

Government Orders

specifically is that work permits be issued before the determination is found, and the policy will reflect that in the end.

• (1300)

I want to return, if I may, to the comments of my colleagues from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and Trinity—Spadina about the process that we have encountered here. I would like to remind all members of the House that this legislative committee received 186 letters and 116 briefs over a period of four months.

We heard 110 witnesses, 48 groups and 35 officials from federal government departments. Within the community this was widely discussed and a number of meetings were held outside of the committee, both with individual members and with the government.

Therefore, when I hear a complaint on one hand that there were 70 amendments and a comment on the other that the government was not responsive I wonder a little bit about the inconsistency. Most of the government amendments were either technical, in response to very specific concerns raised by witnesses or in response to the opposition.

Certainly, we did not address all of the concerns raised by the opposition or all of the concerns raised by the witnesses. That happens in this process. However, both of my colleagues have said elsewhere that they felt in certain areas that the government was responsive.

The government put forward its amendments when others put forward their amendments, and certainly before the report stage met all its obligations to do so. Its amendments, with one exception, are very technical and make the bill a little bit better.

I too have no sympathy for the process of time allocation. I do not like the process, but on Thursday last we debated Bill C-86 for three hours in this House. We dealt with one quick amendment that took 40 seconds. We dealt with another group of amendments, six amendments, for the rest of the time, one topic.

I spoke—I was the only government member to do so—for eight minutes in this House while successive opposition members trooped in and made speeches that had nothing to do with this bill. That was absolutely their right. However, when I hear the opposition complain

that it does not have time to debate the amendments I worry about those lost three hours and where they went, and how far we might have gotten in discussions on these amendments.

Frankly, I lose a little bit of my concern about time allocation when I am confronted with this indignation this morning and am expected to have some sympathy for that position.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I too want to speak to this amendment because I think it is very typical of what has happened in this country concerning the amendments to the Immigration Act.

There has been some dialogue. The community is very concerned. It is becoming apparent that this government is out of step with the wishes of the vast majority of Canadians, as reflected in this bill and in the amendments it is putting forward.

For example, most Canadians think that family class and assisted relatives should be the priority in immigration, but this bill does not reflect that. Canadians feel that because it has been the history of Canadian immigration. Historically, people can come, and they have relatives here who can assist them in integration into the Canadian community by finding employment, finding housing and dealing with Canadian culture. This bill does not reflect that.

In my community of Surrey North there is a very large immigrant population. There are a large number of Asians from Hong Kong and from some other parts of south-east Asia. In particular, we have a very large Sikh population. The Sikh population has made tremendous contributions to the economic and cultural well-being of Surrey, of British Columbia and of Canada.

We are now downplaying that community's ability to involve its relatives in coming to Canada to strengthen Canada. Those people have extended families and they want extended families to come here.

Similarly immigrants in this country have always had a very high commitment to the work ethic. They have wanted to work from the day they arrived in Canada, like my father when as an immigrant digging ditches in March in Edmonton. He wanted to work and that was the work available.