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—
Chair

Mr. Norman Doyle

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC)): We now have a quorum, and I will call our meeting to order.

Today we are receiving a briefing on undocumented workers. We have here today the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the Canada Border Services Agency, and the Department of Human Resources and Social Development. Our witnesses will be Mr. Les Linklater, director general of the immigration branch; Heidi Smith, director of permanent resident policy and program development; Robert MacDougall, director general of the enforcement programs directorate; and Andrew Kenyon, director general, temporary foreign workers directorate.

Welcome to all of you. I think you are familiar with how we proceed. I'm sure you have opening statements you want to make. So we will proceed in the order you want to make them, and then our committee will engage in some discussion and questions.

Welcome.

[Translation]

Mr. Les Linklater (Director General, Immigration Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I also want to thank the committee for its interest in these issues.

The issues of undocumented foreign workers and temporary foreign workers are complex and involve a number of stakeholders across the government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, employers and labour.

Within the Government of Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, or CIC, works closely with both the Canada Border Services Agency, the CBSA, and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, or HRSDC, on these key issues.

I am pleased that colleagues from those two departments are here with us today to respond to your questions.

[English]

CIC has the broad responsibility for developing the policies and programs related to the selection of permanent and temporary residents in Canada.

Together with HRSDC, CIC manages the temporary foreign worker program. HRSDC manages from the perspective of labour market impacts and the assessment of employer requests for temporary foreign workers; CIC assesses individual workers against

the jobs offered by Canadian employers to ensure that they have the necessary skills and qualifications to perform the work and that they do not pose a criminal threat to Canada or to the health and security of Canadians.

The CBSA has the mandate for all immigration enforcement activities, including removals. Undocumented workers or those here working without legal status are a concern to all departments, given the need to manage access to Canadian territory and the labour market.

Today I would like to provide an overview and ask my colleagues to do the same from the perspectives of their departments.

First I would like to address the issue of undocumented workers.

I think it is very important to underline that most information we have about the undocumented population is not based on hard data. While a number of stakeholders have expressed views on this issue, there is no way of validating their estimates of the size of this population. What we do know is that many undocumented workers have been in Canada for some time—in some cases for many years—while many thousands of individuals are waiting to have their applications to enter Canada processed through normal legal channels.

There is no mechanism under the legislation, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, for someone who is illegally in Canada to become a permanent resident legally unless there are exceptional circumstances that warrant an application for permanent residence under humanitarian and compassionate consideration. Normally an undocumented worker needs to leave Canada and apply for legal admission through an overseas mission, with proper authorization, and subject to medical, criminal, and security checks.

I would now like to turn to temporary foreign workers. In 2006 approximately 112,000 temporary foreign workers came to Canada. While final data are not yet available, to the end of the second quarter of 2007 we saw an increase of approximately 25% over the same period in 2006.

In partnership with Human Resources and Social Development Canada, we are enhancing the temporary foreign worker program to make it even more responsive to the needs of Canadian employers. Following a series of administrative measures announced since November 2006—including improved employer outreach, streamlined processes, and increased federal-provincial-territorial collaboration—Budget 2007 provided new funding for CIC and HRSDC to deal with increasing volumes more efficiently and to fill gaps in the current programming, including the need for enhanced employer monitoring and compliance.

We are acutely aware of the need to improve the program to ensure employers are meeting their commitments to workers and that workers have the tools to raise their awareness of their rights and responsibilities.

At the same time, provinces and territories, which are largely responsible for monitoring employment standards and occupational health and safety, are actively engaging on this file. Under the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, we have been negotiating an annex with the province to allow it to take a stronger role in identifying the temporary foreign workers it requires. The recently signed Canada-Alberta and Canada-Nova Scotia agreements also contain provisions to negotiate an annex on temporary foreign workers in the coming months, including recognition of the need to protect the interests of these workers.

To better support labour market needs, the government announced in Budget 2007 that it would permit, and indeed facilitate, the process of allowing skilled temporary foreign workers, including the skilled tradespeople who are already in Canada as legal temporary foreign workers, to apply for permanent residence without leaving the country. It is the government's intention to apply the same provision to foreign students who have earned Canadian credentials and work experience. We expect that by the time the program is up and running at full capacity, likely within five years, eventually some 25,000 people will be granted permanent residence status in Canada each year through this new mechanism.

In addition, the government has facilitated the entry of temporary foreign workers through various initiatives, such as the construction recruitment external workers services program, or CREWS, which helps to bring skilled construction trades into the Toronto area, and the memorandum of understanding for the entry of temporary foreign workers for projects in the Alberta oil sands, which facilitates the entry of the skilled workers required in that specialized sector.

These measures will help to ensure that our immigration system continues to play its traditional important role in growing Canada's economy. Taken together, these additional pathways, along with improvements to the temporary foreign worker program, should not only improve labour market responsiveness but also encourage the legal movement of workers to Canada.

● (1540)

I would now ask my colleagues from the CBSA and HRSDC to provide you with their perspectives on these issues.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Linklater.

Mr. MacDougall.

Mr. Robert MacDougall (Director General, Enforcement Program, Enforcement Programs Directorate, Canada Border Services Agency): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to appear before you today and to provide you with information on immigration enforcement, in particular how it relates to undocumented workers.

The Canada Border Services Agency is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Clearly an effective immigration program requires controls. The CBSA's enforcement approach has several layers. As the first layer, migration integrity officers abroad screen documents and persons before they board flights to Canada. Next, border services officers at ports of entry screen those who arrive in Canada. Finally, for those who are already in Canada, inland enforcement officers identify, arrest, detain, and remove those who are inadmissible, including those who work illegally.

Once someone has been found to be inadmissible, they are entitled to various levels of appeal. In addition, those under removal order may apply for a pre-removal risk assessment to ensure that there is no risk to return to their country. Once all avenues of appeal have been exhausted, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act is clear: a person under removal order must be removed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Controls such as removals ensure that Canada's best interests are taken into consideration in terms of safety and security, the economy, and our humanitarian and family reunification goals. A removals program supports continued compliance and is a deterrent for those who may choose to ignore our laws.

The CBSA prioritizes its removals. The first priority is those who pose a threat to our national security, who are involved in organized crime or crimes against humanity. The next priority is lesser criminality, followed by failed refugee claimants and all inadmissible persons, such as those who work without permission to do so.

The CBSA follows the priority system as closely as it can, but there may be times when a lower priority removal may be processed. For example, when work on higher priority cases has gone as far as it can, officers must move down the priority line. As well, removal priorities can shift, depending on when travel documents or the pre-removal risk assessment decision become available.

Enforcement activity, including removals, is not based on religion, race, nationality, ethnic origin, or gender. The country of nationality or the religion of persons being investigated by CBSA are not considered when deciding to pursue a case. Canada's removal policies are universally applied and do not target such specific groups as illegal workers.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, the ability to remove inadmissible people is vital to the safety and security of Canada. Any deviation from this practice will act as a draw factor for illegal migration to Canada and will jeopardize the integrity of the immigration program.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacDougall.

Mr. Kenyon.

Mr. Andrew Kenyon (Director General, Temporary Foreign Workers Directorate, Department of Human Resources and Social Development): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

[Translation]

I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity to speak to you on the issue you are studying, that is, undocumented workers and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

My name is Andrew Kenyon and I am the Director General of the Temporary Foreign Workers Directorate in the Skills and Employment Branch of Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

[English]

Mr. Chairman, today I will be speaking to HRSDC's role in the temporary foreign worker program, which we co-deliver with Citizenship and Immigration Canada. I'll explain briefly how the program functions within the Canadian labour market and how HRSDC manages its portion of the program in order to balance employer needs with those of Canadian and foreign workers. I'll also speak to what generally foreign workers do here, to certain challenges we face in operating our portion of the program, and to some new initiatives that we're undertaking to address those challenges from the HRSDC perspective.

HRSDC's role in the temporary foreign worker program is to assess temporary job offers by Canadian employers to foreign workers against a set of criteria and to evaluate the potential labour market impact of those job offers. The HRSDC assessment is called a labour market opinion, and it's provided to the employer and to Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The labour market opinion is "positive"—meaning there's no adverse impact on the labour market—"neutral", or "negative".

The labour market opinion, or LMO, is developed based on the analysis of factors found in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act regulations. For example, did the employer conduct reasonable efforts to hire or train Canadians for the job? Is the foreign worker filling a labour shortage? Are wages and working conditions comparable to those offered to Canadians working in the same occupation? And will the hiring of the foreign worker affect a labour dispute or the employment of any Canadian worker involved in a labour dispute?

• (1545)

[Translation]

The department issues labour market opinions to cover periods as short as two days or as long as three years for high-skilled workers. For low-skilled workers, for example, long-haul truck drivers, meat packers and general labourers in construction, changes were

announced in February 2007 allowing the extension of the labour market opinion period from 12 up to 24 months, with wages being reviewed after 12 months.

Labour market opinions are required for approximately 50% of the work permits issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The main exceptions are workers who come in under international agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and intra-company transfers.

[English]

Mr. Chairman, to avoid potential misperceptions about the temporary foreign worker program, it's important to note two things. First, the program is driven by employer requests and there are no numerical limits or quotas. Second, HRSDC processed LMOs for over 163,000 workers in 2006. Despite this, temporary foreign workers represent less than 1% of the Canadian labour force.

To give you an idea of who the temporary foreign workers are in Canada today, the United States is Canada's top source country for temporary foreign workers, followed by Mexico, France, the United Kingdom, and Australia. About 45% of foreign workers entering Canada are in the managerial, professional, entertainment, and technical trade occupations. About 55% are in the lower-skilled occupations, and nearly half of these workers are seasonal agricultural workers who meet the temporary needs of Canadian agricultural producers during peak harvesting and planting periods, when normally there are shortages of Canadians.

I'll move on now to the challenges we face and some of the solutions we're initiating.

One of the biggest challenges we face is the steadily growing demand for labour market opinions in certain regions and sectors. This, combined with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act requirements for case-by-case assessments, has resulted in backlogs and increased processing times, notably in Alberta and B.C.

Program changes have been announced to address the situation, including the creation of lists of regional occupations under pressure for B.C., Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, and others as they are developed; ensuring employers will have shorter and simpler advertising requirements prior to hiring temporary foreign workers where shortages are clear and ongoing; the creation of online labour market opinion applications; concurrent processing of labour market opinions by HRSDC and work permits by Citizenship and Immigration; the creation of federal-provincial working groups in Ontario, B.C., Alberta, and Manitoba; and most recently, the expedited labour market opinion process, allowing eligible employers to receive labour market opinions in specified occupations in B.C. and Alberta much more quickly than under the regular LMO process.

In January of this year Minister Solberg announced the expansion of the E-LMO pilot project from the original 12 occupations to 33 occupations, representing 50% of the total volume of labour market opinion applications from employers in B.C. and Alberta.

[Translation]

These changes are taking effect and we expect to see the benefits, particularly with the addition of funding from Budget 2007. However, with the total number of TFW requests up 100% between 2000 and 2006, and with a 200% increase in Alberta and a 40% increase in BC in the first six months of 2007 as compared with the same period in 2006, the pressure is likely to continue to grow.

• (1550)

[English]

An additional challenge we face is to ensure a balance between the facilitative elements of the program and adequate worker protection. As I noted earlier, temporary foreign workers have the same protections as Canadian workers under federal and provincial laws. Provinces and territories have the primary responsibility for establishing and enforcing employment standards and occupational health and safety, such as wages and working conditions.

Nevertheless, we're working with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to improve information for foreign workers regarding their rights and recourse mechanisms. We are producing and releasing a pamphlet to foreign workers in a number of languages to advise them of their rights and the recourse mechanisms available to them.

As well, HRSDC is implementing improved information to employers about their responsibilities and the requirements of the program. We're also developing information-sharing agreements with the provinces to allow us to identify and share information where there have been violations of labour standards.

We still have a lot of work to do. What we're hearing is that we are moving in the right direction.

I'll conclude on that note.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Did you mention your estimate of the number of undocumented workers we have in Canada? What would the estimate be of that?

Mr. Les Linklater: Mr. Chair, neither CIC nor stakeholders are really able to determine the exact number of persons who are in Canada illegally, including undocumented workers.

There is no hard data, as I said in my opening remarks, to accurately support an estimate of undocumented workers or illegal persons. Estimates range from 80,000 to 500,000, depending on the source, and while media and the stakeholders often cite very high numbers, these are not based, as I said, on supportable evidence.

What the department has done relates back to 2005, when we compiled our own estimate of undocumented workers, which we calculated to be between 80,000 and 120,000. This was an estimate arrived at after consulting with industry associations, labour groups, and regional CIC offices across the country.

Really, for us to have an accurate estimate of this population, Canada would need to have exit controls so we could track the entry and exit of people and therefore understand how many people have overstayed.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

We will go now to Mr. Telegdi.

Mr. Telegdi, you have seven minutes, please.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Actually, that's a good point to start off with. When we did touring on this, our estimates were from 200,000 to 500,000.

You mentioned some figures here that say we're taking in 165,000 folks, 45% of whom are high-skilled and 55% of whom are low-skilled.

I really want the committee members to understand this. The low-skilled folks are the ones who were eliminated as possible immigrants to Canada at the time the point system was changed. Just so the committee members know, the committee was overwhelmingly against the way the point system was changed. It was the classic case of a minister who knew little being convinced by the officials that it was the way to go.

If you start looking at the low-skilled workers and the way you categorize them—not the professionals—you're talking about 90,000 people. The new point system has been in operation now for a long period of time. So if you multiply 90,000 people by five years, you have 450,000 people.

The problem is that the system is not very functional, and that's why there's such a huge shortage. It doesn't matter where you go in this country. From the Maritimes, where fish plants are threatening to close down, to the west coast, to up north, we're in a real mess. And it comes back to the point system. Skilled trades have a hard time coming in. Labourers have a hard time coming in. So having the point system and the way it was changed has created a real problem.

There is talk about protecting Canada and what have you and protecting security in the country. Can you tell me how many people we are trying to deport right now because of criminality, Mr. MacDougall?

• (1555)

Mr. Robert MacDougall: I can tell you a little bit about 2006-07 and the record for that year. There were 12,636 people removed from the country, and 15% were criminals. Therefore, we're looking at around 1,900 or just under 2,000.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: No, I don't want to go in the wrong direction. Let me clarify.

How many people have we identified as criminals, right now, who have had status in the country as permanent residents, but because of their criminal activity, we are in a position to deport them or the government is taking action to get them out of the country? How many of those people do we have?

Mr. Robert MacDougall: I don't have an exact number of criminals we would be working on that I can give you right now. We have a working inventory of around 22,000 who are removal ready right now. About 8% of those in the working inventory who are ready for removal have criminal backgrounds.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Just so we totally understand each other, and I expect that you will provide the committee with the answer, right now there are thousands—2,000, 3,000, 4,000—of people who have status in Canada, but because of serious criminality concerns, Canada is rightfully trying to get rid of them. There's a real bottleneck, and the bottleneck is not being able to get a date with the Immigration Appeal Division. They can't be processed until they have their hearing before the Immigration Appeal Division. All permanent residents are entitled to a hearing prior to being removed from the country. I really want to get a handle on those numbers, and I want you to provide that to us, because I know you have the figures and I know they're in the many thousands.

My concern is this. Instead of focusing on those folks who we rightfully have identified are a concern because of criminality and who, to create a more peaceful community in Canada, if you will, we want to get rid of—we can't get rid of them because of the lack of positions on the Immigration Appeal Division—we're getting rid of undocumented workers, a problem that we have created because of the point system, which doesn't work for the economy. They seem to be getting all the priority, even though it hurts the economy. It would seem to me that if we're going to get rid of folks on a priority basis, it should be at the level of the ones we want to get rid of because of criminality.

The other issue is that the previous minister, not of this government but of the previous government, was working on some program of regularization that was trying to come to grips with undocumented workers. How far did you get in that process? I know it was quite a way along.

Mr. Robert MacDougall: I guess that question would probably be for my colleague. But if I may, Mr. Chair, I would just respond to the criminal element briefly.

I'd just like to say that when you look at how we remove people.... We have a priority list, as I mentioned, which starts off with the serious criminals and works its way down to failed refugee claimants

and then others in an inadmissible class that would include illegal workers. So that's our priority system. When we look at the history of what happened last year, we look at a total of, as I mentioned, about 8% in the global inventory, if you like, of those people to be removed who have a criminal history.

Last year, of the 12,636 people removed, 15% were with criminal backgrounds. I think what that demonstrates is that certainly the priorities of removing criminals are being respected in our regional offices. They did remove a larger percentage than exists in the overall global inventory, and of course then they worked their way down to the others.

So I just wanted to provide you with those numbers, but I'll pass on the second part of your question.

The Chair: His seven minutes are up, but I think we need a response here.

Mr. Les Linklater: Mr. Chair, just to clarify, in 2006, while HRSDC processed 165,000 labour market opinions, in fact, only 112,000 temporary foreign workers came into Canada, and of that number, approximately half were high-skilled and half were low-skilled.

With regard to the selection criteria and avenues for low-skilled individuals to come into Canada, there are a number of avenues that are open to them. The first would be provincial nominee programs, where we have extensive documentation of strong provincial history, particularly in Manitoba and Atlantic Canada, with the nomination of low-skilled workers, as well as the arranged employment scheme, which provides bonus points to individuals who have secured a permanent job offer validated by colleagues at Human Resources and Social Development.

At the same time, Budget 2007, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, has announced the government's intention to create a new mechanism to allow temporary foreign workers, including the skilled trades and other individuals in technical occupations, to transition to permanent residents.

With regard to the question related to the previous government's activities on this file, work was indeed carried out in the past on possible initiatives to regularize the status of undocumented workers. In 2005, a draft memorandum of understanding with the undocumented workers coalition was developed at the working level. However, it was never signed and it was not endorsed by the previous government.

• (1600)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. St-Cyr.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here today in this rather subdued meeting room. I have a few questions for either Mr. Kenyon or Mr. Linklater, for the person who feels more qualified to respond. These questions pertain to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. I merely want to understand the mechanics of this program.

You mentioned that when a request is made, a labour market opinion is required. The request comes from an employer who is experiencing a labour shortage and wants to hire foreign workers. If I understand correctly, it is the employer who requests permission to hire foreign workers.

Is that how things work? Fine.

So, taking into account the criteria that you listed, you will either grant, or deny, this employer the right to hire foreign workers. Is that correct? So far so good.

Of the four criteria mentioned in your presentation, there is one that appears very important and obvious to me:

Are wages and working conditions comparable to those offered to Canadians working in the same occupation?

I would image that the aim here is to avoid a situation where companies hire cheap foreign labour.

Practically speaking, how do you ensure that this criterion is being satisfied?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: Thank you for your question.

What we call the “prevailing wage”, the wage that Canadians would be paid in that occupation, is an average based on a variety of data sources. We draw data from EI databases to identify wages that Canadians are paid in that occupation. We look at employer surveys. We look at provincial wage surveys as well. Both Alberta and B.C. have extensive information on wages that are paid for a variety of occupations. In some instances we'll go so far as to do surveys of competitors in a particular region to determine what people in that occupation are being paid.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: As far as the other criteria are concerned, for example, “Is the foreign worker filling a labour shortage”, I imagine you still use the same kind of market data?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: To determine whether there is a shortage of workers, one of the key places we look is whether there are a number of Canadians currently receiving employment insurance because they are unable to find jobs in their occupation. If the number of Canadians on employment insurance in a given region is relatively high, that would indicate that there's not actually a shortage of workers in that occupation.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: So then, you can conduct a broad-based labour market analysis to arrive at a decision. However, at the same time, you must have rather extensive knowledge of the company in order to make that decision.

In order for you to get an answer to the question “Did the employer conduct reasonable efforts to hire or train Canadians for the job?”, the employer must provide sufficient information in his request and the department must have sufficient knowledge of that employer to respond appropriately.

● (1605)

[English]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: One of our main tasks in assessing an employer request is insisting that an employer provide proof that they have undertaken extensive advertising in local newspapers, on the national job bank, and other sources, depending on the type of occupation and the region in which they're operating. They do actually have to provide proof of the work they've done in that area to ensure that Canadians are not missing out on employment opportunities.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: How do you assess the last criteria which concerns labour disputes?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: It's interesting. There are a variety of different types of labour disputes, of course, and we have to look at each one on a case-by-case basis. If there are negotiations under way for a new collective agreement, for instance, we want to make sure there's no impact on the outcome of those negotiations by bringing in temporary foreign workers. We want to always ensure that the temporary foreign workers enjoy the same benefits under a collective agreement when they're operating in a unionized environment. And if there is an actual labour dispute, a strike, for instance, we will generally refuse a labour market opinion simply because of the impact.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: So then, you're saying that employers make a request, which the department evaluates on the basis of these four criteria and, if the department's response is favourable, the employer can go ahead and hire the worker.

Do you follow up in some way with this employer to see if the four conditions have been met and if the employer is treating these workers decently and properly?

You circulated a small pamphlet at the start of your presentation in which we read that workers must be informed of their rights. What type of monitoring is done after the worker has been hired to ensure that the employer is fulfilling the terms of the contract with society?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: Again you've hit on a very interesting question and one that preoccupies me as well as my minister.

Our ability to do investigations or verification of employers after we issue an LMO is quite limited at this point under current regulations, and we realize that this is an issue. We need to work more closely with other enforcement authorities in the provinces as well as with our colleagues in the federal government in order to do these. This is one of the reasons why we're developing information sharing agreements with the provinces, so that we can identify when there are problems and can notify the appropriate authorities to ensure that enforcement actions are taken.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: What you're saying then is that no systematic follow up is done.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: If an employer is asking for an extension of a labour market opinion, we can check on their compliance with measures. But up to that point, there's very little we can do.

Another interesting development is under the expedited labour market opinion process that I mentioned in my presentation. Recognizing the limitations that the current regulatory provisions place on us, what we have done is include a provision in the application process whereby employers consent to allow us to do after-issuance verification, which I think is quite an important development, because it allows us to do the work that clearly we all agree needs to be done.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: If it comes to your attention that an employer is not respecting these criteria or is not treating employees properly, can you, pursuant to the regulations in place, turn down a subsequent request from this employer on the grounds that in the past, he has failed to comply with the regulations?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: The legal advice we're receiving on this at this point is a bit mixed. But to the best of my knowledge, at this point we don't have the authority to assess past performance when we're checking on new labour market opinions. This is again one of the issues we have to address in future regulatory development.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. St-Cyr.

Madam Chow.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In five years, if we look at 150,000 temporary foreign workers coming to Canada each year, to use this year's figure, we're looking at 750,000 or three quarters of a million workers. Your document said that about 25,000 of them will get landed immigrant status—that's about 3.3% who would get to stay—and you're looking at something like 725,000 who will not be able to stay, which means they are not likely going to be able to get landed immigrant status.

These workers, it seems to me, have absolutely no power. I've heard cases of abuse, exploitation of these workers, and overcrowding of accommodations. They put their money into employment insurance, but they can't get any of it because they have to leave. Some provinces don't have health insurance until they've been here for more than three months. Their family members most likely are not able to join them and never really would have a chance to join them.

We are setting up a system that, in my mind, at the end of the day, is going to be driving down Canadian wages. These workers basically have very little in the way of rights. The minute they complain.... Their permit is really for that job, for that employer; the visa is not really for the employment period of, say, two years. That has been one of the recommendations previously, and I notice that it hasn't been quite implemented yet.

Also, we know there are recruiters overseas, and some of them are pretty unscrupulous. They ask for \$5,000, \$10,000, and they promise the sky. There's no training. They come in, they don't know the safety measures, and they don't know the labour laws.

What has the department done, whether it's from CBSA or the CIC, to make sure the recruiters overseas, those who are operating in not a very legal manner, are punished?

I notice that none has gone to jail. I can't see that many have been charged. Who really is in charge—is it CIC, or is it CBSA, or is it the RCMP—to make sure that at a bare minimum these workers coming in would not have these recruiters just exploiting them?

• (1610)

Mr. Les Linklater: Mr. Chair, these are issues of great concern, not only to the departments here today but also to our provincial colleagues. In fact, as Mr. Kenyon has mentioned, information-sharing agreements with the provinces are being developed to help us share information around infractions not only of federal statutes but also of provincial statutes.

For example, the four western provinces all have legislation on the books that makes it illegal for recruitment agencies to charge a fee to the prospective employee. Although they may charge the employer for their services, it is illegal under provincial statute for them to charge the employee.

When an employee comes forward with that type of information, either to HRSDC or to CIC or CBSA, we direct them to the appropriate provincial officials. We do, I think as Mr. Kenyon pointed out, recognize that the systematic follow-up is something we need to work on through future regulatory initiatives.

The key to that is being able to share information with the provinces more freely and between the three federal departments that are involved to make sure we're bringing all of our tools to the table to look at the activities of recruiters.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Your visa office staff are not trained to ask the question about whether you are in fact being charged. I've seen cases where the employees complain before their trial would actually get to court—their day in court. They're already deported because they lost the job. Of course, the employer then fires them. This means that no charge would ever stick because they've gone. So why would any employee report? There's no opportunity.... We don't have any law to say that if you do complain, we will stop all removal against you. I haven't heard that.

I've noticed that the CBSA in fact do not stop the deportation, and CIC overseas don't ask the employee whether they are being charged or not. So how would that system work? The provincial government says, well, it's not our responsibility. So how would that work?

Mr. Les Linklater: These are very difficult issues, Mr. Chair, and there's no denying that more work needs to be done in these areas.

When it comes to the activities of recruiters overseas, it's very difficult for CIC to have enforcement action taken against foreign-based recruiters. For example, we would require the cooperation of local law enforcement agencies that may in fact be operating in full compliance with local legislation. That does make it problematic should we think that temporary foreign workers could have been mistreated.

As part of our moving forward with regulatory changes, however, we recognize that there are situations where employees who have come to Canada will find themselves in situations of distress not of their own making. We would want to look at appropriate remedies, so that the employer, or the employer because of their activities, is penalized for any action that has caused distress or made the worker more vulnerable, and not penalize the worker. So we would look at some sort of regime to provide a safety net for workers in those types of situations.

•(1615)

Ms. Olivia Chow: I asked the question on the order paper to CBSA as to how many Canadian-born children have been deported because their parents are undocumented workers. I got back a response saying that CBSA don't have that and other agencies do not keep these kinds of statistics.

Does CIC have these statistics as to when you deport undocumented workers? Some of them have Canadian-born kids. How many Canadian children have been deported, say, in the last two to three years? Does anyone have any statistics on that?

Mr. Robert MacDougall: Mr. Chair, I would say the answer to that would be zero, in that we don't remove Canadian-born Canadian citizens. The parents may be subject to removal, and obviously they will be likely to take the kids with them, yes.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Yes. I can't imagine they would leave the kids in Canada.

Mr. Robert MacDougall: We certainly respect that you want to keep the families together and so on. But as far as keeping statistics on the number of those cases where that has occurred...

Ms. Olivia Chow: Well, let me go in another direction. How many Canadian families—

The Chair: The time is up. I guess we can get it on the next round.

I'd like you to comment, though, on the part of Ms. Chow's question that dealt with the EI. Would a temporary foreign worker pay EI? If the temporary foreign worker pays EI and can't draw employment insurance, is that fair?

Ms. Olivia Chow: Yes, but they can't draw on it because the minute they are unemployed they're gone.

The Chair: That's right; they're gone after the harvest is over, or what have you.

So they would pay EI premiums, would they not?

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: Yes, they actually do pay EI premiums.

It's not an easy issue to address, because the principle behind EI is that you're allowed to collect EI premiums if you're available for work in Canada, but of course the temporary foreign workers you mentioned leave the country and therefore are not eligible.

On the other hand, what we're asking employers to do is to provide consistent conditions for temporary foreign workers, i.e., if they work under the same conditions as Canadians, they will pay the same deductions as Canadians.

It's an issue we're aware of. I have to admit at this point that we don't have an answer for it, but we're looking at it. It's not an easy one to fix.

The Chair: Yes, you should. If you're not eligible to draw unemployment insurance, you shouldn't be paying premiums.

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: Exactly.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Komarnicki, and then Mr. Bevilacqua.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): It would seem that if someone has never collected EI, it shouldn't be a great step not to pay into that. So it's something that maybe needs to be investigated.

The Chair: Yes, I think so.

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: There is one additional piece of information, though. They are eligible to collect, for instance, sickness and maternity benefits.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: All right, so there are benefits.

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: There are benefits available, but those benefits are limited. So it further complicates the situation.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Which means you may prorata them, or something like that.

I have two areas to deal with, the undocumented workers first and then the temporary foreign workers.

The term "undocumented workers" is perhaps generous, in some sense. Although there are sympathies for that group of people, when I look at the list here, you have, for instance, failed refugee claimants. And maybe this is where part of the dilemma is, that there's a fairly extensive process involved that claimants can go through: IRB hearings; appeals to the Federal Court; leave to appeal; applications for pre-removal risk assessments; and, in addition to that, humanitarian and compassionate grounds applications. So there is a process in place. At the end of the day, when a person goes through that process but chooses not to leave, they would be here in the category of undocumented workers. But they shouldn't be here. Isn't that a fact?

Mr. Les Linklater: Yes.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Or if they're here on a worker's visa or a visitor's visa or a student visa, when the time has expired you would expect that if they had agreed to those terms, at the end of the day they would leave?

Mr. Les Linklater: That's right.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: So I suppose if you took it to the worst extreme, some would be here either because they were smuggled or trafficked into Canada illegally and then remain here.

Mr. Les Linklater: Correct.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: The other part of the dilemma is that there are legitimate means that are being established to get similar types of people in here, which these people may not have gone through. For example, there's the "Canadian experience" class that is being initiated, which is basically to allow certain temporary foreign workers and international students who get permits here to apply from within Canada for an appropriate application.

Is that correct?

• (1620)

Mr. Les Linklater: That's right.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: And then another legitimate means that people can look at to get here is through the provincial nominee program. As I understand it, provinces with certain occupations they wish to address are given the freedom to nominate various individuals into their immigration plans for their provinces.

Is that correct?

Mr. Les Linklater: Yes, all provinces and the Yukon have agreements with CIC to be able to nominate individuals who meet their specific economic or demographic needs. For many provinces, that would include individuals who wouldn't necessarily meet the federal skilled criteria.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: So if the provinces chose to deal with some of the skill shortages through their immigration programs, could the people who are nominated apply for permanent residence within Canada?

Mr. Les Linklater: Most provincial nominee programs do lead to immediate permanent residence. They're processed as we would process any other skilled worker applicant overseas—but on a priority basis.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: So what we have here is a legitimate means for coming into the country, opening up for various skill levels and parties, as opposed to the other instance where the processes that exist have been fully utilized, they haven't been successful, and the people remain.

How do you deal with that group of people if you want to be fair to the other group of people? Is that the dilemma?

Mr. Les Linklater: That's one of the issues we struggle with, in that there are a number of people waiting to come to Canada legitimately, who have been playing by the rules and are waiting their turn to be processed. There are others who are taking advantage of programs that provinces offer to come forward, and do so legally, whereas others choose to remain after they've gone through a number of processes, or after their legal status has expired, and are in the country and working underground for the most part.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: I understand there have been regularization programs in the past. From what I've seen in the information, the uptake has not been all that high, and I wonder why. Many countries that have tried to go through regularization processes have actually tried to create a legitimate means for people to apply and have added conditions to that application, so it's like opening up another category. Am I right in that?

Mr. Les Linklater: Yes. In fact, a couple of programs were put forward, one in 1973 and another in 1983, and take-up was much less than had been anticipated. There may have been a fear of

coming forward or of receiving some sanction for having been in Canada without status.

Certainly given the debate in the United States, while the scope of the problem is much larger there, it is a difficult issue. There would be security concerns, and certainly countries such as Spain and Italy, which have undergone a number of regular "amnesties" over the last couple of years, have incurred the disfavour of some of their EU partners, given labour mobility access across the European Union.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: I'll switch now to the temporary foreign worker and some of the issues regarding protection.

There's no doubt that much of the protective area is covered by provincial legislation, and I've heard that each province may have just slightly different rules and regulations with respect to protection. Professor Harry Arthurs, in his review, *Fairness at Work*, seems to suggest that maybe certain national preconditions could be looked at in terms of when the permit is granted or in granting future permits or in dealing with that whole category. There may be a way of setting up some minimum standards that maybe could be coordinated between the provinces through agreements or something like that.

Can you expand on that?

Mr. Les Linklater: As I think Mr. Kenyon said earlier, the current regulations are very directive, so should certain thresholds be met for an employer, HRSDC shall issue a labour market opinion. For Citizenship and Immigration or for the Border Services Agency, subject to a temporary foreign worker meeting certain thresholds, we are obliged to issue the work permit.

This is one of the issues we're trying to bolster through Bill C-17, the legislation on vulnerable workers, but I think as we move forward with regulatory reforms—to be able to provide sanctions within our regulatory framework, to refuse service to employers that have not met certain benchmarks, and to be able to share the information with provinces, as we've alluded to earlier—having that common base of information will be key to being able to employ a sanctions regime.

• (1625)

The Chair: Thank you.

That completes our seven-minute round; we'll go to our five-minute rounds.

Go ahead, Mr. Bevilacqua.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank you for your input and your presentation.

Perhaps you could give me an update on the exit control system. Has anything been developed, or are there any plans to address that particular issue?

Mr. Les Linklater: At this point we aren't looking at exit controls. I think given the trade relationship with the United States, the back and forth, and the concerns we have now with maintaining an open border, it would be of considerable expense and would have to be looked at in the context of the broader international trade and mobility agenda.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: So it's not a priority, obviously.

Mr. Les Linklater: At this point, no, it's not.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: The very capable staff of the Library of Parliament have 18 questions written for us on the undocumented workers and around 16 on the temporary foreign workers. If I may, Mr. Chairman, I would like to have the answers. Obviously I only have five minutes and can't get answers to all these very good questions; perhaps the witnesses can respond directly to the clerk or the chair. I would like to see written responses as well.

Mr. Chairman, I notice that Mr. Linklater's statement opens by saying the issues of undocumented foreign workers and temporary foreign workers are complex. Whenever I see that phraseology, a red flag goes up, because sometimes things being complex really require non-answers. Sometimes you get non-answers on the issues because they are in fact complex.

I'm just wondering, since you opened up with that statement, what plans you have to make this issue a little more simple to understand, or to simplify the process through which we can get actual answers to these challenges.

Mr. Les Linklater: I think some of the key aspects of the work that's ongoing will be very helpful in bringing additional clarity to processes for the applicants and for those who are using the program.

For example, with temporary foreign workers, since 2006 we've been taking administrative measures to simplify the process for employers to make it easier for it to be understood by employees and employers alike. There is a new online temporary foreign worker guide that helps walk people through the process so that all the information from the three federal departments is now in one place to help employers use the program better.

We're looking at simplified processing. The expedited labour market opinion process is helping employers. At the beginning of this session I distributed some of the information that we are now going to be providing to temporary foreign workers, a pamphlet that advises them of their rights and responsibilities and provides them with current information about relevant provincial labour offices where they can address any complaints they have about wages and working conditions. That pamphlet is now available in English, French, and Spanish and will soon be available also in Mandarin, Hindi, and Tagalog, and we will be providing it with our documentation to foreign workers.

At the same time, as I mentioned earlier, we've been working with Ontario on an annex to the temporary foreign worker agreement. That will help bring to the table all the tools the province has around labour standards and the sanctions the province can take and the information that can be shared between the province and the three departments here to be able to take action against employers.

We're also looking at regulatory changes to make the regulations less directive, to say, for example, if there is adverse information

about a past infraction on the part of an employer, either with regard to a provincial statute or a federal statute, we would look at that as part of our assessment and perhaps refuse service to that employer if the infraction was of such seriousness that service withdrawal was warranted.

So there are a myriad of things that we are doing. It is complex because there are federal-provincial dynamics; there are labour standards and wages and working conditions; there are employers. We also have a regular dialogue with organized labour around the program and how we can move forward better.

So as a result of a number of consultations and other policy work that has been ongoing, we have been trying to bring all these pieces together to tie them up in a more concise package that ministers can bring forward.

• (1630)

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: As you know, when we're studying issues like this and others related to immigration, we're very cognizant of the fact that by the year 2011, 100% of Canada's net labour growth will come from immigration. When you consider Canada's aging population, where you're going to have, from the present state of five workers to one senior, a drop in the next 15 to 20 years to three to one, there are issues related to productivity and other issues where I think if we don't wake up to that reality, if Canada's political class does not wake up to that reality, we will indeed be challenged.

But I was interested in a comment made by the immigration minister—

The Chair: I generally allow the question if the individual has the question started before the clock goes off. I know people are wondering. The question was started, so I'll allow the question.

Go ahead, but the time is up—a short question.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: The point I'm making is this. You cannot treat immigration as an afterthought in Canada's public policy process. There's far too much hinging on it, namely the future of our country, as far as I'm concerned.

When the minister was here, she admitted that she did not have enough resources to do the type of job that she would like. My question to you is, do you have enough resources to do your job?

Mr. Les Linklater: We work within the parameters that we're given. We're trying to do our best to make sure we're responding to the various needs that employers and the workers are placing on us. It's a challenge, but I think we're moving the yardstick forward.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bevilacqua.

Mr. Carrier.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Good day, gentlemen. Thank you for being here today and for shedding some light on this rather unique subject.

According to the background material made available to us, the prospective workers are the ones who must apply, in their own country, for a temporary work permit. However, the employer is the one who is subsequently evaluated. The provinces are also involved in this matter. I would like someone to explain to me how the process works. I assume the wheels are set in motion when a particular employer needs workers.

Does that employer contact Human Resources and Social Development Canada directly to find foreign workers or must he first go through his provincial government? There are after all a number of agreements in place.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: I'll start.

First of all, the employer approaches HRSDC or Service Canada in the regions in each province making a request for a labour market opinion. For instance, they need a certain number of employees in a particular occupation. They identify the advertising they've undertaken, the wage they're proposing to pay, and we do an assessment of that application. That's the quickest explanation of what it is. We produce an opinion that describes the impact that we expect the bringing in of those workers will have on the Canadian labour market. That is what we provide to the employer. If it's a positive or neutral opinion, the employer then takes the next step and goes to CIC with the names of the employees they would like to bring in. It is the employees' responsibility to deal with CIC. I'll let Mr. Linklater speak to that. We deal only with the employers and we deal only with their specific applications.

You mentioned how we collaborate with the provinces. Of course, we do work very closely with the provinces. Generally, though, it is HRSDC, Service Canada's responsibility to take a decision on a labour market opinion. The exception is with Quebec, where we have a memorandum of understanding, a long-standing agreement by which Quebec actually has the final word on whether or not they concur with the labour market opinion that we produced.

• (1635)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Carrier: Thank you.

Do you have anything further to add?

Mr. Les Linklater: Mr. Chairman, I want to make it clear that under the Canada-Quebec Accord on Immigration, the final decision rests with Quebec, in so far as the impact on Quebec's labour force is concerned. If there is agreement with the opinion issued by HRSDC, Quebec issues a certificate of acceptance which is then forwarded to us. We then are responsible for issuing a work permit, and for sending a note stating that Quebec has issued a certificate of acceptance, along with the certificate number.

Mr. Robert Carrier: In terms of each worker applying in his or her own country, does the employer travel to that country to recruit

workers and encourage them to apply for a job, or is this something your department does?

Mr. Les Linklater: It depends. For example, employers that have a human resources policy in place whereby they can recruit in foreign countries do occasionally join forces to recruit workers abroad. Other times—and this issue has already been raised—some employers hire workers abroad who have recruiting skills to handle this work.

Mr. Robert Carrier: You stated at the outset that the provinces and territories were largely responsible for monitoring labour, health and workplace safety standards. What exactly do you mean by “largely responsible”? Are there certain areas for which they are not responsible?

Mr. Les Linklater: Federally regulated jobs, that is those in the banking and transportation sectors, come under federal jurisdiction. However, employment in other sectors is provincially regulated.

Mr. Robert Carrier: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carrier.

Mr. Khan.

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'll ask three quick questions of Mr. Bob MacDougall and wait for an answer. I'll give you more time to answer this time.

I'd like you to take the committee through the pre-removal risk assessment, how it works. How long does it take to deport someone who is considered a risk to Canada? I'd like to hear your comment on whether you're satisfied with the process or the authority in place or whether you would like to see an improvement.

The general impression is that it takes an awfully long time to get people out of the country.

Mr. Robert MacDougall: To your first question on the process, I think it was mentioned a bit earlier that all of the applicants have due process rights, of course. What we tend to see is the removals end of the process. It may take three or four years to actually come into place, because by the time a person goes through the process and is ready for removal, there are various, as you mentioned, levels of appeal and so on. That's what we deal with now. So when we look at removals that we're doing this year, they probably reflect an influx from about three or four years ago.

I'll perhaps leave it to my colleague to talk about the pre-removal risk assessment, if he would like. That's provided by CIC to us.

Regarding improvements, well, we're always anxious to follow the act and remove as soon as reasonably practicable whenever a person is removal ready. But of course we respect the due process and wait for that to unfold before we can actually do that.

Mr. Wajid Khan: So you're pointing to someone else on the risk assessment....

Mr. Les Linklater: With regard to the process, that's beyond my area of expertise. If you have a specific question, we'd be happy to respond in writing—perhaps with the other questions, if the chair agrees.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Okay. I will send you the question. My concern is that there are people who are deemed to be putting Canada at risk, and yet it's taking three, four, five years, sometimes longer, to remove them. But we can discuss that in writing.

My other question is for HRSDC. When you approve, you're dealing with the employers only, I understand. When you approve the HRSDC application for an employer who has gone overseas... and I'm talking about the lower-category drivers, chefs, cooks, etc. There are a lot of turndowns at CIC. Visa officers seem to have the final say on that. Employers then complain, "We realize what specifically we want this person for; we don't want him here as a professor of English or anything, he's just going to be a cook in the kitchen."

How do we address this? Is that the difference between the 165,000 and 112,000 in turndowns? Is it because of the decisions of the visa officers, or are there other things? And how do we tackle it?

• (1640)

Mr. Les Linklater: The discrepancy in the numbers can partly be attributed to refusals, but I think a number of employers look at a number of options to meet their HR needs, and temporary foreign workers would be part of that strategy. In effect, sometimes an improved labour market opinion may not actually manifest itself in an application with CIC for a worker, but of course there are refusals, as you have mentioned.

When it comes to the way the program works, HRSDC does deal with the employer. Their role is to establish whether or not there is a legitimate job from a legitimate employer with a need that cannot be met domestically.

When it comes to the actual issuance of the work permit, it is CIC's responsibility to determine whether or not the applicant that the employer has identified has the ability to do the job that's been offered; that they have the acceptable experience, as outlined in the labour market opinion; and if, finally, they are someone who, in the opinion of the visa officer, is going to return to their home country or leave Canada once their work permit has expired. Those are, *grosso modo*, the assessment factors that our officers take into account.

You mentioned low-skilled. I think there are some instances where perhaps people may not have established to the satisfaction of a visa officer that in fact their ties to their home country would be sufficient to have them return to their home country after their work period.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Very quickly, before I turn it over to my colleague, is there any consideration given to those who have worked here for extended periods of time—four, five, six, or seven years—and whose kids are going to school, when it's towards the end of the school year, in terms of allowing them any time to liquidate their assets?

Mr. Les Linklater: In terms of prior to a removal, for example?

Mr. Wajid Khan: Yes. Let's say it's decided a person should be deported. Is there any consideration given to the timeframe

concerned in deportation, allowing them to liquidate their assets or to get their kids through the school year?

Mr. Robert MacDougall: Certainly whenever a person is identified for removal they are called in for an interview. During the interview that would all be discussed. The timing and arrangements would be made with the officer at that time.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Khan.

Mr. Telegdi, please, five minutes.

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

Mr. Linklater, could you get to this committee the copy of the draft memorandum of understanding done with the foreign workers? The reason the previous government didn't do anything with it was they got defeated. It was a happy day for the bureaucracy, but it wasn't a happy day for the government or undocumented workers.

So we want to see that. Thank you.

How much money do we spend, Mr. MacDougall, on removals every year? What did we spend last year?

Mr. Robert MacDougall: I actually have that number for you. The last fiscal year we spent \$23,433,000 on the removals program.

Just to be clear, we have four lines of business in our internal inland enforcement area—

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: I only have five minutes.

So we spent \$23 million?

Mr. Robert MacDougall: That's on the removals program specifically.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Okay. How much are we scheduled to spend this year?

Mr. Robert MacDougall: I'm not sure exactly. I'd have to get the exact figure for you.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: The other one is this. Please provide the information. You said you don't have it right now, but I think it's a legitimate question.

Immigration should have an idea how many Canadian citizens there are living abroad. Every time you deport undocumented workers, there are children going along who are Canadian citizens. Surely to God, having dealt with lost Canadians all this time, we're trying to get a handle on how many Canadian citizens we have abroad, and that includes how many kids.

Mr. Linklater, you should be able to get those figures, so we are looking for those figures.

The other issue is the power relationship. You admit a worker into Canada to work for one employer. It's a terrible power relationship. The worker is totally powerless. I think it would be much better if you were to admit someone to work in a sector, so that they can go to another employer.

We saw that with the live-in caregiver program. Somebody comes in, is totally victimized by their employer, and then, if they want to respond to it, they are booted out. That's not fair, so we really want to deal with the issue.

We have temporary foreign workers, particularly in the agricultural sector, who come back here decade after decade after decade—some of them up to four decades. It reminds me of the old days when we brought the Chinese in to build the railway and then put in place the Chinese Exclusion Act. There is something wrong with that.

If we're going to have people the economy needs, it would be preferable to have them be Canadian citizens, rather than have them be here, be put out, and be brought back for that many decades. I would really love to have some discussion of that.

Mr. Linklater, you mentioned that this is a very complex issue. It really doesn't have to be that complex. If you look at the fact that we have undocumented workers, for the most part it was because of the failure of the point system we have in place, which we have finally recognized, and we see the programs that are being put in place because that has been recognized.

If you look at undocumented workers who have been contributing to building this country from the perspective that they are persons who had a chance to be in the country helping the economy, let's look at them as an immigrant on probation. Did they do well or did they not do well? Did they establish ties in the community or did they not? Did they break the laws or did they comply with the laws?

Mr. Chair, if somebody comes in as a regular immigrant, once they are in it's very hard to get rid of them. Let's look at these people as having been here and having helped the economy. Let's see how they did. If they did well and fulfilled the probation, then we have a way for them to stay. So I'm looking for those issues.

The last issue is to take away with you the questionnaire from our researchers. We would like to have answers for all the questions that weren't answered. There are 18 questions, but many of them were answered. This would be a good homework project for you, and it would be beneficial to our committee.

This is a critical issue we are dealing with. Immigration has been the lifeblood, is the lifeblood, and it's going to continue to be the lifeblood.... Our productivity is suffering because we do not have enough people working in jobs that need them. We have too many jobs and not enough workers.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Telegdi.

Next are Ms. Grewal and Ms. Ratansi.

Ms. Grewal.

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

Talking about these undocumented workers, I would like to know what the consequences are when employers employ these undocumented workers. Are there some rules in place?

Mr. Les Linklater: If it comes to light that an employer has not been abiding by the terms of the contract or has not been respecting provincial legislation, provincial authorities can take action with the employer by sanctioning them under provincial statute. If there are criminal offences that relate to the immigration status of the individual involved, the Canada Border Services Agency would take that on as part of an investigation and perhaps prosecution.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Does Canada have exit controls?

Mr. Les Linklater: No.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: So how complicated could it be to have visits with the government prior to their departure? Is it very, very difficult to follow that procedure?

Mr. Les Linklater: There are approximately, I think, if my memory serves me, about 100 million border crossings into Canada every year. That means we would have to document everyone coming in and everyone going out, with the resources that would be required at our ports of entry to be able to do that.

• (1650)

Mrs. Nina Grewal: How much time do I have, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Three and a half minutes left.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Okay.

Mr. Batters.

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Thank you, Mrs. Grewal.

I'll just dive right in here. I agree with Mr. Telegdi that a robust immigration strategy is essential for this country. We are facing a labour shortage like nothing we've seen before, and it creates some great challenges.

I just want to ask you a few questions about a case that presented itself in my office, in my constituency. Granted, this was pre-9/11, so the world has changed an awful lot since then. My understanding is that this was fairly common pre-9/11. This individual came to Toronto from Iran, from a flight from Tehran. In any event, he came to Canada on a fraudulent passport, using someone else's passport. The customs officials recognized right off the bat that this gentleman was not the gentleman he said he was on the passport.

I realize you'd have to know the specifics of the case. But in general, why would that individual, or individuals like that, not immediately be put on the next plane back to Tehran and just dispatched out of the country? This individual was allowed to stay in Canada. My memory is failing me. I'm not sure if he applied as a refugee, but he didn't originally come in applying for refugee status. He came in on a falsified passport and was allowed to stay in Canada and was granted a temporary work permit. He fell in love with a girl in Canada and she then had his baby, and the story goes on and on. Now my office has the nightmare of this individual really wanting to come to Canada because this woman has his baby, and the story is, understandably, "No, you tried to get in the first time using a fraudulent passport".

So that's my question to wrap up the time. An individual like that gets off a plane...and maybe you could comment on how it was handled then and if it would be handled differently now. In the same scenario right now, if that happened, would the person be put on the next plane back to Tehran or wherever they came from if they used a fraudulent passport?

Thank you.

Mr. Robert MacDougall: It's very hard without knowing all the details and what the actual person said when they arrived, but they would be turned around.

Mr. Dave Batters: In general, this person was using a fraudulent passport. So right now you're saying they'd be turned around and sent back on the next plane?

Mr. Robert MacDougall: Unless they mentioned they wanted to apply for refugee status or other measures kicked in.

Mr. Dave Batters: Wouldn't they have to come out with that in the beginning, though? They would say, "Yes, I'm here and I'm a refugee for this reason or this reason and I fear persecution." If they get caught with a fraudulent passport, my sense would be that you'd just turn them around and put them on the next plane out of Canada.

Mr. Robert MacDougall: My expert in the area who's been out there doing that job has advised me they're entitled to due process, so we'd have to respect that due process.

Mr. Dave Batters: Sorry, they're entitled to due process?

Mr. Robert MacDougall: That's right, so whatever they present to us we have to follow.

Mr. Dave Batters: They get off a plane and they have fraudulent papers and they're not who they say they are. What possible due process could these individuals be afforded? You have a backload of people in this country who are waiting and they're playing by the rules and they can't wait to get into the greatest country in the world, yet you have individuals who come under false passports and they're given some kind of due process. Does this due process include a temporary work permit?

The Chair: You may give a very brief response, and then I'm going to Ms. Ratansi.

We're interested in the information if you have it, Mr. MacDougall, and if not, you can get back to us on it.

Mr. Robert MacDougall: Apparently refugee claimants coming into the country quite often arrive on fraudulent documents, and we have to follow the process that applies for refugee claimants. They're quite often using fraudulent documents in order to get here.

• (1655)

Mr. Dave Batters: I think that's sick. I think that's horrible that we have that policy and I think it should be revisited.

The Chair: I sympathize with the problem because I've had many like it and I wanted to see a resolution.

Ms. Ratansi.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Thank you.

Thank you for being here. I have three quick questions, but they may be long in answers. But don't take too long because I want to share my time with my colleague here.

You talked about the increase in temporary foreign workers, 100% between 2000 and 2006, and that Alberta will have a 200% increase. What mechanisms are there in place to track these temporary foreign workers?

Then I have another question, which boggles my mind. There are planeloads of Mexicans or foreign workers being brought into the oil sands and they don't meet any category of temporary foreign worker. They are brought in, they work, and they're brought out. They seem to bypass any immigration system or a border security system. What checks and balances do you have? The look on your face is saying,

"My God, what is happening!" But that's what we have been instructed.

When you talk about border security, when you talk about three agencies working together, I want to ensure that there is security in the system. I want to ensure that there is no person coming in to create problems for me. But these things are happening. What sanctions do we have against businesses? I think the question that was asked by my colleague here was, "Do you have the resources necessary to monitor those things?"

The last question is on undocumented workers. They come from different areas, be they failed refugee claimants or trafficked persons, and I'm very cognizant as the chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women that trafficked persons are very vulnerable. How do you track them? How do you find them? Do you wish to regulate the industry, and if you do, what are some of the benchmarks and best practices that you have observed? The U.S. had amnesty and Spain had amnesty, and I watched a program on Italy. I just want to throw this in the loop.

Mr. Les Linklater: In terms of systematic tracking of temporary foreign workers once they're in Canada, there is no one single mechanism that is in place to be able to track the movements of temporary foreign workers or what may happen to them. In fact, that's why we've put forward these promotional brochures for applicants to be aware of how they can help themselves, by contacting the relevant provincial authorities if they run into a difficulty.

With regard to Mexicans, I'm not aware of people coming in without proper documentation. As part of the screening process, Mexican workers don't require a visa to enter Canada, but if they intend to work, they do require a work permit, and if they intend to be here for more than six months, they need to do a medical examination.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: But if I were an employer and I did bring in planeloads, and I have sufficient money to bring in planeloads, what checks and balances do you have?

Mr. Les Linklater: First and foremost, you would have to go to HRSDC to make the case that you couldn't find Canadians to do that work, and if HRSDC agreed, they would issue a labour market opinion, which would then be transferred to us at CIC, and we would then process applications for work permits.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: That's being bypassed, so I'm thinking of checks and balances in the system that we don't have.

The last one was on the undocumented—

Mr. Les Linklater: On the undocumented workers, again by improving the legal channels and making them more accessible for employers, we feel that we will limit the draw for people to remain in Canada illegally.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: What about the trafficked women?

Mr. Les Linklater: As you're probably well aware, we have extended the duration of the temporary resident permit that is available to victims of trafficking. That's now at 180 days. That allows the trafficked victim to obtain a work permit free of charge, and it also provides them with medical coverage under CIC's interim federal health program, which would include trauma counselling as appropriate.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Do I have time to give?

The Chair: You have a minute.

Ms. Kadis, go ahead.

Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.): Just along the lines of the live-in caregiver program and in the view of the marked reference by Mr. Bevilacqua regarding the aging population, the increased need, obviously, not only for taking care of children but also seniors, and what ways we can improve this program in view of the fact that often, if someone does have to leave an employer, it's a very difficult process, should we not perhaps have a pool of people here as opposed to it being only employer driven? What are your thoughts on that?

• (1700)

Mr. Les Linklater: We have introduced some additional flexibilities into the live-in caregiver program. They're now issued with labour market opinions that are valid for 39 months. So that would allow them to enter Canada, complete their work assignment, and apply for permanent residence while remaining in status, without having to apply for a new work permit every year, which used to be the case.

Mrs. Susan Kadis: But there is still that difficulty outstanding that if it doesn't work out with that particular employer who has brought them over, in terms of going to another employer, often it takes a long time for them to get a work permit and difficulties are encountered.

Mr. Les Linklater: We're looking at how we can streamline our processes in Vegreville, but these people would be deemed to be in status during a transition between one employer and another.

Mrs. Susan Kadis: Again, the issue can't be overemphasized in terms of what the needs are going forward so that we do ensure that we have those capable people available to meet the needs of the Canadian population.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Komarnicki, or was it Mr. Batters? If you want to share, you can.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: I have just a couple of questions flowing from the discussion on temporary foreign workers. Bill C-17, as we talked about briefly, is a step in the direction of offering some form of protection to vulnerable temporary foreign workers. Can you expand on that, and would it or an expanded form of that be the type of direction that could be taken to protect temporary foreign workers?

Mr. Les Linklater: Bill C-17 is designed to provide visa officers with the tools to be able to deny a work permit to someone who may be destined to a situation of potential abuse or exploitation. This would happen overseas before the potential worker was actually in

Canada. But as I mentioned earlier, the way the act and the regulations are written now, they are very directive. There is no opportunity for negative discretion of any kind within the act. So Bill C-17 would allow the minister, based on objective evidence, to issue instructions to visa officers for them to take into consideration any evidence that would link particular situations with vulnerability or the potential for abuse or exploitation and refuse the permit to someone based on those circumstances.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Flowing from that, I would certainly encourage the committee to bring Bill C-17 back before this committee for consideration as a piece of legislation.

I noted that you handed out a pamphlet called *Important Information for Temporary Workers Working in Canada*, which essentially gives them what their rights might be and their obligations, who they can contact, including the various provincial departments dealing with labour standards and that kind of thing. That is one example of perhaps how this issue of temporary foreign workers can be dealt with.

I noticed that in the live-in caregiver side of the program, they are either given courses before they come here to Canada, which are given in their language, or there are certain steps that are taken that would certainly enhance their ability once they got here to deal with labour standard types of issues and others as well. How is that being done, and can that be transposed to temporary foreign workers other than those in the live-in caregiver program?

Mr. Les Linklater: Certainly with regard to the seasonal agricultural workers program, given the institutional history and the involvement of partner governments, notably Mexico and Commonwealth Caribbean governments, they've developed the expertise to be able to provide that additional support to their workers before they come to Canada, so they can counsel them on what to expect here.

With regard to other employers and other temporary foreign workers, some of the efforts we've undertaken collectively would include the online manual for employers wanting to hire temporary foreign workers and the establishment of temporary foreign worker units across the country to take a more hands-on approach with employers in the regions, together with provincial governments, looking at how we can do joint promotion with provincial governments.

This happens quite regularly in Alberta and British Columbia, and it's a model that we'd like to replicate more across the country, where federal and provincial representatives are going out to the employer community to educate them about their rights and obligations under the program, to advise them of the requirements of provincial statutes such as those related to the use of recruiters, and certainly to help them understand the immigration process from A to Z, starting with the labour market opinion process, the work permit process, and arrival at a port of entry with CBSA.

•(1705)

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: It would seem to me that the robust empowering of workers, given language barriers, given the assimilation to a new culture, would be the type of thing that could be looked at in terms of ensuring that the abuses that were earlier referred to would be minimized. Would you agree?

Mr. Les Linklater: There are a number of employers who are exemplary users of this program and they offer support services to their workers once they arrive. They provide additional training, whether it's official language training or sensitization to their new local communities, and these are employers that we want to work with more, to use as an example for others.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: I know there has been a significant amount of funding that we have provided—\$1.4 billion over five years—and much of that deals with integration, settlement, and so on. Insofar as temporary foreign workers are concerned, is there a need to deal with, not just the integration of those who are landed immigrants or permanent residents, but also temporary foreign workers, and is a program developed for that specific purpose?

Mr. Les Linklater: At this point there is no program for settlement funding per se for temporary foreign workers. The terms and conditions of our current program structure direct that this funding be used for the establishment of permanent residents.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Komarnicki.

Mr. Telegdi.

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

Mr. Linklater, how many languages is this pamphlet that we have translated into?

Mr. Les Linklater: Right now we have the pamphlet in English, French, and Spanish, and it's being translated into Mandarin, Indian, and Tagalog.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Okay.

Let's say I'm working on a farm picking tobacco and I don't know how to use the computer. The pamphlet gives a bunch of websites for more information on CIC. Do we have information for those folks that they can get to that is not so high-tech?

Mr. Les Linklater: Yes. Telephone numbers are available, as are those for local offices of the CBSA.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Of course, you'd have to be able to read and you'd have to have access to a phone and all those good things.

I have another question. Mr. MacDougall, could you get us a list for the last five years as to how much money we're spending on removals, and please give a breakdown on the various categories?

Mr. Robert MacDougall: I can get that for you, although I would say right off the top that the categories will probably be split between criminals and failed refugee claimants, because the system doesn't capture them as specific to categories like undocumented workers, for example. They themselves might fall into a number of different categories, as was discussed earlier. I can certainly get you the dollars spent on removals and I can tell you the breakdown between those two areas.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: But if we have a failed refugee claimant here for any period of time, that person will probably become an

undocumented worker. You said you have a breakdown for undocumented workers but not....

Mr. Robert MacDougall: No, we don't have that.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Oh, I thought you said there was one category, which was refugees and criminals.

Mr. Robert MacDougall: No. Those are the only two.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Those are the only two you have.

Mr. Robert MacDougall: Yes, as far as the categories of removals as we document them.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: What happens if somebody's visa has expired? They are neither refugees nor....

Mr. Robert MacDougall: They'd fall into the "other" category, I guess. I know that certainly on the statistics I have, the percentages come up to, say, 90%, but obviously the 10% are the others that fall into the undocumented foreign workers who overstay their visas and that sort of thing.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Okay. We would like to get a copy of that.

It strikes me every time I go to a restaurant that virtually all of them are complaining that they can't get help, and it's a real problem. When we were on break, I made a point of asking, after I got hit with the first couple of people, and it seems to be pretty universal that they really need help for people working in restaurants, yet we have no way of dealing with that part of the population, for those kinds of workers.

•(1710)

Mr. Les Linklater: The temporary foreign worker program is demand-driven. If employers are finding it difficult to meet their labour needs locally, they can approach HRSDC with their case and demonstrate the efforts they've made to hire locally. If those have proven to be unsuccessful, they can then access the temporary foreign worker program.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: On the issue that was raised by Wajid Khan, can you provide us with some information on the number of people who get approved and the number of people who get turned down for visas? I'm a little concerned about the number turned down by the visa officers. From your figures I think we're talking about something like 160,000 approved and 115,000—

Mr. Les Linklater: No, 165,000 labour market opinions were processed by HRSDC. At CIC we issued about 112,000 work permits in 2006. I think the average approval rate is likely around 70% to 75%, but we'll get that number for you.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Okay. I would appreciate that.

The other situation I have involved somebody who runs an Indian spa. They wanted to hire people from India. They got the requirements and were approved for that. The employer went to India and interviewed a number of people she wanted to hire, but the visa officer turned those people down, saying they didn't have sufficient qualifications. I really wonder if everybody was dealing with this in good faith, and knowing the person, I assume it was.

My problem was with the standards applied by the visa officers in making the determination, since they probably didn't know a whole lot about the business.

The Chair: Mr. Linklater.

Mr. Les Linklater: I'm not familiar with the specifics of that case, but in general terms, visa officers are looking at the applicant's ability to do the job that's been offered and their bona fides as a visitor to Canada.

The Chair: I don't have anyone else on the list here who wishes to speak.

We have Mr. Carrier and Madam Chow.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Carrier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like you to clarify something for me. We have talked mainly about temporary workers who may become undocumented workers. What type of monitoring do you do once the temporary workers' contract has been clearly drawn up? Is the employer responsible for confirming to you that the workers have left the country once their contract has expired? If not, how do you monitor the situation?

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: HRSD deals only with the employers, and under present regulatory authorities, our responsibilities are diminished significantly at the point when the labour market opinion is issued.

But as far as the workers themselves and how we determine whether they leave, I'll turn that over to Mr. Linklater.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Les Linklater: Exit controls are hard to enforce. There is no systematic monitoring process in place to ensure that these workers leave the country. However, if the agency finds out that a particular person has no status, his name will be entered immediately in the removals file.

Mr. Robert Carrier: At the very least, do you ask employers to confirm the departure of these workers?

Mr. Les Linklater: No.

Mr. Robert Carrier: Therefore, this is a good climate for undocumented workers.

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: For low-skilled workers, the employer is required to pay for their return airfare to ensure that the employee actually has a ticket home.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Earlier, mention was made of favourable and unfavourable opinions issued by HRSDC officials. Mention was also made of neutral opinions. I don't quite understand that concept. Either we need workers, or we do not.

Why would an employer bother to go abroad to find workers if he could find Canadians to do the job and if makes no difference?

Once you've explained the meaning of a neutral opinion to me, could you tell me why they are hired? If we don't really need them, if they really don't help our economy, then why are we hiring them?

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Kenyon: It's interesting, you're asking a question that I was asking of my staff before I came here this afternoon. The answer is that neutral labour market opinions are issued primarily when it is a job or an occupation that is so specialized it would have no impact on Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Chow.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Under the experience class right now—our committee has not had the opportunity to discuss this—these would be the temporary foreign workers who would be able to apply for landed immigrant status in Canada, so they can then be able to become landed immigrants. You projected 25,000 in five years, but mostly you have to speak fluent English or French, with certain skills, etc., which means I can see that the folks who have the degrees would be able to stay in Canada, but the folks who don't, the manual labourers, won't.

Given that at least half the workers in the temporary foreign workers program are the low-skilled workers, the category C and D rather than the A and B, why wouldn't you structure your experience class in a way that at least you give those who are not highly skilled, with degrees, with fluent English or French, a chance that they could actually stay in Canada or apply in Canada? That's the first question.

Also, why 25,000? Why 3.3%? Why can't 5% or 10% or 15% of the 150,000 actually stay in Canada? The 25,000 seems to me fairly arbitrary. Is that to meet the target, that is, the 260,000 number?

Mr. Les Linklater: Mr. Chair, when we look at the program parameters—and they are still very much under development for the Canadian experience class—our thinking is that those temporary foreign workers in the skilled trades, the technical occupations...that is a very significant gap the labour market is missing out on now. We would like to ensure that those individuals have the opportunity to apply to remain permanently in Canada, after having worked for a specific period of time. We know that only about 8% of the skilled workers coming in through the overseas grid are in the skilled trades, and those are the key occupations that the economy needs now.

With regard to low-skilled workers, a fair proportion of the low-skilled workers are eligible, through the LCP program, to apply for permanent residence. There's another significant group, the seasonal agricultural workers, who come for about eight months every year, who are part of that low-skilled group, who would not be eligible to remain permanently at this time. The remainder of those low-skilled individuals are very much coming in at the request of specific employers in specific sectors in specific regions.

I use the example of long-haul truck drivers, which is an occupation that most provinces are experiencing a shortage of, and many of whom are using their provincial nominee programs to allow those people to remain in Canada as permanent residents. So there is an avenue there, as well as the arranged employment scheme, which would allow individual employers to nominate individuals to meet their particular labour market needs.

With regard to our forecasts as to who would be applying under such a new class, we have looked at the historical data of those temporary foreign workers and international students who are in Canada and who have been in Canada for two years. If we implement this category in 2008, that means people who have been here for at least one year, if not two, would be eligible to apply. So it's a retrospective assessment of the number of workers here at the higher skill levels.

We have purposefully taken Americans out of that group because we have found, historically, that temporary foreign workers from the United States do not stay. They are here for a number of days, a number of months, but they tend to go home. So looking at the remainder of the population, as well as taking out working holiday participants, international youth students who are here and who have open work permits, we have based our assessments on the remainder of that pool, which would lead us to about 25,000. We've also factored in a potential draw factor for implementing this program as well as anticipated growth in the temporary foreign worker program.

● (1720)

Ms. Olivia Chow: Mr. Chair, that was a long answer, and I think I'm going to run out of time. I think our committee really should look at the experience class program, because I see that under another program that used to be called the low-skilled pilot project we have workers in areas such as cleaning, hospitality, manufacturing, oil and gas, construction, etc., and they are not likely going to be able to fit under the experience class. If this committee is to make some sort of suggestions as the department is about to put the policy in place, I think it certainly should have some discussion regarding which of the 150,000 temporary foreign workers each year should be allowed to stay and apply in Canada, and what that number should be. Why should it be 3% or 8%? Why shouldn't it be higher? I believe if they're good enough to work here, probably most of them should be good enough to stay here.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Kadis.

Mrs. Susan Kadis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to pursue some clarification regarding the live-in caregiver program that we were discussing previously. Did you say that you're working on changes to this program? It sounded to me as if you were. Again, I'm particularly interested in how long it takes someone to gain a new work permit in the same field if they have to leave an employer due to abuse or problems that are encountered. Does it jeopardize that two- to three-year period to obtain the permanent resident status? Is that along the lines you're talking about, and does it signify a change in government policy?

Mr. Les Linklater: We have issued labour market opinions and work permits for 39 months from the outset so that the individual caregivers who come into Canada are not obliged to renew their permits on a yearly basis, as was the case in the past. It was an inconvenience to them in terms of client service if they stayed with the same employer and required them to pay a fee each year. That's now no longer the case.

We are working with HRSDC to get a handle on the volumes of requests we're seeing. There was money in Budget 2007 to help deal with improved efficiency in the process, but there are, unfortunately, occasions when people who are between employers are waiting for a new work permit. As I mentioned earlier, if somebody has an approved LMO for a new employer from Service Canada and is then waiting on CIC to issue a new work permit, they are, for all intents and purposes, deemed to be "in status", and they can continue to work as a caregiver while the work permit is being processed.

Mrs. Susan Kadis: That would not jeopardize that two years...?

Mr. Les Linklater: No, it would not jeopardize the 24 months within 36.

Mrs. Susan Kadis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

That just about completes it.

On behalf of the committee, I want to say thank you for coming today. You provided an awful lot of good information for us. Thank you for that. It's been a productive afternoon.

I believe you have some questions from the committee, and you'll be getting back to us in due course.

Again, many thanks for your presence here today.

The meeting is adjourned.

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