

*Immigration Act, 1976*

office in Vancouver East. It was very interesting that many of the callers used the same phrases which the Minister was using. There is a definite relationship there. Callers talked about people jumping queues, used the phrase "illegal aliens" over and over again, and talked about "sending people back on the boat".

I sympathized very much with many of the callers, although certainly not with those who expressed racist views. However, many of the people with whom I spoke expressed the concern that they wanted an immigration policy which would be fair and which would seem to be fair to Canadians and to those waiting to come to Canada. I hope they also meant that it should be fair for people who are in fear for their lives or suffering economic deprivation and are seeking to come to Canada as refugees.

We on this side of the House still believe that it is very important to ensure that procedures are clearly understood by people before they come to Canada. That has not been the case. There is still a perception that people can exploit the system, as they certainly have. The point is that we do not know whether they are genuine refugees until they get here and have had due process of examination. Those who do qualify as refugees can then go through the proper procedures in order to remain here. New Democrats believe that after having had a fair hearing with the opportunity of having counsel and appeal, any person who is not a legitimate refugee should not be allowed to stay permanently in Canada. To be able to do so would certainly be unfair and an abuse of the policy. I repeat that we do not know this unless these people have an opportunity to be examined and have their case reviewed.

● (1520)

Canadians are very proud of our humanitarian tradition. We opened the doors for Hungarian refugees. I had personal experience in working in refugee camps in Vienna and elsewhere in Austria and saw the generosity of Canadians. While perhaps not generous enough to take people who were unhealthy or could not adjust as easily, we took as many as we could.

It is interesting that this summer we are talking about boat people because we opened our doors to boat people in the South Seas. We welcomed as many people from Southeast Asia as possible and sped up the refugee policy at that time. We tried to bring them here and do much of the processing in Canada. We should not forget that Canadians approved of this and welcomed those people.

I hope Canadians feel the same way in this case. Certainly, in my part of Canada along the western coastline many people are coming from Latin American countries. These are people who suffered a great deal of hardship, and I feel particular concern for a number of women with young children who have had a great struggle in coming through the United States.

Much of the outcry from Canadians about this incident is based on media reports and some of the angry statements by the two Ministers, which really made it difficult for people to look rationally at some other requirements that are needed in a fair immigration policy for refugees. We believe very strongly that this incident would not have occurred had the Government proceeded a year ago to reform the refugee processing policy and procedures and implemented the recommendations of Rabbi Plaut and the recommendations of the all-party parliamentary committee that was concerned with improving the refugee processing system.

People would have known that the Government was taking action, and I believe that people outside Canada, including agents who are exploiting people and telling them to distort the truth in some cases, would have been much more reluctant about encouraging people to come here if they knew the refugee determination process would take two or three months rather than two or three years.

Let us consider present public opinion as a result of the debate in the House and in view of the period in which people have been able to consider the details of these Bills. Canadians have been able to read reports in the media from many experts who appeared at the committee. They have also heard many speeches in the House which I hope have raised very legitimate points.

When I was in Vancouver East last week fulfilling appointments in my office I found quite a change in public opinion. I would be interested to know if this has happened with other Members of Parliament, because it seems to me that tempers have cooled down and people are looking at this issue more reasonably. In fact, many people said that we should make sure that we maintain the kind of justice and humanitarian policies that we believe are so important for Canada.

For example, last week churches, many support organizations and individuals in Vancouver held a major protest asking the Government to modify these Bills and provide protection for people coming to Canada. One young man came to my office saying that he and his mother would have been charged under this Bill since they have given accommodation to refugees from Latin America until they could apply officially.

A Portuguese constituent of mine, now a Canadian citizen, expressed concern that the Government was misleading people by making the general public think that refugees are the same as landed immigrants and are jumping ahead of landed immigrants on the list. He is quite right that there are two different waiting lists. I hope people are more aware of this now.

An organization in Vancouver, Casa Latinoamericana, has expressed a particular concern. I want to read some of the highlights from a very urgent notice they published during the summer. They are very concerned about the recent news that death squads are operating out of Los Angeles. They state:

According to articles publicized in *The Globe and Mail*, *The Province* and other sources, people actively involved in denouncing U.S. policy in Central