

*Immigration Act, 1976*

Perhaps they do not recognize the seriousness of the arguments that have been advanced in opposition to this legislation. One must come to the conclusion that rather than treating this problem as an emergency, as it must be defined by virtue of our being called back to the House, it is being used as an opportunity. There is no question that there are many areas of our country in which there is great unemployment. Not only are people unemployed, they see no hope of ever being employed as a result of inaction by the Government, nor do they see a solution to the employment situation they face in their particular parts of the country. At the same time, it appears to them that others coming to this country from across the seas are getting jobs.

Experience tells us that when people face the kind of emotional stress caused by unemployment they begin to look for scapegoats and usually find them. In this area, the most frequent scapegoat has been the immigrant and the refugee, usually those who look a little different, whose collective behaviour arouses xenophobic suspicion. While these are realities, these episodes should not be mistaken as characterizing our country. I would prefer to believe that our country and its soul is characterized by the recognition accorded to it in the Nansen Medal.

One has to conclude that the Government has chosen to use an episode in Nova Scotia as a means of gaining political points. The Government has said: "Let's do it quick and dirty, never mind the details, never mind the fine points, never mind the Charter of Rights".

• (1450)

Earlier, my colleague cited the fact that although we have created a crisis in the country largely as a result of the failure of the Government to have designed an efficient, fast and fair refugee determination process, there is beyond this domestic requirement for a good process a real refugee crisis building up in the world. As my colleague indicated, there are millions of refugees in the world, particularly in the Third World, who are being produced as a result of any number of factors which include war, famine, and civil wars, which characterize too much of the world.

I cited the fact that ultimately my family and I are products of the flight of refugees, refugees from the United States. There is a lesson in that experience. In that instance refugees were produced as a result of slavery imposed upon a Third World continent. Of course, that terminology was not used then. In other words, the refugees of the 19th century were in large part a product of the actions of those who had to receive the refugees, that is, the western world.

When one looks at the refugee situation in the Third World and counts the number of refugees that are created as a result of wars against oppressive regimes supported by the West; when one considers the number of refugees that have been produced as a result of conflicts resulting from the contrived borders and the colonial manipulation in the Third World; and

when one considers the number of countries in the world attempting to pay off their debts by converting vast agricultural areas to the production of exportable food at the cost of producing food for the people of those countries, one can adduce the very strong argument that the western world is in very large measure responsible for the refugees that do exist—not for all but for a very significant number. A large part of the refugee problem has been precipitated by those western nations which now have to deal with their huge numbers around the world. It is certainly clear that there has to be a unified international approach to deal with the causes of refugees and to deal properly with their fate.

There is no one who would suggest that Canada can take all the refugees in the world, nor all the potential immigrants of the world. But in a country with a decreasing birth rate, a country which needs people, a country which can thrive and build a new future for itself only if we increase our population, it is certainly clear that we need not be niggardly in the way in which we treat potential refugees or immigrants. I would suggest that this piece of legislation is both niggardly and unnecessary. It would cast a pall of shame over us all if we do not make the appropriate necessary changes to bring it into accord to those imperatives of morality, equality and humanity which I hope characterize this country in which I have the honour to be a Member of Parliament.

It is quite a contrast to envision the poor and the hungry who come from nations of the world which have so little with the arguments one hears about queue jumping and suggestions that there are those who are trying to weasel their way in by devious means to take advantage of us all. When we hear this from members of the Government we have to pause to reflect on the consistency, the seriousness and, indeed, the morality of those who advocate this sorry piece of legislation.

As you well know, Mr. Speaker, just today we found that among the most privileged in our country, and in order to ensure that their offspring are properly taught in the most exclusive schools, they managed to queue-jump a teacher, in whose stead no one else would do, to ensure that this very prominent individual and his family would not have to settle for something second-rate. Let me be frank. We have in the highest portion of the Government a manipulation of our immigration laws in order to do what? To queue-jump. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is more guilty of queue-jumping than any refugee trying to flee death or persecution. I think that that is sad to note.

Many have pointed out that this legislation is, first, unnecessary and fundamentally flawed measured against the criteria set out in the Charter of Rights. I do not want to burden you, Mr. Speaker, because I know that you have heard many times before the various respects in which this legislation is in conflict with the Charter of Rights. It is so fundamentally inconsistent with the Charter of Rights that there is no way to make it right.