

government was addressing the subject and the facts reported to us from perfectly reliable sources. I refer, for instance, to the article by Ian Adams in the *Globe and Mail* just a few days ago.

● (1120)

Many people have come back from Chile stating that there was a continuing reign of terror, that there was an urgent humanitarian need and that Canadian action had been quite inadequate up to that time. I cannot forbear saying that the credit for the change of attitude lies with a large section of the Canadian people. I refer particularly to people in Quebec and people in the churches who communicated with the government—many, I must say, have communicated with me as well—indicating their deep concern about this matter. I regard this belated—I say “belated” advisedly—recognition that something had to be done as a credit to the working of our humanitarian democracy in Canada.

It is suggested in the statement that very few people want to come to Canada. I do not understand that to be the case. I offered to send to the minister a list I had several weeks ago of 60 people in Panama alone who had made application to come to Canada, but it is not until recently that their cases are being dealt with.

An hon. Member: Where were they from?

Mr. Brewin: They were from various parts of South America, some from Chile, some from Brazil and some no doubt from other countries. I do not personally think, when one is dealing with a humanitarian problem, that the nationality of the people concerned is of very great concern.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brewin: I want to make one or two points with regard to the details of the statement. I am glad to see that there are to be relaxed selection criteria, although I do not exactly know what that means. I hope it means there will not be an insistence on the production of documents which the people concerned cannot possibly produce, such as passports and other travel documents. I hope this requirement will be waived as it was in the case of the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian refugees. The statement says that background checks will be carried out. Of course they have to be carried out. Our Immigration Act requires that we do not admit people with criminal records. Of course this must be looked into. But I hope these background checks will not result in long delays. I hope that a generous attitude will be taken and that political grounds will not be advanced as a reason for keeping these refugees out of Canada. It is all very well to call a person a Marxist and condemn him for that reason, but we are dealing with people whose lives are in danger and I hope political judgments will not be used to keep people out.

The statement speaks for assistance to cover transportation costs. I hope we will do what I believe the West Germans and Swedes have done, provide an airlift. If you have a sense of urgency, why not provide transportation directly? I hope the government is considering doing that.

Middle East Peacekeeping Force

The fact is also mentioned that one European country, Sweden, I believe, has agreed to accept up to 600 refugees. That is their target. I point out that Sweden is farther from Chile than Canada is. I suggest that we should take a leaf from that country's book and set a target at least as high as that which a smaller country like Sweden has been able to set in this regard.

I wish to finish by saying that, if I have been critical of the government, I now welcome the apparent change of heart. I say again that it is the aroused conscience of the Canadian people which has been responsible for this and I pay particular tribute to them this morning.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, in his statement the minister mentioned the humanitarian reasons for accepting Chilean refugees. I think that we all agree with these reasons, except that we should not necessarily call those people refugees, but immigrants whom we should accept for those same humanitarian reasons.

I also believe that we should urge the minister to be careful in accepting those immigrants, to prevent Canada from becoming a refuge for all the riff-raff from all parts of the world.

For several years, Montreal has experienced difficulties with men from a certain country who defy even the government with their organization.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the people from Chile should be accepted as immigrants rather than as temporary refugees and be taken in only if they meet the requirements of Canada for immigrants. Moreover, these immigrants should accept our political system and democracy as we live it. In short, they must accept to live in Canada as we do ourselves.

When seen under this light, the minister's decision is acceptable and desirable and we will support it. Again, however, care must be exercised, not because of the fact that these people come from Chile and of the experience they had to endure over there. It can be applied to just any situation in any country of the world.

I think then that care must always be exercised in situations like these as for any other.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ALLEGED LACK OF MEDICAL FACILITIES FOR CANADIAN ELEMENT IN MIDDLE EAST PEACEKEEPING FORCE—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to ask permission of the House to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity arising out of allegations that Canadian Forces in the Middle East have been supplied with inadequate medical facilities. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert):

That the matter of medical facilities provided for the Canadian contingent of the U.N. peacekeeping force in the Middle East be referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence for investigation and report.