

● (1450)

Those are statements of fact, Mr. Speaker, and the minister and his department are the only ones who have any information whatsoever.

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, with great respect to the hon. member I want to point out that I sent him a draft copy of the statement and if he will carefully examine my comments he will see that when I was on my feet I did, as I think is properly my right, make some corrections and changes.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: You change every ten minutes.

An hon. Member: We cannot even rely on the statement.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Speaker: May we have order, please. The hon. minister, I am sure, would appreciate and agree with the Chair that this is hardly a point of order but a point of debate. I would hope that we might continue with the hon. member for Hamilton West. At the same time, I think I might remind the hon. member for Hamilton West of the terms of Standing Order 15 which gives him the right to make comments without provoking debate.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to provoke a debate with my remarks, though apparently they cut home as far as the minister is concerned. Without replying to what he has said, let me read the last paragraph of the statement which leads me to say that the government has not made up its mind what to do in this most serious situation at this time. The last paragraph reads:

In view of the concern expressed not only by responsible organizations but also by responsible newspapers in Canada, that more time may be needed to allow the new climate of trust to take effect, we are assessing the situation closely as the time available to register draws to a close. I will also listen carefully to any comments from hon. members. As hon. members are aware, any extension of the adjustment program would require new legislation to be passed by parliament.

What the minister is attempting to do is acquire direction and leadership from editorial comment and the reaction of Canadians. I am very surprised by this statement because there are a number of matters which should have been dealt with to allay the fears of many of these illegal immigrants. Did the minister mention anything about his policy with respect to the alleged witch hunt? This is of great concern to many of these people, but the minister ignored it. Did the minister give selective assurances with respect to his attitude as to what moral turpitude means? What does the prohibited clause mean? How do we find proof of residency? What does the minister think about those people who have been working but not filing income tax returns? These matters are of great concern and the questions should have been answered. There should have been some indication of what the government and the minister think about them, but nothing was said because the minister does not know what to do and is seeking

Immigration

advice from members of parliament and the people of Canada.

This has been a magnificent program, Mr. Speaker; there is no doubt about that. It is unique. No other country has attempted to do what we have done and we on this side of the House wish the minister every success. I dislike being partisan but in view of what is happening I have to be. We can see from the statement that the minister has made up his mind that there will be an extension. Why does he not come to the House and say that he wants two more weeks? If we are given the facts we will approach the matter with an open mind, especially as the program came from this side of the House in the first instance. We remember when the minister cut off applications and we protested that it should not be done in that way but should be approached in a humanitarian manner. At first the minister disagreed but suddenly he flip-flopped and brought in this legislation which we endorse.

I repeat that this is a good program but we hope that the minister will consider the economics of the matter. I do not know how many people are involved but if the time is extended we may get another 10,000 or 5,000 people. This would save the country money compared with the mass deportation orders that would have to ensue eventually.

We are not going to tell the minister what to do. He knows what we think as we started this program in the first instance.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Get out of the job.

Mr. Andras: What has he said?

Mr. Alexander: In all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, I must say that the advertisements have been good; there is no question about that. I still believe, however, as many other people do, that there are some who have not been reached and perhaps there are some who are not yet prepared to accept the government's sincerity. If this be true, I wish the minister would tell us; that is what we are waiting to hear. If this be a fact, perhaps there is need to extend the program. If the minister would bring the facts before us and let us know whether he wants an extension of time we would be prepared to approach this matter with an open mind for the benefit of Canada and Canadians.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) criticizes the government for the inadequacy of this program—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Orlikow: —and then says it is for his party to express an opinion on whether the program should be extended. As to the success of the program, close to 50,000 people have come forward. This indicates, first of all, that we have a mess of considerable proportions in this country. People who were here—

An hon. Member: Whose fault was that?