

Poles in 1982? These people have come to Canada and have made a valuable contribution. I do not think anybody regrets the fact that they were admitted as special movements of refugees, or suggests that we would have been better off if we had had special measures which would have prevented them from coming to our shores.

This could be said of all immigrants, but it could also be said of refugees. Refugees and immigrants are, for the most part, great contributors to the country. They are consumers. They buy food and clothing. They need housing, education and health care. Some people maintain that immigrants and refugees take jobs away from us. I argue that they provide jobs for Canadians, not only to the extent that they are consumers but also because many of them are innovative entrepreneurs who put together enterprises and hire many other Canadians.

We have finally had put before us Bill C-55, which is the Government's response to the Plaut report and the reports of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration. I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I do not consider Bill C-55 an adequate response. I support the wording in the resolution before this House today, that that policy must be condemned.

In the first place it must be condemned because, according to the provisions of that Bill, access to the refugee determination process will not be universal. Both the Plaut report and the report of the Standing Committee suggested that any process we put in place should be universal. In other words, it should be accessible to all of those who claim refugee status. If a person comes to Canada claiming to be a refugee, he or she should have a chance to prove his case.

What do we have with Bill C-55? We have provisions whereby once a person claims to be a refugee and is asked from what country he came, if he states that he has come from what is considered a safe country, then he is immediately sent back to that country. He is not given an opportunity to put his case before the refugee determination board, or whatever the new name for it might be. He is not given an opportunity to put all the facts before an independent tribunal to show that he really is a refugee. Because he comes from what is considered to be a safe country, he is immediately sent back without access to a tribunal to hear his case.

Who will define what a safe country is and who will set out a list of these said countries? We do not at present have in the Bill a definition of a safe country. It is simply referred to, and we are told that the Government will provide a list of countries it considers safe, countries to which people can be returned without giving the individual a chance to have his or her case heard. We can speculate on which countries will be included in the list.

I heard a program on the CBC the other night. People from the CBC telephoned individuals working in a refugee movement in the United States. They described the new Canadian legislation to the Americans and asked them whether they considered the United States as a safe country for Guatemalan

Supply

and Salvadoran refugees. In other words, they said that if Canada listed the United States as a safe country, then as a Salvadoran refugee who had come from the United States would be sent back there. The Americans were asked whether, in that case the United States was safe for Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees? Their answer was no. They said most Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees who come to the United States are not acceptable as refugees in the United States.

We can speculate about which countries the Cabinet will consider safe countries under this legislation. But how will the Government define a safe country?

As we all know, the conditions that give rise to the refugee phenomenon often come about suddenly. There is suddenly a *coups d'état* in a country; suddenly new repressive measures are put in place and people flee overnight. That happened in the Hungarian revolution of 1957, to which I referred, in the Czech situation in 1969, during the Vietnamese war, in Lebanon and so on. You cannot predict in advance the conditions in countries which will oblige people to flee as refugees. Nor can you predict that these situations will change from day to day, from week to week, or from month to month. As well, what might be a safe country for one group of refugees may not be a safe country for another group. Maybe the United States is a safe country for people fleeing from Poland, but it is not a safe country for people fleeing from Salvador.

We condemn this new process being suggested to the House of Commons and to the people of Canada as one that is not acceptable. It is not acceptable because it does not provide universal access to an independent tribunal so that a person claiming refugee status can have a full and an impartial hearing of his or her claim, after which somebody can say yes, you really are a refugee in accordance with our law and the international treaty, or no, you are not really a refugee. What we are doing is sending certain people away without a hearing because they come from what is called a safe country.

We have other objections to the legislation. We object to the fact that the preliminary panel to hear these refugee applications is not made up of two people from the refugee side of the Department. It is made up of one person from the immigration side and another person from the refugee side. In our resolution we suggest a system somewhat similar to what was suggested in the standing committee's report.

We need in Canada a fair system to deal with refugee applications, a fast system in order to deter and prevent fraudulent refugees, a system that is open to all of those who claim refugee status, a system that would allow a person to apply for refugee status from anywhere, from within Canada or from without, and a system which has a fair appeal process. As I said at the beginning, the refugee problem is a human problem of vast dimensions. We in Canada who are relatively well off should not shirk our responsibility or pass the buck concerning this issue. We did not shirk it before. Certainly we can do something again.