

I would also like to serve notice that it is our intention to ask for unanimous consent regarding five amendments to the message. The critics have received notice of that and I think it is their intention to give unanimous consent. I simply want to serve notice to you, Sir.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, we accept this as notice. We appreciate the generosity of the Parliamentary Secretary and that of the House. Just to make it clear, the request of the Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap) is to have a few minutes more than 20, up to 30 minutes, if necessary, to complete his remarks. That is the understanding.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kempling): Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Hon. Members of the House for their courtesy in allowing me a little extra time to speak on this, a very large and difficult subject. I would also like to ask the indulgence of the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) to give me a copy of his amendment because I may wish to move a sub-amendment to it after I have seen the actual wording.

This Bill has now been before the House for 11 months. During that time there has been a surprising amount of opposition to it registered by Canadians from coast to coast. Church groups, union groups, refugee aid groups which have been working very closely with this Government and the preceding Government to help sponsor and settle refugees, and thousands of other people have registered their great dissatisfaction with Bill C-55.

Their main concern, albeit not their only concern, is that it denied the right of an oral hearing as required, not only by the sense of justice of many Canadians, but in law by the Supreme Court decision in the Singh case three years ago. It also gives almost no right of appeal. That again offends, not only the sense of justice of Canadians but the international sense of justice. It offends the convention on refugees which we signed two decades ago.

The Senate amendments made some small improvements in this matter but most of those were turned down by the Minister. I doubt that the Senate's amendments by themselves would have been enough. However, together with a little further amendment they may have made this Bill more tolerable. However, amendments on so-called safe countries, oral hearings, right to counsel, a fair chance for refugees to state their case or make their declarations at the beginning, have all been turned down by the Minister, which is very unfortunate.

I believe that Canadians, represented strongly and repeatedly by groups such as the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and so on, will continue to fight against this unjust law on the ground that it greatly weakens our policy for aiding refugees. It is said to be intended to help refugees, but that is not the way it is seen by

the great majority of people in this country who have been engaged in the practical day-to-day work of helping refugees.

Part of the purpose of our Immigration Act is to carry out our international obligations for humanitarian work, such as the helping of refugees. The United Nations handbook on refugees, pursuant to the convention relating to the status of refugees which we signed 20 years ago, says:

No Contracting State shall expel or return—

And for certainty it uses the French word *refouler*—

—a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

The Minister's response, following the action of her predecessors denies that principle which is the heart of the convention relating to the status of refugees.

I want to take a few minutes to indicate why, in my opinion, we are in such a bind over this. The great majority of people in this country, so far as they have concerned themselves with refugees at all, mainly by helping, are opposed to the Minister and the Government being adamant in their refusal to listen to the constitutional lawyers, the Canadian Bar Association made up of lawyers in private practice whom the Government professes to respect, and many other public groups.

It seems to me that this convention on refugees arose out of the experience in the years following World War II when there were many displaced persons, as we sometimes called them, mainly in Europe. Out of that we developed principles and practices for the protection of refugees. These were mostly refugees left over from the chaos of World War II, many from Eastern or Central Europe. Over a period of five or six years after the war, a principle emerged of defending the rights of the individual refugee against his own government and giving him the right to claim protection from another government. This was done by many thousands of people, especially those coming from Eastern Europe to Western Europe or North America.

The Governments which led in establishing this convention for refugees on the basis of the rights of the individual are now denying it, as the Minister is denying it by her response here. Between the late 1940s and early 1950s and the 1980s the world has changed very considerably with regard to refugees and that affects how people see this law.

We now have growing conflict between the countries which are members of NATO, and one or two others, and the countries which were formerly colonies of the members of NATO. These colonies were used for the vast enrichment of the peoples of the countries which now make up NATO. They were sources of cheap raw materials, cheap labour, and immense debt repayment. Somehow or other the action of Francis Drake and his followers and the Spaniards and others in going to those countries and stealing gold, silver, wood, and other kinds of wealth, is now interpreted that those countries owe us hundreds of billions of dollars.