

creates anxiety about their futures, and denies them their right to be reunited with their families.

I ask the minister, what steps is she taking to end this torture?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, without accepting any of the vocabulary that has been used, let me say that we have put some steps in place that I think will make the process faster. We have done that in the last few months. Fifty per cent of the cases have been opened, and the process is moving ahead more rapidly. We, too, want to ensure that people's futures are settled.

I would also point out that people can work in this country as soon as they have had their first hearing. There are many countries in which people who are refugee claimants cannot work at all, can never bring their families, and can never become citizens. I think the hon. member should maybe turn his attention to where the real problems are.

**Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has been promising fast action for 21 months. She has failed to deliver. Furthermore, she has taken so many of the regular immigration staff out of normal immigration work that Canadians now have great difficulty in getting action on their sponsorships.

Will the minister stop the torture and stop blocking immigration by declaring an amnesty, that is, land the people in the immigration backlog?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I am really surprised to hear this hon. member, for whom I have a great deal of respect in the refugee field and who is really concerned about refugees, raising some hysteria about torture. That is unlike him and is unworthy of this Chamber and is unworthy of the people—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs. McDougall:** Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has looked at our system. The head of our refugee determination system, Gordon Fairweather, has been in communication with him because our system is regarded as a model, aspects of which may be applied in the rest of the world. That means that we are doing this in a fair and humane way.

### *Oral Questions*

#### **ENERGY**

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The price increases in heating oil and gasoline are a crisis for millions of Canadian homes and businesses, yet the Conservative government cancelled over a dozen programs that Canada had in place to encourage energy conservation. Now Canadians are seeing the result.

Will the minister reconsider the programs cancelled, such as the incentives for converting from oil to natural gas? Will the government also reinstate the cancelled programs, such as the ones at the National Research Council, for developing alternative energies to fossil fuels?

• (1440)

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, on the first question, the answer is no. On the second question, the answer will be in the Green Plan.

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I attended the minister's news conference this morning where he gave his blessing to a further 10-cent-a-litre increase for the price of gasoline based on present world prices. I think Canadians will be grateful to him to have that blessing.

How much of a price increase for home heating oil is he prepared to give his blessing to in light of present world prices?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, we had a good federal-provincial meeting. We went through the various aspects.

I was asked whether or not the price increase on crude post the August 2 invasion by Saddam Hussein of Kuwait had worked its way through the Canadian pricing system. I said, no, that there was a mathematical formula which would relate to about 0.7 cents per litre of increase for every dollar increase on WTI.

What I find incredible is that that member was a member of a government which, at this time, wanted the price of oil to be \$116.63 a barrel. He wanted the Montreal reference price to be \$78.73. In other words, he wanted Canadians to pay \$78.73 for a barrel of oil,