

Adjournment Debate

We have a system which is continually evolving and developing. It is a system which builds on its successes and learns from its mistakes. It is a system which will continue to serve the interests of Canadians and Canada both now and in the years to come. For all those reasons, I cannot support the hon. member's motion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone listening to us tonight and all hon. members a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

Is there unanimous consent to proceed with the late show question now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Madam Speaker, on November 20, I asked the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration a question regarding the fate of the family of Romanian refugees Carmen and Alexander Dima, who had been expelled by Canada to the United States, where they filed a proper application to immigrate.

Since April 5, 1995, this family has been awaiting a response in Plattsburgh, where it lives with the Christian Brothers, thanks to the financial support of the parish of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce in Montreal. Before they left, immigration officials had assured the Dimas that their case would be handled with sympathy and promptness.

Eight months later, the Dima couple and their children are still awaiting the response of immigration authorities, even though the Quebec government acted expeditiously by issuing a certificate of selection on June 14. Once again, I wish to denounce vigorously all the red tape and unjustified delays in processing this application.

• (1835)

Because of these endless delays, the Dima family may also be deported from the United States. This red tape is a major problem in the processing of immigrant applications and refugee claims.

The minister and immigration authorities should realize that behind these applications are people, families, children, and that it is cruel to make them wait for months and years.

I ask the minister to show some compassion for refugees during this holiday season. Christmas is a time for compassion and generosity.

If I may, I would also like to mention the case of Victor Regalado, who has been awaiting a response to his refugee claim for 13 years. This is a record. In the meantime, this Salvadorian refugee has studied and worked here and obtained grants from the Canada Council. He is now living with a Canadian citizen, with whom he has two children, and making an important contribution to Quebec society, particularly in the area of film-making. I ask the minister to grant him permanent resident status as soon as possible.

Finally, I would like to give my best wishes to all immigrants and refugees in Quebec and Canada, as well as to the hon. member for Halifax and the Minister of Immigration, for good health, peace and happiness during this holiday season and in the New Year.

[English]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Dima family, as the hon. member well knows, has co-operated with immigration officials by returning to the United States where they have applied through the normal channels.

It is very important for the hon. member to note that at visa offices in the U.S., 83 per cent of independent applications are completed within 10 months. In particular, in the visa office in New York, 80 per cent of these visas are processed within eight months.

As a matter of course, all legal requirements associated with the processing of an independent application must be met before a visa is issued. This means the necessary medical and security checks. I know the hon. member knows this. In this specific case, some of these requirements are still outstanding. Once all pertinent information has been received, visa officials will be in a position to make a final decision.

I am sure it will be one merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to the order made earlier this day, by unanimous consent the motion is deemed withdrawn.