replies by Ministers, which are misleading, in the sense that they may or may not be absolutely accurate. Of course, what is the forbidden thing is to intentionally mislead. I suppose that often in the heat of debate things are said which may mislead a little bit but which are not necessarily intended to mislead. That of course is what I would have to look at very carefully in the comments made by the Minister, and I will do so.

I wish to say to the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) that the substance of the matter raised is of importance and the Chair will look carefully at the matter and report back to the Chamber.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT, 1976

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Bouchard that Bill C-55, an Act to amend the Immigration Act, 1976 and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When the House rose at one o'clock the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) had the floor.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, before lunch I was speaking on the safe country concept. I was beginning to address what is a safe country and to perhaps press upon the Government the need for a better and clarified definition.

We put to the Government on many occasions practical examples with respect to whether or not the United States of America can be considered such a candidate for inclusion on such a list given its record of refugees coming from Central America who are subsequently deported from the United States. We asked with respect to Salvadorans and Guatemalans whether or not the United States can be considered to be a safe country. We also set out Great Britain as an example. From that country a good number of Tamils are deported.

On several occasions the Minister has spoken about guarantees, safeguards and agreements with countries in terms of trying to define precisely our standards and the standard of those candidate countries we would be considering for such a safe country list. Those agreements, safeguards and guarantees have not found their way into the legislation. Therefore the Government has refused not only to define the phrase "safe country", but it has also failed to signal a willingness to enter into an agreement with a country or in fact to define what it means to have a standard that we claim to be safe. It also refused a number of amendments to alter such words as "returning to a safe third country" in exchange for "entry" or "admission" to that country which would more precisely define what it is we mean when we talk about returning to a country, since anyone can return to a country. However, that does not guarantee an individual the right to stay, to enjoy this status, or the right to even enter into the refugee determination system.

A very interesting witness appeared in committee on this subject. He is a lawyer from the New York City area working on behalf of the Committee for Human Rights. His name is Arthur Helton. With respect to the intransigence of a government in terms of not defining what it means by "safe country" and perhaps also answering whether or not the United States of America would be on such a list he said, "I think certainly that the United States does not deserve to be called a safe third country for Salvadorans, Guatemalans or Haitians. I can certainly tell you that if the United States was left off a safe third country list it would cause great embarrassment to authorities in the United States. It would create such enormous diplomatic pressures that the United States authorities would call on the Canadian authorities". He concluded by saying that it is incumbent upon the countries that have traditionally played a leadership role in refugee protection to resist most strongly any efforts to move away from that commitment.

Mr. Helton raises another area of concern. It is that we have the highest political body in the land charged with drafting such a list. The Government reversed a policy of the previous administration by eliminating the B-1 list. This is a list of countries to which the Government of Canada said under no circumstances, because of those human rights violations in those lands, would we ever return a refugee to face continued torture or persecution. Not only did it remove the B-1 list, which means that anyone can be deported back to any country regardless of human rights violations awaiting those individuals, but it is also prepared to draft a list of countries to which the Government is willing and prepared to send people back with no questions asked and without seeing the guarantees or agreements about which I spoke earlier.

When the highest political body in the land, that is, the federal Cabinet, decides which countries shall be on a safe country list, that Cabinet will of course be subject to great international political and diplomatic pressures. Our concern is that those pressures will be so huge and so powerful they will undermine the individual circumstances that should be addressed in terms of refugee claimants coming to Canada, having a possible safe country concept legislated in response.

The question which we must ask is whether or not some of those countries should be on that list. Or will it be the fact that our allies, our NATO partners or other countries with which we do trade will be on that list despite the fact that they may not merit being so because of their human rights violations? The question to ask is, of course, "What happens to individual refugees who because they come from a safe third country return to that country and we assume, or we would want Canadians to assume, that they are safe when in fact the opposite may be true?"