

*Government Orders*

knew best, the police officers and police chiefs whose mandate it is to serve and protect us and our communities.

I hope we have the patience for this force to be allowed to do its job and as I mentioned in Montreal last month to the police chiefs association there are two things that can endanger this type of joint force. One is jurisdictional squabbling which has not been the case, and I take my hat off to the four different forces that have converged in the joint forces. The second aspect is the whole thirst or appetite for what I would refer to as number crunching or bean counting. At the end of the day the mandate of this force is to get the job done, but also not to ask these professionals things that are also irresponsible of some of those who ask it of them in order to say how many did you get today, how many did you get this week, did you get them all last week.

The mandate is a very difficult one for these individuals but they are professionals and they will get the job done. In the United States the joint force concept has run into problems for those two reasons. It is my hope, not for the short term but for the long term, that we allow this force to work and not only work in terms of removing the individuals that we all believe ought to be removed but also to render us through the experience and the information that they will get in how enforcement is best done and by whom.

If the professionals come back and tell this Parliament that enforcement is more of a policing discipline and not an immigration one, then so be it. Let us answer the riddle once and for all but let us allow those professionals to do the job they are capable of doing.

There may be other improvements that we can usher in to the system and one such recommendation for instance coming from some of the police chiefs is to permit judges to not recommend deportations at the time of giving sentence but to order deportations at the time of sentencing so that the system is leaner, so that the issues of that individual are all dealt with at the right time, and that there is full due process for the individual's counsel and lawyer to react to that judge's ordering of a deportation rather than recommending and then having it go back to immigration and before an immigration appeal division and so on.

That will necessitate not a change in my act but a change in the Criminal Code. As parliamentarians we should be interested in this issue and prepared also to look at making the relevant amendments if we think those amendments will work and if we think those amendments are fair.

[Translation]

There have been difficulties with some removals from Canada to some countries because of problems obtaining foreign travel documentation. Senior officials are dealing with this problem and it will be resolved soon.

The immigration department is continuing to step up its international efforts to prevent undesirables from entering the country and is working closely with the RCMP and a number of foreign control authorities and in partnership with airlines.

• (1230)

[English]

Having acknowledged the problem and having attempted to define the scope of the problem, there is certainly something else to be said. If we do not deal with these issues now in the light of day, there are those who would appeal to the darker side of our character and use the excuse of public safety to cloak a negative and hurtful agenda aimed at shutting off all immigration. I say and my government says that we cannot allow this any more than we can allow criminals to wipe their feet on our welcome mat.

It is important that every one of us in this Chamber work toward exploding the myths surrounding our immigration and refugee process.

[Translation]

Yes, there are problems and I have just acknowledged what some of them are. But to those who claim that immigrants are bilking our welfare system, we have to say that this simply is not so.

Statistics show that native-born Canadians are more likely to use the social assistance safety net than are immigrants.

[English]

For those who fear we are in the icy grip of an immigration crime wave, we have to tell them and those individuals among us that this too is far from reality.

A recent research paper prepared for a law conference at Carleton University in our capital said bluntly that immigrants were under represented in the criminal population. Researchers found that the so-called immigrant crime appeared primarily to be less serious crime. Social scientists say that a likely explanation for this so-called under representation among the criminal element is due in some part to the screening process that takes place before the immigrant arrives on our shores.

I also know equally that it is difficult and sometimes impossible to compare the dull, dry figures from a research paper with the heartache and anger that comes with the story at the top of our supper time news. As parliamentarians we must stress again and again that there is a lot more to immigration than a news story about a thief in the corner store, as important as that is, to the safety of all our neighbourhoods and communities.

Look over your back fence. What do you see? The chances are you see a neighbour who is an immigrant or is a son or daughter of an immigrant. I see the crime stories in my clipping service every day at 6.30 in the morning but I do not hear quite so often stories about people like Kim Loan Hua. Who is Kim? She is an immigrant. She came here penniless in 1979 as part of the