

Adjournment Debate

getting engaged in these types of things. However, I will not interfere with biology and natural predilection, as I am afraid the law was doing until now.

It is interesting to note as was the case with Ken Taylor, our Canadian ambassador in Tehran, that many spouses of foreign service employees could not gain employment with the Government of Canada upon posting back to Canada because they were not Canadian citizens. That is real discrimination, considering the fact that they had no choice but to come to Ottawa where their spouses were being posted. In many cases, their training, education or skills quite possibly qualified them to work in different areas of the federal Government. However, they could not do so.

People who have been married to Canadians and working on behalf of Canada for up to 10 years could not take such jobs because they had not resided in Canada long enough to meet the requirements. Therefore, I am happy to support this Bill. I congratulate the members of the Foreign Service Community Association and I note their presence in the gallery. They have worked hard to see this occur. They have every right to be pleased and I am happy to join the House in what I believe will be unanimous consent on third reading of this Bill.

I trust that Government Members will ensure that proclamation and Royal Assent to the Bill will take place as soon as possible so that the spouses of foreign service personnel will have the Christmas present for which they have been waiting so long, and will be able to make their applications to become Canadian citizens.

Mr. David Daubney (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise once again, this time on third reading, to support the worthy initiative of my hon. friend, the Member for Etobicoke North (Mr. Pennock).

I believe that this Bill to amend the Citizenship Act is a good example of how well this House can work when we seek to redress an injustice in a rational, conscientious, and workmanlike manner. The Bill corrects a wrong that has persisted for much too long. It is apparent that the difficulties faced by the non Canadian spouses of our foreign service representatives present practical and personal problems for Canadians serving their country abroad.

I represent a constituency that has a number of Canada's foreign representatives, ranging from officers in the foreign service and their families to members of our Armed Forces. I am well aware of the importance that this Bill holds for them. It means that their spouses, once citizens, can look to employment with the Government of Canada to pursue their careers. It means that the awkward feeling that comes with uncertainty about citizenship will no longer be a regular feature of a foreign service career. It means that the possibility that some of the best people will leave the foreign service, because their spouse's eligibility for citizenship will be threatened, will disappear.

I am confident that we are not sending out the wrong signal to all Canadians or to the rest of the world. We are not giving preferential treatment to people who want to come to this country. I believe that Members from all Parties in the House will agree that what we are in fact doing is providing the Citizenship Act with fairness and consistency in an area which it previously lacked.

A survey of 160 spouses of foreign service personnel reveals that 108 have been married for over three years. Only 16 have met the present residency requirement of three consecutive years in Canada. It is safe to assume that the large majority which has not met this requirement would have done so if their spouses would have been posted at home.

This Bill directly affects only a relatively small number of people. However, that fact does not detract from its importance. As I said, the Bill is a good example of how the House, in a simple and straightforward way, can provide benefits to all Canadians.

For the foreign service personnel and their spouses, it means the end of frustration and uncertainty. For all Canadians, it means that we can remain confident that our foreign service will continue to attract the best representatives for Canada abroad.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May I call it six o'clock?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 66 deemed to have been moved.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—NICARAGUA—UNITED STATES FUNDING
OF CONTRA ATTACKS/REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT URGE
HONDURAS TO HONOUR ITS COMMITMENTS

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to a question that I raised some time ago during Question Period. It is still unresolved and I hope to hear more from the Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark).

It was almost a year ago when I asked a question in the House concerning events in Central America that are still