

Immigration Act, 1976

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we, as Liberals, are strongly urging the Government to take initiatives, either through the United Nations or a Commonwealth or *francophonie* conference, such as the one which is being held now, to convince the other countries whose refugee status determination systems are experiencing the same problems, to work together to develop a satisfactory and global solution for all countries.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the problem of false refugees or refugees generally is an international one which will exist until this Conservative Government takes the necessary steps and shows leadership to call on all other countries, either through the United Nations or such other organizations as the Commonwealth or *francophonie* to develop a global refugee policy, so that Canada, together with a great many other nations, can meet this human and international need. As a country, if we pass legislation like Bill C-84 we will be moving one step back, and everything previous Governments did, whether Liberal or Conservative, will be viewed as a thing of the past and Canada will be moving towards a closed-door policy, becoming in the process a country that does not accept people who have the will, the spirit, and the courage to settle in a new country. People often think that is an easy thing to do. I went through that experience, being an immigrant myself. I can tell you that when you come here, not knowing the language, having no money and having a hard time finding a job it takes courage to stay here to work. Today I am proud of having made that step in 1958. I am proud to be a Canadian. I am proud to be a Member of this House, and I hope we will keep on allowing people like myself to do what I have done.

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Hon. Member not only as a fellow Member of Parliament but as a fellow immigrant, but before that I listened to the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria), and I listened to the new Member for Yukon (Ms. McLaughlin). They spoke as Canadians. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, it was high time this House was recalled because after the arrival of illegal refugees, false refugees and I emphasize false, we as immigrants, we thought that by coming in—

Mr. Boudria: As you are!

Mr. Della Noce: If my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) is smart enough to listen . . . did we listen to him a moment ago? He might understand what we are talking about. I am not finished.

Mr. Speaker, people in our ridings were calling us—50 to 60 calls a day—and these people were on the war-path against genuine refugees. I am an immigrant, and when I first came to Canada I considered that I was privileged to be accepted by this country. In return I worked like a good Canadian. But today this privilege no longer means anything because anybody can enter this country.

This is why I say it had become imperative to recall the House, it was urgent. Are we expecting one boat, two, three or four boats? . . . that is the kind of things we did when we were

going to school. It had to stop. I agree with my colleague from Saint-Léonard—Anjou (Mr. Gagliano) when he says that we probably have to open certain things.

But I am telling him that all those who apply for their card or their immigrant-refugee status arrive here as tourists. Yet the law states that they must apply from outside the country. This legislation was not passed by the Conservatives, it was already in force under the previous administration and, until further order, I am not a lawyer but as far as I know we have to abide by the existing legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the people back home are glad to see that we are coming to grips with the problem. We are not trying to prevent people from coming to Canada, quite the contrary. We want to give a chance to those who have been waiting for years to become citizens before this privilege is taken away from them by others who come here illegally by boat. I had that privilege myself, and again I express my gratitude to Canada for having accepted me as an immigrant.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments and his questions. As I was trying to explain at the very beginning, the difficulty is that you have to differentiate between immigrants and refugees. The public now confuses these two groups.

Mr. Speaker, I can suggest a solution. I am convinced that if we have an open and well-established immigration policy with a faster selection system, there will definitely be fewer refugees and those who do come to Canada will be legitimate refugees.

However, Mr. Speaker, we must not take advantage of the public protests to pass repressive legislation.

As politicians, we have to play a leadership role and determine what type of society we want in Canada. Do we want a Canada with closed doors which will admit only people with money even if they do not have any technical qualifications? That is the issue, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, while I agree partly with the comments of my colleague, I believe that, as politicians, we cannot say: Yes, the public is right and we shall pass repressive legislation.

We have to explain the true situation to the public. The fact is that we find it difficult ourselves at times to differentiate between refugees and immigrants because the legislation is rather complex.

Finally, I would like to say that, naturally, the Government can always try to put all the blame on the Liberals. We were in power for just nine months under twenty years. Everything that has happened can therefore be blamed on the Liberals.

What I can tell my hon. colleague is that, when the Conservative Government came to power, two studies had been made which suggested specific solutions as to what should be done. The Government decided to do nothing and to make more studies. Three years have passed and the crisis continues.