

will have the freedom to make recommendations which will be very seriously considered by the government.

There is no question that people have had enough of old ways. They have had enough of excessive partisanship. There is no question about that, and particularly on this issue.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): As her leader and I had the opportunity to discuss the other day in Whitehorse, there is an expectation on the part of Canadians who support no party, and on the part of Canadians who support all of the parties in this House that we will put the unity of the country above either partisan considerations or any fealty to old ways. We have indicated in the Speech from the Throne that there is going to be, for example, authority for this new joint committee to meet with the elected parliamentarians in the legislatures of the territories. That has never been done before. That is a new approach. There will be several others.

I would hope the hon. member and her colleagues in all parties of the House would give us the opportunity to let Canadians see and take part in new approaches to the most fundamental issue we face, which is not simply the survival but the reinvigoration of this country.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of immigration and it concerns the case of Mr. Al-Mashat, the former Iraqi ambassador to the United States who is now a landed immigrant in this country.

We learned today that his application was processed in 28 days. Meanwhile, thousands of Canadians are waiting three and four years for the applications of their spouses and families to be processed.

Why did this former mouthpiece for Saddam Hussein get preferential treatment at the expense of ordinary people waiting patiently? Why was he allowed to jump the queue?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I had the chance this morning to see the hon. member at the press conference

where my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and myself explained and detailed the reasons why this has happened.

The hon. member raises a point about family reunification. He will remember that when the former minister introduced the immigration plan, the five year plan, she undertook then to review the process so as to ensure that priority be given—

An hon. member: Answer the question.

Mr. Valcourt: What is the point of asking a question if you do not want the answer? What is important is that Canadians know that the government is preoccupied with that aspect of family reunification. I shall look at the processing system and make sure that in our priorities we give priority to family reunification in Canada.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable. I asked the minister why the ambassador jumped the queue and he talks about family reunification.

I will ask my supplementary of the Prime Minister. We learned today that at least one memorandum about Al-Mashat was sent to the minister of external affairs while the application was still pending. This case calls into question the very integrity of the immigration program. Canadians are entitled to know the facts. Will the government immediately table all memoranda about the Al-Mashat case sent to all responsible ministers, officials and the Prime Minister?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this morning I made public a chronology of events explaining how this decision came about. The hon. member is now asking me to ignore the Privacy Act and the rights of Canadian residents. I do not think there is a need for that. They would like, of course, to make a big thing out of this. The facts were disclosed this morning and we have been quite transparent about it all. What is important is that we avoid such situations in the future and these are the steps we have taken.

* * *

DISASTERS

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and it concerns the Air-India disaster.