

*Statements by Ministers*

who are desperate to immigrate into Canada by some unusual and perhaps illegal means? Is he talking about people who do it primarily for money? If so, he should say so clearly and write the law accordingly.

● (1210)

Is he talking about people like Sister Bonnie Butler of Buffalo or other sisters of the Roman Catholic Orders on either side of the border who have been helping refugees because it is their religion to be committed to helping the ones they saw were poor, perhaps in the economic sense, but certainly in the sense of being afraid for their personal safety if they were returned to the country from which they were fleeing? There are those who have helped people come into this country although they did not have the proper documents. Does the Minister intend to imprison and fine those people, or people of the churches generally? Many thousands of people have helped refugees. Would he like to perhaps retroactively fine the people who gave tea, cookies and peanut butter sandwiches to those who came ashore from the Sikh ship? Does that constitute aiding and abetting smuggling? We want to know what sort of law the Minister is talking about. Thousands and thousands of Canadians in the last few months have been helping refugees get to Canada. They have been helping at the Ontario border, the Quebec border, in the Prairies, in British Columbia, in the Maritimes, and Newfoundland. Thousands of Canadians have been doing this. We want to know whether the Minister is attacking them or only a more narrow group of people who do this primarily for profit and who, as he suggests, may even endanger the lives, safety, or health of the people they are smuggling.

If the Minister is going to turn back a vessel because one person aboard has inadequate documents, will he turn back the whole boatload of people, including perhaps those who have adequate documents? We want to understand that very clearly. How will he find out quickly at sea who has adequate documents?

The Minister talks about a security threat. A "security threat" is a very widely and vaguely used phrase. Who is a security threat? Not too long ago the RCMP had dossiers on 800,000 Canadians, probably including people in this room, who at some time or other took part in a public demonstration for what they thought was human rights. Are all those 800,000 people security risks, and is that the kind of standard that is to be applied to people who come to our borders?

Will people who oppose the murderous Government of El Salvador or the racist Government of South Africa be fingered by the international contacts as security risks and therefore shut out from Canada without any possibility of a hearing? How will the Minister square that with our Charter of Rights and with our obligations to refugees under the United Nations?

I do not intend to comment on the Minister's rhetoric about the increasing number of immigrants he has brought to

Canada because his figures change so rapidly. He has stated that 97,000 came in 1986. I also heard him say 100,000 and, today, I heard him say 90,000. Until the Minister has his figures settled I think there is nothing to be said about that.

However, I want to comment with great pleasure on the promise he made today to enlarge the concept of family reunification. This is something on which I, with members of my constituency, have been campaigning for several years. I am also happy to say that it is consistent with the position that the New Democratic Party took two years ago at our annual convention. We will give very strong support to the Minister if he carries through on that promise.

He promised last fall to respond to our family reunification report upon which our committee worked for six months last year. We have not heard a word since then about carrying out that promise, but it is very welcome today.

We will be examining Bill C-84 very carefully. We will also be examining and debating Bill C-55 and doing our best to see that it is replaced with a system that supports what the parliamentary committee advocated, and what church groups, the Bar Association, the labour movement, every public group and every informed immigration expert in this country has advocated, that when refugee claimants come to our border they be sent as soon as possible, with translation and legal assistance, to the refugee board which should be created. They should have a non-adversarial hearing there, and to remove a possibility of a disastrous error, there should be a quick review arrangement or appeal system. We intend to press for that until it is achieved in this country.

That is not only our opinion, it is also what the majority of Canadians support. Such a system will be efficient, allowing for a matter to be heard in two or three months rather than several years. It will be quick enough to do justice to our refugees as well as the abusers. It will notify commercial smugglers and racketeers that there is no more money in bringing people falsely to Canada because they will not be here long enough to earn enough to repay the money they spent on the racketeers' rates.

We will be debating these two Bills very carefully during the days ahead in Parliament. The country will be watching because Canadians whom I know and Canadians whom my colleagues know want to do what is fair for refugees.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### IMMIGRATION ACT, 1976

#### MEASURE TO AMEND

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-84, an Act