

an Jewish Congress and other organizations have condemned these recently imposed regulations concerning refugees as unfair, restrictive and inhumane. In view of what the minister said a few moments ago in answer to my question, does it mean that what was said in the feature article in Sunday's *Toronto Star* by Olivia Ward to the effect that there exists a federal cabinet document showing that these regulations and others tougher than those already in force are being considered by the government, is true?

Senator Murray: No, honourable senators. The Minister of State for Immigration has already commented on the article to which my honourable friend has referred. I do say, however, that amendments to the act will be forthcoming shortly.

Senator Haidasz: Honourable senators, the Leader of the Government in the Senate has still not stated whether the proposed amendments to the Immigration Act will be humane or, at least, fairer than those that have been imposed by the federal government.

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, the amendments to the Immigration Act will be, to use the honourable senator's word, humane. They are intended to maintain in reality the reputation of Canada as a haven for true refugees. We have a good reputation in that regard, and we intend to maintain it. What we intend to close off are the avenues of abuse which have been used all too frequently in the last little while.

Senator Haidasz: Honourable senators, does that mean that the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Canadian Ethnocultural Council are unfair in their criticisms of the federal government's recently imposed regulations vis-à-vis refugees?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, if as the honourable senator suggests, they have described the new regulations as unfair and restrictive, yes, the groups to which my honourable friend has referred are wrong.

DELAYED ANSWER TO ORAL QUESTION FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS TO ATLANTIC PROVINCES— PROVINCIAL ACTION

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question raised in the Senate on February 11, 1987 by Senator Bonnell regarding Federal-Provincial Relations—Equalization Payments to Atlantic Provinces—Provincial Action. In the absence of the honourable senator, I ask that the answer be taken as having been read.

(The answer follows:)

Under section 36(2) of the Constitution Act, the principles behind the equalization program are enshrined in the Constitution:

Parliament and the Government of Canada are committed to the principle of making equalization payments to ensure that provincial governments have suffi-

[Senator Haidasz.]

cient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation.

At the present time, the federal government continues to meet its obligations under the equalization program consistent with section 36(2) and no province has yet undertaken a suit against the federal government citing this reference to the equalization program in the Act.

In the case of the Atlantic provinces, the honourable senator may want to note that the four Atlantic provinces receive, per capita, higher payments than other recipient provinces and that the federal payments represent a higher proportion of provincial revenues in the Atlantic provinces than in other recipient provinces.

THE SENATE

DELAY IN PRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS— QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE—SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before coming to Orders of the Day I would like to make a brief statement on a question of privilege raised by Senator Bell on Thursday last concerning a delay in the printing of the Banking, Trade and Commerce Committee proceedings.

It appears that there was a misunderstanding and that Senator Bell's name was not on the distribution list to receive copies of the Banking, Trade and Commerce Committee proceedings. I am also informed that the proceedings of February 11 were delivered to senators' offices on February 25, and that the proceedings of February 18 and 19 were delivered on February 27.

THE LATE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS CHARLES ABBOTT, P.C.

TRIBUTE

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, a few moments ago a note was passed to me indicating that the flags on Parliament Hill have just been lowered to half mast in tribute to the late Mr. Justice Douglas Abbott, a retired judge of the Supreme Court of Canada. Honourable senators will know very well the excellent reputation of the late Justice Abbott, who was a parliamentarian for many years in the other place, a former Minister of Finance and Minister of Defence as well as the father of another privy councillor and former minister in a recent government, the Honourable Anthony Abbott. On behalf of the government, I express our sincere sympathy to the members of his family and say how proud all of us are of his luminous career in the public service.