

Order Paper Questions

● (1540)

[English]

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO FAIR ORAL HEARINGS BEFORE
REFUGEE BOARD

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty to present a petition from a number of residents of the City of Toronto who are concerned that Bill C-55 threatens Canada's traditional commitment to assist refugees and sets out measures designed to keep most refugee claimants out of the country as opposed to ensuring that genuine refugee claimants are given protection.

Not to go into full detail, they go on to mention the problem of the safe third country part of the legislation, the lack of appropriate appeal or review procedures, and the fact that the standing committee recommended almost two years ago a far more just and speedy system for sorting out real refugees from false ones. They also point out that this has widespread support from the churches and labour movement.

Therefore, the undersigned your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to ensure that Government and Parliament withdraw Bill C-55 and substitute legislation embodying the principles of fair and quick oral hearings of refugee claimants before a refugee board independent of the immigration commission, universal access to such hearings for every applicant in Canada, and the right to appeal on the basis of fact.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, I have the distinct honour of tabling in this House a petition signed by a number of residents of Windsor and Edmonton who avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right thus to present a grievance common to your petitioners in the certain assurance that your honourable House will therefore provide a remedy. These Canadian citizens, sharing a sensitivity and awareness of the real issues involved in refugee determination, in contrast to the Government, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to ensure that Government and Parliament withdraw Bill C-55 and substitute—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I hope the Hon. Member will summarize the petition and tell me where it is from so we can carry on.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I think I am in accordance with the regulations in reading what they are petitioning. They humbly pray and call upon Parliament to ensure that Government and Parliament withdraw Bill C-55 and substitute legislation embodying the principles of fair and quick oral hearings of refugee claimants before a refugee board independent of the immigration commission, universal access to such hearings for every applicant in Canada, and the right to appeal on the basis of fact. In duty-bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 161 and 163.

[Text]

PUBLIC LENDING RIGHTS PROGRAM

Question No. 161—**Ms. McDonald:**

1. Between (a) September 1, 1986, and December 22, 1986, (b) December 22, 1986, and June 29, 1987, were any applications received for payments under the Public Lending Rights program by the Public Lending Rights Commission which were for payment in the fiscal year 1986-87 and, if so, how many?
2. In the fall of 1986, were attempts made to update the mailing lists used by the Commission and, if so, what were they?
3. In 1986-87, what was the average payment received under the Program?
4. Were attempts made to ensure that fewer late applications will be received for payments in the 1987-88 period and, if so, what were they?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): I am informed by the Canada Council that the reply to the above question is as follows:

1. The Public Lending Right Commission received 4,743 requests for payment during the fiscal year 1986/87 between September 1 and December 22, 1986. Of this number, 4,553 applications met the eligibility criteria while 190 did not. Between December 22, 1986, and June 29, 1987, 183 claims were received for fiscal year 1986/87 and, because these were received after the registration deadline, they have been carried over to the 1987/88 year.

2. The mailing list which the Commission used in the autumn of 1986 consisted of the approximately 5,000 names and addresses of those who participated in a Canada Council test registration in 1981, plus the names gathered by phone between November and December, 1986 (a telephone answering service was set up to take calls 24 hours a day). In total, 7,860 registration forms were sent out. Even though the PLR program had just six months instead of 12 to be set in motion, time was found to update mailing lists, sometimes by telephone (when the address had changed but the phone number remained the same), and with the help of various sections of the Canada Council who had many of the current addresses (most often the Writing and Publication Section). In some cases it was necessary to contact the writing associations directly.

3. In 1986-87 the average payment (arrived at by dividing the number of authors into the available funds) was \$619.49.

4. The number of late registrations in the upcoming year should be considerably diminished since we will be able to send out our registration forms two months earlier than last year (they will be sent out in August at the latest), and participants