

Immigration Act, 1976

This Bill was in place in May. Our priorities in the past have been with respect to getting Canadians working again. As we got Canadians working, other problems cropped up. But this Bill was in place in May. There was ample opportunity in the month of May and in the month of June—even during the last days of Parliament—to help us process it. However, there was no willingness on the part of the Opposition, which is why we are back here today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time for questions and comments has now terminated. The Chair recognizes the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) on debate.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-55. I do so because I would like to direct my remarks to many of my constituents who have telephoned my constituency office in great numbers and who have written to us here in Ottawa. I wanted to do so at the earliest possible time. This being the afternoon of the first day that Parliament has been recalled I am proud to be able to get up to speak.

I wish to acknowledge that this has been a good debate thus far. It is shaping up to be an excellent debate. It is a very important one. The public has a great deal of interest in it. I am pleased to be back in Ottawa to face this issue.

I wish to acknowledge the excellent speech made by the Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap) who spoke in reply to the Minister this afternoon. I also wish to acknowledge the speech given by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) who represents the constituency next to mine in Vancouver. Many of the things he said in his speech rang true to my ears.

I said that we have had many telephone calls. Indeed, my constituency assistants, Mr. Adrian Dix and Mrs. Sharon Olsen, have listened patiently to a number of people who have been very angry when they have phoned on this matter. We have probably had more calls on this issue than on any other issue, even more than on the capital punishment issue.

My riding is a multicultural riding in the southeast part of Vancouver. Indeed, my riding receives something like 2,200 new citizens a year. I think that is certainly the largest number of new citizens of any riding in British Columbia, and perhaps it is the largest in Canada. Thus there are many people who have a great deal of concern about immigration and who may be recent immigrants themselves or who may want to bring in their families. There is no doubt that no one wants queue-jumping in Canada. Hon. Members have mentioned that already. People want a fair immigration process, as do families who want to bring their brothers and sisters into the country but who cannot. I am pleased that the Minister announced some lessening of the restrictions concerning these people.

This is a Government that has cut back on immigration, contrary to what the Hon. Member who just spoke said. I believe it has cut down on immigration. It has also encouraged other types of immigration. It has encouraged people to buy

their way into the country as opposed to bringing in people through the area of family reunification.

As I have said, there is a great deal of concern out there about queue-jumping from people who are immigrants themselves and who want to bring in their families. There is also a concern, and one which I have to deal with in the Vancouver context, and I will deal with it honestly, about violence in the Indo-Canadian community. They see Sikhs coming into Canada and, in some instances, the presence of representatives of revolutionary organizations in the Sikh community. Right across from my constituency office, a lawyer, Ujjal Dosanjh, was beaten up because he was an outspoken moderate. That incident occurred right across from my office.

After that incident there was the assassination of Mrs. Ghandi. There were demonstrations in celebration of that in the streets of Vancouver by a very small group of people. There was also the blowing up of the airline, which resulted in the tragic loss of many families and especially children who were on their way back to India for vacations and family visits. I ask Hon. Members to make no mistake about it, that has inflamed the people in the country, and partly those in Vancouver.

The majority of people in the country do not want the Kalistan issue fought in Canada, or fought from Canada. The great majority of people want to make their lives here in Canada. It is the same with other issues, not just the Kalistan issue. For example, with respect to the Irish issue, we do not want fights in Canada. We want peace in Canada where people can live together in a multicultural society. We all believe in that. Everyone in this House believes in that.

I heard from a colleague of mine from up North who has a Sikh friend who is a postmaster. This man has been a postmaster in a small town for 20 years. Twenty years ago he used to hear comments about a Sikh being a postmaster. Of course, he was accepted into the community because he is a good postmaster and a good person. Now, today, he is hearing comments again in the same vein. So we must be careful with what is happening in the country.

I want to say to the people who have called my office, many of whom have said: "I am not racist but—", that they do not have to apologize. They are not racist when they call in about their concerns. One can have concerns about this issue and not be racist. However, one can also have concerns about it and be racist. But people have called with genuine concerns. I want to acknowledge that.

I think that there is a feeling out in the country that the genuine refugees should be let in and the phoney ones should be kicked out. But that is easier said than done when the matter has to be put into law. I want to remind my constituents and Members of the House about some matters which I think are important. First, we are bound by international law. As the Minister said earlier today, refugees are defined as people who flee because of a well-grounded fear of prosecution. We are