

Government Orders

All that scheduling is part of the slowdown. It could be cleared with one stroke if the government would abolish that first step, the inquiry, at which sometimes several days are spent debating whether the person has any shred of evidence on which the board might find him a refugee.

They are supposed to find only that there is that possibility, but very often they go into detailed arguments. They try to find out the date the refugee left his home. If he said half a year ago and the date was two days earlier, they say he may not be telling the truth. They play judge and jury examining the details without remembering that their job is primarily to find if there seems to be a case that might be found valid. They try to do the board's work at the earliest stage.

The Canadian Council for Refugees has asked the government to close out that first stage, to use that staff and that money to speed up the process at the second stage, and also to meet Canada's international obligation for justice by having a review of the negative cases after the board hearing to make sure that the board may not have made, in some cases, a fatal mistake. They would not be reviewing 96 per cent of the cases because the board finds 75 per cent of the cases to be refugees. Of the remaining 25 per cent, some might have to be reviewed, but that would cost much less than doing 96 per cent of them twice.

Therefore, I am hoping that the minister will carefully consider what the Canadian Council for Refugees has said. Otherwise, the breakdown of the present refugee program will make this loan fund inoperative. It simply is not going to work if the whole refugee system gets bogged down by the government's insistence on trying to make an unworkable determination system work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Kempling: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find that there is unanimous consent that we refer the bill to a Committee of the Whole at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Paproski in the Chair.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. House in Committee of the Whole on Bill C-77, an act to amend the Immigration Act.

Shall Clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Clause 1 agreed to.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 2 carry?

On Clause 2—Limitation

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Chairman, on Clause 2 I would like to move, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, an amendment of which I gave notice to you and my colleagues earlier.

The purpose of the amendment that I will be moving is to try to have accountability through the Standing Committee of Labour, Employment and Immigration. Since we are moving the authority from legislation to regulations, I believe it is important for members, at least through the officials of the department or the minister, to have the ability to have discourse, be updated, review, and question.

The government may suggest that this amendment would be redundant because it would be covered in the Standing Orders. I suggest that this would give the principle of accountability maximum protection. Our Standing Orders can be changed or altered by a simple motion in the House, whereas if we attach this to the bill, any changes will have to be made through the normal legislative process of any bill.

It endorses the idea of some accountability and discussion with members of Parliament, rather than removing it completely. It protects it from any changes to the Standing Orders of the House through a simple motion. I think it is an honourable price to pay for the political green light and assurance that the opposition parties have given to the government today on this bill.

Therefore, I move:

That Bill C-77 be amended in Clause 2 by adding immediately after line 18 at page 1 the following:

"(a) The Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration of the House of Commons shall be empowered to examine the use of advances made pursuant to this Act."