

Statements by Ministers

of Canadians that in the 15 to 20 years previous to the present Government this country brought in special groups of refugees and immigrants. In the late 1970s and early 1980s we settled approximately 106,000 Vietnamese boat people. They were welcomed by and integrated into our communities and today they are proud and loyal Canadian citizens.

Mr. McDermid: Under a Conservative Government.

Mr. Marchi: The reality is that when 174 immigrants landed off the East Coast the first reaction by Canadians was to make them tea and offer them cookies. That was the reaction. Then the media came in and the Government undertook a number of very questionable procedures. Yet the first Canadian reaction was that if they are legitimate refugees there is a responsibility on Canada to honour its obligations and traditions.

What is the real solution? Bill C-55 cannot be viewed in isolation. It must be looked at in the larger context, and the real solution is to put in place a system that works, not an *ad hoc* system sufficient for the next week or two or the next month. We need a system in place that will work for years to come. That is why we, along with countless others, have advocated reform of the system. We have been prepared to lend ourselves to that end. It is simply intellectual dishonesty to suggest that the Opposition did not allow the Government to act.

Mr. McDermid: Tell us about your amendment. Tell us about your six-month hoist.

Mr. Marchi: The Government has controlled the parliamentary agenda for three years. Yet no priority was given to this legislation by the Prime Minister or the four different Ministers responsible for immigration, and the situation has been allowed to reach the boiling point.

Mr. McDermid: Be honest, tell us about your six-month hoist. That was your response.

Mr. Marchi: We have to allow Parliament to come to grips with the refugee determination problem. It is important not only for this month or next but for years to come.

The Government also has the responsibility to define much more clearly the differences between an immigrant and a refugee. That is why this morning I was pleasantly surprised to hear one of the reforms suggested by the Minister concerning family class immigration. I welcomed that because the standing committee made that recommendation. Yet it is simply unfair to try and manipulate public opinion—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Marchi:—so that someone cannot sponsor a member of his or her family because there are too many refugees already. That is not true. The fact is that in the last three years the immigration of people with family members already in Canada

has declined and that feeds the frustrations of many Canadians.

To summarize I would like to suggest the following. Canada is not the sucker a lot of people claim it to be. The world is rife with turmoil. This weekend Hong Kong received three boatloads of refugees from Vietnam. West Germany has received more Tamil refugees. Other countries are also receiving refugees. Yes, we must make sure that we allow legitimate refugees into Canada but we also should be playing a leading role in the international community. We have lost our leadership role and the respect of other nations because we have not come to grips with the problem. It is a world-wide problem and unless we have a world-wide solution we will continue to be afflicted by back door immigration consultants who seek to make profits on the trade in human lives. It is time we used immigration as a positive tool for greater economic prosperity.

Consider as well that we suffer a dwindling birth rate and aging population. Our economy needs certain trades that our education system does not produce. You know and I know that immigration has a big role to play in this country, as it did after World War II. Therefore, let us enter into the debate. Let us allow Canadians to participate in a mature, enlightened and unemotional debate so that we may utilize immigration as a nation-building tool rather than having to just accept immigrants or refugees, allowing the international and national situation to deteriorate to what are simply public relations exercises which do not attack the substance of the problem.

I appreciate your patience in allowing me to make these preliminary remarks and I look forward to that enlightened debate. We as a Party are prepared to simply say no to the illegitimate refugees but you cannot do that and at the same time say no to the legitimate refugees. We need to be strong on legitimacy and send out a strong signal that we are not prepared to allow the back door to become the entrance into Canada.

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, the Minister said the Government recalled Parliament to deal with an issue of grave national importance. I agree, it is and has been for several years an issue of grave national importance. I am glad the Government now recognizes it. What it does not acknowledge, of course, is how we got into this mess.

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For years Canada has had a policy of welcoming immigrants and refugees. We have welcomed them according to procedures established by law. Those procedures were also intended to limit abuse since the abusers do interfere with the proper acceptance of those we consider to be justified immigrants or refugees.

It is true that our system broke down because conditions in the world changed. Instead of a flow of refugees from certain parts of Europe, we began to get large and increasing flows of