

find out.”

On a more serious note, she expresses her concern for the graver consequences of Bill C-55, Canada's controversial new immigration and refugee policy. “Now it's going to be much harder (for refugees to get into Canada). They're not going to be able to do it. First World countries are just dumping refugees on the Third World. Look at Pakistan — they have taken all the Afghans, while we're shutting our doors to them. Europe has also closed its doors.”

On 1 January 1989, Bill C-55 went into effect. Under the \$100 million plan, announced by Immigration Minister Barbara McDougall, a two-member government panel, consisting of an immigration adjudicator and a member of the new Immigration and Refugee Board, will hear each refugee claim separately over the next two years. Claimants will continue to be judged according to the 1951 United Nations convention relating to refugees, which states that a “convention refugee” is someone who, because of well-founded fear of persecution due to her/his race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinions, is unwilling or unable to return to her/his country of nationality or former habitual residence.

Under the new policy, once a person arrives in Canada and makes a refugee claim, s/he will be given a quick security check by an immigration officer, and then booked for a hearing that is supposed to take place within 72 hours. If either of the two panel members agree the person before them is a genuine refugee (according to the terms of the 1951 United Nations convention), the refugee claimant will be allowed to stay in Canada and go on to a more detailed hearing. If both reject the claim, the would-be refugee will be asked to leave the country. Technically, humanitarian or compassionate grounds will not be considered. Nevertheless, the law hasn't changed with respect to the “discretionary power” that allows the Minister of Immigration to permit anybody into the country that s/he wants to.

There is concern for the number of claimants that will be rejected, because the new policy does not address the “humanitarian” treatment of people who may have been in Canada for some time, but may be here illegally. McDougall has ruled out amnesty. There are 85,000

claimants presently on the waiting list. It is doubtful whether all those cases can be heard within the two-year time frame indicated by McDougall.

Nancy Pocock has another story to tell me. This one doesn't have a happy ending:

*A Salvadorian woman came to see me today who cried and cried. That's why the tissue is on the table. She's been here for two years and she hasn't got any status. They put her on a Minister's permit when she came and they renewed it for another year because she didn't know enough to ask for refugee status. So she has no status at all after being here for two years and her children are still in El Salvador. She can't bring them here until she has status. And now they're in danger. They're being threatened. There are people being killed around them and she's very upset. So she sat and cried. And I couldn't help her because there's no way we can bring them in now because of the new laws that will be in place the 1st of January. There's about three hundred people waiting in Buffalo to get in and no chance for new people to get in. She hasn't the money to bring them anyway. They have to get a visa from the Canadian immigration official in El Salvador and they'll never get it. The law has been passed. They're going to screen people out — a very complicated procedure — before they get into Canada so there's just no way. They (her children) are now thirteen and fourteen — the right age for the*

*army to get them.*

Nancy and I are sharing a meal in a fashionable restaurant in Yorkville. We marvel at the extraordinary price of a bottle of wine. She tells me a story about having returned from Vietnam and entered a drugstore to buy some shampoo. Facing an entire wall of haircare products she remembers having felt physically ill. She had just come from a country where people were starving to death. Turning to look at me, she adds:

*We (Canadians) say we have a wonderful reputation for refugees, but we don't. It has only been in the last few years that we've been good to them. But before that we shut people out. Look at the Chinese: we brought the men in to work, but we wouldn't let them bring their families. I remember when every town in Canada had a Chinese laundry and a Chinese restaurant but no children, no wives. I remember wheeling Julie, my little girl, down to Chinatown and they'd come out of their store and make such a fuss over her because they didn't have their own babies here. It was sad.*

For Nancy Pocock, the refugee situation in Canada, and all over the world, is still a very sad and sorry affair.

*Anyone who wants to make a donation towards the work of the Quaker Service Committee and Nancy's work with refugees can forward a cheque made payable to “Nancy Pocock” at 52 Elgin Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued.*

## CHRIS WIND

### Suspended

she sits in the third row  
at the second desk  
wearing one of those new shirts  
with words on it —  
her words are in black and blue:  
all dressed up and nowhere to go.

the laws of her country won't allow  
her ever to go back  
and the laws of this country won't  
allow her to go forward

until she looks like, speaks like, acts  
like, thinks and feels like  
us.

the first one is easy,  
she has done it already.  
the second two are more difficult  
though she is learning in my class,  
and she is trying hard.  
but the last two are almost impossible  
—  
and she cries with each cut across the  
grain:  
she is made in Taiwan.