

*Adjournment Debate**[Translation]*

We have constantly urged the Government to implement the changes recommended as early as in 1980 by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) and formally proposed in 1984 by Ed Ratushny and in 1985 by Rabbi Plaut, well before the refugee problem grew worse.

[English]

We also have sought an expanded definition of the family class which corresponds more accurately with many immigrants' notion of extended family living. We will examine very carefully the action announced by the Minister this morning.

At the same time we must make it abundantly clear to the immigrant community that an immigrant who does not have sufficient points to get into Canada does not lose his spot in line because his place is taken by a refugee. We are talking about a new stream of admissions to the country. The refugee is admitted to Canada on an entirely different set of criteria, namely, genuine fear of political, religious, or racial persecution.

Finally, we call upon the Government of Canada to seek actively, by way of a United Nations conference or Commonwealth conference, the participation of other countries confronted with similar strains on their refugee systems. This is not an isolated problem, this is a global phenomenon. We need to work with other countries toward a mutually satisfactory solution. Refugees are on the conscience of Canada, but they are also a global responsibility.

We must stress a co-operative attitude toward solving this international problem. I say to the Prime Minister and the Minister, give us a fair system. Canadians will support that. Canadians will be generous and open, but target the abuses carefully and do it in a spirit of firmness, reasonably, with openness and generosity.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[Translation]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 66, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall)—Pharmaceutical industry—Committee Proceedings—Hearing of witnesses—Minister's position; the Hon. Member for York East (Mr. Redway)—Harbourfront—Moratorium on Toronto waterfront construction projects; the Hon. Member for Kenora—Rainy River (Mr. Parry)—Regional development—Northern Ontario—Alleged transfer of public service jobs—Request for freeze on job transfers.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

IMMIGRATION ACT, 1976

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Bouchard that Bill C-55, an Act to amend the Immigration Act, 1976 and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee, and the amendment of Mr. Marchi (p. 7338).

Mr. John Oostrom (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the House on this very important issue and to speak to this vital piece of legislation.

There has been a tendency by some to read the worst into the new provisions. One of the most important points for us to understand is that in devising strategies and policies that address the needs of refugees, we always need to look beyond the immediate and domestic solutions. More and more, countries are coming to see that addressing the problems of refugees is an international endeavour. As a Canadian delegate to the 106-country international parliamentary union recently, I proposed that the question of refugees be addressed at the fall conference in Bangkok, Thailand. This proposal was adopted due to the urgency of this world-wide problem of refugees.

Refugee problems can only be resolved by finding solutions to their root causes, by long-term efforts to promote development, self-reliance, and respect for human rights.

Initially, the primary need of every refugee is a safe haven. Without access to a country of safe haven and without an ability to uphold the principle of safe haven as a primary need, none of the approaches or solutions advocated by the international community will work.

Initially, a refugee needs to find a place, any place, where he or she will be free from torture or the threat of death, and where basic needs for food and shelter will be met.

The search for a safe haven was not, as we all know, what motivated the tens of thousands of bogus refugees who have overburdened our system in recent years. The decision by refugees to leave the safe haven provided by another country in order to ask for safe haven in Canada, while understandable, is not a refugee matter.

While we understand the preference for this country over another, individual preference cannot dictate national policy. We welcome, however, their applications as immigrants. Our convention refugee determination system must remain open for those who really need it.

At the request of the Standing Committee on Employment and Immigration, the number of refugee processing officers, both at home and abroad, was increased due to the higher demand. However, the processing of immigrants and refugees must be done in an orderly fashion. We cannot have chaos,