

*Government Orders*

the two was necessary for the applicant to be considered a refugee.

While it is true that the two are only required in certain cases, one of those cases is related to the possession of legitimate documents by the claimant. Anyone who deals with refugees knows it is very often natural that the refugee who flees his country as a political opponent of a regime, or who was being persecuted because of his religion, ethnic background, or colour will flee in the middle of the night, sometimes over mountains, through forests and whatever to escape that country and he will not have his documentation. As a matter of fact, in many of those countries he is refused documentation.

For us to insist in this country that every refugee applicant must have proper documents from his country, passports, travel documents and identification documents, because he is applying as a refugee and to turn him back or to make it more difficult for him I believe is not fair.

• (1650)

This morning I spoke to a Jewish man who fled Nazi Germany at the beginning of World War II. He got to Denmark and swam to a Swedish island in nothing but shorts and a T-shirt in order to get away from Nazi Germany and get to a country that would respect his religion and give him freedom. He was a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany and had no documents. Many people fleeing those sorts of conditions have no documents. We will want answers on that.

The bill provides for a better system of family reunification, and we give credit to the government for doing that, but I return to the question that was just asked by my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood. If you are going to do what the government says in its proposal with respect to family reunification, you are going to need the resources in the department to make that work. We would hope that will be the case.

Right now refugees have been without their families for up to five years. There are cases in my office where the individual is here and has not seen his family for five years because of the slowness in our process. Many of the NGOs have asked that the minister use ministerial permits to deal with these cases which are excessively cruel, but he has refused to do that. We still ask him to use his ministerial permits because that would be a way

of dealing with these cases that are between three and five years, which is really inhumane when you come to think of it. A man is here and his wife and children are still in a country which is in turmoil and he has not been able to get them into the country with him even though he has been recognized as a refugee.

The measures in the bill to provide a system of discipline for those members of the board who misbehave and who are negligent is a good thing and we support it. There were cases last winter where members of the Refugee Board were rude to refugee claimants, slept during the hearings, laughed at their stories and even tried to use pressure, one to the other, to come to certain decisions. When this was raised with the chairman of the board, he said that there was not too much he could do because the members of the board were Order in Council appointments which, by the way, makes us wonder about the judgment in appointing some of these people. Nevertheless we believe that this is a positive step to put a measure in the bill to allow the government and the board to deal with members who are misbehaving or who are negligent in their duties.

Another major change in the bill is the increased authority given to the government, to the minister and to his officials to do things by way of regulation. There is quite a massive shift of authority from Parliament to the minister and to his officials in this bill. He referred to some of them. He looks on it as a more effective way of managing the immigration system and the refugee system. However, some of those decisions which are being transferred from Parliament to the minister and to the officials are ones that are open to abuse. While this minister might be a democratic-minded minister and may be fair, although some people might disagree with that description from time to time, we do not know what minister will be in that position. We do not know what government will be in power. We could have a minority government after the next election with the balance of power with the Reform Party which has been, for the most part, speaking against immigration.

We will want to examine very closely the many measures in the bill which will transfer authority to the minister and to the officials in the government to make regulations on these matters. For example, to make changes in the streams of immigrants, to decide which streams have priority over other streams, to decide that