that is in favour of those who do not follow our regulations and laws. Of course, that is not true.

If the Government was genuinely concerned about trying to deal with abuse, then what better way than to have in our laws a refugee determination system that works quickly and fairly? We then come to the delay of almost three years. If we had a refugee system in place that processed claims fairly in weeks and months rather than in months and years, then that would be the greatest deterrence to those who wish to do an end run around our system. Those so-called immigration consultants, those smugglers, charging up to $10,000 and $15,000 would not be able to sell their special packages since someone would not spend his or her life savings in order to stay in a country for a matter of weeks or months. They will come if they know that they have a chance to stay here for a few years. That would be worth their while. But if a refugee claimant who is not a bona fide claimant has to spend upwards of $10,000 to come here only to find out that the processing system allows for a decision in months, then that would be the greatest message of deterrence that the country could send out.

• (1200)

It is the type of signal that we should have been promoting rather than simply procrastinating for up to three years and then moving in a mass of hysteria in response to 174 arrivals with Bill C-84. We must keep in mind that Bill C-84 targets those who come in by boat. Of those in the current 15,000 backlog 300 have come in by boat. The other 14,700 have come in by plane, train, bus, car, and through American border crossings.

The Government has tried to market Bill C-84 as the be-all and end-all of refugee legislation. It is not that. It addresses itself to only a small portion of the larger looming dilemma that we face as a country and as a member of the international community.

If the Government were serious with respect to those manipulators who perpetrated the Portuguese scam, those who were responsible for the Brazilian scam, those who perpetrated the Turkish scam, those who sell visas, passports and false social insurance numbers, then it would have moved months and years ago. The Government should not have delayed any prosecution on those immigration consultants. As we speak today, those individuals are out on the streets of Toronto and Montreal carrying on their business as usual.

If the Government were genuinely concerned about abuse it would not have waited until the summer of 1987 to introduce a piece of legislation, a piece of legislation which runs counter to the best interests of the country. Rather, it would have taken the necessary steps along the way. If it wanted to put in place a deterrence Bill, then it could have put one in place in concert with Bill C-55. It could have introduced such a Bill not some months ago but early on in its mandate.

The Minister said that they listened and heard the great debate. I think that what he was addressing was the process by which Bill C-84 and, indeed, Bill C-55 have come to fruition. It was not an honourable process. On the one hand Bill C-84 had one week of debate in committee. That was when we really had the chance to cross the t's and dot the i's and to go through a clause by clause study. There was one week in which witnesses were asked to participate. For the most part those witnesses came from central Canada because those in the regions, whether they be easterners or westerners, had no time to prepare.

Then, other witnesses were denied an opportunity to come before the committee because it was not prepared to have enough time in order to hear them. It was a process which dictated to Canadians. It was not a prime example of participatory democracy in which the aspirations of Canadians, their input, their suggestions and recommendations were listened to, but in fact the Government simply rushed the process. It rushed the process through the House and in committee and then back again to the House.

The process was not much better with respect to Bill C-55. In regard to that Bill there was some additional time for witnesses to be heard, but there was still a great rush to pass the legislation.

I said earlier that the Government should have introduced this type of legislation in the early part of its mandate rather than three years after its commencement. However, since it decided in its third year to proceed with such legislation, the very least it could have offered was a proper debate to ensure that we would be doing service and justice to a piece of legislation that would be in place for years to come.

This is legislation which is supposed to meet the aspirations of many of the organizations which are active on a daily basis in terms of the plight of refugees, and not a piece of legislation which in a few months or a few years will be struck down by the courts because of some aspect of the Charter or the Constitution. If that happens then it will place in jeopardy all the work that led up to the debate in the House of Commons. It will place in jeopardy our whole determination system and perhaps even paralyse it as a result of a Supreme Court ruling or a ruling by another court.

Then what will we say to Canadians? Are we to say, "Well, we passed the legislation. We thought it would pass the courts and it did not. We now have to start from scratch again"? That is why the process required a great deal of scrutiny. That is why the process required a greater sensitivity on behalf of the Government.

When the Minister came before the committee which studied Bill C-55 he said, "Over the last few weeks you have heard from many special interest groups and individuals, all with strongly-held views on the best course to follow and concerns about perceived weaknesses in the proposed legislation. Like you, I have listened to their suggestions and concerns". He then proceeded to deliver his prepared speech.