

Order Paper Questions

The petitioners point out that a standing committee of Parliament has proposed a new procedure for refugees which would fairly and effectively solve the problems of backlogs and unsubstantiated claims. This alternative has widespread support among all parties, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Bar Association, the Jewish Congress and many other groups and individuals knowledgeable about refugee issues.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to withdraw Bill C-55 and put in its place the kind of proposals put forward by the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is following the time-honoured procedure of presenting petitions. I wonder if the Hon. Member could tell us if it was his office which had the petition certified?

Mr. Robinson: That has nothing to do with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Are there any further petitions? There are no further petitions.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are no questions on the Order Paper.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, a notice was circulated to Members of Parliament earlier today stating that questions bearing Nos. 134, 143, 148, 150, 152, 154 and 155 would be answered today. I wonder if, through your guidance, Mr. Speaker, we could get some sort of reasonable explanation as to why we are not receiving answers to questions pursuant to our Standing Orders because there is a requirement in the Standing Orders that my question, in particular, be answered today under the rules of the House.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's point which is a good one. I was not entirely happy with the documentation I had before me. I intend to submit those answers tomorrow once I am sure the documentation is complete.

Mr. Boudria: I do not want to beleaguer the point, but if there is one question which is not pro forma to be answered today, I would respectfully submit to you, Sir, that the Standing Rules of the House still apply. I would like to know which questions the Parliamentary Secretary cannot answer today, and why not answer the others? I am sure we could all agree unanimously to change a document which he is presenting to include the other questions. It is a rule of the House, just as there are other rules of the House which we observe regularly. As far as I am concerned, the Government has no excuse to breach this particular rule because that is what it feels like at this particular point. Why can we not receive the answer and receive it now?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I stand by my original suggestion. I would suggest to my hon. friend that I will check the documentation out and perhaps we could revert to the tabling of answers later on today and I will have the answers then.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall all questions stand?

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

IMMIGRATION ACT, 1976**MEASURE TO AMEND**

The House resumed from Thursday, June 18, consideration of the motion of Mr. Bouchard that Bill C-55, an Act to amend the Immigration Act, 1976 and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee, and the amendment of Mr. Marchi, (p. 7338).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the Hon. Member for Chambly (Mr. Grisé), I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended 50 minutes beginning at one o'clock.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Grisé (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak today to the amendment of the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) concerning, of course, the refugee problem.

As you know, this Government recalled Parliament in the interests of Canada's security. Mr. Speaker, we are gathered here today because the problem of aliens entering Canada illegally by claiming to be refugees has become an extremely serious one.

I want to make it clear to Hon. Members present that the decision to recall the House was not taken lightly. We are aware of what this decision entails but it was absolutely necessary. It is our duty, as a Government, to take the initiative when the country is affected by events of a serious nature.

Unfortunately, ever since the Government announced its intention to recall the House, it has been accused of either overreacting or being irresponsible. They are never satisfied. Either we are going too fast or not fast enough. I am, of course, referring to comments by Opposition Members.

I believe it would have been irresponsible not to act in this kind of situation. If we had not taken action, it would have meant the steady deterioration of a situation that affects our system for determining refugee status. We cannot tolerate further occurrences. Doing nothing, Mr. Speaker, would have been telling the world that Canada allows its laws to be broken. Doing nothing would have aggravated the dissension reflected in public opinion and thus put our programs for refugees and immigrants in jeopardy.