

Tabling of Documents

Mr. Riis: The Hon. Member screams across the floor "To take forever". We are simply asking that we follow the traditions and rules of the House of Commons as we do with all serious legislation. We are asking for no more. I think the Government has accepted that we will begin the debate on this new legislation likely tomorrow which will give Members of the House of Commons a full day to study the legislation, to read, digest and examine the various implications of the clauses so that the debate which will take place will be a thoughtful and informed debate.

I simply want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we, as well, informed the office of the Government House Leader this morning that we would like to take a day to study the Bill. I do not think that should be considered to be holding up the legislation. In fact, it might even facilitate it in terms of thoughtful and productive discussions as opposed to debating a Bill which most of us would not have had a chance to discuss thoroughly.

I also want to say that I am somewhat offended in that we had a meeting of House Leaders yesterday to discuss the business of today and subsequent days and I am asked today to presumably respond as to whether or not we would be prepared to extend hours of debate or to entertain the request for a committee of the Whole to examine this legislation. I think the place to discuss the work of the House of Commons is between the House Leaders at the appropriate times and not on the floor of the House of Commons. I ask the Hon. House Leader for the Government, therefore, that he take advantage of the good nature of the opposition Parties in co-operating to see that the Bill before us receives thorough and complete study and examination, and carry out our meetings as we have done traditionally between each other and not on the floor of the House of Commons.

If the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) would allow me to make a comment, I do want to register the fact that in respect of the address we will hear later by the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard), while presumably the intention was to get it into the hands of the opposition critics so they could respond again in a thoughtful and complete way, we really did not have sufficient time. I appreciate at least the thought of getting it to the critics ahead of time, but 15 or 20 minutes does not allow a very thoughtful response on the floor of the House of Commons.

Therefore, once again I would urge the Minister and the Government House Leader that whenever possible, in order to have the debate on the floor of the House of Commons as meaningful and thoughtful as possible, that we are informed as early as possible.

Mr. Mazankowski: I thought I tried to explain that fully.

Mr. Riis: I appreciate that this is the beginning of this particular sitting and perhaps this morning there were difficulties because there was a lot of business which had to be transacted. However, for the future, I make that request.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 106(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Government's response to Petitions Nos. 332-2598, 332-2600, 332-2631 to 332-2635 inclusive, 332-2639 to 332-2677 inclusive, 332-2679 to 332-2695 inclusive, 332-2697 to 332-2719 inclusive, 332-2721 to 332-2733 inclusive, 332-2737 to 332-2781 inclusive, and 332-2783.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION**MEASURE TO AMEND**

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, Parliament has been recalled to deal with an issue of grave national importance. A serious problem—the growing number of migrants who are entering Canada by posing as refugees—has reached critical proportions.

The arrival of 174 migrants on the shores of Nova Scotia last month has created unprecedented public concern. And rightly so, Mr. Speaker, since organized attempts to evade the immigration laws of this country are absolutely unacceptable. They endanger the physical safety of the migrants, imperil the security of Canada, and—worst of all—jeopardize public support for our immigration and refugee programs.

But there is a much graver problem which has been highlighted by this latest incident. It concerns the growing influxes of undocumented persons who claim refugee status at ports of entry from one end of this country to the other.

These are persons who have not applied through normal channels. These are persons who in most cases have bought their way into Canada with forged documents, or who have destroyed their documents en route.

[English]

The number of persons making refugee claims in Canada has grown enormously in the past seven years, from 1,600 in 1980 to a projected total of 30,000 in 1987. The vast majority of these claims are ultimately found to be bogus. Most of these persons are not in need of Canada's protection.

Before I continue, I would like to remind Hon. Members, and this is important, that the United Nations defines refugees as people who flee their homeland because of a very well-