the world participate in the UN and it is only through the collective pressure of nations around the world that we can maintain the often bruised and abused fabric of the UN and its agreements.

The Executive Committee said also:

In accordance with established international practice, supported by the relevant international instruments, persons rescued at sea should normally be disembarked at the next port of call. This practice should also be applied in the case of asylum seekers rescued at sea. In cases of large-scale influx, asylum seekers rescued at sea should always be admitted, at least on a temporary basis. States should assist in facilitating their disembarkation by acting in accordance with the principles of international solidarity and burden-sharing in granting resettlement opportunities.

Once again, this piece of legislation proposed by the Conservative Government of Canada runs completely contrary to the requests and suggestions of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

With regard to safe third countries and countries of origin, we found that in Bill C-55, which has not yet been passed by this House, there are some safeguards for people returned to a safe third country. However, Bill C-84 contains none. There is no functional opportunity, no legislative or real mechanism to assist in that. If a ship which sailed from a so-called safe third country is turned around, there is no way of knowing whether its passengers will be permitted to enter that country should they return there. It is possible that they would not. If they are

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permitted to enter, there is no assurance that they will have an opportunity to present their refugee claim and no protection against return to their country of origin.

We must ask ourselves what exactly is going on. The United States produced and passed somewhat similar, although nowhere near as Draconian, legislation a few years ago. The Minister says, for example, that humanitarian groups will not be prosecuted. We have found that that was precisely the intention of the legislation in the United States. The same arguments were used. They said they would not prosecute the churches and so on. However, in order to assist certain totalitarian regimes in Central and South America the United States has prosecuted and made criminals of church people and groups which, for reasons of conscience, have attempted for many decades to assist those who are persecuted around the world.

In conclusion, I did not believe at the time and certainly do not believe now that there was an emergency which required the recall of Parliament. Bill C-84 certainly does not address the real concerns of Canadians with regard to queue jumping, the real smugglers and so on. It acts in a malicious, vicious and wrong-headed way against those people who require the compassion which Canada has shown for so many decades to refugees from around the world.

● (1730)

**Mr. Althouse:** Madam Speaker, I note that at the beginning of his speech the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) discussed the 174 people of East Indian descent, mostly Sikhs, who, coming to our shores, appeared to have precipitated this so-called emergency. After their initial welcome by Nova Scotians and after they were fed, these people were held with no access to lawyers. They were processed thoroughly over a period of several weeks, given security checks, and, from my observations, were given the most thorough testing, to the point of almost being harassed, of any group of people who have come to our country seeking refugee status. It is now a bit over a month and a half from that date and I note with some surprise, given the hysteria emanating from the government benches and from some of the press, that all of the 174 persons have now gained conditional access to Canada as refugees.

I am a little curious and I wonder if my hon. friend could tell me, what would protect us more from refugees coming into this country, if that is what the Government is proposing to do under Bill C-84? It seems to me that the same procedures would still be in place, with more difficulty for the refugees. The ship's captain, in this case, was tried, fined and jailed. The fines for a ship captain, I understand, would be higher. But would not these genuine refugees still be in the country? Would they not still be allowed in? Is not the difficulty the Government faces in deciding who will be a refugee? And does this particular Bill make that any more clearer?

**Mr. Fulton:** Well, Madam Speaker, I think the Hon. Member's question is right to the point. There are really two