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—
Chair

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi

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• (1540)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Michelle Tittley): Honourable members, I see that there is a quorum.

We can now proceed to the election of an acting chair. I'm ready to receive motions to that effect.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Do we not have a vice-chair to start with?

The Clerk: I'm proceeding to the election of an acting chair.

Hon. Maria Minna: Okay, sorry.

The Clerk: I'm ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): I nominate Ms. Demers.

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): No, thank you.

[Translation]

Mrs. Joy Smith: No, Madam Demers? Why not?

[English]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I can't speak if I'm there. I'm not a vice-chair. We have some vice-chairs; why don't we take them?

The Clerk: Ms. Smith.

Mrs. Joy Smith: I thought it had been organized for Ms. Mathysen to be the chair. I have to leave for a little while. How can we manage this, then?

Hon. Maria Minna: Why don't we share rather than wasting people's time? Why don't the two of us volunteer? You do part, and I'll follow up when you leave.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Okay.

The Clerk: Ms. Minna nominates Ms. Smith to be acting chair.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): I nominate Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: Okay, and the chair can ask some questions sometimes. I always do when it's my turn.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): So if I have to leave, Ms. Minna can take over.

Welcome to the committee today. I'm so happy that you have joined us. We're very anxious to hear your presentations today. You have 10 minutes each, and then we will have two rounds of questions.

Lucya, would you like to begin?

Ms. Lucya Spencer (Former President, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants): Thank you very much, Joy. I would also like to say thanks to members of the committee for granting us the opportunity to be here with you.

I am here representing the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. This is an agency that is province-wide and is located in Toronto. I am here today to share our views regarding economic security for older immigrant and refugee women in Canada. But before I do that, I will tell you just briefly about OCASI.

OCASI came into existence in 1978 when there was a realization that immigrants were coming to this country and needed services, and so a couple of agencies got together and formed what is known today as OCASI.

OCASI has a membership of over 180 autonomous organizations across Ontario. Its mission is to ensure equal opportunities, to ensure that immigrants can achieve equality, access, and full participation in this Canadian society. The membership of OCASI provides a variety of services to immigrants and refugees who come into Ontario.

We have been asked, as you know, to speak to you about the economic security of immigrant and refugee seniors. But before we can get into that, I need to give you a broad portrait of the situation of older immigrant and refugee women in Canada. I need to do that in order to build a context regarding economic security.

First, I'll touch briefly on the immigration policy and the constraints of that particular policy.

I think all of us know that in Canada we have an aging population. It includes not only "Canadians", but also the immigrant population, and particularly immigrant women. In 2004 we were told that more than half of the population in Canada 65 years and over were women. Of that group, 19% are foreign-born women included in the number. We know that in Canada women make up more than 50% of the population. Immigration has helped to strengthen the growth of population in Canada over the last little while.

Statistics Canada reported that one-third of immigrant women are between 45 and 65 years of age. Women who were born outside of the country are more likely than other women to be seniors. In 2001, 20% of all immigrant women were 65 years and over, compared with 12% of Canadian-born women.

Therefore, we have a growing and an aging population among immigrant women in this country. I will give you a bit more statistics. Figures show 14% of the female population are from racialized communities and live largely in Toronto and Vancouver, and I think that is no surprise to you. Most racialized women in Canada are foreign-born, and the largest share is of recent arrivals to Canada. What we have observed is that 55% of all seniors are racialized women.

Two per cent of foreign-born women cannot speak either English or French, and this is disproportionate to our men. They are mostly seniors, of whom 18% of those born outside the country cannot speak English or French. Most of these women came to Canada as sponsored immigrants or were dependants sponsored by their husbands. This, we know, is the experience of about 72% of immigrant women.

What we are seeing in our country today is that the current immigration legislation and policy, specifically the point system as applied to independent immigrants, privileges immigrants with post-secondary education and work experience in their fields. Given global conditions of inequality, many women have limited access to post-secondary education and the opportunity to work in their fields.

Because of this inequality, these individuals are very dependent upon their spouses, and because of this we have had situations where women, when problems occur in the family, cannot do anything for themselves because they have always been dependent on their partners.

• (1545)

I can cite just quickly an example of one woman who had lived with her husband for the last 25 or 30 years and who then, when she was asked to leave the home, did not even know how to go to the bank. She did not know how to write a cheque because she had never done that at all throughout her life.

The Canadian Council for Refugees, of which OCASI is a member, has on several occasions asked the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to address this inequality, but what we've seen is that nothing has changed. What we have is a growing population of immigrant women and racialized women who are experiencing poverty. Hence we call it the racialization of poverty.

We know when we look at immigration trends that a number of immigrants are arriving from areas like Asia, the Middle East, African countries, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. This has meant an increase in the number of racialized immigrants coming into Canada, with most of these coming from China. Over the last 10 years, that number has grown significantly. About half the female Canadian population, or approximately 49% of all immigrant women, are from racialized communities.

According to the 2001 census, the average income in Ontario was \$35,185, the median being \$28,027, indicating that the majority of Ontario residents were receiving less than the average income for the province. In contrast, the average income for immigrants who had arrived in Canada between 1995 and 1999 was \$29,398, while the median was \$20,006. The average income for Ontario residents from racialized communities was \$28,978 and the median was \$23,990. This shows you what is happening to racialized immigrant women in

this country. What we see is that women are living in poverty, and this is of great concern to us as an organization.

We ask ourselves what has changed. A number of reports have been written on this particular subject matter. I cite two of them. One is *Canada's Economic Apartheid: the Social Exclusion of Racialized Groups in the New Century*, which was written by Grace-Edward Galabuzi. Another one came from the Canadian Council on Social Development: *Nowhere to Turn?*, written by Dr. Ekuwa Smith. These reports have looked at the racialization of poverty of immigrant women in Canada.

We know that systemic racism, discrimination, and inequality, especially in the labour market, continue to be contributing factors to poverty among immigrant women in this country. Therefore, we think something needs to be done. It is true that there's not much out there on the issue surrounding senior immigrant women, and therefore we think some piece of research needs to be targeted specifically at that particular group. What we know is that recent immigrants to Canada are more likely to be employed in contingent types of work or non-standard types of work, or piece work, or temporary work, or contract work, or seasonal work. What we also know is that women from racialized communities are relatively well educated compared to others, yet we find them in low-paid jobs in our community.

Women from racialized communities earn less and have comparatively low incomes. This is consistent with the experience of all racialized residents in Canada. Four per cent of women over 65 had paying jobs. Many have never been employed, but we believe that this will change because we have a growing population and at the same time, an aging population and some—the young women—are finding employment. Therefore, we're hoping that later on their situation will not be as bad as it is for the current seniors.

• (1550)

When we look at what is happening in our labour market, more and more immigrant women, as I said earlier, are becoming poorer. The National Advisory Council on Aging, in its report *Aging in Poverty in Canada*, written in October 2005, reports that almost half of all immigrants aged 45 to 59 who arrived in Canada after 1980 said they feel they're ill-prepared for retirement. Forty-seven per cent of those do not know when they will be able to retire or do not intend to retire at all.

Generally, recently arrived old immigrants find it more difficult to enter the labour market compared to previous immigrants.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): I would like to tell you, Ms. Spencer, that your time is up. Perhaps you could conclude. I'm sorry about that. Time goes by so quickly.

Ms. Lucya Spencer: In conclusion, I would like to say that we need to ensure that seniors are given the opportunity for training, for employment. And when I say training, I also refer to language training, because many of the seniors cannot speak either English or French. Many of them live with families, and therefore they need the opportunity to equip themselves to better help them find some level of employment in our community.

We want to make sure the economic impact of the challenges that these individuals face is somewhat reduced, which will allow them to enjoy a better life in Canada during their aging years. In the brief we submitted, we have listed more changes that we think need to take place in order to ensure that seniors have a better life in Canada.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you, Ms. Spencer.

Ms. Fyfe, can we hear your presentation, please?

Ms. Karen Fyfe (National Women's Vice-President, National Farmers Union): First of all, I would like to thank the committee for inviting me to attend.

As my sister Lucy mentioned, the face of poverty in this country is racialized. It's also ruralized. I'm an elected official with the National Farmers Union, and I'm representing only 2% of the current Canadian population; I work on my farm and I work off my farm full time in the summer to support the farm business. I also work to support our five children, three of whom are in university. They will graduate with huge debt loads nonetheless, because the farm that my husband and I operate....

Ours is a fifth-generation family farm—as I said to Joy, the house was built in 1829—but I'm afraid we'll probably be the last to farm this land, based on the current economic conditions and the current political climate.

I don't always speak only for farm women, I speak for rural women as well. Farming occurs in rural Canada, and we work on such issues as the economic viability of Canadian farm families and also the strengthening and nurturing of rural Canada.

I was very impressed with the Senate standing committee going across the country and soliciting input and advice as to what is happening in rural Canada right now and why rural Canadians are feeling like, and being treated like, second-class citizens in a nation that we helped build. Had it not been for rural and farm women and for the socially progressive policies we came up with, particularly our sisters in Quebec and Atlantic Canada, where would this country be? I'll leave you to answer that question. It would not be a very pretty picture.

Farm women see a strong central role for governments and their various departments. That includes the Farm Women's Bureau, with which I did many years of work. This is my second time around as an elected official with the National Farmers Union. I was the women's president in the early 1990s to the mid-1990s. That was a paid position. Now, as the women's vice-president, I am in a strictly volunteer position. I have been on the road for the last week. My farm business at home is being managed by my husband and by our two children at home. I do this vice-president's position on a volunteer basis because I am so connected to the farm community, and to the rural women, men, and youth who make up our country.

To backtrack a little bit, as I said, farm women see a strong central and progressive role for governments and their various departments, be it the Status of Women, be it the Farm Women's Bureau, or be it HRDC—or be it supporting the collective marketing agencies that farm families have built up in this country.

I will admit to you today that the attacks this government has put on the Canadian Wheat Board are scandalous. The attacks and the

undermining of the supply management system in this country—two institutions that were built by farmers, controlled by farmers, for the enrichment and betterment of the farm community—are absolutely disgraceful.

We favour a two-pronged approach to government involvement—first, in reorienting government approaches toward gender inclusion, and second, in supporting farm organizations to become more gender inclusive.

I don't know how many of you good folks here actually come from a farming background. I know that Joy does, and I know that the honourable member there does. We are in a catastrophic state in the farm community right now. We have many issues that we have to deal with, not only farm issues but rural issues. That is our context. That's where we live. That's our culture and our identity.

• (1555)

To even start to address the financial crisis that farm communities are dealing with would take an entire day's workshop. So I'm going to assume you understand the financial crisis we're facing and get into some of the more social and cultural crises we're facing as well.

One of them is certainly that there are older women living and working on these farms. Fortunately I'm not quite as old as my mother-in-law. She has lived and worked on that farm all her life, but because she's never worked off the farm, she has no pensionable earnings. She will die in poverty, as I probably will—except I work off the farm in the summer, solely to make sure I have contributions to the Canada Pension Plan.

Income splitting for farm families will not work, because there's not enough money coming into those families to even have income splitting as a viable option.

I believe my brief will be circulated, Joy.

• (1600)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): It's not translated, so if you just hand it in to the clerk's office we'll see if we can translate and distribute it. Everything in the committee has to be in both languages.

Thank you, Karen.

Ms. Karen Fyfe: Great. Thanks.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's own statistics have proven that over the last 20 years, return from the marketplace to farmers has been zero or less than zero. The money farm families are surviving on comes from off-farm employment or government support programs. That is not how farm families want to make their living. It does not give credence and ownership to what we do when 2% of this entire country's population feeds the other 98%, and we have enough to export.

I told the senators at the Senate committee looking at rural poverty that we do not have an agricultural policy; we have a trade policy. Neo-liberalized trade policies move you to the lowest common denominator in the trading game, whereas my product must be sold in the marketplace at the lowest possible price. If I see any income from that at all, I'm certainly never paid for my labour or my return on investment.

Having said that, I don't want to leave you with the understanding that nothing can be done. Part of the work of the National Farmers Union is to always offer solutions. We say yes, it's a huge, complex, overwhelming mess that we're in right now, but there are solutions.

Farm women generate wealth, nurture the next generation, and nurture the environment. So one of those solutions is for farm women to have their own private pension plan, very similar to nurses, teachers, lawyers, and anyone else who is deemed a professional.

Part of my job as a spokesperson for farm and rural women is to get across to people such as you—but also to groups we work with—that we are professionals by choice. We have a vested interest in agriculture. We have gone to agricultural colleges. We are in a lifelong learning mode. We respond to trends in the marketplace. We're professionals. We're not just sitting at home baking cookies, although we certainly do that.

I understand if you're feeling a little overwhelmed by the issues we're facing. We too are overwhelmed by the issues we're facing, and the lack of clearly defined and articulated government support policies and programs.

There's a wide range of issues. Income is one, and pension is another. There's the fact that training and education programs are very closely linked to employment insurance, for which many farm women would never qualify because they don't work off the farm. That is something that should be addressed as well.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you so much. We really appreciate your presentation.

Ms. Bose, could you please give us your presentation?

Dr. Anuradha Bose (Executive Director and Project Manager, National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Tittley, for allowing us to come before this committee. It's been a while since we've been here. I want to thank Ms. Minna and Mr. Stanton, who separately made sure that we appeared.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

Today we've been asked to talk more about the income security of immigrant women. That's a broad subject in itself. Accordingly, we will focus our observations on newcomers, that is to say women who have been living in Canada for 10 years or less.

At the risk of seeming irritating, the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada maintains that newcomers and their families have a problem of income security and impoverishment. They suffer from having to enter a flexible labour

market and from getting only unconventional jobs. A disproportionate number of immigrant women suffer the consequences of this state of affairs.

Immigrants are an urban phenomenon in Canada, Toronto being the destination of choice for most of them, followed by Vancouver, then Montreal. Newcomers are swelling the ranks of poor workers.

[*English*]

What does income insecurity look like to newcomers? From where we sit at the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, of which I am the executive director, immigrant women and their spouses arrive with higher qualifications than their Canadian counterparts but are consigned to something we like to call "McJobs", jobs that are low-wage, dead-end, and unskilled.

Immigrant families arrive here as middle-class professionals with their life savings clutched in their hot little hands, which are soon eaten up in subsidizing their basic needs, with little chance of requalification and upgrading. Shortly after landing, they join the ranks of the working poor, with little hope of escape within a decade.

If, within a family, one person has to requalify, it is usually the man, who generally holds the visa for the family. And even then, they hesitate to take on that level of debt, knowing that some day their children will have to assume debts of their own for their education.

Some immigrant women are fortunate enough to find employment in a variety of small or medium-sized immigrant-serving agencies, and they lurch from contract to contract. Much of the settlement work in Canada is carried out by poorly remunerated workers, often working part-time, often without any benefits.

Men usually will not consider such jobs, preferring to drive cabs. At least they escape from the home that way.

In a family I know, of immigrant origin, the university-aged children jokingly refer to their engineer father as "that subsidizer", not only for them but also for their mother who works in settlement services.

Chen, Ng, and Wilkins, in 1996, studied the effect of immigration on immigrants' health. Immigrants arrive here healthy but lose that advantage compared to native-born Canadians over time. It is our contention that much of this can be attributed to the erosion of their standard of living and the quality of their lives. Working-poor immigrants are underemployed while being overqualified, stuck in McJobs that are seasonal and part-time, that carry no benefits, no employer-sponsored health and life insurance, dental plans, or drug plans. Immigrant families live in constant dread of workplace-related or other accidents, of illness brought on by the stresses and strains of making ends meet, and of worrying about their children's future.

Income insecurity means no money to put into RESPs for their children's education, so they cannot benefit from the changes to RESP contributions as put forward in the last federal budget. It also means that parents will deny themselves and take on two or three other jobs in order to ensure that their children get an education and get ahead.

• (1610)

[Translation]

For these people, income instability means very few or no opportunities to save for their old age by investing in RRSPs for their eventual retirement. In the medium and long terms, this segment of the population will eventually constitute a heavy burden for Canadian society.

Sector workers expect that the frustration caused by under-employment and the stress of holding more than one job and of shift work will put enormous pressure on family life, causing conflicts between spouses and between parents and children often leading to marital violence and the break-up of relationships.

We also wish to emphasize that violence against women and children, particularly girls, is unacceptable in any circumstance and that such acts cannot in any case be justified on the basis of culture and tradition.

[English]

Employment insurance, as it is structured presently, does not allow the majority of immigrants to access EI benefits. Employment insurance does not recognize the exigencies of a flexible labour market. It hearkens back to an era of stable jobs for life.

A CLC undated study shows that 20% of immigrant men who experience at least two weeks of unemployment received EI benefits in 2000, compared to 32% of non-immigrant men. In the same period, only 19% of immigrant women collected EI benefits, compared to 30% of women of non-immigrant origin.

It is likely that immigrant women are ineligible because of the work they do and because child rearing and caregiving responsibilities cause them to detach from the workforce for extended periods. Newcomer women usually do not have the bonding capital or network that can support their nurturing roles. Isolation is the newcomer woman's curse.

Income splitting is not a solution for the newcomer population. NOIVM believes that the social costs of income insecurity of immigrant women and their families has never really been computed. Such a study, NOIVM believes, belongs to the domain

of a joint meeting of the standing committees on the status of women and citizenship and immigration. They need to commission a study of the social costs of income security on immigrant families.

I thank you for your indulgence.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): I thank you so much for your presentations today.

Now we are going into round one. Seven minutes—that is the question and the answer period.

Could we start with Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you. I wasn't chatting. My colleague and I were sharing different pieces of information here, so I didn't mean to insult the presenters.

In any case, I have a lot of questions, and a lot of the information I do understand with respect to the immigrant and visible minority women's.... Both organizations have been very familiar to me, of course, for many years.

Let me start with Ms. Lucya.

There are a lot of aspects I want to get at, but one of them, in particular. You earlier mentioned the average and the median incomes, and you were talking about immigrant families. I think you said \$28,000 was the median, but then it was much lower, at \$23,000, for certain immigrant families. This brings me to a question of how we try to help families.

Under the most recent child credit, for instance, if you're making \$35,000 and up, you get the \$310, but below that you don't. It's peanuts, and then it goes down lower, so you actually miss out. So are you telling me today that in essence the majority of immigrant families, a very large number anyway, are not going to benefit from that?

• (1615)

Ms. Lucya Spencer: Yes, exactly. Based on the information we have received through our research, we do believe that many immigrant women will definitely not benefit from it at all because of their employment situation.

Hon. Maria Minna: Because the work supplement or the work credit actually dies at 21, there is a big chunk in between, and then it starts to peter out anyway. I forget the exact numbers, but I have a table that I've drawn out. It goes, I think, up to \$12,000, and then it starts to go out. So actually there is a big chunk of families that are just kind of stuck in that.

Ms. Lucya Spencer: They're stuck, yes.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Are you talking about individuals as opposed to families?

Hon. Maria Minna: I'm talking about the child credit, for starters, which doesn't apply to them at all, actually. So they're losing out on the jobs, and now they're losing out on the benefits, which is a huge problem. I just wanted to highlight that, because it is very important to look at.

One of the things I have tried to push for a long time is to use the gender lens when we do policy, and also the gender-racial lens or immigrant lens. Call it the multicultural lens, or whatever you want to call it. Without using that, we really miss out on a whole lot of things. Obviously this is one good example of how we're missing out on those families.

The other question is about income splitting, and that was mentioned by you, Ms. Bose, and actually also by Ms. Fyfe. With respect to farmers, it's the same thing, actually. Income splitting doesn't really help, because there isn't a lot of money. Income splitting for the purpose of income tax is pension splitting. According to the analysis I've looked at, which the Caledon Institute did, if you have pensionable earnings of \$100,000, you save \$7,000. Then when you're down to \$30,000 pensionable earnings, you are at a lower rate, and then you start to really peter out until you have none.

Most of the families that are arriving, actually because of their number of years here, have very little of that.

In farming, again you mentioned, Ms. Fyfe, the need for a homemaker's pension or a pension for farm women. Actually, many European countries do in fact have that for women, which they can pay into.

My question to all three of you, though, when we are talking about women's economic security, is whether you have—whatever you call it—a homemaker's pension or strictly a pension for women.

In your case, you're working on the farm. How would you structure that? That's my first question.

Ms. Bose and Ms. Spencer, could you include in your answer how you would deal with the fact that most immigrant women come here at a certain age, an adult age, so that they actually don't have a full work lifetime to contribute to this kind of scheme?

Ms. Karen Fyfe: I'll have to admit that this is a relatively new tack for the National Farmers Union to take, looking at pensions for farm women.

Because we're so few and spread across a large country, we do a lot of networking and a lot of coalition work. The B.C. Farm Women's Network has taken it under their wing to look at exactly how pensions for farm women would look. They are the group of women who are analyzing this and are coming up with some very workable solutions.

As I said, this is my second round of being an elected official with the National Farmers Union. Back in the early to mid-1990s, I worked with women like Linde Cherry from the interior of British Columbia, as well as Carolyn Van Dine in New Brunswick. We pushed, first of all, for a recognition of farm women as professionals equal to any other women in professions out there in which women are working, and we deserve our own pension plan.

Many of us are working three jobs. We are working at raising a family, so we're stay-at-home moms; we are working at our jobs on the farm; and we are working off the farm. Then we are volunteering to keep what's left of our little rural communities alive.

So if there is some way of having all of that valued in terms of the monetary or financial contribution, and then looking at how to set up a pension that captures all of that economic activity we've generated and all of that wealth we've produced, that's the type of stuff the British Columbia women are working on, and it is certainly a project that I'm willing to undertake.

• (1620)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): You have 30 seconds left.

Dr. Anuradha Bose: For us it's again a very new field, entering into the whole question of pensions and financing of RESPs, etc.

One thing I should have said is that neither income splitting nor pension splitting means very much to newcomer families.

One thing that might be looked at is the whole question of portability of pensions. I'm speaking from a personal point of view. I've worked in four countries, and there are two countries with which the government does not have a bilateral treaty, so there is money in a pension fund somewhere that I cannot access because there is no treaty governing these two countries.

This is something that will require more study than we have resources for. It is something that I think needs to be done.

Hon. Maria Minna: We just got rid of the research department at—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): We're out of time right now. Can we go to Ms. Demers, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: The position of chair suits you well, madam.

Mesdames, thank you for being here today. Thank you very much for the courage you continue to show in believing that you can really change the way policies are developed for women. Thank you for believing in us, thank you for believing that your presentation is important for us.

Ms. Spencer, I have a question for you that can also be put to Ms. Bose and Ms. Fyfe. Ms. Spencer, you told us about immigrant women of all ages, but we know that, as we age, it's even more difficult because we have fewer means, fewer pensions and so on. One bill currently under study, Bill C-36, limits access to the Guaranteed Income Supplement for immigrant women who are still being sponsored. To date, the act enabled those women to access the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

Do you believe this change is positive? Do you believe it can help immigrant women, if a bill further limits their access? Personally, I find it contradictory, but we're told this is better for immigrant women. I'd like to have your opinion on the subject.

[*English*]

Ms. Lucya Spencer: I'm not too familiar with Bill C-36 at this time, but I'll attempt to respond to your question.

You're saying that this bill, to make sure I have it correctly—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: That restricts—

[English]

Ms. Lucya Spencer: —will limit the access of immigrant women.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: —access for immigrant women who are no longer being sponsored. Those who are still sponsored would no longer have access to the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

[English]

Ms. Lucya Spencer: That is pretty sad, because what we are looking at here is women who have come to the country for a particular reason. Yes, some of them have come to the country sponsored by a partner or a husband; we know that sometimes a number of things happen within the family that cause a breakdown, and they have to separate from that particular partner or husband through no fault of their own. To actually limit the access these women have to this other source of income will be penalizing them on top of the situation they have gone through.

If that's the direction the government is thinking of going in, to me it's a bit unfair to this particular group in society.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you very much.

Ms. Fyfe, I acknowledge your courage all the more. I know how it is: my father was raised in Saskatchewan, on a farm in Shaunavon, and today there are no more farms or villages in the entire region. It's very small, virtually no one is left, older people are still there, and that's all.

You told us a lot about the advances you've made. You told us about a pension fund which you, women farmers, and farmers' wives, can access. It's true that it's thanks to you that we eat every day. I like eating, so I want you to continue existing; that's important for me.

But you told us some things I don't understand. Last week, when the Wheat Board was transformed, 62% of farmers voted in favour of that transformation. You're telling us that's not a good thing, that it's not right that it was transformed. So I don't understand. Yesterday there were questions on the subject in the House, and we were told that no farmers were talking about it. Last night, I listened to a Liberal Party debate on the subject. They said that the Liberal Party wasn't putting farmers...

You're a farmer. Can you tell us how that changes your situation? How does the fact that the Wheat Board has been changed make the situation tougher?

• (1625)

[English]

Ms. Karen Fyfe: Thank you very much for the question.

I won't use language that's too complicated or try to be too critical, but I think sometimes being critical might be a good thing. This is an issue that will lead to more rural poverty in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and the higher grain growing areas of Alberta where those grain farmers are removed enough from the Canadian-American border that their transportation costs are higher.

There is a saying that no matter what set of figures you're looking at, you can interpret them to suit your own agenda. If it would please

you, Ms. Demers, I could leave you with an article that our president, Stewart Wells, has written to Mr. Strahl about the smoke-and-mirrors campaign on the Canadian Wheat Board.

There were three valid questions on the ballot that were put to the grain farmers.

One, do you want the Canadian Wheat Board to continue being the buyer and seller of Canadian-grown barley? That means all barley except feed barley would continue going through the board.

Two, Do you want to be your own buyer and seller? Instead of having the board doing it, you'd have all the individual farmers out west finding their market and then selling.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Excuse me, this must be relevant to what we're talking about.

Ms. Karen Fyfe: This is very relevant, Joy. We're talking about the economic security of western farmers.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Madam, your time is up, but you can continue with your next questions. I try to be fair to all presenters. We're all so enthusiastic about everything we say that we could have a week's seminar on it.

Thank you so much. Not to be rude, but we must go on.

Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Perhaps we could pick it up there.

We need to link these responses to specifics around the economic security of women, and we were starting to get a little far apart.

I come from a background in small business and echo the same kind of sentiments, Ms. Fyfe, that you expressed with respect to pensions and the kinds of things that inhibit people who are essentially self-employed and don't have the same access to those things. Typically farm families, or families who have built small businesses of their own, ultimately end up having to use the equity they build up in their own properties.

I'm wondering if there's been any response from NFU with respect to some of the positives we saw come out of budget 2007, especially with respect to the increase in the lifetime capital gains exemption, which went from \$500 to \$750. It essentially allows farm families to keep more of their money upon a rollover, and that will help in their retirement years, I hope.

Has there been any response to that?

• (1630)

Ms. Karen Fyfe: Not officially, and I will admit that's not something we've had a great deal of time to look at because we've been so wrapped up in the Canadian Wheat Board campaign and the supply management. Here's what's happening in the Wheat Board, and it's going to roll over into supply management.

Let's assume my husband and I wish to sell our farm to our children. First of all, they can't afford to buy it because of land costs, machinery costs, and we can't afford to sell it to them at a price they could afford to purchase it at because of the incurred debt over the last 20 years of our farming operation. I'd say that's certainly in supply-managed sectors, where quota has such an increasingly high price attached to it. For most dairy farms in my province, which is a small province where the average herd size is 80 to 100 cattle, the price tag on the quota alone could be \$1.5 million to \$2 million. You'd have to be crazy to want to buy into something like that, and as a mother, I'd have to be crazy to want my sons or daughters to go out and try to finance that by borrowing the capital.

So it's available, but not really.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I only have seven minutes, so I'm going to try to move it along. I don't want to cut you off, but thank you.

I didn't get a chance at the opening to thank you all, by the way, for taking the time to join us here this afternoon.

I want to go to Ms. Spencer, if I can. You gave us a very full presentation with lots of statistics, and I look forward to getting into those in a bit more detail. But having listened and summarized as you were going through some of the numbers, I wonder if it would be fair to say—perhaps you can help me out with this—that when it comes right down to it, you painted a picture of a situation where immigrant women in particular are in a situation where average incomes tend to be less than those of non-immigrant sectors of society, particularly among those who have been here between one to ten years.

When it came right down to it, you mentioned education and language barriers as being the two main thrusts of what appears to be preventing this group in society from achieving full access to the kinds of incomes they need. Is that a fair statement?

Ms. Lucya Spencer: Yes, but just to qualify one part of it, I referred specifically to racialized immigrant women who are at the lower end of the ladder.

Yes, it's a fair characterization of what I said. You have a number of these individuals who have come into the country at the age 49 or 50 and cannot speak either English or French. Many of them are at home with their respective relatives and do not get the chance to get out into the community even to be able to articulate with others in the language, so that they can even pick up a couple of words. Then as they age, they still cannot speak. This is a fact, that many immigrant women who have been 25 or 30 years in this country cannot speak English or French. Yet they need help; they need assistance; they need services.

What we are saying is that we need more in-depth study on this particular issue so that it will help you as policy-makers to put systems and structures in place to make the funds available that will allow them to grow old in this country and feel comfortable.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: In budget 2006, and then backing it up again in this recent budget, the government has made substantial commitments to language instruction, to education, to a temporary foreign visitor program, even a new foreign credential referral office, in an attempt to try to bridge some of those gaps. Madam Bose spoke very eloquently about this gap that exists as well, in terms of trying

to bridge the gap to get new immigrants into jobs, because they do exist. They are, for the most part, bringing the skill sets that are needed.

That really leads me to another question. I wonder whether, in the course of your statistics, there's any breakout.... There are generally two or perhaps three groups of immigrants, if we look at those who are coming on an economic type of application, those who are coming to reunify with family members and on a compassionate basis, and then refugees. Is there any breakout for those who are coming on economic grounds, who are actually coming with the skill sets that, for example, we're matching up with Canadian needs? Do we see how those folks are performing relative to the other groups, so that we can see where the priorities need to be put?

• (1635)

Ms. Lucya Spencer: We are talking about newer immigrants, as opposed to older immigrants.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Lucya Spencer: If I can backtrack a bit, you talked about the training, etc., that is available. We also have to look at the restrictions that are placed on access to these training programs. Some individuals, more so older immigrants, cannot access some of these training programs out in the community.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Why can't they?

Ms. Lucya Spencer: Some of them come into the country as sponsored immigrants. I'm trying to remember the exact words here, but some of them, because of the way they have come in, come in as refugees or refugee claimants, and it takes another period of time before they are eligible for many of these programs. At the same time, they're aging and they also need assistance and need help.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you. I'm sorry we ran out of time. That was very good.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): You've run out of time.

Ms. Bose, you would like to make a brief comment.

Dr. Anuradha Bose: I was just going to say that I have here with me the executive summary of a Statistics Canada study of "Chronic Low Income and Low-income Dynamics Among Recent Immigrants", and I would refer you to this, Mr. Stanton. It talks about the economic welfare of immigrant families, not just the individual, and talks about the "low income syndrome". It treats it as a syndrome.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): It would be very helpful. Thank you.

You can continue in this vein with the next question, if you want to, Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you all for coming before the committee today. For me, this is a return to a familiar place, as a former member of this standing committee.

I want to start with Ms. Fyfe.

We're talking about economic security. My riding in Nanaimo—Cowichan is one of those odd mixes of rural-urban ridings. We have a substantial number of farms, although they're much smaller in scale than prairie farms.

One of the things the women in my community talk to me about is the fact that, particularly if there's a marital breakdown, they have trouble around access to housing. If they need additional services, it's very difficult in rural communities. Most of our rural communities aren't served by public transportation. They often can't get easy access to health care clinics and what not.

I noticed in this very good report that was put together, called "Farm Women and Canadian Agricultural Policy", there are some very good recommendations. Could you specifically comment on some of the other issues, child care for example, facing rural women and farm women?

Ms. Karen Fyfe: Bear with me for a second.

Jean, this is the executive summary of a much bigger document.

We see there are four pillars to maintaining a viable farm and a viable rural Canada. We see financial stability as being a foundation pillar; a domestic food policy, a made-in-Canada food policy for Canadian farm families that is a true agricultural policy, not a trade policy; healthy food and the environment are of the utmost importance to us, because it's where we live; and then there's strengthening the social and community infrastructure.

You're absolutely right, Jean, when you talk about the public infrastructures that we assume would certainly be there in the urban setting. Whether or not you can access them is another matter. They're not available in rural Canada.

In fact, my home province of Prince Edward Island has changed significantly over the last 20 years. When I was first having children, we had two day care centres in a little village of 100 people. They were seasonally run because of the farming, fishing, and resource-based industries we had. But they were there, we could access them, and we were subsidized because of our low economic status on the totem pole. They're no longer there.

To say you can access child care in a vacuum is really ludicrous. If the child care spaces are not there, you can't access them, whether you need them in July or whether you need them in January.

As for public transportation in Prince Edward Island, the only city that has public transportation is Charlottetown. If you live outside the greater Charlottetown centre, there is no public transportation. You're almost held hostage by your friends and neighbours. If you want to escape an abusive situation, you have to get on the phone in the strictest confidence and ask to be picked up and taken to the women's shelter or to the hospital.

Access to services, the public infrastructure that most of you around the table would assume exists, does not exist.

• (1640)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Perhaps I could go to Ms. Bose and Ms. Spencer. Ms. Fyfe sounds like she's also describing some of the isolation many women are facing.

I have a question.

A couple of times you've referred to the need for additional information and further study. It's interesting, because in the context of the recent census data from 2006, of course, Canada's birth rate has fallen to the point where the reason Canada is growing is that people are coming to Canada from somewhere else. I heard you say there's a significant gap in really understanding a number of factors, including financial security, access to training, and access to other services. Could you quickly outline a couple of the key things you would recommend in a future study to address this?

I know you've touched on some of them, but if you could succinctly put it to us, it might help to frame terms of reference for a future study.

Ms. Lucya Spencer: As for some of the issues that need to be looked at from our perspective as an organization, who are the seniors coming into Canada? What resources are available to them?

We also have to look at the legislation currently in place and at how it is having an impact on those individuals for integration into this new society.

We also have to look at the resources available to them in the community—i.e. settlement services, as an example. How many of them are accessing these services?

When it relates to those who are experiencing abuse, how are they getting the information to let them know there are resources in the community and where they should go for some of these services?

I think there's also an educational part that comes with it. How many of these service providers, etc., have an understanding of some of the issues relating to senior immigrant women?

Ms. Jean Crowder: I want to comment quickly on pensions for older women. This applies across the board. There's an organization out of Vancouver, British Columbia, called WE*ACT, Women Elders in Action. They weren't specifically focused on immigrant and racialized women, but they did do a number of very good recommendations about reforms to the pension system.

They recognized things like the non-standard flexible employment. They recognized things like that there needs to be an expansion on the drop-out provisions, for example, because although there's a drop-out provision for women with child care, there isn't a drop-out provision for elders.

Anyway, it was more of a comment that I think it's an additional piece of information that would be helpful for us to look at. I don't know if anybody has a quick comment on it.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you so much.

We'll go into round two now, and this is five minutes for question and comment. We'll start with Ms. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much.

I want to thank all three of you for excellent presentations.

I know very much about farm women and the issues they face. I was Secretary of State for the Status of Women in 1996 and spent a lot of time speaking to farm women. As a result, this came about: the ability for farm women to be able to talk about their economic reality, their social reality, and the isolation that they face and what happens when they become seniors.

I think it's a pity that this, which was an extraordinarily important document to help us to understand the complexity of immigrant women's lives, of farm women's lives, or rural women's lives, is now cancelled. This will no longer be available, this policy research fund. I think that is an extraordinarily devastating thing for women in this country, because it brought together academic research and real-life research for the first time. The two collaborated to be able to come up with some good solutions and some real answers.

I was going to ask you about your ability to have access to quality child care and to early childhood education, but I think Jean already asked you that question. But I do want to talk about the issue of access itself.

In Prince Edward Island you had two child care centres that are no longer there, and it was a small community. In places like Saskatchewan and in certain farms in the Prairies where there are huge distances, I think there needs to be a very innovative way to have access to early childhood education and to child care.

I know the problem with farm women is that you are neither fish nor fowl; you tend to fall between the cracks, and always have. You're not considered to be women in the paid workforce. You're considered to be stay-at-home moms, when you're not really. You're not staying at home. Somebody has to look after your kids while you are out there on your acreage doing work. This is a real problem that I would like to see us address.

The issue of seniors' pensions is one that has always concerned me, not only for farm women but also for senior immigrant women, who have often come to this country—as Lucya knows very well—and who have been babysitting their families, doing that unpaid work that they have had to do within the home, for which they get no recognition.

I would really like to hear you tell me how each one of you feels about the concept of having some sort of pensionable benefit that values the unpaid work that women in Canada do—farm women, immigrant women who take care of their children. And I would like to find out how we can structure that. Part of it may address some of the pensionable benefits for farm women. So I would like to hear about that.

The second thing I would like to ask a question about is the Wheat Board.

I note, Karen, that you've been trying to speak to that. I'd like to hear you finish it, please, because it hugely impacts on your economic viability.

Thank you.

• (1645)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): There's only a minute and a half left, so please keep that in mind.

Ms. Karen Fyfe: Three numbers, Joy.

In terms of the Canadian Wheat Board barley vote that was put out to the western grain farmers, 14%, Hedy, voted for the open market. Really, we're the growers and buyers—

Hon. Hedy Fry: One-fourth?

Ms. Karen Fyfe: Fourteen per cent voted in favour of a complete open market. The other 86% voted for a combination of either keeping the single-desk selling—that is, keeping the status quo, keeping the Canadian Wheat Board—and the other portion bought into the misinformation campaign and the manipulation—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Ms. Fyfe, could you relate this to women's economic—

Hon. Hedy Fry: It is related, and I asked her specifically about income.

Hon. Maria Minna: It's the family income. They're farmers. Women are farmers.

Ms. Karen Fyfe: We've had zero return from the marketplace, Joy.

Hon. Maria Minna: She's just said she's a professional. She works.

Go ahead.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Excuse me, Madam Chair—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): We're running out of time. I'd like to give you a couple of minutes. I'm just asking you, please, the topic is women's economics. Could you relate that as well.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Excuse me, on a point of order, Madam Chair, please. If the chair is ruling that the issue of the Wheat Board and how it impacts on the economic viability of farmers is not relevant, I would like to say to the chair that she is out of order, because the economic viability not just of male farmers but of female farmers is extraordinarily important. I would like to get the answer, please, from Ms. Fyfe without someone trying to shut her down every time she speaks.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Ms. Fry, what I am trying to say is relate it to the socio-economics, the topic we're talking about. You can speak on the Wheat Board, of course you can, but let's connect it instead of making it a political platform.

Ms. Karen Fyfe: The connection that I would make, Joy and Hedy and Nicole, is that the power in the marketplace comes from collective activity. We've seen that in the corporatization of the industry. We've seen that in the concentration of the grain handling industry. If it works for corporations and grain handlers to work collectively and to work in an organized fashion, it works for farmers too. The Canadian Wheat Board and supply management is the farmers' initiative to organize themselves collectively in the marketplace and get the best possible return.

Yes, there are occasional spikes in grain prices, and depending on where you live—proximity to the American border—that does play a factor. But the fact that 86% of those farmers who voted want a board, or some version of it, that gives them the best return, that goes right to the heart of the economic viability of those western rural families.

•(1650)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you, Ms. Fyfe.

Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Thank you to the three presenters. I certainly have enjoyed your presentations this afternoon. I think we've heard a lot of different issues, and a lot of questions have come to my mind.

I have questions for each of you. I'm not sure how much time we'll have to get through them, but I'm going to start first with Madam Spencer, please.

You talked about the education and the language training and the barriers that are there, and the fact that there's such limited access to post-secondary education. In your presentation, you said that if there happens to be a family breakdown, lots of times the women are not able to speak the language, and they don't know what to access. We've heard about all their problems from everybody.

My question to you would be, can ethnic beliefs and customs play a part in this that we need to be aware of when we're looking at solutions?

Ms. Lucya Spencer: I would hate to go down that road, because what we're going to do is compartmentalize certain groups of people. I think we have to look at the whole picture as it relates to women having access to some of the services, etc., that are there.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: So for example, if we can come to a solution that we feel will work across the board, if you want to call it that, or for everyone, aren't there different things we need to be sensitive to?

Ms. Lucya Spencer: If you're looking at a policy level, what you're putting in place is a policy or a program or an initiative that will address barriers to languages, to training, to access to services, etc., but as that rolls out at the community level, then we'll have to take into consideration serving a particular cultural group that needs a particular time for prayer, as an example. We have to be cognizant of that and allow that to happen.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: So our policy can be broader implementation, but it will have to be more specific?

Ms. Lucya Spencer: Specific.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Okay, thank you. That helps me.

Madam Bose.

Dr. Anuradha Bose: I would say that the policy must work across the board, but we must be cognizant of women's other roles, which are their caregiving and nurturing roles.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Yes.

Dr. Anuradha Bose: I would stress that, much more than anything, that's cultural or traditional. Women's rights are human rights, you know.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Definitely.

Dr. Anuradha Bose: Therefore, I wouldn't draw any distinction.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Okay. I'm not trying to draw a distinction; I'm trying to ask if there is a sensitivity that will help make this better across the board. I think Ms. Spencer has answered that to my satisfaction.

Dr. Anuradha Bose: Yes. I don't think you would like to hear my answer particularly, because I would speak from a point of view that might not be acceptable to you.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: I'm not sure what you're referring to, but that's fine. If you don't wish to—

Dr. Anuradha Bose: I was just going to say this is not something.... I would not venture down the road of either tradition or faith; it's much more women's other roles that I'm more concerned with.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: It is the implementation that would address that issue—

Dr. Anuradha Bose: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: —and I think that's what Ms. Spencer has said.

I wanted to ask you another thing, Madam Bose. You talked in particular about newcomer immigrants from one to 10 years. In my community, I just recently met with a very highly qualified woman who was a doctor in the country she came from. She can't practise here because she doesn't have the certification. She is a very highly qualified professional and very much wants to contribute and be a part of the community and the workforce, but because of restrictions and so on, she's not able to do that at this time.

She is not working—she is staying at home—but lots of other people with the same qualifications or equal qualifications are doing low-paid jobs, as you just said.

My question is this: when people immigrate here, what are their expectations? Are they given expectations that their qualifications will be accepted or that there will be an avenue whereby they can have those qualifications accepted readily? Do we need to be talking to the immigration department about this? I need your opinion.

•(1655)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): We have just a couple of minutes, Madam Bose.

Dr. Anuradha Bose: I'll be very brief.

I think the information people are getting in the sending countries is very incomplete. It's not well put forward. There is a lack of fit between immigration policy, which is all about long-term ability, and the need, which is much more the labour market fit. I think the information structures have to change. That very outdated point system has to be revisited. I think there has to be a root-and-branch look, not just tinkering at the margins.

Thank you.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you so much.

Go ahead, Ms. Deschamps.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Thank you very much.

First I'd like to welcome you and thank you for being here today.

In view of the fact that I represent a quite rural riding, I'm very sensitive to your testimony, Ms. Fyfe. In recent years, we've seen a lot of farms and small farms disappear, particularly in our regions. What I appreciated or what I thought was remarkable was when you told us that the rural world is where you think we find our identity. That really moves me very much.

You also said you have five children.

A little earlier, you showed us a report. Perhaps I wasn't paying attention. Is that the report on Canadian agricultural policy that you showed us earlier and that you have in your possession?

The National Farmers Union, I believe, has carried out a research project on Canadian agricultural policy entitled "Farm Women and Canadian Agricultural Policy". Does that report contain any recommendations to promote agricultural succession? When I say promote, I mean finding incentives to make youths want to take over the farm.

You have five children. Will one of your five children take over the farm?

[*English*]

Ms. Karen Fyfe: Thank you, Ms. Deschamps.

Yes, of the five children, I have a 20-year-old living at home and a 10-year-old. The 20-year-old, a daughter, is the one who would like to take over.

Of the five children, I'd have to admit she's the last one I would have thought would return to the farm and want to take it over, but she knows the financial realities and she knows that she has to continue with her education, and she knows that she will have to work off of the farm.

Right now, she works seasonally with me, in the summer and the fall, and she saves that money. When we can't pay the light bill, that's where some of her earnings go.

We are cow-calf operators. The BSE crisis basically wiped us out, along with the rest of the beef industry.

I wish I could say something good about the next generation of farm people, but all of our analysis and all of our research has led us to the conclusion that if there's not a public dialogue, if there's not an engagement between those of us who produce the food and those who eat the food in terms of getting a public food policy going in this country and a domestic food security policy in this country....

I'm very concerned about the next generation of farmers and where that food comes from. It's not good news.

• (1700)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you very much. We've reached five o'clock. We have two motions, and we want to hear the wrap-up, as well. So I'm going to ask the pleasure of the committee.

I know, Ms. Crowder, you have another question, but we are running out of time if we want to deal with the motions today.

At your pleasure, then, I will ask our witnesses to wrap up so that we can deal with the motions.

Thank you for your very insightful comments and presentations. I would ask that each of you, in turn, starting with Ms. Bose, wrap up. You have one minute each to do so.

Dr. Anuradha Bose: Madam Chair, I would just say two things in conclusion.

First, when looking at the credentials question, a very vexatious question at best, a gender lens is required.

Second, there must be a soft loan facility for people to be able to access in order to be able to upgrade themselves, because the longer time you spend in a McJob, the more deskilled you get. Therefore, you have to be able to get here and requalify as soon as possible.

Third, somebody has to grasp the nettle and contend with the self-regulating bodies, and the best of British luck on that.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you.

Karen.

Ms. Karen Fyfe: Thank you, Joy.

I want to allow Ms. Deschamps to know that this is the executive summary of the big blue book that Hedy held up. I have copies here.

To summarize, I haven't painted a very positive picture of where Canadian agriculture is going, but that's not to say it can't change. With the work that the National Farmers Union does and the work that our counterparts, the UPA and the QFA, do in Quebec, we have some solutions that we could put forward. We have been putting forward those solutions over the last 20 and 25 years. It's just that if they don't fit in with the current political realities, they don't get acted upon.

We'll keep pushing and we'll keep speaking, and we'll keep working together.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you, Karen.

We have a link for that report that Ms. Fry has, the one to which you referred. We will send that link out to all committee members so they can access it.

Lucya.

Ms. Lucya Spencer: There are so many things I want to respond to, based on the discussions that have taken place—unpaid work, seniors, etc. We think that a meaningful effort should be made to improve the economic security for older women, and this will require a number of changes. I'll leave just four with you this afternoon.

First, change work-related legislation such as the EI Act to ensure that more workers qualify, to address the systemic inequality faced by women.

Second, introduce guaranteed income opportunities through instruments such as the federal budget so that Canadian residents can receive incomes that meet the low-income cut-off.

Third, eliminate systemic inequalities in CPP and OAS, and explore mechanisms to strengthen those programs so they provide a guaranteed income that matches LICO.

Finally, introduce and finance labour market skills training and employment initiatives for older workers, especially older women.

Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you so much.

I'm going to suspend the meeting for two minutes. We'll resume for committee business after that.

• _____ (Pause) _____
•

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): I call the meeting back to order, please.

Dr. Anuradha Bose: Ms. Smith, my remarks will be translated and the clerk will have them tomorrow.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you very much.

You have a draft report in front of you on recent funding and program changes. This is not for consideration today.

• (1705)

Ms. Jean Crowder: I don't have one.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Sorry, this is for members of the committee only. It is a confidential report, so how would you like to handle it?

I have consulted with the clerk because I am always nervous about confidential reports. These are for committee members only, and we would ask that all committee members please not leak this.

I'm really nervous about this, so can we hand them back in and deal with this? I know the intent was to hand them out today. We all have our names on them, and I want to make sure that all reports are handed back.

Could you please do that for us, Ms. Demers? Thank you.

I don't want to have a confidential report out for two weeks. I'm sorry.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I approve of your decision. We had problems the last time.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): I know, yes.

All right, you've all handed them back, then? Great. Thank you so much.

I'm taking a look at Ms. Mathysen's motion. Amendments to the motion can be moved. Are there any amendments to this motion that's in front of us?

You should have two things in front of you: the original motion as of March 20 and then the amendments of March 27.

Today Ms. Mathysen is not here. I have to ask the committee, would you like to set this motion aside for the first meeting back, when Ms. Mathysen can speak to her motion, or would you like to continue to deal with it today?

Could I have a show of hands? Who would like to wait till Ms. Mathysen is back here to speak to the motion? Do we all agree that we'll deal with it today? Great.

Ms. Mathysen isn't here, so I will read it into the record, with the amendments. The motion is:

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), That the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women recommend that the Government publish the three research reports funded through the Status of Women Canada's Independent Policy Research Fund, as follows:

Monica Townson and Kevin Hayes, "Women and Employment Insurance Program: the Gender Impact on Current Rules on Eligibility and Earnings Replacement";

Shelagh Day and Gwen Brodsky, "Women and the CST: Securing the Social Union";

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, "Integrating Marginalized Women's Voices into Policy Discussions and Debates Linked to the CST";

and that the chair report the—

I'm sorry?

• (1710)

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): I'm sorry, I don't have the amendments. Is that what you're reading right now?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Yes, I am.

Would you please give him a copy of the amendments?

It ends with: "and that the chair report the adoption of this motion to the House forthwith."

Would anyone like to speak to the amendments, or can we proceed? Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Ms. Mathysen briefed me in advance and fully supports its coming before the committee today and would hope the committee—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): We've agreed to do that.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Yes, absolutely. I just want to be on the record as saying that I have Ms. Mathysen's support to have this here.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you.

Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Madam Chair, I'd like to move an amendment to the motion. The amendment would essentially have the effect of removing the two studies that are referenced—studies number one and two—because the information we've received with respect to the status of these reports indicate that both of the reports, by Townson and Hayes, and by Day and Brodsky, are in fact in the process of being translated and will be published on the website in short order.

In view of the fact that these are processes that are and have been under way, and that nothing we have in front of us has suggested this would be impeded—as a matter of fact, we have a commitment through, in this case, the department that Status of Women Canada will publish these two reports—I would move an amendment to this motion that both of those studies be removed.

The third one we haven't been able to establish, because the name of that particular study doesn't seem to match up with any of those we've already received here, so there's still a question. By all means, let that one stand.

I would move that amendment. I don't know whether we need a seconder for it; I don't know that we do.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): We don't have the amendment yet to the motion that I read, and then we'll do the amendments after that.

Maybe I'll have the clerk explain this procedure, because I want to make sure we're all clear on it, including me.

The Clerk: I'll just make reference to the notice of motion by Irene Mathysen of March 27, in which the three titles are cited. It was submitted by Ms. Mathysen, who, because she was the mover of the original motion, cannot move an amendment to her own motion. Therefore, the chair read it into the record.

We would require a mover for those amendments, if we wanted to do that. They haven't been moved, technically; they've been read into the record.

So at this point we have Mr. Stanton making an amendment to the amendment, which hasn't been moved.

• (1715)

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Madam Clerk, you're talking about this notice of motion of March 27—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Could we have order, and we'll do this one by one. So we will not proceed unless we can do it in an orderly fashion.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: You referred to this notice of motion of March 27 as an amendment. Are you saying that it is an amendment to the earlier motion? That earlier motion was withdrawn, if I recall.

The Clerk: In fact, in the explanation it was stated that it was withdrawn, but it was in fact the consensus of the committee that it be deferred to the following meeting. So there was a misunderstanding in that regard.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: *Je comprends.* Fine. I just wanted to clear that up.

The Clerk: To clarify it, it might.... Sorry, I'll let the committee decide how they want to proceed.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you.

Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: I don't believe I had a question.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Okay. Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I was actually responding to Mr. Stanton's effort to amend the motion, now that it's been....

Okay, so we're clear about that? Can I go ahead and do that now?

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I have a point of clarification. As Mr. Stanton pointed out that one of reports that's in the amendment actually isn't listed in the file, then we need a clarification as to whether or not that amendment actually should stand. If in fact the report doesn't exist, you can't ask for a report, an amendment, that actually does not exist or has never been written.

So I would ask for the clarification of the clerk on that.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): The clerk cannot provide clarification on that.

Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: I think, Madame Demers, you were asking me a minute ago what this was. Just let me explain, and then I'll tell you what I think we have to do.

On the original motion that Ms. Mathysen put forward, she amended it; but she can't amend her own motion, so we have to move this amendment. I support the moving of this amendment because I would then like to deal with these items, simply for reasons that I can explain now or later, if you like; it doesn't matter. I can explain them now.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Now would be good.

Hon. Maria Minna: I'll explain them now, no problem.

There was a letter sent to Monica Townson by the department on January 16 saying that her document was not going to be published. Ms. Mathysen wrote a letter to the minister, as I understand it, and the minister has not yet formally replied to her on this issue. So this letter still stands. While I understand that we are being told it will be posted, it's not yet been posted. In fairness, I need to go by what is there. What I have so far is a letter to Ms. Townson that says her report is not going to be published.

Now, I understand we are being told that it will be, but it's been weeks now, so I think we should go ahead.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): I just have one clarification here.

On the list of reports that I read out the other day: *Integrating the Voices of Low-Income Women into Policy Discussions on the Canada Social Transfer: Aboriginal Women in Vancouver, Immigrant Refugee Women in Calgary, and Women with Disabilities in Winnipeg*.... There were discussions on the Canada social transfer, aboriginal women in Vancouver, immigrant and refugee women in Calgary, and women with disabilities in Winnipeg. That is the same as the one on the notice of motion of March 27 by Ms. Mathysen, which says, *Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, Integrating Marginalized Women's Voices into Policy Discussions and Debates Linked to the CST*. That's the same one.

Questions?

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Yes, I appreciate Ms. Minna's clarification, but in fact I don't think it addresses.... I think Mr. Stanton has made it pretty clear that the first two reports are actually embedded in the list of reports that the committee has asked for. I'm referring to the third request. Does that report actually exist in the way it's written in the motion?

• (1720)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): It would be clearer if it matched the actual verbiage on the actual list, and Ms. Mathysen isn't here at this time to address that.

Ms. Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Thank you.

I don't see the problem with moving forward with the three reports. We have doubt about number one and number two. I appreciate that we received something from the department, but we have contrary evidence indicating that it was not going to be completed, so there's no harm in reaffirming it. Then the final one, we have some indication it's not going to be completed or published, and we want to say it should be, so I have no problem with endorsing all three of them.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Mr. Dykstra, and then Ms. Demers.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Are the reports going to be completed or not?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Yes, we do. Just to clarify, I read out during the last meeting the reports, with the working titles, that require revision and will not be completed and one was *Integrating the Voices of Low-income Women into Policy Discussions of the Canada Social Transfer: Aboriginal Women in Vancouver, Immigrant and Refugee Women in Calgary and Women with Disabilities in Winnipeg*.

Just to clarify what we did last week, we were requested to bring the reports that will be published, the reports that will be printed, the reports that will be posted on the web, and the reports that will require translation before they're posted on the web. Last week we found out we had three reports that were printed and posted on the web and we had five reports that I read out last week that will be posted on the web and require conversion to HTML. Then, the reports that require translation will be posted on the web. There are two of them.

In the last part—this is where the quandary is—the second report, *Integrating the Voices of Low-income Women into Policy Discussions*, and the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women one are apparently the same report, but the minister's office has reported that these reports require revision and will not be completed, so they're a work in progress.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Further to my question, why in the world would you want to publish studies that are not going to be completed? It's just a ridiculous notion. The reports will not be completed, therefore, we're going to ask that the report be published?

Hon. Maria Minna: The research has been stopped.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Is that the recommendation the clerk is prepared to make, to support a motion to release reports that are not completed?

The people who are writing these reports are professionals. The last thing they're going to want to do is have their own material released while it's three-quarters, half, one-quarter, 10 pages....

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Can I clarify? These are reports that require revision and will not be completed because they need to be revised.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I think at the very least, you should ask these professionals, these individuals who committed to write these reports, whether they want their work that is not going to be completed to be released even though it won't be completed in the fashion they would like it completed in. I think, at the very least, you need to ask these folks whether or not they want that.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Ms. Demers.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Rick, that's what these women have asked us to do, that is to say to see that their reports are published. My motion will enable us to give them what they want. Imagine all the knowledge we will acquire. Thanks to these reports and these women, we'll know exactly what women think about a number of subjects. It's simple: the reports have already been done, and some need to be reviewed and corrected, but the research is done. All that's left to do is to publish them. Imagine! You can't be opposed to that idea.

• (1725)

[English]

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I certainly am. I would not want my materials—

Hon. Maria Minna: Let's call the question. This is actually getting us nowhere.

I have more letters here. Can I read something else into the record? Or is Mr. Dykstra the only one allowed to speak?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Order.

Mr. Stanton, you were next.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Just as a point of clarification, going back to Ms. Minna's point, has Irene's motion been moved at this point?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): No, it has not....

Excuse me; order, please. I'd really like get this wrapped up, if we can. We need to have discussion, not bulldozing.

Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Has the motion been moved, first of all?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): The clerk has informed me that it has not been moved as of right now.

Should we have it moved now?

Hon. Maria Minna: I moved it earlier. I'll move it again.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Okay.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: So it's moved. Okay. That's one part of my question.

Now, I've proposed an amendment, and I've suggested that those first two items really be left out.

I would take the committee back to our discussions on this. Ms. Mathysen brought an original motion because of the correspondence that she had received. Having not received anything back from the minister, she brought this motion to compel the committee to go through the motion process, to bring a report, to compel these reports to be produced.

There was a discussion on that. To my recollection, we undertook to get some answers to those very questions. And *voilà*, we have the answers. What we have here is a report from the department that outlines the specific status of the reports that were in question, the list. In fact, two of the reports that were in question, that Ms. Mathysen has clarified through her motion, were here.

I would simply say...and I take it full well that the one report on here is in the category of not planning to be published. Fine, let's put it on there. But we have, in good faith, the report from the department that these things are in process. I see no need...and this is why I bring the amendment.

I would suggest, Madam Chair, that you put the question to the committee if we want to get on with this. I put the amendment on the floor. Let's vote on it.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Just to clarify, are you calling for a vote on the amendment? You are? Okay.

The Clerk: Mr. Stanton, perhaps I could just ask you to clarify something before the vote. You are moving the amendment that what part of the text be deleted? Perhaps you would read out the part that you would like deleted.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I would move that paragraphs two and three of the motion be deleted. Those paragraphs read as follows:

Monica Townson and Kevin Hayes, Women and Employment Insurance Program: the Gender Impact on Current Rules on Eligibility and Earnings Replacement;

Shelagh Day and Gwen Brodsky, Women and the CST: Securing the Social Union;

The Clerk: Ms. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry: No, I will waive my time to speak. We're running out of time, and we need to get this thing put to bed.

The Clerk: Are you abstaining from voting?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Oh, you're calling the vote? Sorry.

(Amendment negated)

● (1730)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): The amendment did not carry.

We can go to a discussion or we can call the vote right now. What is your pleasure? Call the question, then?

(Motion agreed to)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): There's one other issue. There will be a dissenting opinion attached to this particular motion. Is it

the pleasure of the committee to have a dissenting opinion attached to this motion and to have it in to the clerk by tomorrow?

Are we all agreed?

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Do you mean in 48 hours?

Hon. Anita Neville: Tomorrow is the last day of the House, so it is 24 hours.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Can we say until Monday? If it's normally 48 hours, that's two days.

Hon. Maria Minna: It is 48 hours for notice of motions, not necessarily the dissenting report.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: That's why I asked what's normal in a case with a dissenting opinion.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): The dissenting opinion normally is 48 hours. Can we agree to 48 hours to the clerk's office?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Now we have another motion from Madame Demers.

Madame Demers, would you like to read it into the record?

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The motion reads as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on the Status of Women recommend to the government that it restore the Court Challenges Program, and that adoption of this motion be reported to the House as soon as possible.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you, Madame Demers.

It's been read into the record. Would it be the pleasure of the committee, the time being past 5:30, to defer this to the meeting the first time we're back?

Hon. Maria Minna: I would just bring it to the vote. It's pretty fast, I think.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I don't think we have any time to debate it, Madam Chair; we're out of time. We're past the time here, and we—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Excuse me, can we go one at a time?

Go ahead, Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I'm just saying we need time to debate this. We're out of time. We had half an hour and we went through the other one. Let's put it on the docket for the next meeting.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Go ahead, Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: I think that all sides on this particular issue, no matter how we debate it and with respect to Mr. Stanton, are going to vote in favour. I know we're going to support it, because we understand what the issue is about. I don't see wasting all this time. I would rather go straight to the vote and get on with it today. In the next couple of weeks we will come back to a new matter. I don't think this is an issue that needs a great deal of debate.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Are there any other comments?

Go ahead, Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Madam Chair, with all due respect, I feel we need to have time to debate this motion. If we want to debate it now and people want to stay, that's fine. The time for the committee is over, but it's up to the rest of the people if they wish to stay.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): We certainly can take time and stay here for as long as it takes, even if it's until midnight, to debate this motion. We will do whatever is the pleasure of the committee.

• (1735)

Hon. Maria Minna: I'll defer to Ms. Demers on this.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Ms. Demers, please go ahead.
[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, I'd like us to vote on this motion today. For the past three weeks, my colleague and I have been touring Quebec and meeting with women's groups. To date, we've met approximately 150 women from various groups. They urgently ask us to urge the government to restore that program.

I don't think we should waste any time. Two weeks is a very long time. That will take us up to the end of April. I would really like us to settle the matter and to submit it to the government. Then it will be up to it to make its decision. In any case, we know that we're going to vote for the motion, and you know that you're going to vote against it. The result will be the same even if we debated it for 24 hours or a week.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you, Ms. Demers.

I need a motion to continue this debate. Otherwise, the meeting will be adjourned and we'll continue it next time. Does anyone have a motion to continue this debate?

Ms. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Yes, I would like to put forward a motion to continue debate, with a timeline at the end of which the vote will be called. I would like to continue this debate for 10 minutes, ending at a quarter to the hour. Then the vote will be called.

(Motion agreed to)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Are we discussing Ms. Demers' motion now?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): We're discussing the motion, yes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have a few questions about the motion.

It relates to the court challenges program. I know we've certainly heard a lot of special interest groups talk about the court challenges program. I have had people talk to me about it, as well as groups that have come before this committee.

I certainly think it should be noted that this court challenges program has encouraged some groups to bypass the political process.

They've used the courts instead of going through the process that's been set up that they should be using.

I think it also needs to be said that certain pro-life and traditional family groups have consistently been denied court challenges program funds.

I find it very strange that government is funding some causes and not others. I find it even stranger that government is paying groups to challenge government legislation and government programs.

I would certainly ask why we should be funding and using public dollars to encourage advocacy litigation. I do not understand why we are funding some groups and not others. It's not an even across-the-board representation. I don't think it's right, and I don't think the people of Canada want or need their hard-earned dollars to support only specific groups.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Thank you, Ms. Davidson.

Ms. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Thank you very much.

Madam Chair, this is probably one of the single most important and historic programs that has ever occurred in Canada. Practically every single piece of case law that pertains to gender has actually come out of this program. It has usually tended to defend the rights of those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged and who have absolutely no money to be able to defend themselves.

It's a minority rights program that has defended aboriginal women, immigrant women, lesbian women, and women who have actually been at the margins of our society and who have suffered from poverty and discrimination. These women have no voice. They have no money, generally speaking, to hire a lawyer to take discriminatory cases to court.

The court challenges program was put in by a Liberal government to support the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and gender equality therein. Therefore, to cancel the only tool by which minority women and women in terms of gender equality can have access to the courts and can have access to human rights is in fact nullifying what the charter intends to do.

To do this is destructive, to say the least. It's discriminatory, and I think it must be returned if women are to have rights acknowledged in this country and access to justice. Without access to justice, these women have been denied justice.

• (1740)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Ms. Fry says that this is the most important program in the country, and yet in the year 2000 it was impossible to tell who actually got money from the court challenges program. So if it's such an important program and it's so important to Canadian women, why does it actually exclude some women, on the one hand, and why in fact is it that—and I know you were in government at the time, Ms. Fry, so maybe you can explain to me—there was no accountability whatsoever for this program? No one in this country had a clue who was actually getting money from the court challenges program.

It didn't, after 2000, publish the names of the groups that it funded. Files are no longer available under access to information, and individuals and companies caught up in litigation had no way to find out what was happening with that money.

We can question the merits of whether or not you liked the program or didn't like the program or whatever the case may be. The fact is that there was absolutely no accountability in the program, none whatsoever.

You can be proud, I suppose, of a program put forward by a Liberal government that has no accountability, that answers to no one, and that excludes women from being included in it, and now you want it back again. Well, I'm glad you're proud of something that actually didn't work, doesn't work, never has worked, and is on the cutting edge of excluding women from being involved in it. Great. Why don't we just vote on it?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Mr. Cotler and Mrs. Davidson.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Number one, the characterization of this program as being in pursuit of special interests is a mischaracterization of the program, both as a matter of law and as a matter of fact. Its intention and its application were with respect to the promotion of equality and the protection of equality, which is not a special interest but is in the interest of all Canadians and in the interest of a just society.

It was intended to promote and protect minority rights, particularly minority language rights. There is no vested interest in that if we care about minority rights, which, as was set forth in the secession reference case, is one of the fundamental constitutional principles of our overall Constitution. So the promotion and protection of equality and the promotion and protection of minority rights are what this country stands for. If we're now going to go and convert this into special interests, that's a mischaracterization and a misrepresentation of the Constitution of this country.

Number two, it's intended to promote access to justice for those most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society who would not otherwise have had the standing and the capacity to even come before the courts to begin with. So this was intended to equalize access to justice in the pursuit of equality of justice.

Finally, determinations with respect to grants were made by an independent panel. They were not made by the government. They were not by special interest or in the service of special interests. I think to make that kind of statement is to reflect a lack of understanding of this program, how it worked, what its principles were, and what its purposes were.

To say that this has not been discussed.... It has been before the House of Commons. It has been before the justice and human rights committee. I dealt with it as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

I don't care where people want to come down on an issue, but at least they should be informed of the facts and the principles and the purposes of a program before they make such misleading statements before a parliamentary committee.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Mrs. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Yes, Madam Chair, I certainly listened very closely to the Honourable Mr. Cotler, and certainly I appreciate what the intent of the program was. I am saddened to think that the outcome of it wasn't what the intent was, because I think it had a very valuable intent.

If this motion passes, I will be asking for a dissenting opinion, please.

● (1745)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): The question is called. Could we start on a recorded vote, please?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7 ; nays 4)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): The request has been made for a dissenting opinion. Is it the will of the committee to have a dissenting opinion attached and 48 hours for that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): Okay, great.

There's one more item of business. How does the committee wish to proceed with the draft report? There are two options: send it to the office over the break or bring the copies to the meeting on April 17.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Draft report for what, please?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): The confidential report we took back.

The problem is that we had just discussed this and there was a question about sending it out at all.

Hon. Anita Neville: Send it on Monday to our offices, the Monday when we come back.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith): That's one opinion, Ms. Neville. Anybody else? Do we agree to sending it to the offices on April 16? Okay, we'll send it on April 16.

And please be very careful with that report. We will record who does bring it back.

The meeting is adjourned.

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