

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the purpose of the amendments to our immigration legislation proposed by the Minister of Employment and Immigration is to change certain aspects which over the years have created problems and also to adjust the number of immigrants we receive now and whom we welcome with warmth and generosity, so as to meet Canada's economic and social concerns, in the 1990s.

I think it is entirely in order to respond to certain questions and comments that have been raised regularly by Canadians to the effect that we should try to direct immigrants towards locations where they are more likely to adjust to prevailing economic and social conditions and to meet specific needs.

I think the Minister of Employment and Immigration made an excellent suggestion in his draft amendment, because once again, the purpose of all these new measures is to adjust our immigration program to changing political, economic and social realities.

• (1300)

[English]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the question of my hon. colleague.

The government is saying essentially that it is willing to entertain all sorts of challenges, that charter challenges are something which could very successfully be challenged. At the same time, just barely a few weeks ago we dealt with the question of a referendum where the government said: "Whoa, hands off. We are very reluctant to move in this direction with a referendum bill because we do not want to have a challenge under the charter."

Now either it is soliciting challenges or it is not. The government is not concerned about challenges under the charter as far as immigrants are concerned but it is concerned when it comes to citizens of this country who are not immigrants. Government cannot have it both ways.

Either government is fully aware this is going to lead to a number of charter challenges and is going to bog down the system even more, or the legal advisor of the government said this would not create charter chal-

lenges. Quite frankly, I would like to see the government table any of this legal advice or opinion where it says this type of activity or legislation on the part of the government would not engender charter challenges because I think the lawyers would be wrong.

[Translation]

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, Canada has always been a welcoming nation. I said earlier that we must adapt our immigration laws to the new realities of the 1990s. When it has been explained to prospective immigrants that there will be certain limitations regarding their place of residence for a certain time, we are firmly convinced that once they are here, they will accept those conditions. In fact, these changes were proposed following wide-ranging consultations among various groups in this country and were welcomed by a large number of Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the minister and first I want to say to him and to the people of Canada that we are not opposed to improving, streamlining or making the Immigration Act of this country better than what it is. We have difficulty with the fact that a very complex bill is being jammed through the system so quickly. It is tough to comprehend all aspects of this.

My question is with respect to the part of the minister's speech where he said that we are going to be able to better control the movement of new immigrants. Under the proposed amendments to the new Constitution we are basically giving immigration to the provinces. That means there will be provincial immigration operations right across the country. The provinces will all be doing their own thing. What mechanism will we have as a national government to correct any abuses to the immigration system once we pass on this immigration responsibility to each of the provinces? Is there any part of this amendment or this act which covers that?

[Translation]

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, since as yet there has been no agreement on a new distribution of powers in a renewed Canada, these problems will be dealt with under our current immigration legislation, on the basis of the distribution of powers as it exist today. As soon as these powers are to be transferred in some way or