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—
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Mr. Norman Doyle

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• (1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC)): Perhaps we can bring our meeting to order.

Before I go into our committee meeting, I want to say thank you to my colleague here, Andrew Telegdi, for chairing our last committee meeting. I couldn't get here. I had glowing reports, and people actually saying that the current chair should be replaced with the vice-chair, so I had better not miss too many more committee meetings.

Thank you, Andrew, for a job well done. I appreciate it very much.

This morning I want to welcome, on behalf of the committee, our witnesses. We have Mr. Ken Sandhu, full-time member of the Immigration and Refugee Board, head office, and deputy chair of the refugee protection division in Toronto's regional office.

Welcome, Mr. Sandhu.

And we have Lois Figg, full-time member and assistant deputy chair of the Immigration and Refugee Board, Toronto regional office.

Welcome to you as well.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, before we go on, I just want to make sure that the appointments are under the new system.

The Chair: Yes. Would you like to clarify?

Before you do that, I also want to welcome Krista Daley, senior general counsel.

Welcome to all of you here today. We'll get under way in a moment, I'm sure, when we find out what Mr. Telegdi is talking about, because I'm not totally familiar—

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Right now the new appointments that are being processed are under the new system.

The Chair: The new appointment system.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Yes, the new appointment system. That's why I wanted to clarify.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): What does it matter? The witnesses are here I think because of Mr. Karygiannis' motion or request, and specifically for these two, so you can ask them any questions you want to. But how these or future

appointments are made is not something that needs to be settled here at this point.

The Chair: Order, please.

Maybe we can continue and get into our meeting. That will clarify itself, I'm sure, in due course.

Welcome to all of you. We look forward to a good, productive meeting, the way we generally handle it. I'm sure you're fully aware of it. You're given the opportunity to make some opening statements—and feel free to do that—after which, of course, our committee members like to take the opportunity to direct some questions your way, or to make some comments, or what have you. So please feel perfectly at home here, if that's possible, and make your statements, and we'll see what we can do to get the meeting moving along.

Mr. Sandhu, Ms. Figg, or Krista Daley, whoever wishes to make the first statement, it's in your hands.

• (1110)

Mr. Ken Sandhu (Full-time member of the Immigration and Refugee Board, Deputy Chairperson of the Refugee Protection Division, As an Individual): Okay, sir, I'll begin.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Ken Sandhu: I came to Canada in 1968 at the age of 18 as a landed immigrant. I attended high school in Guelph, Ontario, where I completed my grade 13. I completed my bachelor's degree from the University of Guelph and I worked as a correctional officer with the Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services. I was promoted to various positions, gaining experience in human and financial resources management, including experience in supervisory positions.

In March 1988 I was appointed executive vice-chair of the Ontario Board of Parole, which was an order in council appointment. In March 1995 I was appointed chair of the Ontario Board of Parole, a position I held until September 2001. Until my appointment to the Immigration and Refugee Board as a member in June of 2004, I held various executive positions with the Government of Ontario.

I have been a full-time member of the Immigration and Refugee Board for the past three years. I applied for the deputy chairperson position in the fall of 2006 in response to an advertisement that was put forward by the minister's office and I was interviewed and appointed in March 2007.

I have been completing some of the unfinished business in Toronto with respect to the hearings, and at the same time I have been attending to my responsibilities as a deputy chairperson. Essentially I have been shuttling between Toronto and Ottawa. My position is in Ottawa, and I will be moving to Ottawa in the near future.

With respect to my educational background, I completed my master's degree from York University and went on to work on my PhD, but I did not complete it. Only the thesis was left to be completed.

I have belonged to several professional voluntary organizations and have received a few awards in my life. I have a level 1 coaching certificate from the Ontario Baseball Association, and I coached minor league baseball teams for several years and girls' soccer teams.

I'm married, I have three children, and today is my 32nd wedding anniversary.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Thank you.

This, Mr. Chairman, is a part of my statement with respect to myself. I have submitted my CV, which I presume the members have. If they have any questions about any of it, I'd be happy to answer.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sandhu. Congratulations on this very important day. I'm sure you're looking forward to getting out of here and going to celebrate with your wife.

Ms. Figg, do you have any comments?

Ms. Lois D. Figg (Full-time member and Assistant Deputy Chairperson of the Immigration and Refugee Board, Toronto Regional Office, As an Individual): I have an opening statement as well.

Good morning, Mr. Chair and committee members.

I immigrated to Canada as an infant, with my parents, from England to Montreal. I grew up in Montreal. I attended CÉGEP. I attended the University of Western Ontario and graduated from it with an honours bachelor degree in history. I attended the University of Windsor Law School, at which time I developed a lifelong passion for human rights law, and was called to the Ontario bar in 1988.

Shortly thereafter I began to work for the Immigration and Refugee Board as a refugee hearings officer. Within about seven months I was promoted to manage the unit of about 40 refugee hearing officers.

In July 1990 I was hired by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and I was posted to Hong Kong. I was in Hong Kong as an appeals counsellor, representing Vietnamese boat people who were detained in camps. It was my job to go to the camps and interview them and represent meritorious claims.

During the time that I was at the UNHCR, I was also seconded for about 18 months to work on a special committee dealing with, mainly, unaccompanied minors. It was my job to make a

recommendation on their refugee status but also devise a durable solution for each of those minors.

In May 1994 I was appointed by the Hong Kong government to the refugee status review board, which was an appellant-level refugee decision-making authority. Later that year I returned home to Canada.

Following the birth of my daughter in—actually, her birthday was yesterday—June 1995, I became a stay-at-home mom for three years. I was a group volunteer at Metro Mothers Network in Toronto. I returned to the workforce in 1998, as I was hired by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. I was investigator there for about a year. Following that, I won a competition to become a mediator.

During that period of my life I was also a director at my daughter's day care centre. I also took an advanced law degree at night and was conferred a master's of law in June 2003 from Osgoode Hall Law School.

In early 2000 I was invited to write a three- to four-hour written test to become an IRB board member. After passing the test and being interviewed, I was appointed to the IRB in June 2000.

I trained for about four weeks and then was assigned to the Americas team in Toronto. The team I'm designated to hears claims emanating from the Americas. I was also assigned a mentor.

I should point out that I was initially appointed for two years, but in April 2002 I was reappointed for five more years. I was designated by the then chairperson, Peter Showler, to be a member manager. I led a team of decision-makers in Toronto until April 2005.

In April 2005 I was appointed as an assistant deputy chairperson of the immigration appeal division in Toronto. In the fall of that same year, Mr. Fleury, our former chair, asked me to act as deputy chairperson of the immigration appeal division for three months.

More recently, in November 2006, I competed for the position of assistant deputy chairperson in the refugee protection division, and in April 2007 Minister Finley reappointed me for three years and designated me as assistant deputy chairperson of the refugee protection division in Toronto.

Thank you.

● (1115)

The Chair: Wow. Thank you. Very impressive qualifications.

Our committee members now, I'm sure, are going to make some comments. We have about an hour and ten minutes. We do have three motions that we have to deal with, so we'll break at roughly twenty minutes to one to deal with the various motions. Will that be fine?

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Or it might be even sooner.

The Chair: Or it might even be sooner.

Anyway, first of all, the official critic for immigration, Mr. Omar Alghabra, I'll go to you.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, everybody. Thank you for coming here today.

I can't help but feel guilty. Both of you seem to have important occasions today and yesterday, but you're here, so I hope that didn't cause any changes of plans. I want to thank you for coming here today and congratulate you on your service and your résumés.

One of the reasons why I think we're interested in talking to you is to learn from you what your perspectives are and how you think you can, within your new roles, offer a vision, and how you can deal with the challenges and opportunities the IRB is facing. So I'm interested, and I'll be asking both of you, Mr. Sandhu first, what do you think are the most pressing challenges and opportunities right now at the IRB?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Sir, I have to say that the pressing issues are that we do not wish to see the backlog grow again. We wish to make decisions as efficiently and effectively as we can. Essentially, that's the objective. If I was to mention the top concern, that would be it.

• (1120)

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Ms. Figg.

Ms. Lois D. Figg: As I'm sure you know, we have a dual mandate. We have a mandate to be fair. Quality decision-making is our primary goal, but also to be efficient. So the management team always has to take decisions grounded from that mandate.

It's our job to inform our chairperson of what directions we can take to be more efficient and fair. In this regard we have constant quality issue sessions with our members. We make sure that our members not only deliver high-quality justice and consistent decision-making, but we also want to make sure that we can be as efficient as possible at the same time.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Thank you both.

Mr. Sandhu, building on what you just said, how do you think we, or more specifically you, can help deal with the backlog issue right now? If I were to ask you for three measures that you were going to take or adopt, as you've already accepted and I guess you've started this assignment, what would they be?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Sir, we have already started to take some action. We have undertaken an initiative in our western region, which we call an integrated approach to dealing with hearings. What this means is that we have cross-appointed members from our immigration appeal division as well as our refugee protection division to hear cases in both the divisions.

We are able to do that especially in our western region, which is our smallest region, because first of all the numbers are small, and, secondly, we have to do hearings in several locations, such as Calgary. The office is in Vancouver, but we do hearings in Calgary, in Edmonton, and all the way to Winnipeg. So that would help us in using our existing resources more effectively. If a member from either division is going over to one of those sites to do an immigration appeal division, and there happens to be a pending refugee protection division claim, the member can take care of that matter.

Secondly, in our Montreal office we have looked at a simplified approach to information gathering, which will assist us in bringing forward the claims more rapidly. What we discovered was that our

partner agencies, CIC and CBSA, were completing forms and information on the same candidate, and then the IRB was the third to come along and basically gather the same data. So we are looking at a simplified approach to getting information so that the cases move forward more quickly.

The last thing I would say with respect to efficiency is that we expect as appointments are being made to the board that we will have an issue with training members. We're looking at assigning resources to train members so that they can start to become decision-makers as quickly as possible.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Do I have time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes, you do, Mr. Alghabra.

Go ahead. You've got a couple of minutes yet.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: I really don't have any more questions. I just want to leave with you the fact, and I will probably be reiterating something that you agree with and believe in, that those are extremely awesome responsibilities you have. You are making life-and-death decisions at times. You're right, the difficulty here is in balancing between fairness and efficiency and protecting the interests of Canada, as well as protecting vulnerable individuals who need our help.

Thank you for your service. I want to urge you to remain cognizant of these priorities, and I wish you all success.

• (1125)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Alghabra.

We now go to Madame Faille.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you. I'd like to thank you for having agreed to appear before the committee. It has become a habit, in fact, since we began our study of the board, problems related to the backlog and problems that refugees are experiencing. That is why we decided to ask future members to appear before the committee so that we can ask you some questions. This also gives us an opportunity to see you and to learn why you want to do this job.

With regard to the duties you are required to perform, are you able to work in French? What level of understanding of this language do you have? Among the complaints that we heard, some concerned the workplace. The members are not always able to work in their language on a daily basis. I'd like to know your language level, with respect to the duties you have. I believe that this is important because the people whose cases you hear, as my colleague mentioned earlier, come from various regions throughout the world, including some where people also speak French. Other complaints we heard in offices in western Canada and in Toronto concerned the difficulty of being served in French, which is one of the two official languages.

I would also like to know whether, since your appointment, you have had the opportunity to meet with partners, such as immigration consultants or the Canadian Bar Association, to talk about the future of the Immigration and Refugee Board, or IRB. There are many problems. It takes far too long for cases to be heard.

I believe that earlier my colleague was trying to understand your priorities as a manager. So, the difficulty of scheduling meetings is causing a lot of problems for the partners, and agencies working with refugees. Many of them do not have a lot of funding. Yet, it takes about 30 to 40 hours to prepare a refugee application. People at legal aid also have very little time to prepare a case.

What do you think about this, with regard to the partners concerned? I can appreciate that you want to be efficient and hear cases within a six-month period. In fact, that has always been the board's intention. No one likes to have a backlog, because the longer people wait, the more settled they get, the more attached they are to Canada. So you will understand that we are aware of all these issues. But how do you, as a manager, see this? Please tell us too what you want to achieve and why you wanted to become a member.

Thank you.

● (1130)

[English]

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Mr. Chairman, I'll start off by answering that I am learning French. My office is fully bilingual. All instructions or directions that have to be issued are issued in both languages. I have every desire and plan to learn French.

With respect to meeting with the partners or stakeholders, before I answer that, let me say that in the short time I have been in the position, even though I've been finishing off my work in Toronto, I have managed to meet with all the members in all three offices. Toronto, of course, I knew well, having been there for three years. I've been to Montreal, and I'm going back again; we're having a quality training session next week.

With respect to stakeholders and partners, we have had meetings with them. We have just concluded a one-day session at the national level with all of those groups that you mentioned. And we have put back on track the regional consultations, which I think are in some ways more important than the national one, because that's where the work gets done. That's where those issues that need to be resolved must be resolved. I know that my colleague held a meeting in Toronto just a week ago. There is one taking place in Montreal next week. And we will be looking at holding one in Vancouver.

As you say, they are our partners, and they bring forward issues that are crucial to the proper functioning of this organization.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: Perhaps you could give us an update after your meeting to tell the committee of these individuals' concerns? Perhaps in the next few weeks, you could advise the committee of your concerns. We have not always had the opportunity to meet with them individually. However, when such meetings do happen, there is an opportunity to get into the technical details or details regarding the problems. So I would like you to give the committee an update regarding their concerns.

[English]

Mrs. Krista Daley (Senior General Counsel, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada): I'm not quite sure what you mean by that. Perhaps you could clarify. Do you mean that we would come back and report to this committee on an ongoing basis about our various stakeholder consultations?

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: The meeting will be held next week. As you know, we will soon recess. However, over the summer, the committee members will do work on their own. So, we won't necessarily have the opportunity to meet with each of the partners this summer. I would ask you to provide us with the list of people who take part and a summary of the meeting, so we can learn what their main concerns are, and so that in the fall when we come back to talk about issues affecting refugees, we will have a briefing book.

Thank you.

[English]

Mrs. Krista Daley: Yes, we're prepared to do that.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Faille.

Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Again, I want to thank you for celebrating your 32nd anniversary with us, Mr. Sandhu. I hope you have a more appropriate celebration later on today.

And I hope you didn't miss out on your daughter's birthday celebration last night, Ms. Figg.

I also want to thank you for the important work you do in the protection of refugees. It is something that is very important to Canadians, as I'm sure you both know. Canada, I think, is justly proud of our recent record in the protection and resettlement of refugees. I know that your part in operating a fair and just system is crucial to both that hope of Canadians and the reputation Canada has. So thank you very much for that work.

Mr. Sandhu, my first question—and it may be a very simple thing—is when your appointment as the deputy chairperson of the refugee protection division was announced, it said that you were designated. It didn't use the word “appointment”. I'm wondering if someone, maybe Ms. Daley, could explain the difference between designation and appointment. When you spoke, you used the word “appointment”, but I think the press releases and the other issues talked about designation.

I'm just trying to understand the difference.

● (1135)

Mrs. Krista Daley: It's a good thing I brought my well-worn legislation here. Let me have a look.

I will read from the legislation itself:

The Chairperson and the Deputy Chairpersons and Assistant Deputy Chairpersons...are appointed on a full-time basis and the other members are appointed....

The word "designation" has come up in the context of the IRB, with respect to the coordinating members, who are, in essence, the people who would report to Lois Figg, and they are designated by the chairperson to be coordinating members. There is sometimes some confusion around that, but by legislation, the chairperson, the deputy chair, and the assistant deputy chair were appointed by the GIC, so these two members were appointed by the GIC.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Why was the language of designation used in terms of Mr. Sandhu's becoming the deputy chairperson?

Mrs. Krista Daley: Is that in the press release?

Mr. Bill Siksay: Yes, and it is in his CV as well from the IRB website. It says that Mr. Sandhu was appointed a member of the Immigration and Refugee Board on June 21, 2004, and designated deputy chairperson of the refugee protection division on March 5, 2007.

Mrs. Krista Daley: I really can't comment on that. That might be just a form issue. I really can't comment on why that is. By legislation, it is an appointment, and it's a Governor in Council appointment.

Mr. Bill Siksay: I wonder if both of you might describe the process you went through in terms of re-appointment and appointment to the deputy chairperson jobs you have? Just describe what the process involved from the time you expressed interest in those positions.

Mr. Ken Sandhu: I'll go first.

Mr. Chairman, I was appointed to the Immigration and Refugee Board in June 2004. I applied for the position in January 2002. It went through a series of checks, I would say. My application was first vetted against criteria, I understand, and I was informed that it would now go forward. I had to then appear for a fairly extensive written test. After the test, I had to provide references, and I know that my references were checked quite extensively. After that, there was a three-person committee that interviewed me. After that, I was informed that I had been successful and that my name was on this list.

Then in early 2004 I was informed that there was one more step as a result of a new process that had been constructed, and I would have to appear for one more interview. At that time, I was interviewed by the former chairperson, Mr. Jean-Guy Fleury, as well as the assistant deputy chairperson in Toronto and one other community person. As a result of that interview, my name was put forward to the minister, and I was informed that I was appointed in 2004.

With respect to the deputy chair position, the deputy chair position was advertised on our website in the fall of 2006. I applied. I was called for an interview in December 2006. I was interviewed by a representative of the Prime Minister's Office, of the Privy Council Office, and the then minister's office, and the former chairperson was also present, although he didn't actively ask any questions.

As a result of that interview, I was informed that three names had been put forward and that I was one of those three. Eventually I got the word saying I was the one who had been picked.

● (1140)

Ms. Lois D. Figg: As I mentioned, I first became assistant deputy chairperson of the immigration appeal division, and that was in the spring of 2005. I had simply responded to a call for expressions of interest. I'm trying to think back, but I believe we were required to answer three questions. I don't remember what they were, but basically it was outlining your vision of what you would do in your division were you to become the assistant deputy chair. I was shortlisted for an interview. I was interviewed—I think it was around December 2004—by Mr. Fleury, our former chair; by Marcie Bourassa, who was at the time the deputy chairperson; and by somebody from our human resources department. I know the chair had my performance evaluations before him. From then, I'm not sure how many names might have been recommended to the minister. But I was eventually appointed.

The Chair: It's eight minutes now.

Mrs. Krista Daley: Mr. Chair, I think I need to clarify my answer to Mr. Siksay with respect to the legislation, because of course I've been sitting here now combing through my legislation, trying to find a response.

If I could just clarify the record, I did err, Mr. Siksay. There is a provision that says that the deputy chair and the ADCs are in fact designated by the Governor in Council from among the full-time members, and then the chair, deputy chair, and assistant deputy chairs are appointed on a full-time basis. So it is in fact a designation. I erred, and if the record wants to be clear, that's subsection 153(2).

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Grewal, you have seven minutes.

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to you all for your time and your presentations.

I have two questions. They're very short, and they go to Ms. Figg.

Ms. Figg, according to a story in *The Globe and Mail* in 2004, you accepted about 289 refugee claimants out of 353. That's an 81% acceptance rate. This gave you the highest acceptance rate in the country. The national average was I think between 42% to 47%. This, I believe, was for the 2001 to 2003 period. Why were you more likely to rule in favour of a claimant than your colleagues? I just want to know.

My second question is.... I would like to say that your qualifications are impeccable.

Ms. Lois D. Figg: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: You have a master of law degree and experience as a human rights officer with the Ontario Human Rights Commission and as an appeal counsellor at the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. And of course you have seven years of experience on the IRB.

Would you please tell us something about your experience as a woman hearing applications for asylum? Do you feel that your sex provides you with advantages or disadvantages in the performance of your job?

Ms. Lois D. Figg: Thank you for your questions.

With respect to the first, I'm sure this committee knows already that each member is required to make a decision based on the evidence that's before him or her in that case. It's very misleading to look at a broad statistic and make too many assumptions.

I'll give you an example, if I may. In Toronto, where volumes warrant, we group, geographically, teams. You might have heard us talk about teams before. I had been the manager of the Americas team. On the Americas team, you might have claims from what could typically be a refugee-producing country like Colombia. Another team may have western democratic countries before them. So I would just advise anybody who is looking at statistics to be a little bit wary of drawing too many conclusions.

Each of our decision-makers has to take each case on a case-by-case basis and make a decision based on the evidence that's before that decision-maker. I hope that answers your question.

• (1145)

Mrs. Nina Grewal: My second question was about the—

Ms. Lois D. Figg: Yes, I was going to move on to the second question.

You wanted to know about my gender and whether that makes a difference. That's an interesting question. It requires, probably, a bit of reflection.

My instinct is that I don't think so. I've seen tremendously compassionate male decision-makers and female decision-makers. I think what's tremendous about our board is that we have this wonderful international reputation. We have guidelines on vulnerable claimants. Both the public servants and the GIC decision-makers who form part of our board are truly interested in human rights and in balancing efficiency and quality decision-making.

The Chair: You have three and one half minutes left.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: In that time I'll direct some general questions first to Ms. Figg.

Obviously you have a lot of passion, I can see, with respect to what you do. That's always great. Certainly you have quite an accumulated background, as was mentioned by Ms. Grewal, with respect to your human rights background. Obviously it's a significant background that would be helpful in what you're dealing with.

You mentioned that you had passed a test and you were interviewed initially. As you know, in the recommendation that came forward from a report just recently, part of the recommendation was that all applicants would not only take the test, but that there would be a passing grade for the test and that only those who passed the test would actually move on to the next level in the process before appointment.

What are your thoughts about that? You can certainly tell us how you feel about the job you do and maybe tell us about how you feel about the process and the recommendation with respect to requiring passing a written exam and have a passing mark.

Ms. Lois D. Figg: I'm not exactly certain how to answer your question, because I feel it's certainly not my role to advise the government on how to set up a selection process.

We have one that's in place at the moment. From my end of it, I have been on a panel that interviews candidates and deems them to be qualified or not, and then they are floated up to the minister. From my end, we see people from all sorts of backgrounds. We have nine competencies, which we worked very hard to develop. We're ensuring that each of the people we deem to be qualified is qualified.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Do you have objections to there being a written examination with a passing mark and requiring the applicants to meet at least that standard in that area?

Mrs. Krista Daley: If you don't mind, I think the two members are here really to discuss their own competencies and their own appointments. The issue of the appointment process is really not one that either Ms. Figg or Mr. Sandhu is involved in.

Mr. Blair Wilson (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): On a point of order, I don't think the questions the parliamentary secretary is asking the witnesses are appropriate. I think you should rule on the questions. I don't think they're appropriate.

The Chair: I have to confess I didn't hear the last question, because the clerk was making a point of order to me, so I leaned over and didn't hear the final question.

Mr. Komarnicki, could you clarify what the last question was that you asked, so that we can make some kind of ruling on it? You have approximately 10 seconds to do that.

• (1150)

Mr. Blair Wilson: Mr. Chair, he's asking for comment on potential government policy.

The Chair: I think everyone is aware, if that was the question, that asking witnesses to comment on potential government policy is not something that the witnesses should get into.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: That's fair, and you can rule that way, but just to be sure, the question was about their points of view with respect to the requirement of having a written test and a passing mark for people to advance past that test. The question was that specific. If the answer is that they can't answer because it's a matter of policy, I'm prepared to accept that, but that was the narrowness of the question. If you rule that way, so be it, but it wasn't broader than that.

The Chair: That would be a matter of policy, I think, and the appropriateness of answering that question would come into question.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Mr. Chair, speaking on that, I think given the fact that Ms. Figg has experience with the board from the day it was formed, when we had incredibly highly partisan appointments by the Mulroney Conservatives, and that the quality of appointees has greatly been enhanced, particularly when we withdrew the political interference with the work of the board, Ms. Figg is in a very good position to tell us how the decision-making was greatly enhanced and reached a peak when we got to Mr. Fleury's leadership.

There are very few people you're going to get who will be able to make that kind of comment.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Telegdi.

Did you have a submission to make here, Mr. Karygiannis?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I'm just wondering if we've gone over the time that Mr. Komarnicki was allowed. If so, can we move on to the next person?

The Chair: I think I will rule that we're wandering into an area of policy here that the witnesses may not want to get into, or need to get into, so I'm just going to leave that there. Of course, we've wandered into a nine-minute period here, so I'm just going to move on now to our next questioner, which is you, Mr. Telegdi, and undoubtedly you want to make additional comments on that in the time allotted.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Thank you very much.

First of all, let me say that I think it's a great day for you to be here in front of a parliamentary committee, because certainly you and Ms. Figg have come a long way in terms of coming to this country, and you're a testament to the kind of country we have. My disappointment is going to be when the House adjourns next week, probably. I'm going to miss June 19, which we had a committee meeting scheduled for, because that was the day my family arrived in Vancouver as refugees to Canada, and I would have thought it would have been appropriate to be sitting in a citizenship and immigration committee meeting at that point in time.

Given my experiences and my background, I have a particular passion, if you will, for what happens to refugees and how they're treated, as well as what happens to Canadians, particularly those of us who are not born in this country, and what kind of status we have as citizens.

Now the question I have for you is, what's the backlog right now?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Sir, in the refugee protection division it's about 26,000.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: The other question I have is, how many officers are we short?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: In the refugee protection division we are short 45.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: And how many are we short in the immigration appeal division?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: I believe, sir, we're short 10 in the immigration appeal division.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Okay, and what kind of timeframe do we have for people who want to be heard by the immigration appeal division?

Mrs. Krista Daley: Sir, perhaps I could just clarify. These two members are only on the refugee protection division, so we don't have the information here with respect to the other division.

• (1155)

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Well, it's the best we're going to get before we adjourn for the summer. What I have heard is that no dates are being booked. We have a backlog of thousands of people whom the government is trying to get rid of, but they cannot get rid of them—these are criminal records, if you will. They cannot get rid of them until such time as they have a hearing before the immigration appeal division, and you certainly must have some idea as to what happens there, because you folks aren't that separated out.

You would know. You would have an idea, so I would like to have you, Mr. Sandhu, give me your best knowledge on this.

Mr. Ken Sandhu: I'm sorry, sir. I really don't know, only because we've been concentrating on the refugee protection side. But we could get you that information.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: I would like to have that, because I think it's important, and I hope the parliamentary secretary takes note. As much as we want to be fair and have a system where the refugees get a chance at a fair hearing, in coming into this country, we also want to make sure we have a way of dealing with people who have abused their welcome in this country. Having thousands of people who, on the basis of criminality, Canada is trying to get rid of doesn't enhance public safety for Canadians. This is something that the Conservatives always talk about, law and order, and what have you, so that's very much a policy difference.

The other—

Mrs. Krista Daley: Sorry. Perhaps I could just be clear about what you're asking for. You want to know the processing time for the cases in the immigration appeal division.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: That's right: what does it take?

Mrs. Krista Daley: Okay.

As you will recall, Mr. Sandhu was asked a question at the beginning about some of the initiatives we had in terms of reducing the backlog. He mentioned the integration initiative in the western region. This would allow our members a bit more of a flexible workforce—for instance, if a member were going to an itinerant location.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Thank you.

I'm sure you're aware of the House of Commons passing a motion on the implementation of the refugee appeal division. I was on this committee when we passed the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. It's something that Parliament feels very passionately about. Eventually, when we have the right circumstances, it's going to become legislation. You might take that back to the members of the board. I'm sure they're keeping on top of this.

In terms of getting to the backlog, can you tell me what the processing time is now for somebody to go through a refugee application, from the time of application to the time of decision rendered?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Sorry, sir, we'll have to get that for you. We don't have it with us right at this point.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Because I hear it's rather lengthy. Again, that's something this committee is concerned about.

The Chair: I'll have to ask you finish up, Mr. Telegdi. It's been six minutes now.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Okay.

This is something we're very concerned about, getting timely decisions and getting down not just the backlog but also the time for processing.

Mr. Ken Sandhu: If I may, Mr. Chairman, at this point it's approximately 14 months.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Telegdi.

Mr. Bellavance, when you're ready.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to tell you that, in my committee, the critic may ask questions in each round, without any problems. Nonetheless, I am pleased to take part in this meeting to review the qualifications of the appointed individuals.

Mr. Sandhu, you talked about various priorities: in particular, you want to help to train new members. We know that there is currently a shortage of members.

I would like you to explain to us in greater detail how you intend to train these new members. Who will help you train them, since there is a shortage? I would like to know whether this is one of your priorities and whether you have a specific plan as to how you intend to proceed.

• (1200)

[*English*]

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Mr. Chairman, we have recently received some appointments. There have been about 10 or 11 appointments in the last few weeks, and a few reappointments. So we are getting some appointments and we do have some new members we have to train. We are able to do that at this time because we have enough resources. We have enough experienced members who we can pair them up with, in addition to our regular basic training. So we're fine at this point.

As you can appreciate, it's always nice to get a few lump sum payments for training purposes so that we don't have to run too many programs. Nevertheless, the appointments are coming. We do have some new appointments that have been made in the last few weeks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance: Do you have any other comments, Ms. Figg?

[*English*]

Ms. Lois D. Figg: I have nothing to add, other than to mention, with regard to the new member training mentioned by Mr. Sandhu, that it's a three- to four-week program. We've had that in place for many years. It's actually a world-renowned program. We assign a mentor, following that, to each new member. Depending on the region, members will be put in teams—in the bigger regions, for instance, Montreal and Toronto—and we do have, for the time being, enough experienced members to be mentors.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance: Are experienced members, the mentors, already assigned cases?

[*English*]

Ms. Lois D. Figg: Yes, absolutely.

Mrs. Krista Daley: I'd like to clarify this, because I think what you were getting at was if we're limited in resources, how can we use the member resources we have now to train new members. That's what I was hearing.

I want to clarify another point. For example, the majority of the new member training program that Ms. Figg referred to, which is a

three- to four-week period, is given by our professional development unit, who are not board members, and my own unit, which is the legal services unit. So we're actually able to provide a lot of what I call the “clashroom” work, in terms of the law and the procedures, so that doesn't really make a large drain on the other member resources.

For all members, and this is whether or not we're in the current situation with vacancies and backlogs, or historically, they then would normally sit as three-member panels, until we're satisfied that they're able to resolve and handle the hearings by themselves, and then they're assigned a mentor for a period of time. That really has been an ongoing process for us.

So there is a division between the resources needed to train up a member between the public service and the GICs and the GIC managers who are in place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance: I presume that some of the committee members you are talking about today are on sick leave.

Have you any statistics on this? Is there currently a major shortage?

[*English*]

Mr. Ken Sandhu: No, sir. There was no unusual number of absences on the part of the existing members. There are always a few who are not available, for one reason or another, but not unusual numbers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Blair Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd just like to thank the witnesses, Mr. Sandhu, Ms. Figg, and Ms. Daley, for coming here today and talking about the important issues that we've been discussing here in the citizenship and immigration committee.

As has been mentioned, Canadians are proud of the international reputation Canada has had as a fair, just, and compassionate society. I believe this is reflected in our refugee protection and resettlement policies and procedures. Judging by your résumés, which are impeccable, I can see that we are being well served by representatives like yourselves. So I want to thank you for your hard work and your public service.

I have a few questions, though, just to discuss the issue with respect to the refugee board. I know my colleague, Andrew Telegdi, already mentioned the fact that the number of vacancies, with respect to members, has been growing, the size of the backlog has been growing, and it appears that the processing time has also been growing.

This has always been a challenge for the government of the day, but after the election of the new...or I should say after the election of the aging Conservative minority government, this problem seems to be exacerbated, and it's just getting worse and worse, with 45 vacancies in one department and 10 vacancies in the other.

I have two questions, and the first question is to Mr. Sandhu. Since being newly appointed, how many files or cases do you have to deal with on a monthly basis?

•(1205)

Mrs. Krista Daley: Sorry, I wonder if we can clarify. Do you mean Mr. Sandhu, personally, as a decision-maker—

Mr. Blair Wilson: Yes.

Mrs. Krista Daley: —or are you referring to his responsibility as a manager?

Mr. Blair Wilson: Under his control, how many people does he have reporting to him, and how many cases would he be dealing with on a monthly basis?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Sir, the number of cases or files dealt with by members differs somewhat in the three regions. For example, the western region travels to other cities to do cases. Our average is between 15 to 20 per member, but this is subject.... I hadn't figured it out, but from what I know, we can deal or we do deal with about that many a month per member.

Mr. Blair Wilson: And what would be the average time spent per member on that type of work log? Are they doing 40 hours a week, 50 hours a week?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: The members are certainly working full-time. Some, I will tell you, are working more than full-time.

It's a very demanding position. It's not something that can be dealt with in a passing manner, by anybody. You have to be completely focused. I have found, coming from other agencies, that this is one of the more demanding areas of work, in the sense that it's one of the best adjudicative agencies. Good adjudicators are very significant and important to the system.

I would say it's definitely a full-time, 40-plus hours a week job.

Mr. Blair Wilson: What effect does the growing backlog and the increasing time commitment have psychologically on the individuals who realize they're trying to get through their case files as quickly as they can and be as fair and give good decisions, quality decisions, but at the same time knowing there is a growing backlog behind them? How does that psychologically affect the individuals?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Let me say what I think. I've just come out from being a member. I was a member for three years.

But I'll ask Ms. Figg to respond to it as well.

From my point of view, the process is such that the member managers do not allow that pressure to bear on the members who are there. Nobody is saying that because there's a backlog you have to do more cases. Nobody said that to me. That is a management problem we face because we realize that with every delay, lives out there need to be accounted for.

But certainly as a member, I was never put under any pressure. My workload was not increased as a result of the backlog.

Mr. Blair Wilson: Thank you.

Ms. Figg.

•(1210)

Ms. Lois D. Figg: Thank you.

I can tell you, in my region in Toronto, the members are typically assigned six cases a week and they typically finalize four a week. So they're hard-working members, professional to the bone. I would say they put in more than a 40-hour week, typically.

With respect to your question about, I would say, morale, I think it's a good question. Our members lived through the action plan, which occurred a few years ago, when our board was able to clear up a tremendous backlog. So they understand we're not in control of intake.

But we're a very professional organization. As Mr. Sandhu said, we're not expecting more of them. They give 100% and they always have, so there is not more pressure on them from that point of view. But of course they have great pride in the organization, so they want to see the organization be healthy as well.

I wouldn't say morale is a problem. As Mr. Sandhu has indicated, their managers are very aware and keeping close tabs on how members are feeling about their job, and we want to make sure our members are well and happy at all times.

Mr. Blair Wilson: Do I have time for one quick question?

I was wondering what systems are in place to ensure the consistency of decision-making.

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Mr. Chairman, we could spend a lot of time answering that one. But let me say very briefly that we use a number of tools to try to bring about consistency, one of which is to have sessions with the decision-makers, with the members, on where we see large differences or discrepancies in the rates of decision-making.

The consistency issue also is dealt with by making sure the information the members are given, on which they base their decisions, is consistent.

We did not have as consistent information in the past, only because each of the regional offices in the past had their own respective country packages. More recently, we have gone to a computerized system, and we're providing every member with the same set of information, so we expect the consistency to improve with that, including the fact that anything that's available in English must be available in French.

That's what we've been doing.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Good morning, and welcome to the committee.

Your résumés are impeccable, and I don't think there's any question as to your capacity to serve on the board; however, I do have a couple of questions. If you don't have the answers right now, maybe you can supply them to us in writing.

We've been told that there's a member shortage right now, Mr. Sandhu, in your region. Would you know how many members you need to have a complete complement?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Yes, sir. In the refugee protection division, as I indicated, our approved complement is 127, and we currently have 82.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Are there any plans, Mr. Sandhu, that you are aware of, in the immediate future—let's say in the next month or two months—to fill those 45 vacancies?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: I understand, sir, that our chair—I don't know whether you know, but the minister announced confirmation of our interim chair just this week, and Mr. Brian Goodman has been confirmed in the position—discusses matters of appointment with the minister.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: You're not aware?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: In my capacity, I'm always keeping him informed, and we're discussing matters, and you know that there have been appointments in the last few weeks.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: What is your current inventory of cases—spousal, parental, and criminal, who we want to be out of Canada? Do you have any idea what the inventory is?

Mrs. Krista Daley: Just to clarify, we don't have any information here on the immigration appeal division, which are your criminal and family sponsorship issues. The only information we have here is with respect to the refugee protection division. But if you would like, we could provide that information to you.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Please. I'd appreciate it.

The length of time for spousal appeals or parental appeals used to be anywhere between six months to a year and a half, when you were at full complement. How long does it take now for a spousal appeal, from the time somebody puts it in to the time it's finished?

•(1215)

Mrs. Krista Daley: We can provide that information to you. Once again, we only have the refugee protection division.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Thank you. It's appreciated.

Can you also please provide it for spousal, parental, as well as criminal categories—people who are to be...?

Mrs. Krista Daley: On removal orders, I understand.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Removal orders, yes.

Mrs. Krista Daley: I'm not personally able to say that we break it down into those specifics. I know we have numbers for the immigration appeal division writ large, but whether we have those—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: If you can, I'd appreciate it.

Also, if can you give us an idea what time it took, say, in 2003-04, versus what the timelines are in 2006—07, I'd appreciate it.

Mrs. Krista Daley: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: One question I have for you pertains to something the committee will be discussing in the fall, and it's happening right now. We're going to be inviting people to come to speak to us about what's happening in Iraq. The situation in Iraq, as well as in other countries, changes from day to day. For example, today it's in the news on BBC that Turkey has sent soldiers into the

northern part of Iraq. There is back and forth comment: one is denying, the other one is not denying it. Those reports are daily.

What procedure, sir and ma'am, do you have in your operations manual to follow up the daily news, to speak to the communities...? We're going to be hearing from Iraqis who have been affected—people in raids, people maimed, people blown up. I've heard some stories that certainly made my hair stand up.

What procedures are there in place for you to get updated? Is there a reaching out that you do to speak to communities—in your manual, in your training—whereby you reach out to the communities, talk to community stakeholders, to community groups, in order not only to verify the information you get from the news and the information from the department, but also to hear the individuals and what communities have to say?

Is there a procedure you are following?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Sir, I'll answer that, and then I'll ask Ms. Figg to add to it.

What happens typically is that if there is something quite new—a new development such as the one you've talked about—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: You mean the Turks going into the northern part of Iraq today.

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Yes. We have capacity within the board to have that information, and also the counsel who appears with the claimant will provide it. I have sat as a member when I have had news pertaining to the day I sat brought forward from another part of the world, information that was shared with me.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I'm not talking about the individual day that you're sitting. If you're responsible for that particular section of the world, do you get briefed and updated daily? Is there a reach-out mechanism to the community?

Mr. Ken Sandhu: We do not, as a board, reach out to the community because we have to rely on reliable, trustworthy information that is brought forward. We have a very effective research directorate that provides us with that kind of information.

Our problem is that if we reach into the community, we're not likely to always get factual information.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, can I ask Ms. Daley one final question?

Can you please provide us with a written manual of the mechanism that is followed up in the research and how you reach out to the communities and what work is being done, just as an outline, if you can?

Mrs. Krista Daley: I'll see what we have in terms of our research directorate, because that really is their responsibility.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Komarnicki.

I do believe we have time, just in case you want to get prepared, after Mr. Komarnicki, to go to Mr. Telegdi for a few minutes, and then to Madame Faillie and Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Komarnicki.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll be relatively brief.

Just from hearing you speak and the attention you give to this matter, we know that we have a very professional organization in place and a well-managed one as well. Certainly, you can take that back. I'm quite impressed with what I've heard. Certainly the background Mr. Sandhu has is impressive. I'm not sure you mentioned it, but I see you had a medal of honour from the Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators for your outstanding contribution to the administrative justice system of Ontario. That goes well for what you're about to be doing.

Hopefully with your collective backgrounds you will be able to ensure the system works very well.

Mr. Sandhu, I noted that you mentioned that you responded to a fall 2006 advertisement and were interviewed in the process and then reappointed as a result of that. Was that an in-house advertisement, or was it one of the more general advertisements that appeared in various newspapers across the country like the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*? Could you maybe just tell us about that?

• (1220)

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Sir, I believe it did appear in the papers. I saw it on our website of the IRB, but our general counsel is quite certain that it appeared in the papers.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: So it is a wide request for applicants?

Mrs. Krista Daley: Yes. My recollection is that it appeared in the national newspapers. It was also on our own website, so there was a link within the board to see if people were interested. Also I believe it was on the appointments secretariat at PCO. It may have been on their public website as well, where they list various vacancies and various agencies.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: People can apply from within or without?

Mrs. Krista Daley: Yes, it is very much a public process.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: The other point is that of course hearing about how the system operates is one thing, but seeing how it might operate is another. Have you had past experience where MPPs or members of Parliament actually observed how the processes work right in live action, so to speak, and maybe interact with some of the participants in the process?

I suppose all three or any one of you can answer that, maybe starting with Mr. Sandhu.

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Mr. Chairman, I did have that experience. As my résumé shows, I was the chair of the Ontario Board of Parole for six and a half years. In Ontario that was the provincial organization. We had considerable success in having the members of provincial Parliament come to observe our hearings. The comments I got back were all very positive in that they said they did not know what went on or how those hearings were conducted, quite understandably because those hearings were conducted in prisons, in jails.

Our hearings in the refugee protection division are still private because of the nature of the information that we consider, but I know from my last two years as a member that if members of this committee or other members of Parliament wish to observe, claimants would accept it. In the event that there is one who wouldn't want that, then fine, we'll ask somebody else. I would really invite people to come and participate, because I think that is the best way to understand the process.

Ms. Lois D. Figg: I'll simply add that we have had representatives from all three levels of government from time to time who observe. The immigration appeal division hearings are public, so anybody at any time can observe them. The RPD hearings, as Mr. Sandhu said, are private, but we can ask counsel or a claimant if they would be prepared to permit an observer.

Almost invariably, given enough time, we can find a case for anybody to observe. I would echo the sentiment that we would be delighted to have representatives come and see these public servants at work, these decision-makers at work, and see the kinds of stories they hear and the claims they have to determine day in and day out.

Mrs. Krista Daley: The only other offer I'd also put on the table from the board—we have certainly done this in past, and I believe we would be more than willing to in the future—is that we would organize briefing sessions for members of Parliament and their staff. That's also a very interesting part of the whole thing, and then that would morph into actually observing a hearing in one of the three divisions. It could be a nice package.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Komarnicki.

We'll go to Mr. Telegdi and Madame Faillie.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

There is a built-in frustration in having to deal with stuff in government, particularly in this immigration and refugee division. The set-up under Brian Mulroney was a real mess. Then in a non-partisan fashion, we really fought, and it came from Conservative members, the New Democrats, and some Liberal members, and it was cleaned up. We had the backlog under control. We were going to improve the consistency of the decision-making we have to do, which is the refugee appeal division—that's the only time you're going to have consistency. Just like when you have the Federal Court, you have the Federal Court of Appeal that sets the rules for folks so the decision-making is consistent.

Then we get to the point where we're looking forward to getting six-month hearings. We're into a year and a half. A crisis was created by this government, and it is as frustrating as hell. I was frustrated when the Liberals weren't moving fast enough. It's so incredibly bothersome that we got to where we got, and we still have a vacancy of 45 members at the IRB. It's unconscionable.

We have criminals we cannot get rid of from this country because they cannot have hearings before the immigration appeal division. I shake my head, because the party opposite, the governing party, is big on law and order. Yet we can't deport criminals out of this country because of this. I really hope you get us those figures, and we're very much looking for criminality. This is a public safety issue for Canadians, and the Conservatives have to take responsibility for it.

We want the Minister of Public Safety to come to this committee, but he has never come. We have not had Stockwell Day, the Minister of Public Safety, who spends his time shovelling people out of the country, before this committee. His priority is undocumented workers who are contributing to the economy of this country, and he has been contemptuous of any effort we have made to try to get him in front of this committee.

Just yesterday, we passed a motion in the House, a motion of concurrence, that we put a halt to deporting undocumented workers. Surely to God.... I appeal to my colleagues on the other side of the table. When I was in the chair, I fought with all parties to get changes that were going to make the system better. It's just frustrating as hell to see this mess coming to us.

Ms. Figg, you mentioned that you were dealing with Vietnamese refugees. I'm not sure if you followed the work of the committee. We've been pushing for getting the few refugees from the Philippines into Canada so we could close the chapter, if you will, on the Vietnam War. Do you have any knowledge of that situation over there?

• (1225)

Ms. Lois D. Figg: I have very little knowledge. The time I was dealing with Vietnamese boat people was 1990-1994. I was working for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and representing them to the appellate-level refugee body, so I was dealing with people who had been denied refugee status at the first instance and acting as their representative on meritorious claims.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: The other issue I have is one that people keep bringing up all the time. I think if we're going to make a real change in the IRB in the long term, we're going to have to start looking at IRB members as we look at the judiciary. The judiciary have very difficult jobs, and once we make an appointment, they're there on a term of good behaviour, just as the judges are. If we want to give guidance, we do it through legislation; that way, we stop government interference. They're a very important institution in our country.

I know you're not going to be able to comment on that, but I just wanted to put that out to you, because I think that would really solve the problem in the long term.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Faille is next.

• (1230)

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to say that I too agree with what my colleague, Mr. Telegdi, just said. We need to find a way to make the work done

by the IRB much more stable and ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit or qualifications, that members are not always facing the possibility of not having their mandates renewed or not being able to continue their work. I think that continuity makes people feel like they are contributing and produces a sense of great satisfaction. So, we must find a way to ensure that these decisions are more stable to ensure a sense of continuity.

You probably are already aware that the backlog continues to grow and that the waiting is getting longer. However, the lives of refugees do not stop once they have been allowed to stay. All the paperwork that follows takes an extremely long time too. Among other things, it takes a long time for the permanent residency applications of successful refugees to be processed and for the family to be reunited. We are talking about approximately 18 months.

People in my riding, pharmacy technicians, professionals, have been admitted as refugees. Some come from the Congo, others from other regions. Yet, the waiting periods are even longer still in some African countries.

What could you bring to the IRB to ensure that families are reunited much faster? Once you hand down your decision, all the administration regarding the family reunification follows. In some cases, it can take up to five or six years for families to be reunited. So, if we look at it on a time continuum, we see that from the time when the individual filed their application until the time that their family is reunited, the waiting period in some areas in Africa is six, seven or eight years. This is absolutely inhuman. However, I don't think that the public is necessarily aware of this situation.

Could you tell us why it takes six months to hand down a decision and tell us, based on your experience processing refugee applications and your experience abroad with regard to those living in refugee camps, how important is it to quickly reunite the families?

[English]

Mrs. Krista Daley: I'll turn to my colleagues, but I'm not sure it's something the board can really respond to. What I can tell you is that from a legal perspective, we attempt to process our family cases together; if a family comes to the board, we don't put the wife and the children with their own claim, and then the husband has a separate claim. We try to process the cases together.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: That is not what I meant. The application is processed at the same time.

[English]

The Chair: You have 30 seconds. I have to manage the time here, because we have three or four people. Go ahead.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: Yes, I know. I simply want to clarify my question because perhaps the interpretation...

I know that the reunification is processed at the same time. But, often, the primary applicant is here, but all the claimants and dependants are somewhere else. So, once the application has been approved, yes, they are all allowed in. However, the reunification takes a long time. In your work with CIC, do you also consider this?

[English]

Mr. Ken Sandhu: We have a very small piece of this pie in the refugee protection division. Our policy is, as the general counsel was just saying, that when we have a family member, we will join that family member's claim to the other member who's here. But you're talking about those who are left back in their own countries. We lose track of that. We do not have any jurisdiction over those matters. But for whoever comes to Canada and is a family member, we will join their claims as long as they tell us they are family members.

The Chair: Thank you.

Could we have Mr. Siksay, please? Then we have Mr. Komarnicki, and we'll see what we can do then.

Go ahead, Mr. Siksay.

•(1235)

Mr. Bill Siksay: Thank you, Chair.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: Point of order.

[English]

The Chair: Point of order.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: I call a point of order. I want to clarify something, Mr. Chair. I know that this issue has been raised regularly in this committee. When I ask questions in French, the interpretation may not always be perfect. It is clear to me, given the answer to my question, that the question has not been understood. I know that my time is up, but I am penalized because of the interpretation. I wanted to point out that the question was not understood. I would simply like, if possible, for the witness to answer my question.

[English]

The Chair: Of course, yes.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: I just want to make the committee aware of this fact because we have talked about it in this committee. I often have to repeat my questions two or three times, and my time then runs out.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: That's a very good point. Sometimes when we're getting up to the allotted time, I have to probably move it along a bit faster than usual. Sorry about that, Madame Faille.

Ms. Daley, if you have a comment on that, please respond.

Mrs. Krista Daley: Would it help if I explained what I thought your question was?

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: Yes.

[English]

Mrs. Krista Daley: I think we probably understood.

What I understood was that after we have accepted a claim, there are often family reunification issues, and therefore your concern was

whether there was anything the IRB could do in our process to try to aid in that family reunification post-IRB?

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: Here is what I want to know. At the time in the process when the decision is made, there has to be an exchange of files with CIC. The file goes to Vegreville, where it is transferred to the embassy, which then processes it.

Is there any work to be done in this area to ensure faster reunification? Transfers can take a great deal of time. I have had a file for the past 12 months; Vegreville still doesn't have it. That was my question. I want to know whether anything was done to deal with this.

[English]

The Chair: We'll have to have a brief response.

Mrs. Krista Daley: I personally don't know what the length of time is from the time we do a positive decision until it goes over to the department for their ongoing processing.

The Chair: I have to move it along here, I'm quite sorry, because I have motions I have to deal with, and I want to get a couple of people in here.

Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Thank you, Chair.

I will resist the temptation to make a speech about the refugee determination system and the problems and the potential solutions, although I think I feel as strongly as other members do about that.

I do have one final question for our witnesses. I wonder if you might just tell us a bit about your experience with performance evaluation at the board, both as members of the board and as managers. I'm not looking for the details of what your evaluation was—obviously it was very good because you're back with us—but just what that process looks like, and your experience of going through that process.

Mr. Ken Sandhu: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I can speak to it from the point of view of someone who actually got assessed. I only contributed to assessment of my other colleagues as I was not formally a manager within the IRB.

Based on my experience with other agencies that I've worked in, and the performance assessment system that I implemented with the Ontario Board of Parole when I was there, I have to say this one is very thorough. It's very extensive. I felt that I was assessed on all the competencies and fairly. It involved my manager's coming and observing me in the hearing room. So I was quite impressed.

My sense is that in the future we will want to maintain it. If there are any improvements we can make, we would want to do so with input from the members. That's how I feel about it.

Ms. Lois D. Figg: I've had the opportunity to evaluate many members. I actually brought two of my own evaluations with me. We thoroughly evaluate each member just prior to the end of their mandate.

The form we have right now is about 45 pages long. It looks broadly at three strokes, which are: knowledge; quality in decision-making, and that also concerns quality in presiding skills; and also, generally, collegiality.

We've examined very closely since 2004 the nine competencies. So for each of the members during each evaluation, we look at the nine competencies. The managers review tapes of hearing rooms randomly. They take about 15 to 20 decisions, randomly, and review them. They observe hearings, as Mr. Sandhu has said. So it's a very, very thorough evaluation.

● (1240)

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

We're in the fast-comment section of our program here.

So Mr. Komarnicki, Mr. Alghabra, and Mr. Karygiannis, fast comments, please.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Chair, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Maybe just to cover some of the remarks made by Mr. Telegdi, I find it interesting that he's interested in speeding up the process to keep criminals out. You would have thought it might be to allow appropriate claimants to be in. Obviously his party would not be the first and foremost one concerned and interested in that aspect of it.

With respect to the Vietnamese question, he had an opportunity, his government had an opportunity to do it...had a good number of years...failed to.... We've taken steps to ensure those remaining Vietnamese can come in through humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Certainly a solution is being found.

With respect to the new appointment process, it will be more efficient; it will produce people to fill the positions. When those positions are filled, I think they will be adequately worked forward. The report, actually, that we have from the appointments commission sends a higher standard, not a lower standard, in terms of accountability, transparency, and credibility. It's open. It's transparent. That's why the report was commissioned.

For the first time, all appointees will be required to pass a written exam. That's not the case under the previous system. We're taking a balanced approach to allowing the chair and the minister to appoint members, and to having the people go through one body as opposed to two bodies, which will streamline that. We've undertaken a national search for qualified candidates. We're committing to holding regular recruitment campaigns. It's interesting that Mr. Sandhu was able to partake of that.

The process for filling the vacancies is well under way and it will be completed before long. We will move rapidly and will have a well-functioning IRB board.

The Chair: Okay. That's two minutes. Thank you, Mr. Komarnicki.

Mr. Alghabra, I think you had a comment you wanted to make.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, thank you, Mr. Sandhu and Ms. Figg, for coming here. I'm going to leave political rhetoric until we have a minister here or for

during the campaign. What I'm going to do right now is say what I didn't get a chance to say during my time earlier.

I don't know if you've had the chance yet, but I invite you to read the report that this committee tabled in the House of Commons a couple of weeks ago. It's a comprehensive report about refugees and refugee matters. I think it would be very useful for you to get the opinion of this committee on what we think the pressing issues and the important matters are.

Thank you again.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Alghabra.

On behalf of the committee, I want to thank you for coming here today and providing the information you did. It was very, very well done. We thank you for that. We thank you for your valuable public service and the great work you're doing.

Please feel free to come back at any time, even without an invitation. Thank you very much.

We'll allow a minute for our witnesses to move away, and then we'll go into three motions that we have here.

Okay, we will move back to our first motion.

Tell us about your motion, Mr. Siksay. Maybe you can read it into the record.

● (1245)

Mr. Bill Siksay: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm very happy to present this motion this morning. The motions reads:

That the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration study the issue of immigration consultants, that the Committee invite members of the Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants (CSIC), immigration consultants who work independent of CSIC and individuals who have used the services of immigration consultants.

Mr. Chair, the reason I'm bringing this is that the whole area of immigration consultants has been one of controversy for many years. There were measures taken to establish a professional organization of immigration consultants, a self-governing professional association. That association, CSIC, has been established for a number of years now, and I think it's a good opportunity for the committee to have another look at the situation regarding the practice of immigration consultancy.

We know there are still some controversies and that there is still some reticence among some immigration consultants to be part of the organization. We know there have been some growing pains for that organization and we know there are clients of immigration consultants who have concerns about the service they received and the conduct of the consultants.

I think it would be important for the committee to spend a meeting or two looking at that and seeing what the state of that professional organization is, and of the profession in general, because it affects so many people who are immigrating to Canada or who are hoping to have someone immigrate to Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Siksay.

Do you have a comment, Mr. Karygiannis?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Yes, Mr. Chair, I do have a comment or two.

I don't believe you will find that Citizenship and Immigration Canada takes any representations from somebody who is not a member of CSIC. The problem I have is for work independent of CSIC and individuals who have used the service of immigration consultants.

The fact that we would like to call the individuals who have used the services of immigration consultants is fine, but there's been a move by many people who have come forward and spoken to many of us about CSIC and how hard the level is to complete their exam. There's a level for competency and there's a level for the speaking of English. I know for a fact that there are certain communities, including especially a particular community in my riding, that have come and said they've studied in Canada, they've earned their degrees in Canada, and yet they cannot get that exam.

The organization and the way it's working.... The level they have, the standard for people to come in, is so high. I'm just wondering if Mr. Siksay knows of individuals who are independent of CSIC. Maybe he should bring those to the attention of the minister and ask the minister not to represent them anymore.

My only problem is...I don't mind getting them in here, but the wording of "independent"—I mean, if I'm working independent of CSIC, I'm certainly not going to come here and say I did that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Alghabra.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

May I suggest making a friendly amendment? I don't know how we want to word it, but I'm just going to suggest that the committee conduct a study on the immigration consultancy industry. In a way, that will include our inviting the representative regulators as well as individuals who are stakeholders in this industry.

Thanks.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Telegdi, and then we can move on.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: I think a study on this one would be good. I have too many people coming in who end up being deported, and their bank account is empty because they've been fleeced by consultants. I have had that experience too often.

The other issue—and, Bill, I'm not sure if you were going to look at it—goes beyond the borders of Canada. We have unscrupulous consultants in, say, Pakistan, selling a bag of goods to a prospective immigrant, who then ends up coming here. Then it becomes a real problem for them with what they were told. What can we do about that?

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Faillie is next, and then Mr. Siksay.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faillie: I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants. At the same time, we met with the Canadian Bar Association. I think that they are on the

right track with regard to training people and increasing the number of members of their association.

However, the problems they have concern the protection of immigrants. I have briefed the committee on problems regarding information posted in embassies in the country's mother tongue. India is one of many countries that has several languages. In China, guidelines on immigration applications are posted in Mandarin. The problem was that the translations were not right. The department had told us that it would get back to us on this. I don't know whether the researchers have had a response from the department on this. Perhaps not.

I think that, here, with regard to the wording, there is no point hearing from individuals who are not members of the society. I don't know whether my colleague can amend his motion.

● (1250)

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Could I make a suggestion to that effect, Chair? It may help us get to a conclusion.

I think folks have made a good point about the phrase "immigration consultants who work independent". I think maybe it would be better to say "immigration consultants who are critical of CSIC and its requirements". I know there is some controversy about the requirements, which may be helpful to look at.

The Chair: Thank you.

Do you have a question for Bill on that?

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: How about the ones internationally?

Mr. Bill Siksay: I think it's broad. It's not meant to be limited to domestic—

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: But they work independently of any regulations.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Komarnicki.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: I just have a point to make about—

The Chair: Quickly, if you can, please.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Okay.

I think it's a fair motion as amended.

I, myself, have been part of the Law Society of Saskatchewan. Bodies that self-govern do set professional standards to deal with issues of discipline, ethics, professional training—those kinds of things that obviously have had some sore spots in the consultant's area of operation.

I think it's well worth doing a study on that. I would be in support of that motion, and I guess we will, as a group—

The Chair: We'll vote on this amendment first.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, could I make a friendly suggestion to Mr. Siksay?

If we were to drop the words “immigration consultants who work independent of CSIC”, that opens it up for us to bring in immigration consultants who could be critical of the work the body is doing or immigration consultants who are friendly. That way we don't skew it, and we don't get people's backs up.

Okay, Bill?

Mr. Bill Siksay: That's fine.

The Chair: He agrees. Okay, good.

We are voting on the amendment.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: If I can, Mr. Chair, we're dropping the words “immigration consultants who work independent of CSIC”.

Mr. Bill Siksay: No. Let's drop the words, “who work independent of CSIC”, so it reads that we're inviting “members of the Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants (CSIC), immigration consultants and individuals who have used the services of immigration consultants”.

The Chair: Do we need any further discussion on this now, Madame Faillie?

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faillie: I also want to call a point of order after.

[English]

The Chair: Let's vote on the amendment.

It will read:

That the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration study the issue of immigration consultants, that the committee invite members of the Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants (CSIC) who work independent of CSIC—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: No. You're dropping the words “who work independent of CSIC”.

The Chair: Okay. We're dropping that.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: On the main motion as amended.

Madame Faillie has a word on that.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faillie: Yes. I want to add, at the very end of the motion, “and that Citizenship and Immigration Canada explain to us how it currently applies the act.” I would like us to invite CIC officials because this legislation already exists.

[English]

I want to be specific as to why they're coming, because they don't apply the legislation.

•(1255)

The Chair: Let's see what the clerk has that clarifies this, because frankly I've lost it.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Samy Agha): As I understand Madame Faillie's motion, it would add at the end of the motion, “and CIC officials”.

So you want to invite members of the Canadian Society, immigration consultants, individuals who have used the services of

immigration consultants, and Department of Citizenship and Immigration officials.

Is that correct?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Meili Faillie: Yes, CIC officials.

[Translation]

I want the officials who come to tell us how... The legislation exists. There is a section, in the Immigration Act, which requires official representatives to represent would-be immigrants. The problem here is that the legislation exists and the department is not applying its own legislation. I want it to come here to tell us what efforts...

[English]

The Chair: The analyst makes a good point as well. She says that we should add there, “That the committee invite, among others, those who might...”. That would broaden it to allow for other individuals to be brought forward.

So we have—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Is there a time limit that we're going to put on this? Is there a date, Bill, to submit names?

Mr. Bill Siksay: I think we just refer it to the agenda planning and see how the agenda works out in the fall.

The Chair: All in favour of the motion as amended?

(Motion agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: That's that.

The motion from Mr. Karygiannis.

Would you read your motion into the record, Mr. Karygiannis?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, I would like for us to deal with both motions, that we freeze the clock at 1 o'clock, if that's okay with everybody?

The Chair: One motion at a time.

An hon. member: We freeze the clock.

An hon. member: No, no, not freeze the clock.

An hon. member: Yes, a motion to freeze the clock.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: We won't consent if you need unanimous consent.

A voice: You don't need it.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, we have places where, due to either man-made and/or natural disasters, the citizenship and immigration department has expedited family cases of individuals—after the tsunami, after Pakistan, certainly after Lebanon. There is strife right now in Lebanon. What I want to do is ask that we pass this motion that if there are people in the queue who are affected in Lebanon, and especially in the north part where all the strife is taking place, we ask the ministry to expedite their cases, once their health as well as the background checks have been done, and put them at the front of the line in order to unite them with their families in Canada, especially in Lebanon where there are difficulties right now.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate Mr. Karygiannis bringing forward this motion, and I agree that there is a particular situation of importance in Lebanon. However, I don't think Lebanon is the only place where such a situation exists, and there are other places where people have immigration applications outstanding where they're also experiencing the ravages of war or civil strife or even a natural disaster, as Mr. Karygiannis mentioned.

So I'd like to propose an amendment that in the first line we delete the phrase "due to the continuing strife in Lebanon" and that in the third line we take out the words "the affected area" and replace that phrase with "areas affected by war, civil strife, or natural disaster". So essentially we can say that there should be some attention and expedited processing for anyone who has an immigration application in from an area that's affected by war, civil strife, or natural disaster.

Chair, I believe that's often the practice of the department in any case. But I think it wouldn't hurt to make that very explicit. So I'd like to propose that amendment.

The Chair: We have your amendment.

Discussion on the amendment.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Chair, before we proceed, I make a motion that we freeze the clock at 1 o'clock, because there's another motion.

The Chair: We're going to deal with your motion. We're dealing with all three motions, sir.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Is that unanimous consent that we deal with the motions?

• (1300)

The Chair: There's no unanimous consent required here, according to the clerk, and I'm relying on what the clerk is telling me.

Let's not get bogged down in these details. Let's do this.

Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay: I've just moved that amendment, Chair. Hopefully, members will find it...

The Chair: Let me find out about this now, because I don't want to step on anyone's toes here. I want to know.

Mr. Clerk, would you please educate me here with respect to the clock? What are the rules and regulations?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, the committee can sit for as long as it wishes to sit. Unanimous consent is not required to adjourn the meeting at any specific time.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: On the agenda, it's set from 11 until 1.

The Chair: The only thing I'm concerned about is that the rules are being adhered to properly. I don't care what the point of it all is. If that's the rule, that's the rule.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: It wasn't applied the same way just a couple of meetings back, to my recollection.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Mr. Chair, just for his edification, we did freeze the clock when we passed the estimates.

The Chair: Let's not get bogged down in this. There seems to be consensus here that we deal with these motions before we...and we're wasting time here.

The motion by Mr. Karygiannis is being amended by Mr. Siksay. Let's do things properly here.

The amendment is that we take out of this motion "due to the continuing strife in Lebanon", and also say, in the third line, "areas affected by war, civil strife, or natural disaster".

Comments on the amendment? And please don't ask me to go to the motion. We will have comments on the amendment first.

On the amendment, Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I certainly welcome the amendment on the third line. However, I would like the first line to stand, please.

The Chair: Comments on the amendment, Mr. Komarnicki.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: I have a point of order I wish to make.

Whenever a report is going to the House when we haven't heard any evidence on an issue or called any witnesses, I've taken objection every time, as a matter of principle. A report in the true sense means that you've heard something, you've seen something. You're making a report to the House.

We've been in the habit of just doing a motion in mid-air and saying let's report it as a report to the House. I think it's inappropriate to do that. We should have at least some evidence before us. We should have a hearing before us. We should consider and then do a report.

If we're going to do a report, then we should do a dissenting report—essentially, in this case, that this is not the way to do a report.

The Chair: I concur with that. However, we have to go with the motion and the amendment and vote on it. I concur with what you're saying. However, that and \$1.25 will get us a cup of coffee at Tim Horton's.

Any further comments on the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now the question is on the amended main motion:

That the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration recommend to the House of Commons that all immigration applications from areas affected by war, civil strife, or natural disaster that are presently in the queue be immediately expedited, and that the motion be reported to the House of Commons.

Mr. Komarnicki.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, a report shouldn't go to the House without hearing any material evidence or witnesses or having any material before the chair. I think the motion is improper for that reason.

I want that order to be ruled on—in order or out of order—and if it's in order, I would like to have a dissenting opinion to set that out.

The Chair: It's out of order. The clerk tells me that the committee doesn't have to do any studies pertaining to that.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: That's not what Marleau and Montpetit says.

An hon. member: Are you challenging the chair?

• (1305)

The Chair: I can only rely on what the clerk here is telling me is factual. I've made a ruling.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...a dissenting report to lodge my point of view as to why the report shouldn't go in this fashion, as a report. I'd like to refer to Marleau and Montpetit, and to why it says that. I think it's an issue that should be read. It should at least be reported back to this House why Marleau and Montpetit is not followed in that regard.

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...the deadline is.

The Chair: The dissenting report is to this motion, Mr. Komarnicki?

An hon. member: Tomorrow morning, Mr. Chair.

An hon. member: One sentence.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Tomorrow morning.

The Chair: There would be a dissenting report to this motion, correct?

Do you want some guidance on that, Mr. Komarnicki?

Mr. Bill Siksay: Mr. Chair, I propose that the dissenting report be no longer than the main report itself.

The Chair: That's fair enough.

I'm getting consensus on that. Is that all right?

Good.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Yes, that's good. But I would like for the dissenting report to be given to the clerk by the end of the day and for this motion to be reported tomorrow.

The Chair: I don't think that's reasonable. However, I'm in the hands of the committee.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Mr. Chair, it's a short report.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, I think you could put it to a vote.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...in place by tomorrow at 10 o'clock.

The Chair: It's not reasonable to do that; it has to be translated and what have you.

What is the rule, Mr. Clerk, as to the amount of time there would be? Nine o'clock tomorrow morning?

It looks as if we have a sale, Mr. Komarnicki. So it will be 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: When will it be reported to the House, Mr. Chair?

An hon. member: Immediately.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Immediately.

The Chair: As soon as possible.

The notice of motion by Mr. Andrew Telegdi is that the 10th report, on citizenship revocation, and the 12th report, on updating Canada's citizenship laws, of this committee in the first session of the 38th Parliament be adopted as reported in this session, and that the chair present the report to the House.

This was the stood motion, if I'm correct in assuming that.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Basically, Mr. Chair, we're going to be dealing with citizenship legislation. We have spent millions of dollars gathering information in previous parliaments, and I think it's important that we also respect the witnesses for giving up their time and contribution for the work of the committee and adopt these reports, because they will serve us very well in terms of the future work on citizenship.

The Chair: Are there further comments, or is there discussion, on the motion as currently before us here?

Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Chair, I want to say I am going to support this motion, but not without some hesitation. I do strongly support the work we did in the previous Parliament and stand by that work; it's been very important, but I also think that other members who weren't present for that should have the opportunity to see it.

The Chair: Okay.

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Just for clarification on my motion, will it be reported to the House tomorrow, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: I don't know. Maybe. We'll have to wait and see. Possibly. I think it might.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Certainly mine has no dissenting opinions, so we can have it put in quickly.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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