

Oral Questions

Mr. Nielsen:—which is messed up. The Hon. Member speaks of ego. We do not have an aircraft large enough to carry around the ego of the President of the Liberal Party of Canada who makes such distorted statements and slanders against our Governor General.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary again, directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. In the last Budget the Minister of Finance said: "This Government has moved decisively to bring spending under control", and: "Ottawa must become leaner and more efficient". At a time when the Government has cut back on increases to family allowance—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Riis:—cut back on increases to family allowance, does the Deputy Prime Minister feel that \$40,000 per trip, plus the cost of the crew itself, is a proper expenditure? Is this the kind of signal the Government is trying to send out, that it is a priority for the Prime Minister to make a video of himself?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I have already told the House, perhaps the hon. gentleman was not listening, that the number of flights has been reduced in 18 months, as compared with 12, by 22 per cent, and the number of hours decreased by 23 per cent, for a total saving of \$2.5 million.

Let me ask the hon. gentleman, does he think he contributes to that kind of saving when he and other Members of his Party, and the Liberal Party, accept rides on an aircraft which flies a normally scheduled run to Europe, thus displacing our Armed Forces who are required to buy commercial tickets—

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Come on. How many in your Party have done it?

Mr. Nielsen:—as a result of—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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REFUGEES

DEPARTMENT'S LETTER TO APPLICANTS FOR REFUGEE STATUS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I have copies of a letter which her Department sent to thousands of individuals who are wanted for serious and violent crimes and who are being invited to apply for permanent status if they file a refugee claim.

Why is the Minister going outside the present refugee backlog and soliciting thousands of false refugee claims, 12,000 alone in Toronto, from such individuals as drug traffickers and murderers? Does she not think that this

horrendous amount of extra work will only penalize the current and legitimate refugee claims which already number 22,000?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I can say to you that the Hon. Member's statement is grossly exaggerated. I can tell him that this review will include no one with regard to criminality measures or health considerations. I do want to say that the people who are involved in this process are already in the process and the place they can ask for a refugee determination is at the inquiry stage. The Hon. Member may say that certain people should be blocked from having access to that, but as long as we can guarantee security and health considerations we feel the process should be open to those who may want to ask for refugee status in this country.

REQUEST THAT LETTERS BE RECALLED

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister suggesting that the drug traffickers, offenders and those with armed weapons, should be considered for refugee claims? That is not the definition of "refugee" under the UN. Is the Minister prepared immediately to recall those letters to such offensive individuals and ensure that the only individuals who can apply for the special administrative review are those individuals in the 22,000 backlog who have already submitted a claim, and not the criminals who are outside that stream?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member does not want to hear this. I have already indicated to him that this review will not benefit those who are criminals or those with health considerations who are not allowed to enter this country.

Mr. Marchi: That is not true.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

REMOVAL OF LABOUR REPRESENTATIVE FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. It is in regard to the Post Office. Why has the Government chosen this moment to terminate the appointment to the Board of Directors of Canada Post of one of the labour representatives? Why is it doing this now? Is it intending to change the practice of asking the CLC to nominate labour members to the Board? Did it do it now because that member wrote a letter of complaint to the Government asking for information in order to do his job? Or did the Government do it because there is an important meeting coming up to discuss plans regarding the Post Office?