

We can understand the sentiment the minister expresses. She has objected that it would not be right and it would not be wise to admit as landed immigrants to Canada people such as there are some in the backlog who had falsely claimed refugee status, perhaps even knowing it was false.

Therefore there is this long, dragged out process for sorting out which one stays, which one goes, this one stays, that one goes and so on. It is causing this hardship to the refugee claimants in the backlog. The CCR is mainly concerned in its resolution about sorting out who had a justifiable case and who did not. It is taking too long by the system the minister enacted a year and a half ago in her regulations.

There is a further problem. It is that the staff which is used to do that sorting out is badly needed somewhere else. There are 50 members of the Immigration and Refugee Board trained to examine the cases of refugee claimants who are being used not to examine the new refugee claimants who have come since January 1, 1989, but to examine cases in the old backlog. They do not do it alone; they do it in company with an adjudicator. An adjudicator is one of the most highly trained and most highly paid members of the immigration staff. There are other staff members used, such as case presenting officers, refugee officers, translators, clerks and so on.

It costs a lot to cause that much delay. The worst cost is that those adjudicators and those refugee board members are not available to work on the new system.

Of the 21,000 people who came to Canada last year, 1989, to claim refugee status and who were to be processed under the new system, less than half—about one-third—have had a decision. As of January, 1990, there were about 13,000 people who had come to Canada the year before to claim refugee status and who had not yet been told yes or no.

That was supposed to be the fast system. When the present minister and her predecessors argued for Bill C-55, the number one argument for it was that we must act quickly. There were two reasons given. They were two good reasons for acting quickly. One was that a genuine refugee claimant deserves justice quickly, deserves to be landed quickly, as the law would provide. The other is that Canada deserves to get rid of the phoney quickly, as the law provides.

Government Orders

If, as the minister of the day predicted, those decisions were made within two or three months of a person's arrival in Canada, then there would be no refugee scams. There would be none of the racketeers telling people in Portugal, Brazil, Trinidad, India or anywhere else: "Give me \$5,000 and I will get you into Canada. All you have to do is say the word refugee. Even if they finally kick you out it will be in about three, four or five years and you will have earned a lot of money to take back home, after you have paid me". That is the kind of scam that developed once there was a long waiting period in the mid-1980s to get refugee status determined. Yet the government said that the most important thing we have to do with the new law is to make it fast.

The government has failed to do what it said was most important in the new law. Some 13,000 people who came to Canada in 1989 did not at year end have a decision. Some may have come the day before, some may have come many months before. The government itself predicted in the Estimates that by the end of 1990 the delay time would be about nine months. Presumably that was a cautious prediction. Presumably it could be more than nine months. But the government itself knows that the new system is not working the way the government intended it to work.

There is one reason above all others that accounts for it not working. The government is doing its work twice. The government has a system of double examination. First it examines the refugee claimant for what it calls a credible basis. Does he have any evidence upon which a refugee claim might be determined? If so, he goes to the full hearing of the refugee board; if not, he goes out. Ninety-six per cent of those who have come in and have got as far as that first hearing—some have not got there yet, after months—were judged to have that credible basis and were sent on to the refugee board.

• (1230)

The refugee board then has to do the same work all over again, with even more high priced staff, two refugee board members, each getting about \$100,000 a year. The work is done twice. There is all the in-between work of scheduling, notifying the claimant, making sure that an interpreter, the presenting officer, and the board members are there, and so on. They also have to make sure that there is a room that they can use.