

—let's not forget the 'rabble' of Britain and Europe provided an immigrant labour force that built Canada in pioneer days, just as the 'rabble' of the Orient slaved and died to complete the Rocky Mountain portion of our national railway. It was the 'riff-raff' Irish who built the city streets of North America early in this century and the 'rabble' Italians who built the buildings.

An hon. member: My ancestors.

Mr. Lewis: You are right. My hon. colleague from Brantford says his ancestors. I say my ancestors because I am the first Lewis in my family born in this country. When we talk about immigration people forget there were a lot of poor English that came to this country, built it and participated in it. The same for the poor Irish and poor Italians. They all came here and made great futures for themselves and their children. They built this country.

We do not want to stop that. We want to enhance it. We want to build our immigration levels and build this country. At the same time, we are determined that people who want to cheat the system are not going to cheat our system and people who want to take advantage of Canada are not going to take advantage of Canada.

I agree with my hon. friends when they raise concerns. When this bill goes to committee there will be ample opportunity to take a look at it and to make sure that we have provisions in there that are fair but at the same time protect Canadian society, not against somebody who comes here and wants to make something of themselves but against people whose first step on coming into the country is to try to beat the system.

With this bill we will tighten that up and endeavour to have a country which is known as open to immigration but at the same time closed to cheating.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the Solicitor General is here. He might be able to explain a clause in the bill which I just cannot understand. It is with respect to detention.

At the present time an official of the department of immigration can put a prospective immigrant or refugee in detention, not because there is a charge of an offence against that refugee or immigrant, but because the official has reason to believe that the immigrant or refugee might not turn up for an inquiry that is planned

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in a few weeks' time. That is the immigration official's opinion, that the individual might not turn up for the inquiry or it is his or her belief that this individual could be a danger to the public.

I am saying there is no charge against these individuals. If they were charged they would be in a criminal court or a criminal institution. These are immigration detention centres.

Under the present law once the official decides that the immigrant should be put in the detention centre there is a review of that detention within 48 hours and then thereafter every seven days.

Since most of these immigrants and refugees cannot speak English or French a lot of them have great difficulty getting ready for the first review at 48 hours. The great majority of them do get ready for the seven day review and the vast majority are released on that seven day review because it is shown that they are not really going to flee the country or avoid the inquiry and they are not really a danger to the public.

In this bill the government is proposing to extend the seven-day review periods to 30-day review periods, more than four times the present time allowed for a review of one of these cases. I just cannot understand it. This means that the same practice or tradition we have now that the great majority of these people will stay in detention centres for at least 30 days in order to get a release.

I want to know from the minister, who is involved in law enforcement as the Solicitor General, why was it necessary to increase the seven-day review period and it was for every seven days in the present law? Why is it increased to four times that amount to 30 days and 30 days thereafter each time? It would seem to me that not only is that unfair and unjust to the immigrant who is put in detention but it is also going to greatly increase the cost of the system.

I have one of these detention centres in my constituency. It is going to have to triple or quadruple in size keeping all these people for 30-day periods and 30-day periods thereafter.

I ask the minister, since he is supporting the bill, what is the reason for increasing the detention review from seven days to 30 days over and over again?