

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Marchi:** I thank my hon. friend from Brampton for a number of questions.

First, on the refugee situation the minister says that the government is interested in trying to keep the illegitimate refugees out of the country. Members from all sides agree with that.

• (1330 )

When you have in a system a person who says he is a refugee, it should be taken as the most serious and sensitive statement that one can make under our Immigration Act because it basically says that his life or that of his family is in the balance because of his religious or political views. Every member on this side agrees that those refugees who are fraudulent and who are allowed to stay undermine the authenticity of the real, legitimate refugee who needs refuge. There is nothing that has stopped this government from keeping those individuals out.

The minister points out that there is this legislation now that is going to all of a sudden allow it to do something it could not have done up to now. Obviously the minister does not know the bill or if he does he is certainly not giving us the straight goods. This government under the Immigration Act and under Bills C-84 and Bill C-55 had all sorts of powers to do that.

The fact of the matter is that this government has imposed a refugee determination backlog system that we, since 1986, have said is not working. Instead, it continues to spend millions. It continues to appoint refugee board officials. It continues to deny people work permits. It continues to deny people seeing their own families. All for what? Even the people who were denied were not deported in the end.

This government, which wants to give a perception that it is Mr. Tough Guy with refugees, was not serving the refugee, the taxpayer or this country. We have told the government that.

It is still in that backlog clearance program that it said was only going to take a year and only cost \$75 million. It has now taken three or four years and we are in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member for York West. We should remember the fact that with the exception of our native peoples, we are all immigrants to

this country. We have to treat this issue in a very sensitive way.

The member is a former critic on immigration and has been working with this issue for many years. My question has to do with the staffing. He knows, being a Toronto member, that probably 90 per cent of our work as members of Parliament today is taken up with immigration cases.

**An hon. member:** Is that all?

**Mr. Mills:** The member from Ontario asks if that is all. He agrees with us.

The problem that I have with this amendment procedure that we are debating in the House today is that the minister on Friday would not acknowledge that he needed more staff; in other words, that aspect of these amendments which is going to try to streamline and push the paper through so we can maybe go on looking after some of the other problems of the other 90 per cent of our constituents.

I do not see anything in this amendment or in the government's attitude which will help those public servants who are working on these problems to try to get the paperwork done so that people can get off social assistance and into the work force.

We have people who have been sitting around in Toronto, as the hon. member well knows, waiting for months and months trying to get their landed papers. The system is being shut down, I believe, because of lack of proper support staff in the department.

I wonder if the member could comment on that.

**Mr. Marchi:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Broadview—Greenwood makes a very clear and very obvious statement that this government is not putting resources in its department to expedite the claimants, be they landed immigrants or refugees. They cannot even obtain their Canadian citizenship because there is such a barrage and a backlog on that front. At the same time, the government does not allow people to even work.

This minister from Brampton has the audacity to say that those people go on welfare. At least let them work while they are waiting for their status papers. This minister and this government do not give them work permits and then they get criticized for going on welfare. That is the double talk for which this minister and this government have become infamous.