

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

COMMITTEE STUDY OF CONCERNS OF MILITARY FAMILIES— STATUS OF REPORT AND NATURE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Hon. Lorna Marsden: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Perhaps he would permit me to preface it by congratulating the minister and his colleagues in the government on the appointment of Dr. Geraldine Kenney-Wallace as the new President of the Science Council of Canada. She is a distinguished professor of physics and chemistry at the University of Toronto, has a fine sense of organization and relations with business and other sectors, and is a first-rate person. I think it is an excellent appointment and that we will all benefit from her public service in this capacity.

My question concerns the committee which the government appointed this summer to study concerns of the families of military members. The committee was chaired by Professor Desmond Morton of Erindale College. The committee held hearings at several bases across the country and had some consultations. Can the Leader of the Government tell us whether the report of that committee has been received, and, if so, what is the nature of the recommendations?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, I thank our colleague, Senator Marsden, for her comments concerning the new head of the Science Council of Canada. I am glad to know that that appointment meets with the general approval of honourable senators. I must say that I am not as well informed as I should be with regard to Professor Morton's report, but I shall make inquiries to see whether the report has been received.

Senator Marsden: I wonder if the Leader of the Government could find out, when he makes those inquiries, whether the report will be tabled here or in the other place so that we can see the nature of those recommendations.

Senator Murray: I shall do that, honourable senators.

REFUGEES

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONSULTATIONS ON BILL C-84— EMERGENCY LEGISLATION

Hon. Jerahmiel S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate in his capacity as Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations. On August 12 I asked the leader about Bill C-84. In response to my question he said:

That bill has not been submitted to members of provincial governments nor have specific provisions been canvassed in advance with members of provincial governments.

I have since received notes of the honourable leader given to the Special Joint Commons and Senate Committee on the 1987 Constitutional Accord. On page 14 of his comments he stated, under the heading "Immigration":

Quebec also has a fundamental concern with immigration, which is an area of shared legislative jurisdiction with federal paramountcy.

Under its rules the other place was called back this summer on the basis of a national emergency. Did the government at any time, since it shares jurisdiction with the provinces, get any indication from the provinces that in fact the issue which provoked the bill, which was the entry into Canada of 174 people, was an emergency, and, since the introduction of that bill in the other place, has the leader received any confirmation that there is or was an emergency?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, first, with regard to Bill C-84, it deals with refugee claimants in Canada, and that is a matter within the exclusive competence of the federal government and Parliament. It is not a matter in which jurisdiction is shared. Second, the question of the urgency and the extent of the urgency is, I think, a proper matter for debate, and we will get to that debate when the bill arrives here from the other place.

Senator Grafstein: Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question with regard to shared responsibility. The persons who prompted the bill were, after their screening, landed, if you will, in the province of Ontario. Does the Leader of the Government not think that, because of this shared responsibility, he should have at some point canvassed the issue with the Province of Ontario or the other provinces where some of these refugee claimants were subsequently landed?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, the nature of the emergency is again a matter for debate. What we have here is a situation in which our practices, laws and policies relating to immigration—and indeed the rights of people who come here either as immigrants or as genuine refugees—are all being cast into some doubt by the unexpected arrival of boatloads of people, many of whom have no documents showing refugee status and claim that they have come directly from a particular country when, as it has turned out in other cases, they are not coming from that country but from a third country. Such matters threaten to throw the whole immigration regime into some confusion, to put it mildly. How urgent this matter is in the mind of the honourable senator or in the minds of the members of the government is a matter we can debate at the appropriate time. The government is not in any doubt as to the need to act quickly and firmly on this matter.

Senator Grafstein: Honourable senators, I still have a problem with the leader's answer. Is he saying that it is the intent of the Lang-Cloutier agreement, the subsequent Andras-