

• (1500)

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, that is a big question indeed; it applies to the whole legal and regulatory system and is far too wide for me to try to tackle this afternoon. However, if I judge by the extent of the branch line system which is still open in Canada, and by the rather low level of branch lines which have been abandoned, I suggest that the communities have done a damn good job against the lawyers.

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IMMIGRATION

RECOMMENDED AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Hon. Bud Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Some Hon. Members: Gone!

Mr. Cullen: Well, perhaps someone can take notice of the question.

As the Minister will know, some 600,000 to 800,000 people apply every year to come to Canada by legal means, adopting legal procedures. Now there is a recommendation from the Advisory Council that a general amnesty should be granted to those who are here illegally. Can the Minister confirm that he will not accept this advice and that he will not even entertain the idea of an amnesty for illegal immigrants.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I think it would be much too early to draw any conclusions because the report was just issued yesterday and it is obviously a very delicate and sensitive matter. We will not be making any judgments until we have had an opportunity to get a full response from all affected organizations and individuals in the country, including provincial Governments and others.

The Advisory Council has undertaken the study and I want to review its report in consultation across Canada. I would think this would be an area where Members of Parliament in particular could be particularly helpful by taking soundings in their own areas and giving me the results, so that I can make a judgment based on those results. It is a problem, Madam Speaker, and as in most areas of immigration we are prepared to deal with those problems in an effective and fair way.

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PETITION

MR. BRADLEY—OPPOSITION TO BILL C-10

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table the three hundred and fiftieth report of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petition presented by the Hon.

Business of the House

Member for Haldimand-Norfolk (Mr. Bradley) on Wednesday, December 8, 1982, and finds that the petition meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, I thought for a while the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) was going down for the third time!

My question is to the Government House Leader. He has informed us that we will be proceeding with Bill C-131 on the final designated day under Standing Order 75C for the Old Age Security Act. Could he confirm that and confirm as far as he can into next week the business that the House will be dealing with?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, today is the last opposition day in the current supply period. Tomorrow, we shall indeed complete second reading of Bill C-131 and, beginning Monday next week, we shall undertake second reading of the bill to amend the Income Tax Act. As usual, of course, all that is subject to change.

[*English*]

Mr. Nielsen: There was some thought, I believe, that debate might be interrupted on Bill C-139 if, as and when the capping Bills, C-131, C-132 and C-133, came back from committee. Is it the intention of the Government to interrupt debate on Bill C-139 should those other Bills come back from committee next week?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Yes, Madam Speaker, my colleague fully appreciates how most urgent it is to have Royal Assent given to Bills C-131, C-132 and C-133 before December 22. That is why, under the circumstances, should these bills be reported to the House in the middle of next week or even earlier, I will seriously consider giving the Hon. Member reasonable notice with a view to completing the study of those bills before December 22.

[*English*]

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, my question is also for the Government House Leader and relates to the question I asked earlier in Question Period. I understand that at 3:30 today in Room 209 of the West Block the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee will meet again. Looking at the fact that he said we are going to adjourn December 22 with all these Bills passed, is he planning on calling us back on December 23? Because we are not going to let that Bill pass unless we have an open election of the chairman of that Committee.