

Immigration Act, 1976

with respect to how we deal with individuals claiming persecution in other countries. We appreciate the leadership shown by the Hon. Member on this issue.

I know that the Hon. Member for a number of years has played a leadership role in a committee dealing with Soviet Jewry. He has for many years made great strides in advancing the goals of that organization. I was moved by his comments about how the Bill would allow the Minister to intercept ships coming to this country. I wonder if in the back of his mind there was not the image of one of the very few dark days in our past, I think it was 1939 when a ship—

Mr. Brisco: You weren't even born!

Mr. Riis: No, I was not.

Mr. Brisco: Of course, then why should we be apologizing for it now?

Mr. Riis: I do not understand, I thought I was asking a straightforward question in response to the thoughtful comments by the Hon. Member. I was referring to 1939 when the Government of Canada decided, in the wisdom of the day, to not allow that ship to dock with its Jewish passengers. Most of those people were killed at the hands of the wicked Nazi regime when they returned to Europe. Was that imagery not in his mind when he was making his comment?

Mr. Kilgour: It was a factor, and there was also a ship which landed in Vancouver that the Hon. Member will be aware of in, what, 1913? It was sent back to India. I am told that most of the people on that ship perished when they got back to India.

● (1440)

In response to the question, I have a bulletin from Amnesty International of which I am proud to be a member. Michael Schelew makes the point:

The Government states that no genuine refugee will be turned away from Canada's shores. But how can the Government decide who is a genuine refugee if it does not hear the claims of all refugee claimants on the merits?

The Government says that all genuine refugee claimants will be allowed to have a hearing on the merits. Once again this begs the question.

How can the Government determine who is a genuine refugee claimant if the proper decision-making body does not hear the claim on the merits?

I am sure the Hon. Member would agree that the Bill is simply not one which represents the Nansen Medal for the spirit of tolerance and understanding that I believe now exists from Kamloops, to St. John's, to Aklavik.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Before I recognize the Hon. Member for Windsor—Walkerville (Mr. McCurdy) on debate, may I just take this opportunity on behalf of the Speaker and all Members of the House of Commons to express our good wishes to the Pages who have been with us for one of

the longest sessions we have had in Parliament. They will be leaving us, and I want to welcome the new recruits.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We wish them well. After two or three elections they will probably take some of the seats of Hon. Members who are here.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, of course, I would like to take a moment of my time to express my own gratitude to the Pages who are departing. I understand that some of them will continue to be around Ottawa, attending school here.

Like you, Mr. Speaker, I hope that some or even all of them will show up here on the right side of the House.

I want to take particular note of the fact that amongst the departing Pages is one Page from the City of Windsor. That person did such an excellent job that this year we will have two Pages from the Windsor area. I feel very proud of that fact.

I listened with great attention to the speech by the Hon. Member for Edmonton—Strathcona (Mr. Kilgour). I hope his colleagues listened to him with equal care because we are facing an issue of extreme and fundamental moral importance.

It is very clear that the Member has struggled with this issue and examined it in terms of his own experience and understanding of others who have worked with refugees, and within the context of what he knows to be a serious refugee problem world-wide.

On the one hand, he asked whether there is a problem with respect to the refugee determination process in Canada and, on the other, he asked whether the remedy sought in Bill C-84 particularly, and in Bill C-55, is commensurate with the problem at hand. I am sure he engaged in a painful and difficult reflection.

I must say that his very dissent draws a rather sharp contrast to what we have experienced in the House in the last several weeks during the debate on this so-called emergency. I looked around the Chamber as he spoke and, no matter how dramatic the character of his intervention, I noticed that virtually none of his colleagues on the government side raised their heads to even listen to what their colleague had to say, in spite of the fact that the Member for Edmonton—Strathcona is not the only Member on the government side who has dealt with his own conscience, wrestled with the issue and expressed dissent.

It has also been mentioned that, as happened a moment ago, we have had thoughtless, mean interventions when attempts have been made to explain those concerns that have worried not only those of us on this side of the House, the Hon. Member and his colleague, but which have bothered a great many organizations, including churches, labour unions, lawyers and civil libertarians across the country.