

Oral Questions

With respect to the regulations, if the present conflict of interest Bill passes second reading, we are quite willing to make the necessary declaration to the Registrar General, which I would have done had I gone, in any event. There is no conflict of interest. There is no breach of any present rule. There is no impropriety. This is simply a goodwill gesture between this country and Thailand, the same as has happened with Singapore Airlines, Air Canada, Canadian Airlines, Wardair, and dozens of other airlines in the past.

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IMMIGRATION**PROCESSING OF REFUGEE STATUS CLAIMS—TREATMENT OF BACKLOG**

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Mr. Gordon Fairweather, Chairman of the new Immigration and Refugee Board just established through the Government's refugee legislation, stated yesterday that his budget for financial and human resources is not enough to process the existing refugee backlog of 55,000, nor would it allow the board even to keep pace with the regular number of claimants. Therefore, if the Minister is committed in her support and promotion of this new system, why did she fail to allocate the necessary resources needed to do an adequate job?

If the Minister wants to prevent the system from breaking down, even before it starts, what plans does the Government have to tackle this huge refugee backlog in the system?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member had been paying attention over the last few weeks, he would have known that I have said on several occasions that the backlog will be treated distinctly from the new refugee determination board, the board I am very pleased to have headed by Mr. Fairweather. I know it is going to be an outstanding example of the refugee and immigration tribunals in the world because of the kind of training they will have.

I have said any number of times that I will make a separate announcement about the backlog, that the three options on dealing with the backlog summarized by Mr. Fairweather yesterday are exactly the ones I have been mentioning myself. The only difference is that I have publicly said that there will be no amnesty.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, just before the passage of the two refugee Bills the Minister kept saying: "Deliver these Bills. That's all I need". She has those Bills. She has been promising Canadians an answer to the backlog, but still she continues this evasive dance about an interest that is uppermost in the minds of many Canadians. The Minister can be as evasive and as sanctimonious as she pleases, but there are basically two general options available to the Government.

Mrs. McDougall: Three.

Mr. Marchi: Will the Government provide additional resources to the new board so it can manage effectively with the backlog? If the Government has an alternative plan with respect to resolving the backlog separately, what is that plan and why the delay? Why not inform the House, and through the House, Canadians, of her plan—

Mr. Speaker: Given the hour, I think the question is long enough. The Hon. Minister.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we are developing a way of dealing with the backlog. I know it is important to many Canadians, especially those who are involved in the backlog. When I have an announcement, I will make it.

Mr. Speaker: This will be the last question. The Hon. Member for Vancouver East.

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STATUS OF WOMEN**REQUEST THAT ROYAL COMMISSION ON REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY BE ESTABLISHED**

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. A report called "Women and Reproductive Technologies", which was prepared for Status of Women Canada, raises very serious ethical, health, and equality questions with respect to surrogate motherhood, gender selection, artificial insemination, and *in vitro* fertilization. Will the Minister arrange for this report to be made public? And will he tell the House what specific steps he and his Government are taking to establish a Royal Commission on new reproductive technology which, I believe, he favours?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important, first, to establish what this report is. It is one in a series of papers which is being developed because there is a federal-provincial status of women working group on the issue of women's health, generally, and reproductive technology is part of that. So there will be other papers as well that will be studied by this group in reaching its own conclusions on a separate topic.

POSITION OF MINISTER OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who surely recognizes the need for action, and action now, on this whole matter. It is fine that the Status of Women continues to do its thing, but the new technologies—which have been developed primarily by men, I think he would agree—have major impacts on women's health, relationships with children and women's rights, yet women have had no say in these developments. Will the Minister consult with the Minister responsible for the status of women and with women's groups, including the new coalition, and recommend to the Government that a Royal Commission must be established and must be composed of 50 per cent women?