

*Oral Questions*

ment have already met with Sister Mary Jo Leddy and have made a commitment to accept any new information until June 25. A final decision on these cases has been promised by the end of July.

**Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina):** Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for the commitment to accept the new information, however, there is more that is required.

Will the minister also assure this House that the system of post-claim refugee determination will be changed to include non-governmental organizations so that there can be accountability to the refugees and to the public?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, when the hon. member stands in this House to talk about that group, this is a group promising civil disobedience against a refugee determination system which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee Representative in Canada, who was here two weeks ago, lauds as the best refugee determination system in the world.

This is the fairest and most impartial system in the world and that group is promising civil disobedience against such a system.

The short answer to the hon. member is no. We have a good refugee determination system and we will keep it the way it is. If we can improve upon it we are open to suggestions but the suggestion of getting NGO groups to be part of the decision is not one that I am ready to undertake.

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**SMALL BUSINESSES LOANS ACT**

**Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte):** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of State for Finance and Privatization and has to do with the Small Businesses Loans Act which we passed in this House a few short months ago.

What impact have these changes had on small businesses accessing capital? Have the banks responded positively to these changes that we have introduced in the House?

**Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)):** Madam Speaker, the small business

community is foremost in our minds. When we brought in the Small Businesses Loans Act and broadened it to facilitate a number of businesses and help with the private sector lending, we felt assured that there would be improvement for small businesses.

I am pleased to report that small business registration for loans is up 67 per cent. In fact two banks have special programs now for small businesses.

My colleague the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism will be meeting with the Canadian Bankers' Association within the next week to ensure that the promotion is continued for the availability of these small business loans. It is something that all members in this House have been encouraging.

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT**

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

For over three years visitors to Halifax International Airport have been visually accosted by the sight of a half finished five storey hotel on Department of Transport property that no less a source than the Auditor General says should never have been started in the first place.

After three years I once again ask the minister if he will stop dithering and tell us whether this project will ever be completed or will it stand as a permanent reminder of this government's failed pathetic attempts at economic development in the province of Nova Scotia?

**An hon. member:** They love the helicopters down there.

**Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, this hotel project was started by a prominent businessman in the maritimes and had every indication that it could contribute to the economic development of the region. This is why we entered into that contract.

It has gone sour. It is a very intricate legal situation that we are trying to determine and see our way out of. As soon as this legal situation is cleared then we will be able to dispose of the problem.

• (1450)

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Madam Speaker, that is the same response the minister gave to a question on this matter one and a half years ago.