

Oral Questions

gration. On October 17, 1978, the minister announced that special measures would be taken involving the admission of Lebanese to Canada. Specifically, he said:

Those who are in Canada as visitors will be allowed to apply for landed-immigrant status from within the country. If they are unable to gain landed-immigrant status, they will be permitted to stay as visitors.

Recognizing the political if not strategic difficulty posed to residents of eastern and central European countries in approaching Canadian embassies, as well as recognizing the obstacles threatening their civil and human liberties when they request permission to emigrate, will the minister allow the Lebanese precedent of special measures to visitors to Canada from countries in eastern and central Europe?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, on more than one occasion I have met with representatives to try to determine the best method to meet their requirements. At one point we talked about putting an office in those countries. That was discouraged. As a matter of fact, it was shot down.

Second, they talked to me about a quota system. They indicated that might not work so well either, because which quota would be used—the quota determined by the country from which they were leaving or the quota determined by Canada? On that basis, we indicated that we would bring about the sponsorship system where five individuals would have the opportunity to sponsor people who came from eastern European countries, that we would do that on a trial basis to see if it would work and accommodate the people we are hoping to accommodate in this area.

[Translation]

Mr. Shymko: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question since the minister did not answer my question.

I would like to know whether the minister is aware of the number of cases where people from central and eastern Europe came into Canada with a tourist visa, the only effective means available to them to go out of their country, and once in Canada made an application to our government for either political refugee or immigrant status, only to be forcibly deported from Canada to their country of origin. If indeed there are such cases, does the minister consider that a humanitarian action?

[English]

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I guess it depends on one's approach. There was a time when tourists were not allowed to come into Canada; they were not allowed to leave their own country. We had to decide whether to interfere in a direct way with that particular movement, as a lot of people want to come to Canada as tourists or visit families and go back to their own countries. If we set up a regime that would give easier access and destroy that particular mechanism, we might do more harm than good to those who want legitimately to come here and visit. Therefore, we have to look at these on a case by case basis.

[Mr. Shymko.]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

POSSIBLE APPEAL BY CROWN AGAINST SENTENCE IMPOSED ON KEITH RICHARDS—RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROSECUTING APPEAL

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice in his capacity as Attorney General: it relates to the conviction and sentence of Keith Richards of the rock group, Rolling Stones. Without making any representation about conviction or sentence, I wish to ask the minister about remarks attributed to him indicating that any appeal from conviction or sentence on behalf of the Crown would be in the hands of the provincial authorities. If I quote him correctly, I believe he said, "I think McMurtry can look after himself", presumably referring to the attorney general of Ontario.

Will the minister take this opportunity, to correct those reports, if they were inaccurate, and to acknowledge that any appeal on behalf of the Crown lies, as it has traditionally, solely with the Attorney General and his agents?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport and Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, in any criminal case, of course, the matter lies strictly with the provincial attorney general. In this particular case, the matter was prosecuted by federal Crown prosecutors. The question of appeal will come before me in due course. I do not yet have a report on the matter.

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for correcting earlier statements. I just wonder, in view of that answer, if it was a Freudian slip. The minister knows that prosecutions are carried on in large part by agents selected from a list of underprivileged lawyers supporting the Liberal party.

Provincial attorneys general have been asking for the power to prosecute for quite some time. Is there now some indication in the Department of Justice that a more favourable attitude is developing toward that request, so that provincial attorneys general may prosecute drug cases as they do all other criminal cases, as the minister quite accurately pointed out?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, the broad question of prosecution by federal or provincial attorneys or agents is a matter of discussion among us. There are times when the provinces may resist the prosecution of offences falling under federal statutes. That is a matter which causes me a good deal of concern. We will be attempting to resolve it in further discussions among us. It is not, therefore, a clearcut question of prosecution by federal or provincial prosecutors, but a resolving of the whole issue of jurisdiction.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

TREATY WITH U.S. TO FIGHT TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Just recently, the Congress in the United States passed, and President Carter of that country signed into law, a bill which in