

*Establishment of Immigration Appeal Board*

If there has been procedural delays, this was the fault of the courts and in no way the responsibility of the department of immigration, except in one case where there really was a delay occasioned by the department of immigration; this delay was corrected by a procedure which I announced in the house several days later.

**Mr. Mongrain:** Would the hon. member allow a question?

**Mr. Tremblay:** Certainly.

**Mr. Mongrain:** I should like to address a question to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize if it is a little personal, but it would be important to see the hon. member's reaction. Was it after that adventure to which the hon. member is now referring that the novel on the furniture deal was invented or before?

**Mr. Tremblay:** After. The furniture adventure is related to another problem, namely the problem of national security. This is another problem on which I will speak extensively immediately.

The second problem which faced the department of immigration, at that time, is security cases. They are well known, because some of them have been referred to in inquiries; there is the well-known Bonanno case, one of the leading figures of the Montreal underworld; the Minaudo case, the Windsor, Ontario underworld chief; the Violi brothers case in Montreal, the Stonehill case and so on.

• (4:50 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, under the present act to be amended by Bill No. C-220, the minister of immigration, as I said, is legally empowered, among other things, to reverse a decision of the department or even of the present appeal board in cases of deportation.

It is a known fact that every time a case is appealed before the board and even before a ruling is made, representations are made to the minister of immigration. Such representations can be quite legitimate. It is quite possible for a member of parliament, a political organizer of any party, a religious leader, to have contacted the person concerned or one of his relatives, and to submit representations in writing or in person on behalf of that person to senior departmental officials who exercise that discretion through delegated powers, either the director of Immigration, the deputy minister or the minister.

Experience often proves that new facts can be presented to the department or to the minister as a result of such representations. And it may happen that in view of these new facts, the minister may quite legitimately reverse a departmental ruling.

But, Mr. Speaker, as shown in the second Sedgwick report, that is the danger for the minister who, in addition to being responsible for the department, is a politician who must receive representations often unfounded, from anybody, from people who, for monetary or other reasons, put the pressure on the minister.

It will be said, Mr. Speaker, that in such a case, the minister must act impartially—and I believe this is what every minister does. However, as has often been said, it is not enough for the minister to make a fair decision, his decision must also seem fair.

We see the situation in which the minister of immigration finds himself when he reserves a decision, convinced that he has good reason to do so but who, due to more or less doubtful or biased representations made on the subject by public opinion or political opponents, is accused of taking a position for political reasons, interest or other motives.

Mr. Speaker, I experienced this situation whenever deportation cases were being discussed. I lived through this period when, precisely because I was in the midst of problems such as these, I had to make a decision and did, in fact, make such decisions at a time when all kinds of criticisms or suspicions could be directed against me.

And it is precisely on account of those criticisms that notwithstanding the fact that, in all cases before public opinion, I had made the necessary decision—and I am prepared to place my record as minister of immigration before any committee of the house at any time.

In all cases, such as Bonanno, Stonehill, Minaudo and Violi cases, I acted in the interest of this country. Those were security cases and I explained a while ago the stand I took in such cases.

But, irrespective of the stand taken in individual cases, the fact remained that I recognized, that the government recognized that the minister of immigration was in an extremely delicate situation in security cases involving the underworld, since he could be criticized politically be it rightly or wrongly. It made it very hard for him to justify his stand, particularly in security cases.