

S. O. 31

739-0802; the member for Fundy—Royal at 433-4040; or the member for Carleton—Charlotte at 466-3670.

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[Translation]

LE GALA DES GRANDS QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, this evening, the second *Gala des Grands Québécois* will take place in Quebec City, organized by the *Chambre de commerce et de l'industrie du Québec métropolitain*.

On behalf of my colleagues from the Quebec City region, I wish to pay tribute to three famous people who will receive the title of Grand Québécois this evening: painter Jean-Paul Lemieux, businessman Jacques Morisset and Senator Renaude Lapointe, who in their respective careers have always been an honour to Quebec City and the general area.

Mr. Speaker, they will join Senator Jean-Marie Poiras, author Roger Lemelin and Father Georges-Henri Lévesque, who last year became the first members of the *Académie des Grands Québécois*.

Speaking on behalf of the residents of the Quebec City region and especially those of Montmorency—Orléans, I want to thank these three laureates for their outstanding contribution to the economic, social, cultural life of our beautiful region.

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[English]

YUKON LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq): Mr. Speaker, last week the government announced it had approved the agreement in principle for the largest comprehensive aboriginal claim in Canada. This is the claim of the 17,000 Inuit of the central and eastern Arctic.

The elements of this deal were arrived at by the negotiating parties last December. In February, the agreement in principle was approved by the Inuit nego-

tiators. Last week's approval by the federal cabinet is another major step toward a final agreement.

• (1410)

The Inuit negotiators who persevered over the past 14 years of negotiations deserve our thanks and congratulations.

A formal signing ceremony is planned for late April or early May, in Igloodik, to which the Prime Minister has been invited. I urge the Prime Minister to accept this invitation.

I also encourage the government to keep the door open for the Dene and Métis in the western Arctic. Justice requires a continued commitment to the fair settlement of both the Inuit and the Dene-Métis claims.

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REFUGEE RIGHTS DAY

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, April 4 is Refugee Rights Day when Canadians from coast to coast celebrate the Supreme Court of Canada's decision five years ago today that every person in Canada who claims to be a refugee has the right to an oral hearing.

Ever since that day this government has tried to get around that decision, the UN Convention on Refugee Status and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It refused the quick and fair method for deciding refugee status asked for by Rabbi Plaut, all Canadian churches, Canadian labour, the parliamentary committee on labour, employment and immigration and every independent witness who testified on Bill C-55.

Instead, the government created a tangled, slow and unfair system that has built up a backlog of 21,000 claimants since January 1989 whose cases have not yet been decided.

Now, desperate because 1,900 of this year's claimants are waiting in Newfoundland for decisions, this government imposes still more transit visa restrictions on international travellers through Gander and Mirabel.

On behalf of all Canadians who help real refugees, I call on this government to stop stalling and enact the quick and fair system Canadians asked for.