

Order Paper Questions

call upon Parliament to dissolve and to allow the people of Canada the opportunity to accept or reject the proposed free trade agreement during a national general election.

I propose to table this petition, and I will have many more to come.

SUPPORT FOR BILL C-55

Mr. Paul Gagnon (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty to present a petition signed by 64 Calgarians in support of the refugee Bill, Bill C-55. The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to restore a system of fairness, justice and expediency by supporting Bill C-55, an Act to amend the Immigration Act.

COMPENSATION FOR FRED TURNER

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by approximately 20 people from the Northwest Territories, northern British Columbia and Alberta with respect to Fred Turner. Putting it in one sentence, they ask that justice be rendered to him. The House is very much familiar with the matter, Your Honour.

* * *

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 229 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 229 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[Text]

NUMBER OF CABLE OPERATORS IN CANADA

Question No. 229—**Mr. Gauthier:**

1. How many cable operators are there in each Province and Territory?
2. How many cable operators outside the Province of Quebec are receiving French signals from the (a) CBC (b) parliamentary channel?
3. In what proportion does each cable operator retransmit French programs provided by the (a) CBC (b) parliamentary channel?
4. How many cable operators outside the Province of Quebec are receiving French signals from (a) TVA (b) Quatre Saisons (c) Premier Choix/Super Ecran (d) TVOntario (e) Radio-Québec (f) Télé métropole?
5. In what proportion do cable operators retransmit French programs provided by (a) TVA (b) Quatre Saisons (c) Premier Choix/Super Ecran (d) TVOntario (e) Radio-Québec (f) Télé métropole?
6. How many households can subscribe to cable television and for (a) each cable operator (b) each province how many are subscribing?

Return tabled.

[English]

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I have discussed privately on at least two occasions with the Minister of State (Mr. Lewis) the fact that the rules of the House have not been complied with since Question No. 208, standing in my name, dated October 15, 1987 has not been responded to. You will know, with your vast knowledge of the rules, Mr. Speaker, that that response was necessary on or before November 30.

I know that the Minister of State himself has probably tried very hard to get the answer, but it appears that he is not the culprit. It is, rather, the Minister of whom I am asking the question.

When will the answer be forthcoming and when will the rules of this House calling for an answer in 45 days be respected in relation to Question No. 208?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is correct in his statement of the facts. I have made inquiries with respect to the answer. I was assured that we would have it for delivery today. We do not.

I can assure the Hon. Member that inquiries will be made more forcefully, and we will get the answer as soon as we can.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I want to draw your attention to the last comment made by the Minister of State (Mr. Lewis). Without belabouring the point, some months ago the Speaker took under deliberation some comments of mine regarding the present Standing Orders and the request made by Members for an answer to an Order Paper Question within 45 days. In my view there is no remedy available to us or the Speaker with respect to getting the Government to respond. I think it would be appropriate for the Government to say: "I am sorry, we will do our best". That is the spirit in which the Minister of State is responding today.

● (1220)

I just wonder if you could ask the standing committee responsible for the rules of this House to possibly tighten up that rule so indeed the Government is compelled to answer within 45 days.

Mr. Speaker: As Hon. Members know, the Chair is not really in a position to act unilaterally on this. As the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) pointed out, the Hon. Minister of State (Mr. Lewis) has been quite frank in saying that he will do everything he can to remedy this situation. I can say to the Hon. Member that I will ensure that an extract from today's *Hansard* on this point is brought to the committee's attention.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I would not want to tar everyone with the same brush. Some Ministers do respond to questions within the required amount of time. If they do not, they