

Adjournment Debate

However, other backlog processing activities continue in the meantime, as does regular immigration program delivery.

It should be noted that backlog processing activities are resourced and staffed separately from the regular immigration process activities. These are temporary resources allocated specifically to deal with the backlog.

To those who want an amnesty or an administrative review, we say that neither is a solution. Canadian experience and that of other countries has demonstrated that such measures simply do not work.

With respect to the new refugee determination system, Bill C-55 is in fact working quite well. Three of the major goals of the new legislation were to reduce the amount of time that it took to render a decision, to render fair and consistent decisions, and to reduce—if not stop—the flow of manifestly unfounded claimants. All of these goals have, to a large extent, been accomplished. There have not been any large scale movements of manifestly unfounded claimants such as was seen with the old system.

There has been some difficulty in moving to maximum efficiency, but this is normal for a new and very complex law. In the first nine months of 1990, 27 per cent more cases were opened than in all of 1989, and 20 per cent more cases were terminated than over the same period the previous year.

While there has been an unfortunate build-up of cases in the system, it must be remembered that cases are being decided in a number of months rather than a number of years, as was the situation under the old system.

The refugee determination system has seen the intake of new claimants almost double in the second year of its operation. Given the results to date, it is apparent that the system is coping quite well with what is coming before it.

The Auditor General has recently proposed a number of changes, and many had already been acted upon. For example, when the Auditor General suggested that steps be taken to reduce the number of adjournments and improve the scheduling of hearings, the department sent out in August, 1990 detailed directives outlining a modified approach which reduces the number of adjournments, and increases the efficiency and effectiveness of scheduling. In December, scheduling supervisors met to

analyze the progress in scheduling and to work out improved procedures to reduce the number of adjournments.

The Auditor General proposed that the first hearing process for cases not contested by the Minister of Employment and Immigration be streamlined. Employment and Immigration undertook two pilot projects in Vancouver and Niagara Falls. It evaluated and simplified the inquiry process, in which all cases conceded that first level hearings would be dealt with by means of a paper process only. Following these pilots, Employment and Immigration moved to implement the process nationally. This is being done right now.

Finally, the Auditor General stated that Employment and Immigration should consider having medical examinations and security and criminality checks conducted promptly following the time a person claims refugee status, given the high percentage of acceptance experienced to date. Procedures are in place to conduct criminal checks on persons arriving at ports of entry whose identity is in doubt. Efforts will be made to speed up medical and security checks.

HAMILTON HARBOUR COMMISSION

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Madam Speaker, to follow up on numerous earlier questions to the Minister of Transport, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the conduct of Burlington realtor, Peter Lush, in his conflicting roles as Chairman of the Hamilton Harbour Commission and agent for the vendor of pieces of property the Hamilton Harbour Commission was interested in purchasing. Most importantly, I would like to summarize the government's actions which perpetuated the conflict.

Realtor Peter Lush, who resigned his position with the Harbour Commission on October 2 of this year, was initially appointed to the Hamilton Harbour Commission in December of 1986, and subsequently re-appointed in 1989 by Orders in Council.

It was widely known that Mr. Lush had several close friends in cabinet, such as the Conservative member for Lincoln, who, it is reported, encouraged and supported Mr. Lush into becoming chairman.

It is also known that, at the time of his appointment to the Harbour Commission, Mr. Lush declared that he would not have become a harbour commissioner if it meant giving up his real estate listings with J.I. Case that