

Immigration Act, 1976

implement that power, I wish it was not in the law. I think it is quite counter-productive to the democratic process to write laws which go far beyond what any Government intends to enforce. It confuses the public as to what actually is the law. Writing laws and penalties far beyond what anyone intends to impose is not particularly useful in providing a legal or moral outlook for the country's population.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a bit about C-84 in the context of the recent handling of an application for immigration by a French national who had been here on a work permit teaching for six years and who requested assistance from the Prime Minister's (Mr. Mulroney) wife in order to have his application for landed immigrant status expedited by the Department of Immigration. I raise that because I think there is a double standard being applied.

On the one hand this House was brought together in an emergency session in order to deal with Bill C-84, which is what we are debating right now. This Bill says, despite all the evidence, that refugees are some kind of risk to Canadian security. Effectively, it allows a person to be designated a security risk. It introduces penalties for helping a person to come into Canada without a visa, passport or travel document as required by the Immigration Act. Yet at the same time the Prime Minister's wife intervenes through her office in order to help someone jump the queue and be considered for landed immigrant status while here in Canada, and this despite the fact that Mr. Grossmann, the man in question, was actually in France for two and a half months over the course of the summer—

• (1200)

Mr. Malone: Sleaze, sleaze.

Mr. Cassidy: This is a legitimate issue. The Hon. Member suggests that it is improper to raise this issue. Yet Canadians are asking why we turn away refugees who are in fear of their lives in Central America, Africa and Asia and bring in legislation which allows boats to be turned away without even knowing whether the passengers have any claim to Canada's commitments under the international treaties governing refugees, while on the other hand someone who happens to be personally acquainted with the family of the Prime Minister can get intervention before an application is even submitted.

I have been thinking about this at some length because of the statements made by the junior Minister of Immigration yesterday. He said there was no intervention by the Prime Minister's office. However, the documents which were reported on in *The Globe and Mail* today make it quite clear that there was a series of telexes sent and that the letter which Mr. Grossmann originally sent was forwarded from the Prime Minister's office. When the arrangements made by the Immigration Department were not convenient for Mr. Grossmann after he had failed to keep the appointment made

for him in Paris for August 20, there was further intervention from high quarters.

What distinguishes one person from somebody else? This person is in no fear of his life, oppression or exploitation were he to return to his native country, but wants to stay here in Canada. That is an understandable desire, but we have a very tight clamp on regular immigration to this country right now. I believe it is too tight, but one of the criteria is whether or not there is a substantial demand for people with the job expertise held by an applicant.

As a resident of Ottawa I can tell you that in the last five or six years there have been almost no job openings in this community for teachers. It is extremely difficult for teachers to get jobs. There are probably thousands of teachers who are unemployed or have had to go into other professions because they were unable to get jobs as teachers in the national capital region. Yet with the help of this intervention someone who was teaching here was able to jump the queue and have his application considered earlier this month.

Mr. Malone: Tell the truth.

Mr. Cassidy: The Hon. Member is obviously feeling rather sensitive about this particular question, as he well should. Ordinary Canadians wonder why some Canadians have extraordinary influence when they are not elected to an office.

Mrs. Collins: How many do you ask for?

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mrs. Collins) asks specifically how many people I have assisted. The answer is a number. I want to tell about the experience of ordinary Members of Parliament in terms of immigration applications. We receive calls from people asking for assistance, saying that they want to become landed immigrants in Canada and have been working here for four or five years.

In such a case my first step would be to explain the way the situation works and the difficulties, explaining that although I am not entirely in support of the difficulties, that is the situation as it is. I would ask them if they had put in an application. If they had not I would say that I can hardly seek to intervene when no application has been made and there is no evidence that they are being unfairly or unreasonably dealt with.

If it was a case of a person who is resident in Canada but did not have landed immigrant status, as was the case of Mr. Grossmann, I would suggest that they consider arranging with the Department to make the application in New York City, Atlanta or Buffalo, rather than having to spend the money to go over to France. If I learned that they were taking a holiday in France I would suggest that they make their application there and that it would not be unreasonable to determine whether it were possible to extend their work permit. There are various ways in which this could be handled which are