instead the opinions, not of the Opposition, but of groups which appeared as witnesses before the committee when the Bill was studied. I would like particularly to put on record the statements and comments which were made on the particular question of prescreening by groups that felt the clause before us ought to be amended.

No one could accuse the Canadian Bar Association of being a body of wild-eyed radicals whose intent it is to disturb the system or to create dangerous situations. That is why it is important to know what it said in committee when it appeared on August 31.

The Canadian Bar Association said that the screening process and the lack of discretion for the immigration adjudicator and member of the refugee division concerning access criteria prevent a complete evaluation of claims and do not comply with the Convention in allowing *refoulement* without inquiry on the merits? In other words, the Canadian Bar Association came down with the suggestion that the review be carried out by two members of the refugee division and in favour of what is commonly described as full universal access. It was suggested that, it be done through at least two members of the refugee division, people who are knowledgeable on matters relating to refugees.

On August 28 the Immigration Appeal Board, another institution that you know, Madam Speaker, is well established across the country because it consists of Government-appointed Canadian citizens, also expressed its disagreement with the way the Bill is written. It said that the immigration process should not interfere with the refugee determination process because particular situations, as the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) so well articulated in his speech, might be penalized.

Let me put on record what the Refugee Status Advisory Committee said on the same date. It said there is danger in not evaluating all the proof during the screening process and that there is danger in denying access to the genuine refugees.

On September 2, the Coalition for a Just Immigration and Refugee Policy said we should not limit access to the determination system. All these organizations came down in favour of full universal access by way of an alternative process.

• (1240)

What did the Mennonite Central Committee have to say on September 2? It said that the screening process, the one being proposed by the Government and which we are attempting to amend today, will not permit an individual evaluation. This is a group of people which, as everyone knows, has had considerable experience in the field of refugees. It is a group which consists of thoughtful Canadians who have taken to heart the whole matter of refugees over many years. They have a considerable record of performance and experience in this regard. They also said that the short timeframe and the burden of proof on the claimants make access to the determination system very difficult. At that time they assumed that that timeframe would be 72 hours. Granted, things may not have been expressed at that time very clearly for them to make that point. However, they went on to ask this. Why not give a universal hearing on the merits before members of the refugee division? Here again we see the emphasis being placed on the refugee division.

On September 3 Rabbi Plaut appeared before the committee. He was in favour of full universal access. He said that the screening process consists of a hearing but with the disadvantage of not hearing all the evidence, as the Hon. Member for York West put it a short while ago. Rabbi Plaut went on to say that, nevertheless, it will take almost as long as a real hearing. This is why we are baffled by the apparent insensitivity on the part of the Government to accept an approach by all those who have appeared before the Committee with credentials and with the intention of improving the quality of the legislation to make it work better.

Pierre Duquette appeared before the committee on September 3. He said that screening will be as long as a full hearing but will not have the advantages of a full hearing.

The witnesses to whom I have referred were not put up by the Liberal Party of Canada. They are individuals or members of organizations who came forward on their own.

The Hispanic Congress on September 3 made the comment that the period of 72 hours is too short.

On September 4 an interesting observation was put on the record by Professor Angus who said with respect to the timeframe that if it were as short as 48 hours or 72 hours then that would clearly be open to a challenge under Section 7 of the Charter. I am sure that the Government does not want this Bill to be brought before the Supreme Court on a Charter challenge. This is another reason we have difficulty in understanding why these amendments are not meeting the favour and support of the Government.

On September 8 the Canadian Council for Refugees made the comment that it is not fair to preclude people from making claims. That is the Council's interpretation of how the Bill as proposed by the Government would work.

The non-governmental groups stated on September 8 that immigration officials should not be involved in any refugee matters. That is the same point being made by the Immigration Appeal Board and the Canadian Bar Association.

Again on September 8 we find that the National Association of Women and the Law stated that, in essence, screening should be eliminated.

The Canadian Jewish Congress on the same day said that screening is done partly by an immigration official as proposed in the Bill. The Congress stated that this confusion of immigration and refugee issues is unfortunate, which is what the Hon. Member for York West and others have been saying for many, many weeks. The Congress went on to indicate that it