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—
Chair

Mr. David Tilson

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• (0905)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC)): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We'll call the meeting to order.

This is the sixth meeting of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, Tuesday, March 10, 2009. The orders of the day are the main estimates 2009-10, votes 1, 5, and 10 under Citizenship and Immigration, and supplementary estimates (C), 2008-09, votes 1c and 5c under Citizenship and Immigration.

We have as our guests this morning the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. He is accompanied by members from the ministry: Mr. Richard Fadden, who is the deputy minister, and Mr. Wayne Ganim, who is the chief financial officer for the finance branch.

Good morning to the three of you.

Minister, you've done this a few times before. You'll have some introductory comments, followed by questions from the members.

Thank you, sir, for coming.

[Translation]

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism): Thank you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee.

Mr. Chairman and dear colleagues, I have the honour today to place before the Committee my department's Supplementary estimates (C) for fiscal year 2008-09, and its Main estimates for fiscal year 2009-10, for which I seek the Committee's approval.

Mr. Chairman, the Supplementary estimates (C) include new funding requests of \$18 million to increase departmental spending authorities to \$1.39 billion for the current 2008-09 fiscal year.

The 2009-10 Main estimates represent a net increase of 38.8 million over the previous fiscal year's Main estimates funding levels, bringing total planned spending of the department for next year to almost \$1.36 billion, just shy of the total authorities for the current year.

[English]

Since our government came to office, the overall CIC budget has increased from \$882.5 million to \$1.392 billion, representing an increase of 56%. I anticipate further increases in the coming year.

Managing the system by which we address the ways for newcomers to come to Canada and integrate here demands our

daily attention. But I believe this attention is paying off. Last month I told you that our backlog of skilled worker applications had exploded from under 50,000 cases in 1993 to approximately 600,000 cases in 2008. Our action plan is designed to speed up processing of applications and make our immigration system more closely aligned and responsive to our economy, our labour market needs. New federal skilled worker applicants, including those with arranged employment, should receive a decision on their application within 6 to 12 months.

As I explained to the committee during my last appearance, the backlog of skilled worker applications had gone from approximately 600,000 to 515,000 by the end of 2008—a significant drop of 15%. I think this is the first time we've seen a drop rather than an increase in nearly two decades. Last year was the first year the backlog was reduced, as I say. I'm confident we will continue to reduce the backlog, and as I get new numbers I will update the public, and this committee, to show how the action plan for faster immigration is delivering real results.

While we're making important improvements on managing immigration, Mr. Chairman, some elements continue to challenge us. In January, as you know, I visited some of our country's busiest visa offices, in Pakistan and India. During a visit to our offices in Chandigarh, for example, I was shown its wall of shame, a collection of the phony documents that had been discovered in submissions from immigration applications.

Immigration fraud can take many forms, from inauthentic documents to marriages of convenience. While I was in India I heard about the growth of so-called marriage palaces, where actors are hired to play the part of guests at fake weddings. This is done to create fraudulent marriage photos to try to fool our visa officers. Some fraud is perpetrated by applicants, and some is perpetrated by unscrupulous immigration representatives who are unregistered and unlicensed. It happens around the world, and Canada is far from being the only country challenged by it. I met with immigration program heads from a number of different countries in New Delhi who are facing similar challenges.

From those who seek to come to Canada to those living here, people need to know three key things about fraud. First of all, it's a criminal offence in Canada. Secondly, it damages our immigration system and it can affect people who seek to come here on lawful and legitimate grounds. Thirdly, it costs all of us money. In short, they need to understand that protecting against fraud is not just the concern of those in government and the legal system, but it's everyone's concern. One way to do this is to stop fraud, before it starts, by informing people both inside and outside of Canada of its consequences.

Mr. Chairman, we are raising awareness of the potential for fraud by third parties through a key tool, which I'm happy to present to you and members of the committee today, namely a video that warns against the dangers of unscrupulous representatives and includes tips on how to choose an accredited representative. In the coming weeks this video, as well as a brochure with similar information, will be distributed to our overseas missions and regional offices in Canada and Service Canada centres. We will also send the video to ethnic and mainstream media outlets in Canada for use as a public service announcement.

At the same time, CIC's website already contains a warning in English, French, and 15 other languages about third party fraud. I saw similar signs displayed at our missions in India as well. It also provides tips for applicants on choosing competent and professional representatives. I believe this demonstrates the commitment of the department and the government to alerting potential immigrants and their families in this country from those who might use fraud in attempts to undermine our immigration system. I've asked the department to continue to explore other ways in which we can inform our clients about this very important issue.

We also need to do more in the area of enforcement. I should note that while in India I also met with the Chief Minister of Punjab, Parkash Singh Badal, who committed to step up efforts to combat fraudulent immigration representatives who operate out of Chandigarh and Punjab. Within a week of my departure he had already contacted our Chandigarh office to discuss ways we can work together, and there were news reports in Indian newspapers about a crackdown on shady immigration consultancies.

I also plan to consult with stakeholders and recent immigrants on their experiences and suggestions for ways to improve the system. This is a priority for me in the months ahead.

I look forward to working further with the committee on this important issue, and I would really appreciate the multi-partisan advice of this committee. This is an issue that, I'm sure, concerns us all.

● (0910)

We have a duty to educate potential immigrants on how to minimize risks when hiring representatives. We are working to make sure that current and potential newcomers understand three important facts about their efforts to emigrate here. First, it's entirely optional for them to hire third party representatives. Second, Canada treats all applicants equally, whether or not applicants use the service of representatives. And third, there are risks in hiring an immigration representative, but if applicants do so, they should seek out members of the organizations I mentioned earlier.

Mr. Chairman, across the country we see settlement funding. I want briefly to address settlement funding as key to helping newcomers succeed.

Since 2006, our government has substantially increased funding, to the tune of an additional \$1.4 billion over five years in all provinces and territories outside Quebec, to support settlement programs and services. That essentially brings all the provinces up to roughly the per capita funding that Quebec has received.

In the first Speech from the Throne following the election, our government promised to work with the provinces to increase uptake in settlement services. That's because, in spite of the significant amount of money we are investing in settlement funding, only about 20% of newcomers to Canada use the LINC language training programs.

One of the most important ways to facilitate the integration and success of newcomers is through settlement programs such as language training. Perhaps we should look at new ways to encourage the use of settlement programs such as language training. For example, would newcomers feel more empowered and more likely to access these services if we gave them a certificate, for instance, for the appropriate amount of language training, which they could then use to shop around to find the best service provider for their particular needs? Such an approach to empower immigrants would also increase their knowledge of the programs available to them. I believe this would encourage newcomers to make greater use of the service, and this would make settlement organizations more responsive to the needs of newcomers.

I encourage this committee to address settlement program uptake within the broader issue of integration. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I would encourage the committee to study the wider question of settlement funding and undertake a thorough study in this regard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chairman, for professionals aiming to immigrate to Canada, recognition of their credentials can be the key to opening the door to their future. And in the current global recession that we face, attracting these skilled and dedicated newcomers to Canada can be the key to opening a door to our country's future.

But while we have successfully attracted immigrants, recognizing their foreign credentials continues to pose a problem across this country. As you all know, the provinces and territories are responsible for assessing and recognizing credentials. This is why, in 2007, we created the Foreign Credentials Referral Office. This is also why, in Canada's economic action plan, this government committed \$50 million over two years to support the development of the common approach to foreign credential assessment, something which will help to ensure that newcomers better integrate into the labour market.

And it is why just last month, Prime Minister Harper addressed foreign credentials with provincial and territorial first ministers, reaching an agreement to develop, by next September, a pan-Canadian framework to evaluate and recognize foreign qualifications. It is our intention that this framework, once in place, will result in standardized and faster recognition of newcomers' foreign credentials.

Mr. Chairman, there is a momentum building among foreign credential recognition stakeholders towards action with the support of all levels of government. I personally feel this is crucial to build the future of Canada. When I meet newcomers — and I meet many — foreign credential recognition is the number one issue on their minds.

Before ending, I would like to stress that I am in constant contact with my counterparts in the provinces and territories, members of cultural communities, as well as my international counterparts. This Committee also serves as a valuable sounding board, so I am grateful for your interest and input.

[English]

Thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Chairman. My officials and I would now be happy to respond to your question.

● (0915)

The Chair: Thank you, Minister, for your comments. As you know, we have seven-minute rounds, followed by five-minute rounds, and the first person is Mr. Bevilacqua.

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

Minister, thank you, and also to your officials.

I listened very carefully to what you had to say, but there's always this impression you give, and your government gives, that in fact you're very open to immigration. I've yet to receive from you or your department the rationale as to why, over the past three years you've been in government, the Conservative government has shut its door on more than 50,000 landed immigrants. That is a concern I have, and it's very inconsistent with the messaging of this government that in fact it is a government that cares, a government that is open to immigration. The landed immigrant numbers speak to a different reality.

The other issue concerns the foreign credentials accreditation. This program was announced with much fanfare, yet last time you were here I asked you to find out how many immigrants have actually received foreign credential accreditation as a result of the investment made by this government.

The other issue concerns the processing times for skilled workers. When you look at 2004 versus the actual date, you see that Pakistan went from 44 months to 70 months; China, from 47 months to 68 months; Sri Lanka, from 41 months to 71 months; India, from 50 months to 73 months; Syria, from 55 months to 71 months; Manilla, from 53 months to 65 months.

I know those are quite a few points I've raised already, but I'm not done yet.

There's also concern about the whole issue of refugees and how that particular part of the portfolio is being handled. According to your own departmental performance reports that were recently issued, the backlog of refugee claims has more than doubled since the Conservatives took office, the number of finalized claims has decreased by 50%, the average processing times have increased to an average of 14 months due to fewer experienced decision-makers, and even the average cost per claim has increased by almost \$2,000 over the last three years.

Forgive me, Minister, but I think there are a lot of things going on here that require attention, and quite frankly, it's a record that concerns me as an individual who cares about immigrants and immigration here in Canada. I view immigration as a very important pillar, a foundation of nation building, so these issues create a great deal of concern to me and to the millions of Canadians who've chosen this country as their new land.

I would like you to go through this, and if you don't have enough time, perhaps you could send responses in writing to me, so I can in fact relay that message also to the many individuals who have raised these issues.

● (0920)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you very much, Mr. Bevilacqua, for those substantive questions and your long-standing concern about immigration.

First of all, on the general intake, I would not agree with the premise of your question. In fact, just to give you some statistical insight into this, since 2005 the number of foreign students admitted to Canada has increased from 68,000 to 79,000. That's a 17% increase in three years. Since 2005 the number of temporary foreign workers has risen by 57%. We've now created a Canadian experience class, and a number of those people will be eligible to apply for permanent residency. Permanent residents have increased from 236,000 in 2004 to 247,000 in 2008. This represents a 5% increase overall. The total entry of foreign students, temporary foreign workers, and permanent residents was 520,000 in 2008, up from 453,000 in 2005. This represents an overall increase of 15% from the last year the previous government was in office.

If you really want to compare statistics on this, between 1993 and 1997, in the previous government's first four or five years in office, the total number of permanent residents welcomed to Canada declined from roughly 250,000 to 175,000, a reduction of 75,000 cases. So we've actually increased permanent resident intake in our first three years, whereas the previous government cut it. Finally, I believe that Canada alone, amongst immigrant-receiving developed countries, is planning to maintain immigration levels rather than cut them in this difficult economic year.

As it relates to foreign credential recognition, I have the same problem answering that question as I did the last time. Over 400 regulatory bodies governed by the provinces do credential recognition, not the federal government, so we don't have a statistical basis to track how many people are accredited. Our objective, as articulated by my colleague the Minister of Human Resources, is that once we get in place this pan-Canadian framework for credential recognition with the implication of all the provinces, funded by our \$50 million allotment in this year's economic action plan, we hope that all applicants for credential recognition will have a clear answer from the relevant professional bodies within a year of their applications. That's the kind of benchmark we will be setting for the provinces to set for their professional regulatory bodies.

As it relates to processing, wait times for 70% of all economic class permanent resident cases have been reduced from 57 months in 2005 to 43 months in 2007 under our government. Of all non-economic permanent residents, the wait times have fallen from 22 months in 2005 to 13 months in 2007. When it comes to all skilled workers, wait times for the majority of cases have dropped from 43 months in 2005 to 29 months in 2007. As I reiterated today, in the largest stream of our inventory—the federal skilled worker category—we've seen a 15% reduction since the introduction of our action plan for faster immigration, which is really a signal achievement, and probably the first time in a generation we've seen that inventory go down rather than up.

Finally, with respect to the refugee inventory, obviously this is an issue that concerns us.

The Chair: We're down to the end.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Let me just say that a large number of recent nominations that I've brought forward to cabinet have been accepted. We're now operating at about 90% occupancy among members of the IRB. That should help address the backlog. We need to look more broadly at inland refugee reform. For instance, last year we received over 10,000 inland refugee claimants from Mexico, who are facing a 90% rejection rate at the IRB. I think we need to ask whether that's an efficient use of our resources and whether that's creating problems for the IRB and legitimate refugees by allowing false refugee claimants to clog the system.

• (0925)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. St-Cyr.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Minister, I would like to ask a few questions regarding the immigrant investor program. I have already drawn your attention, among others matters, to the situation in Quebec which has its own immigrant investor program. There are concerns regarding the processing times. Once the selection has been made by Quebec and once those immigrant investors have invested \$400,000, they get an answer after a relatively stable wait time. But down the line, when their application is sent to Ottawa for processing of the health and security aspects, it seems that the wait time becomes extremely long for checks that should in most cases be rather simple, and those

delays vary widely depending on which office in the world deals with the file.

I would like to know what the situation is in terms of processing times of applications sent by Quebec. How do they compare to those that are dealt with under the federal investor program?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you for your question, Mr. St-Cyr. Let me tell you that we give priority to applications under the Quebec immigrant investor program over those under the federal program. I am being told that there is no deliberate delay. Some times security agents have to investigate before issuing a security clearance. Sometimes this can add to the processing time but I can assure you that there is no deliberate delay by the federal government in dealing with these applications.

I might ask my deputy minister if he has something to add on this.

Mr. Richard Fadden (Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to note that all requests for a security check are sent to our security agencies. They are told what the department's priorities are. Without commenting in detail on the difficulties of the Border Services Agency and the security agencies, they have their own problems. There are too many files to process, they probably lack funding. So the delays you mention are not exclusive to Quebec, they are the same we have to endure all over.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: As for the provenance of the funds, at the early stages of the program in Quebec, concerns were expressed about a lack of verification of the provenance of the invested funds, to ensure they were legitimate and legal. So the government of Quebec made improvements. At the present time, immigration lawyers tell us that the federal government also undertakes very intensive checks of the provenance of the funds. So we have two governments doing the same thing.

I would like to know first of all if this is true. Who is responsible? Who is in charge of checking the provenance of the money? If it is the federal government, the government of Quebec should stop doing that, or vice versa. At the present time, there seems to be duplication. What is the set up in this regard?

Hon. Jason Kenney: I will defer to the deputy minister since I am not aware of the administrative details of this program.

Mr. Richard Fadden: Essentially, Mr. Chairman, the member is right. It is a huge problem for us, not only in Quebec but throughout Canada. The provenance of the money is very difficult to verify. You are right when you say that Quebec has the initial responsibility to verify if the provenance of the funds is legitimate. However, I must admit that, not only for applications coming from Quebec but also from all the other provinces, if concerns arise based on the facts in a specific application, we sometimes review the source of the funds. However, this is exceptional in Quebec's case. I want to be very clear. This is an exception, but the federal government is nevertheless generally responsible for ensuring that no fraud is associated with these files. We have discussed those issues with the government of Quebec and, as you said at the beginning, it also has reinforced its verification. The number of times where both governments undertake provenance checks is very limited. I do not have the figures, but I am told they are very small.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

● (0930)

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: So when some immigration lawyers tell us this happens more systematically, this is a wrong perception, according to you. Is this true of all processing offices abroad or are there offices where a second verification by the federal government, following that of Quebec, happens more frequently.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Again, this is an administrative matter. I will ask the deputy minister to answer.

Mr. Richard Fadden: First of all, to my knowledge, Mr. Chairman, this does not happen systematically. There might be specific files, in one place or another, that are problematic. That being said, we must recognize that lawyers or consultants are hired to deal with the more problematic cases. From their viewpoint, it might seem that specific issues exist. However, I repeat that as far as we are concerned, this is not a general problem in the system.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Very well. I would like to have with the minister a more general discussion about this program. We know that there are issues, rather long processing times. In a period of economic downturn, would it not be a good investment by the government of Canada to provide a few million dollars in supplementary funding in order to speed up the processing of immigrant investor applications? This could translate into probably billions of dollars of investment in Canada from these applicants.

In the estimates that you table here today — which are after all the subject of this meeting — do you have funding to speed up the processing of these files, considering the economic benefit this might provide at this difficult time?

Hon. Jason Kenney: No, not specifically, Mr. Chairman. We have added in the last budget \$109 million for case processing by the department. In the supplementary estimates that we table today, we do not increase funding for this program.

However, I have to admit that you make a sound argument. This means that we should focus on programs that help our economy. This is why I have asked the department to advise on ways to improve the administration of the immigrant investor program. I should add that Quebec has a program that attracts many more immigrant investors than the federal one. Maybe we could learn something from the Quebec program which works very efficiently.

[English]

The Chair: *Merci.*

Ms. Chow.

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

I have three questions that I will give to you in one shot. I actually have them written out, and if they get too long I will just pass the notes to you, and I know you'll respond in writing.

The first one really is about temporary foreign workers. Your planned target is in the tens of thousands. I have a report from the Human Resources folks documenting examples from the live-in caregiver program of employers illegally confiscating employees' passports and other legal documents. And there are reports of verbal and emotional abuse and negligence and sexual assault, which are not uncommon. Some provincial employment standards allow the employers to pay a training wage for the first 500 hours that is lower than the minimum wage. There is evidence to suggest that temporary status fosters vulnerability to abuse, and that the workers accept unacceptable working conditions for fear of unemployment or deportation. The pressure to get a good work record deters workers from reporting abuse.

On the farm workers program, workers pay into EI but are not qualified for EI. They pay into the CPP, the Canada Pension Plan, but are not aware of most of those benefits. They have long working hours without rest or overtime pay, and there is inadequate workplace safety training, inadequate access to medical care, and poor housing, poor community relations, and verbal and physical abuse.

In terms of the pilot project for low-skill occupations, again, having low-skilled domestic workers earning low wages means poor labour market outcomes for them. There is a document showing the consequences in terms of increased emergency medical care, rising crime rates, etc.

The reason I put all of this in writing is that it comes from a report from Human Resources, and it is a problem.

So I really have two questions. What is your plan to protect the most vulnerable? Second, there is the Juana Tejada law, which you are familiar with. Sadly, she passed away. It's about the second medical examination people have to go through once they qualify for landed immigrant status in Canada under the live-in caregiver program. So that's one whole area for you to focus on: temporary foreign workers.

The second one is really the same question I asked you the last time you were here. It's about the global case management system. You probably know that the Auditor General, in her November 2006 report—before you became the minister—said that they threw in all this money. It's \$48 million over budget and two years late. Now, the last time you were here, you requested \$31 million on top of that. And this time you're asking for another \$24 million. So are we throwing good money after bad?

And when can we get a status report about what's happening to all of your IT projects?

Does the global case management system connect with the MyCIC, the application files, so that we can really track who we want to deport and what's happening to the applications? So that's a whole area, if you can address that.

This is the last one. Two weeks ago when you were here, you asked for \$2 million for your advertising budget. This time you're asking for another \$3 million in the supplementary estimates (C). That is \$5 million, Mr. Minister, \$5 million. So the supplementary estimates (B) were for \$2 million, plus these supplementary estimates (C) for \$3 million. What are you doing with this money?

• (0935)

The Chair: You have a minute and a half. Good luck.

Everybody's been going over, ladies and gentlemen.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Ms. Chow.

On the first question of live-in caregivers, first of all, let me express my condolences and that of the government for the loss of Juana Tejada, whom I knew. She was a compassionate and courageous woman. We regret her loss, and we respect her fight.

I can tell you, Ms. Chow, that starting this spring, I intend to review ways in which we can improve the live-in caregiver program to ensure the appropriate protection of the rights of live-in caregivers and to ensure that the program works better. I intend to begin with community consultations in that respect, consulting with, amongst others, representatives of the Filipino community who have a particularly strong interest in the issue. I'm willing to give serious consideration to the principle behind what you characterize as the Tejada law. In this respect, we need to acknowledge that it's the provincial labour codes that govern the rights of workers. It's not entirely a matter of federal jurisdiction, but I'd be happy to work with you on this issue.

With respect to the global case management system, I'm sure this is a concern of every Minister of Immigration since this program began six or seven years ago. The Treasury Board has taken a series of very close looks at the program, has narrowed its focus, and has insisted on outside audits to ensure that the program is being administered efficiently.

I am persuaded that we need something like GCMS. We're operating in the 1960s, technologically speaking, which is one of the reasons we have such slow processing times, relatively speaking. We're dealing with masses of paper. I was just at our case processing centre in Vegreville on Friday. It is unbelievable what we are doing in terms of paper processing. We should be like other countries and

operate electronically. I'll turn that over to the deputy for detailed comments on the spending with respect to GCMS.

Finally, on advertising, the supplementary budget for advertising we brought forward last time was for funds that had already been spent. The \$3 million constitutes a transfer to CIC from the PCO advertising budget.

I'm out of time, I guess.

• (0940)

The Chair: You're out of time.

Mr. Shory.

Hon. Jason Kenney: We'll try to respond in more detail to Ms. Chow in writing.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Shory.

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I would like to thank the minister and the departmental officials who have come here this morning.

Minister, in your opening remarks you acknowledged that foreign credential recognition is a number one issue on the newcomer's mind. I know our government has worked hard to allow qualified immigrants to have their foreign credentials recognized. As provinces have the primary responsibility for credential recognition, what plans do we have to engage the provinces in these efforts? Also, I note that we had set aside \$50 million to support the development of the common approach to foreign credential assessment. What does that mean? Would it be possible in future that foreign credential assessments done in one province would be recognized in another?

Second, in recent years our government has substantially increased settlement programs and services to help newcomers integrate into Canadian society. Can you tell me how this funding to increase immigrant outcomes is being spent and what types of outcomes we hope to achieve?

The last question I have this morning is this, Minister. You spoke of immigration fraud being a serious problem. What plans do we, as a government, have to address this in the year ahead?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Shory, for those substantive questions.

With respect to foreign credential recognition, your first question was how we are working with the provinces. First of all, there is of course the very substantial foreign credential recognition program administered by the Ministry of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, which does work with the provinces and professional agencies and credential recognizing bodies to try to encourage them to streamline their processes. We provide support through this HRSDC program for community organizations representing foreign-trained professionals to advocate for a faster and more transparent consideration of their applications for credential recognition with the agencies. More than 400 agencies exist across the country.

Also, our government has created the Foreign Credentials Referral Office, with its \$32 million budget. Together with HRSDC, in partnership with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, we've created three pilot offices through the Canadian immigration integration project that are providing a kind of a head start on integration broadly and foreign credential recognition in particular, hopefully getting people to make applications for credential recognition before they even land in Canada following their selection for permanent residency.

But most importantly, as it relates to working with the provinces, the Prime Minister, for the first time, I believe, in history on this issue, put FCR on the table with the first ministers at their meeting in Ottawa on January 16, where they came to an important agreement to create a pan-Canadian framework for credential recognition by September of this year. As I mentioned, we're investing \$50 million in the economic action plan to put the flesh on the bones of that framework. As Minister Finley has said, it's our hope that it will lead to a benchmark where all of the 400-plus provincially regulated professional agencies will give foreign-trained professionals a clear answer on their application for credential recognition within a year of their application. We cannot guarantee everyone that they'll get their credentials recognized; it would be irresponsible to do so, but people shouldn't have to wait five years.

The other day in Edmonton I met a doctor educated in Syria. She did five years of medical training, did her residency, delivered hundreds of babies as a highly trained medical professional, came to Canada, and during the last five years has been cleaning hotel rooms and working as a maid trying to get recognized, with one barrier after another set up in her path. This is unacceptable, and we expect the provinces to work with, in this instance, their colleges of physicians and surgeons to ensure that women like this have a clear pathway so at least they can get an answer and know, if they're not going to get credential recognition, what the alternative is.

With respect to integration and settlement funding, as I mentioned, we've increased the envelope for this by about \$1.4 billion to ensure that all provinces are getting roughly the same funding as Quebec used to under the Canada-Quebec immigration agreement. This is principally being delivered through non-profit settlement agencies, which are usually community based, through programs like LINC language training and other programs. There are two provinces, British Columbia and Manitoba, with whom we have bilateral agreements. We transfer the money to the provinces, and they deliver the programs themselves.

One of the things I've asked this committee to review is the effectiveness of our spending in this area. You asked what our objective is. Well, obviously our objective is the fastest possible integration of newcomers, particularly into the labour market. There was a recent study done by COMPASS that indicated that for employers who don't hire foreign-trained professionals, the principal issue is language skills. So it is of concern to me that only 20% or 25% of newcomers are actually availing themselves of the free language training programs we offer through LINC. That's why in the Speech from the Throne we said we want to increase the take-up of these programs. We're working very closely, for instance, with the Government of Ontario as it relates to settlement programming in this province. I would invite this committee to look at other ways we

can increase the uptake, the use of these programs. I've mentioned one idea that has been floated, which is perhaps a pilot program that gives certificates to newcomers that they can then redeem for hours of language training to create a more responsive client-based system.

Finally, on fraud, as I mentioned, we're very concerned about this. I will be pre-publishing regulations for public comment later this spring on the issue of third parties, of immigration consultants, and we will be doing public consultations on how to better regulate that industry. I mentioned our efforts overseas to increase public awareness about the fact that people don't need to use third parties, and if they do so, they should be registered third parties. The video we released today is part of our ongoing public awareness efforts in that regard.

● (0945)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

That concludes the seven-minute rounds, and we are now on five-minute rounds.

Mr. Karygiannis is first.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Good morning, Minister.

Minister, would your department allow somebody who will deny the Holocaust to come into Canada to speak to a group?

Hon. Jason Kenney: I'm sorry?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: A Holocaust denier. Would your department allow somebody to come into Canada and speak publicly?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Karygiannis, I'm sure you know that under IRPA neither the minister nor the department to whom I delegate visa-granting authority have what's called negative discretion. So if someone is legally eligible to enter the country and obtain a visa—that is to say, if in the judgment of the visa officer they're likely to return, and they pass our security and health requirements—we are legally incapable of denying someone a visa on the grounds of, say, their political opinions.

Perhaps the committee would like to consider whether or not we should have negative discretion to prevent those kinds of people from coming to Canada.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: If somebody requires a visitor visa to come to Canada, and you know full well that this individual will come and preach about Holocaust denial, would you allow him in, yes or no? Yes or no, Minister?

Hon. Jason Kenney: It depends on the particularities of the case. I can tell you—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Somebody is going to come to a university—

• (0950)

The Chair: Excuse me to both of you. You know, we can only hear one person at a time. The record can't capture two people speaking. Mr. Minister, you've been asked a question. Try to do your best, and then Mr. Karygiannis will have his turn.

Mr. Minister.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Can I respond?

The Chair: Absolutely.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I just have a two-sentence elaboration, which is that I recall a couple of years ago—I think actually I was in opposition—there was an imam from Saudi Arabia with a long track record of anti-Semitic remarks, including Holocaust denial. And I recall putting the motion to the House of Commons asking the government not to allow him to come into Canada. Now, technically the government didn't have that power, but fortunately the person didn't come into Canada. So I think there are ways of dissuading individuals like that from entering Canada.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: So, Minister, you would not allow somebody in, correct? Yes or no? It's simple; it's all I'm looking for.

Hon. Jason Kenney: If the person is guilty of a crime, or we have reasonable apprehension that he will commit a crime in Canada, then we can deny the person a visa.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Minister, please answer the question with a simple yes or no. If you can't do that, then that's fine. Would you allow somebody to come into Canada and allow him to speak publicly—you know he's going to speak publicly—about Holocaust denial, yes or no?

Hon. Jason Kenney: If a visa officer believes there's reasonable likelihood that someone will commit a crime in Canada, then he will be denied a visa.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Then, Minister, why did your official allow Mr. Türkkaya Ataöv, who is a denier—he speaks of denial of the Armenian genocide—to come to Canada and speak at McGill University? This individual has a long track record. Now, why did your officials allow him in? You should deny him too.

Hon. Jason Kenney: If someone is guilty of a crime in the country of origin and we believe they may commit a crime in Canada, the visa officer is likely to deny the person a visa. This is the first time I've heard of that case, so it's difficult for me to respond to it.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Maybe you can look into it and come back to us.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I would be happy to. If you have evidence that individual was guilty of crimes, either in his country of origin or Canada, I would be very keen to look at it.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Minister, on April 10, 2008, in testimony before the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology of the other place, on Bill C-37, the then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration stated that we can use a subsection 5(4) citizenship grant if individuals qualify under the new legislation: "... they could apply for a section 5(4) and not wait until the legislation comes into force.... We don't want to hold the people up, because the law has not yet come into force...."

Minister, can you tell me how many grants of citizenship have been made since last year, on subsection 5(4)?

Hon. Jason Kenney: While I'm looking for this, I can say that it's not large in terms of order of magnitude. I'll get back to the member with that number, Mr. Chairman, but I think it is in the single digits or in the dozens. It's not a huge number.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Minister, there were 72 applications and only one was granted. Why is your department denying Canadian citizens their citizenship? If you don't have the numbers, Minister, we have Don Chapman in the room here. He has been appearing in this committee. He can stand up and testify how many you have done: one. One to the veteran whom your minister flew down and who was coerced into saying yes, I want to take citizenship. Only one, Minister, and you've had a full year. There are 72 applications on your desk and you haven't done anything.

The Chair: You're well over, Mr. Karygiannis.

If you can give a quick answer, go ahead, otherwise we'll move on.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I'm afraid that Mr. Karygiannis is characteristically wrong. I can tell him that I personally made several recommendations under subsection 5(4) to the cabinet, I think in the order of eight.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, the 2008-09 estimates show \$274 million for language training of immigrants to Canada. I would like to know if this contribution includes amounts to Quebec for this purpose or if this is only for Canada outside of Quebec.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I will ask Mr. Ganim to answer.

Mr. Wayne Ganim (Chief Financial Officer, Finance Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): No, this amount does not include the contribution to Quebec.

Mr. Jean Dorion: Fine.

As well, these estimates show a decrease of \$8.4 million in the Main Estimates of the department, resulting from provisions of the Canada-Quebec agreement. What are the reasons for this decrease? You will find this information on page I-32 of the 2008-09 Main Estimates.

• (0955)

Mr. Wayne Ganim: These reductions are an adjustment to the amount we forecast to be paid to the government of Quebec, and not an adjustment to the present amount being paid. The amount we pay to the government of Quebec under the agreement cannot decrease; it either has to increase or to remain the same. Adjustments are made from year to year, during the same period, in relation to the forecast. We adjust the payment made to Quebec according to two factors: first, the number of non-Francophone immigrants, which is adjusted on an annual basis, and second net federal expenditures. This represents another adjustment that is being made to the payments to Quebec every year.

In a nutshell, the amount paid to Quebec can never decrease.

Mr. Jean Dorion: Would you like to follow up on this subject, Mr. Minister?

Go ahead, Mr. St-Cyr.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: I do not necessarily want to remain on this subject. I would just like to take the opportunity of your appearance, Mr. Minister, to ask you a question.

This morning, the newspapers reported the appointment of Mr. Pharès Pierre, who used to be chief of staff in the Aristide government. Many lawyers are wondering about the ethics of this appointment, since this man has been a member of a government that has been harshly criticized for various aspects of its governance.

Are we not in a rather paradoxical situation, since this person might have to deal with refugee cases who claim to have been persecuted under the regime of Aristide? Do you see any ethical issue in this regard? Was your government aware of the record of this individual? What do you propose to do?

Hon. Jason Kenney: As you know, a new system has been established for the pre-selection of appointees to the IRB. The appointment of Mr. Pierre was made under this system. It means that he was chosen through the IRB pre-selection process, which is based on merit and which includes an interview and a review. Next, the Privy Council Office makes a selection based on security aspects. The individual in question was recommended to me by the IRB. We try to appoint Canadians from various backgrounds and that is the case here.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Were you aware of his past?

Hon. Jason Kenney: No, not personally.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: According to the biographical notes on the Website of the department, Mr. Pierre holds a bachelor of mathematics, with a specialization in education and so on. He was also vice-president and treasurer of the executive of what was then the Progressive-Conservative Party and vice-president of the Quebec wing of this party.

Why did you not mention this in these biographical notes?

Hon. Jason Kenney: I do not know. I found this out when I read the article this morning. I did not know such a party existed in Quebec.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Okay.

Hon. Jason Kenney: It is the first time I hear about this party.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, Minister.

I wonder if you'll just bear with me for a moment. I want to quote briefly, if I may, from a *National Post* article before I get into my question. It's specific to a gentleman who recently was "un-deported", as such. He's a member of AK Kannan, which is a violent Toronto street gang named after its favourite assault rifle, the AK-47.

The article states that the Toronto police report that this gentleman was involved "in the fatal shooting of two teenagers, a meat cleaver attack, the trashing of a community centre, threats, assaults and credit card theft". The reason that he was "un-deported" was that they made a mistake in 2005.

Other people who are frustrated by this are those in the Tamil community in particular. In a statement from the Canadian Tamil Congress, they said they were very happy to see this gentleman deported. They've been making a lot of strides in recent years to clean up the image of their community.

I have a specific question. Recently there was a motion brought forward in this committee not to deport anyone to Sri Lanka. It was a motion brought forward by a Liberal member of this committee, unanimously supported by the opposition members of this committee and opposed by the Conservative members. I'm wondering if you might comment on the effect this would have specifically on individuals who are involved in serious criminal activities or who may have participated or been involved in war crimes in Sri Lanka.

• (1000)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to be clear, I think you're speaking about the case of Mr. Nagalingam. Is that right?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Correct.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I understand he was deported in 2005. I further understand that an agreement was made by the previous government, through its Department of Justice, with Mr. Nagalingam that if his appeal was upheld he would be returned to Canada at the expense of the government. That's what happened. A federal judge overturned the danger opinion, and pursuant to the agreement made by the previous Liberal government, he was returned.

My advice is that this agreement was not required by law. It was a discretionary decision by the previous government. I'm perplexed as to why it was made. We are unfortunately legally bound to implement the agreement. That's why he was returned to Canada. I can assure you that we are arguing and will continue to argue at every possible venue that Mr. Nagalingam constitutes a danger and should remain in immigration detention.

Mr. Paul Calandra: If I can follow up with respect to the motion that we did pass in this committee, it made its way through this committee, as I said, brought forward by a Liberal member and supported by the opposition, and was basically forbidding the government from deporting anybody to Sri Lanka regardless of their criminal activity.

As a follow-up, could you comment on what impact that would have on people who are involved in serious crimes and who may, as I said, be implicated in war crimes at a later time?

Hon. Jason Kenney: We do have a process, Mr. Calandra, for adding countries to a list of countries that have a temporary stay of removals. That is to say, there's a joint committee of Public Safety and CIC, which, based on information often provided by the United Nations, makes recommendations about what countries we should not remove people to.

I would point out that when we do add countries to the TSR list, this has the consequence of prohibiting us from removing people who constitute a danger to Canadians and who are guilty of serious and sometimes violent crimes. That's why I think we should proceed with great caution when it comes to adding countries to the TSR.

Our first responsibility as a government and as parliamentarians is to protect the safety and security of Canadians, and it's our intention to do so.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you.

My second question, Minister, I will ask quickly. A constituent of mine sent a wonderful article—I thought, anyway—from *Newsweek* magazine recently that praised our commitment to permanently settling skilled individuals in Canada. I was wondering if you could comment on the success of this approach.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Yes, it was an interesting article by Fareed Zakaria, who noted the relative success of Canada's immigration system in fuelling, in part, our economic growth recently. All I would add is that one of the reasons we've planned to maintain immigration levels for the next year is precisely because we believe that immigration will be the fuel of the jobs of the future. When we come into the recovery phase, out of this global economic downturn, we will need people to fuel the future jobs, and the last thing we want is to come to the recovery phase and have labour market shortages. I was just in western Canada on the weekend meeting with employers and temporary foreign workers, and I can tell you there continues to be demand for permanent residents, for temporary foreign workers, in certain sectors in certain regions, notwithstanding the downturn in the overall labour market.

• (1005)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Wong.

Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister, and colleagues from the ministry.

I have two very short questions and I expect that probably you can shed some light on these two questions.

First of all, my area of interest is multiculturalism, and thank you very much for last time telling us how you see the direction of

multiculturalism. So could you please comment on the progress of the transition of multiculturalism, moving from Heritage to Citizenship and Immigration? That's my first question.

The second question has to do with your recent announcement that you would like to increase the number of foreign students in Canada. If you look at the financial situation right now and also look at all the contributions either in the financial situation and/or the training of these people who would be our ambassadors to different parts of the world and the fact that these people might also be potentially staying in Canada as well, how would you like to accomplish this? And what kind of plan do you have in mind, please?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you.

On the first question, as I underscored in my last appearance at this committee, as a result of a decision made by the Prime Minister we've transferred the multiculturalism program from Heritage Canada to CIC.

Many people have commented that the settlement services that CIC offers end when people become citizens, and there is a gap there because in many cases people may still need assistance in terms of the challenges of integration. When I was Secretary of State at Canadian Heritage, I worked to modify the objectives of the multiculturalism program, in part to focus on the challenges of integration. My vision of this is that the robust settlement programs we are now funding through CIC, which end at citizenship, can now transition, hopefully seamlessly, into continued support for integration through the multiculturalism program for people who are new Canadian citizens. That's why we've located the multiculturalism program within the citizenship directorate at CIC. What we want to do is find programs that we can fund through the multiculturalism program—grants and contributions and partners in civil society—that can work on the challenges of integration.

I will be bringing forward in the supplementary estimates (A) in May the transfer of funding from PCH to CIC for the multiculturalism program. By the way, this is a positive change for multiculturalism. My sense was that over at Heritage it was a little boutique program. Here it makes a lot more sense. It's in a department with more resources focused on integration, and we can do a lot more with it at Immigration, which is actually where it was located before 1994.

In terms of foreign students, the Canadian university and college sector has commented that Canada is not competitive with other countries as it relates to attracting qualified foreign students. I'm told that, for instance, Australia attracts ten times more Indian university students than does Canada. Maybe some of that has to do with geography, perhaps some of it with climate, but we have great universities and tremendous learning opportunities. We also have the new Canadian experience class, which is a tremendous marketing advantage that offers a pathway to permanent residency for qualified foreign students.

The Prime Minister has asked me to work with my colleagues at Foreign Affairs and International Trade and in the Canadian colleges and university sector to see how we can better market the Canadian post-secondary education product and attract a larger number of qualified foreign students, who are much desired by our post-secondary institutions because they are paying full fees. I also think that the new program we have with the Canadian experience class will be a huge advantage to our economy, because if you have a student here for four years who has perfected their language skills, who has obtained a Canadian degree that will be immediately recognized by a credentialling agency, a licensing agency, these students are, in a sense, pre-integrated. They have a huge head start in comparison with federal skilled workers who are coming in with foreign degrees.

This is something we really want to put an emphasis on, and as I said, I'm working with my colleagues in both International Trade and Foreign Affairs as well as the post-secondary education sector to see how we can increase and more effectively market the opportunities for foreign students in Canada.

•(1010)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister and Ms. Wong.

Mr. Coderre, it is your turn, and I'd like to welcome you to the committee. You have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know fully well what my colleague, the Minister, feels today. I have had myself to answer these types of questions.

I would like to return to the case of Pharès Pierre, who has quite a record. You know fully well, Mr. Minister, that Citizenship and Immigration has close links with Foreign affairs and security agencies; it is a powerful department. We are faced this morning with this reality: this appointment does not respect the principle of justice and the appearance of fairness.

You might say that you were not aware of the record of Mr. Pharès Pierre, but nevertheless this appointment is extremely troubling. It is very obvious that when refugees who fled the Aristide regime at the time have to face a Pharès Pierre, who was chief of staff of this president, serious ethical problems will arise.

This morning, the Immigration and Refugee Board stated that security is also a responsibility of your department.

I would like to ask Mr. Fadden, whom I know well, what he did on this file. If the Minister was not aware of the past of Mr. Pharès Pierre, the department must have known. Was it hidden from him or was he aware of the record of Mr. Pharès Pierre?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Coderre, as a minister, I am ultimately responsible for all appointments, but I was not aware of this. I found out this morning in the newspaper. I intend to talk with the chairperson of the IRB to find out how the pre-selection process was conducted.

I will now let the deputy minister answer.

Mr. Richard Fadden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The review process of appointments prior to the recommendation to the minister is slightly different from that which was used when you were minister, Mr. Coderre. The government decided to give the IRB full responsibility for reviewing appointments. Consequently, nor myself nor the minister have any involvement in this process. The process is entirely conducted by the IRB.

A number of criteria must be met. There is a written exam and two interviews. The appointment is then sent to the minister. As was the case when you were minister, security checks are made once the appointments have been sent to the minister. The department is not involved as such.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Therefore, the spokesperson of the Immigration and Refugee Board lied to the press when she said that your department was responsible for security matters. That is my conclusion.

Mr. Richard Fadden: The department was involved in the establishment of the new system but it does not have any role in the appointments.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Mr. Minister, do you intend to withdraw this appointment, now that you are aware of the past of Mr. Pierre? I do not mean his affiliation with the Progressive-Conservative Party but his affinity with Aristide.

Are you going to withdraw his candidacy, yes or no?

Hon. Jason Kenney: I will look into it. I do not have the power to cancel an appointment. I was not even aware of his partisan record, nor did I know that the Progressive-Conservative Party had a Quebec wing.

Allow me to quote from the Website of the IRB:

Under the revised selection process, the IRB chairperson will be accountable for the selection of qualified candidates as recommended to the minister to be considered for appointment to the IRB.

Hon. Denis Coderre: If that is so, as a minister, do you recommend all of the appointments?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Yes, I have to take the ultimate responsibility.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Being the person accountable, now that you are aware of this issue, could you consider withdrawing this candidacy?

Hon. Jason Kenney: As you know fully well, I do not have the power to do so, but I will review the issue. I only found out about this two hours ago and I will discuss it with the chairperson of the IRB.

•(1015)

Hon. Denis Coderre: When did you receive the appointment of Mr. Pharès Pierre? You said you appointed 90 percent of the candidates?

Hon. Jason Kenney: I do not know the exact date, but we made all the appointments during the two last Cabinet meetings, over the last six weeks.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister and Mr. Coderre.

Ms. Grewal, you have five minutes.

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

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for coming. I have a couple of questions for you.

The first one is that the main estimates include a new line this year for internal services. Could you please explain what services are included in this budget line and how these expenses were previously accounted for?

Hon. Jason Kenney: I will pass this financial detail to the deputy.

Mr. Richard Fadden: Mr. Chairman, this reflects a change that was decided upon at the government level. These services include matters such as administration, accommodation, informatics, finance, and personnel. Previously they were allocated to the substantive programs of the department proportionately. They were dispersed amongst integration, citizenship, and what not. A decision was taken to report them separately so that Parliament would have a clearer idea of how much was spent on these support services.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Previously this committee had heard anecdotal evidence of the poor working conditions of some temporary foreign workers. Are there any plans to address this matter? Could you please explain that?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Are there any plans to address...?

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Are there any plans to address the poor working conditions of temporary workers?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Ms. Grewal.

Yes. In fact, I will be pre-publishing regulations for public commentary, I believe later this month, with respect to the temporary foreign worker program.

That reminds me, I just want to respond to Ms. Chow's suggestion that we're increasing the targets or maintaining targets for that program.

We don't actually have operational targets for the program. It's an entirely demand-driven program, depending on how many applications there are for labour market opinions and work permits by employers. We only fulfill those LMOs at HRSDC or work permits at CIC if the employer can demonstrate they've advertised for the position in Canada and the position has gone unfilled, and the employer clearly demonstrates they are paying the prevailing Canadian wage rate for the temporary worker.

Having said that, I am aware that in a small minority of cases there are allegations or evidence of apparent abuse on the part of some employers. One of the things I intend to bring forward in the draft regulations is a provision where we will remove the right to apply for LMOs and work permits from employers who are repeat abusers.

Part of the challenge is that the labour rights of these individuals fall under provincial jurisdiction. Federally there's very little we can do to enforce those labour rights. Some of the provinces, such as Alberta, have significantly increased their budgets for monitoring and enforcement of labour market standards for temporary foreign workers. Other provinces, like Manitoba, have actually brought forth legislation governing the third parties who play a key role in processing applications for temporary foreign workers.

There is a growing focus on enforcement. We hope to take that one step further with our federal regulations that I will be proposing for public commentary later this month.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Mr. Chair, if I have more time, I'll pass my time to Mr. Dykstra.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I want to correct myself. I've been advised that those regulations will be coming forward in May. I thought it was March, but it's May.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Devinder has a few more questions.

The Chair: I'm sorry. Mr. Shory.

We're moving right along.

Mr. Devinder Shory: Thank you.

I would like to follow up on Mr. Calandra's question. I need a specific answer on that.

In one of our committee meetings, the opposition unanimously passed a resolution recommending that no one should be deported to Sri Lanka. How will it, and will it, benefit Canada if we are stopped from deporting anyone to Sri Lanka, notwithstanding that the person has serious criminal activities or involvements?

● (1020)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Every time we decide not to deport someone who is guilty of a crime in Canada, first of all, we are potentially endangering the safety or security of Canadians, regardless of the source country of that person. Secondly, we are frequently forcing the taxpayers to pay for social services for individuals who are guilty of having violated our laws, be they our immigration or criminal laws. I think it's the taxpayer and the average Canadian who should be concerned about this notion that we should not deport criminals. When people break our laws, it's a serious offence.

The Chair: We're going to have to stop.

Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Coderre brought up a couple of interesting points, which are rattling around in my head, about a fellow by the name of Khaled Mouammar, who I believe was appointed to the IRB as a commissioner. Maybe this is too detailed a question, but the reason it comes to mind is from the aspect of political affiliation. I don't know whether he has any political affiliation or not, but I wonder if there is any truth to that and whether he has a membership to any type of political party, either federally or provincially.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I've read in the public domain that the gentleman in question has a record of contributions to the Liberal Party of Canada. I obviously can't comment on whether he's been a member of any political party.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Fair enough.

This leads me to a further question, maybe not so much from an organizational perspective but from specific comments he has made, as president of the CAF, over the last number of weeks, months, and even years. These include comments about you, Minister, comments about the member for Toronto Centre, and comments about the Prime Minister.

I know there have been a lot of questions around the organization in terms of its federal financial support. We are talking about estimates today. Part of estimates is an expenditure of public tax dollars. Given that you're here to speak to the estimates, I thought I would give you an opportunity to tell us how that specific case may be proceeding and to comment on the whole process with respect to grants.

Hon. Jason Kenney: This matter has been in the media a fair bit, so let me be clear, Mr. Chairman. The very first day I arrived at Canadian Heritage as the secretary of state responsible for the multiculturalism program, I received a briefing on grants and contributions. I indicated to the officials that I wanted to ensure that we were not providing grants and contributions to organizations that make excuses for, or apologize for, violence or terrorism, or organizations that are terrorist or that promote hatred. I mentioned, in particular, Mr. Mohamed Elmasry of the Canadian Islamic Congress because of his remarks that Israelis over the age of 18 are legitimate targets for elimination.

I further mentioned, in particular, Mr. Khaled Mouammar, president of the Canadian Arab Federation—this was a discussion I had with my officials in January 2007—because of his circulation, during the 2006 Liberal leadership convention, of a flyer that attacked Bob Rae, a respected member of this Parliament, because of his wife's involvement in the Jewish community. Following the circulation of that flyer, Liberal Senator Yoine Goldstein referred to this flyer as “racist filth”. It was my view then, and it's remained my view since, that we ought not to finance organizations that promote extremism or hatred—in this case, hatred toward Jewish people in particular—or who publicly support a banned, illegal terrorist organization.

Mr. Mouammar has a long record of public comments expressing support for Hamas and Hezbollah, which are two banned, illegal, and essentially anti-Semitic terrorist organizations. He has referred to Israel as a racist state and he has called for the end of Israel as a Jewish state. In my judgment, these and other comments of his are beyond the pale.

Do I suggest that we should have a test on political opinions for the office-holders of NGOs that receive grants and contributions? No, absolutely not. People are free to say what they like within the bounds of our laws. People are free to criticize cabinet ministers or the government. But I do not believe we have any obligation to provide subsidies to individuals who use their organizations as platforms to promote extremism or hatred or to apologize for terrorism.

That's the view I articulated in January 2007 at Canadian Heritage. As a result, we provided no funding to these organizations. That's also the view I articulated recently at the London conference on anti-Semitism. I have also articulated this to my officials. I have asked my department to find ways in which we can include the promotion

of hatred or apologizing for terrorism as some of the criteria used in considering applicants for grants or contributions.

• (1025)

The Chair: Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Thank you, Minister.

Maybe you would also like to take that task to the people who brought in Mr. Türkkaya Ataöv. He spoke openly. This organization is the TSSMU. Maybe you would like to use that same criterion.

You must know and you must have read in 2007 the Prime Minister's document, *Accountable Government: A Guide for Ministers and Secretaries of State*. It states on page 4:

Ministers and Ministers of State must act with integrity. To ensure public trust and confidence, not only in our Government but in government generally, Ministers and Ministers of State must uphold the highest standards of honesty and impartiality.

Ministers are responsible for ensuring that their departments are managed soundly and with complete integrity.

Ministers are accountable to Parliament for the use of all powers vested in them.

Ministers are accountable to Parliament for the exercise of their responsibilities whether they are assigned by statute or otherwise.

Ministers are also required to answer to Parliament by providing information to Parliament on the use of powers by bodies that report to Parliament through them.

The deputy minister, as the Minister's principal source of public service support and policy advice, is expected to advise the Minister on all matters under the Minister's responsibility and authority. He or she plays a key role in promoting appropriate policy coordination, and building coherence in the activities and reporting of the portfolio bodies.

Their role is to provide their Minister with the broadest possible expert advice and support needed for the Minister's portfolio responsibilities, and to undertake the day-to-day management of the department on behalf of their Minister.

Deputy ministers are responsible and accountable for a wide range of duties including policy advice, program delivery, internal departmental management and interdepartmental coordination.

For an organization to receive money and be on the list to receive money, they must go through an exercise of accountability, an exercise of reporting to the department, and an exercise to bring this forward. Your deputy ministers and officials look at this, and they must also be held accountable for the programs they provide. A lot of these organizations have an executive director, and their bodies—the people who are there to serve—are elected volunteers. Sometimes these volunteers might disagree with a government policy and want to speak on that. These individuals might also come in front of us and advocate policies that you and I might disagree with, but that is their role.

Overall, for the delivery of programs there are benchmarks, accountability, transparency, and most of all, track records on people who deliver these programs. The agency in question may have used the wrong adjectives when they were describing you, and that probably got you a little mad. But at the drop of a hat, this code of accountability certainly went out the window. The discussions you should have had with your deputy ministers went out the window. When the officials were here last time I asked them the same questions, and they certainly were not able to answer.

So you certainly did not look at accountability, you certainly did not take advice, and you certainly did not look at this organization's track record on what they have done and what they haven't done, regardless of their political affiliation and beliefs. The area in question is in need. It's called Steeles-L'Amoreaux and is in my riding in the city of Toronto. It is diagnosed as one of the 13 areas that need help. United Way, as well as the City of Toronto, have outlined it that way.

• (1030)

Minister, not only are you targeting them; there are signals going out to other organizations. Your department has called other organizations that are Arab, and are probably disliked by you, to say, "We're going to audit you." Your officials also called the Tamil Eelam Society.

Minister, I have news for you: 95% percent of the service these people provide does not go to the Arabs; it goes to people in need. And 5% of the things they provide—settlement services—goes toward a particular ethnicity.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Certainly you have forgotten all that accountability.

The Chair: Monsieur St-Cyr.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I want to thank Mr. Karygiannis for putting his views on the record about public funding of CAF.

The Chair: We'll try to go on.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: We certainly know, Minister, what your views are.

The Chair: Monsieur St-Cyr.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Thank you.

I would like to go back to the appointment of Pharès Pierre.

You confirmed you were not aware of his past as chief of staff of Mr. Aristide, but you are aware of it now and the question you did not answer earlier is this: now that you know, do you see that this raises an ethical problem?

Hon. Jason Kenney: As I said, I am concerned and this is why I said I am going to call the chairperson of the IRB to determine if there have been shortcomings in the process that led to his selection. The ultimate responsibility for appointments that I recommend to Cabinet rests with me. If I had known about his record in Haiti, it is very likely that I would not have recommended him to Cabinet.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: You mentioned, as has Mr. Fadden, the changes you made to the appointment system. You say these were made in order to put an end to partisan appointments. But did we not go to the other extreme? In practical terms, the minister no longer carries the responsibility in so far as he is not aware of the detailed background of the appointees. Furthermore, at least in terms of perception, the general public does not really get the impression that partisan appointments are a thing of the past. We still have one appointee who has been a member of the Progressive-Conservative Party of Canada. I use the full name of that party because there has never been a progressive-conservative party in Quebec. This party, as you know, is no longer in existence. The Conservative Party of

Canada has still a presence in Quebec, but one could say it is not very strong.

More seriously, to get back to my question, Mr. Minister, I would like to know if we did not go from one extreme to the other by eliminating any ministerial accountability in order to eliminate partisanship.

• (1035)

Hon. Jason Kenney: As I already said, ministerial responsibility rests with me; I am not trying to shirk it. I am told that the partisan involvement of this individual was with a provincial party that no longer exists. I do not know this individual on a personal level, nor on a political or partisan level. At any rate, Mr. St-Cyr, among all the appointments to the IRB, only one of the appointees out of 25 has a link with the Conservative Party of Canada. In other words, almost 100 percent of the appointments we made have no link whatsoever to my party, as far as I can see, and 100 percent of the appointees were pre-selected by the IRB.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: I did not say that there was effectively such a relationship, but appearances leave room for such an inference.

If an individual wanting to immigrate to Canada lies or makes false statements, he or she becomes inadmissible. We can even retroactively revoke the resident status of that person. You heard the news this morning and I imagine your officials have already made inquiries. Did Mr. Pierre divulge to the IRB in his application...

Hon. Jason Kenney: I was informed that he has provided to the IRB a resume that mentions his involvement in Haiti.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: And despite that, the people at the IRB were of the opinion that...

Hon. Jason Kenney: They recommended his appointment and in my role as Minister I passed it on.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: You realize that asylum seekers from Haiti, for example, would be very concerned to be interviewed by this board member, especially since they would not even have any appeal available. As you know, and we already discussed this, it is impossible in Canada to appeal a decision since, despite what the act says, the Refugee Appeal Division has still not been created. Ultimately, even if there is a majority of good board members, from time to time one who is more questionable slithers in.

Does this not illustrate the importance of establishing a full-fledged refugee appeal division?

Hon. Jason Kenney: I know that you promote the establishment of this refugee appeal division. As I already said, I am not against this idea in principle, but if we set up such a division, we will need first to reform the refugee claim system. I am open to discuss this with you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Ms. Chow is next.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Of the appointments that you've done with the IRB, the Immigration and Refugee Board, and the citizenship judges, you made 12 in that round—there's a Mr. Pharès—and then you made 13 on January 23. I have the entire list here with me. Are there any other of these appointees, out of the 25 that you've done in the last two months, who have links to the Conservative Party, for example, working as a legislative assistant, a party member, executive, fundraiser, etc.?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mrs. Chow, thank you for the question.

I made reference to one I'm aware of who has a connection as a former legislative assistant and Conservative candidate—

Ms. Olivia Chow: Is it John Cryer?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Exactly, Doug Cryer, who was recommended and went through the pre-selection process. I'm not going to veto anyone who comes to me through the IRB pre-selection process just because they happen to be Conservatives.

Ms. Olivia Chow: So there are none other than Mr. Cryer?

Hon. Jason Kenney: I don't know if none of the other 24 have ever made a contribution or voted Conservative, but he's the one I'm aware of who has a partisan connection to the Conservative Party.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Mr. Cryer was director of development for New Connections Ministries, he's director of public policy with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and his studies are in religious education. I did not see from his curriculum vitae that he has a tremendous amount of experience in working in the field of refugees.

You and I know that right now there's only one person, one board member, who would interview these refugees. Some board members would approve 80% of the people they interview and others approve maybe 10% or less, a very small percentage. So really, the life and death of a refugee, whether the person will get sent back home facing torture or even death, is really in the hands of one board member. If this board member makes a wrong decision, this person really, because the system right now has no appeal process.... There's no refugee appeal division. Even though Parliament has said over and over again that we must have one, it hasn't been implemented, so as a result these board members have tremendous power as to whether to say yes—like 80% saying yes—or saying no, and then out of the 80% or 90% who get rejected there might be a few who get deported.

Mr. Cryer, for example, in the CV that was in front of us, doesn't seem to have any experience or extensive experience in being a judge, being a lawyer, or anything of that nature. So how could he be justified as a board member?

• (1040)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Ms. Chow, for the question.

I'd invite you to call Chairman Goodman of the IRB to the committee, who can explain the criteria the IRB uses to assess candidates for pre-selection.

I know a number of people have come to me to complain that the pre-selection process is now too rigorous, that they applied, they wrote the test, and they weren't recommended. That indicates to me that the IRB is screening out a fairly high number of applicants to be IRB panellists. In every instance, I've only made recommendations

to cabinet of those who have been recommended to me according to the pre-selection process governed by the IRB. I have no capacity to interfere in that process, and indeed, they don't require a legal background per se, as I understand it. There's a diverse background, and I think the idea is to end up with a body of members of the IRB who come to the refugee cases with diverse backgrounds.

Finally, I would reject the notion that it's one IRB panellist alone who determines someone's fate. Of course, multiple appeals are available in our system and are very frequently used by refugee applicants. If they are rejected at the IRB, they have access to our entire court system and the independent judiciary. In fact, our IRB, as I understand it, has a much higher acceptance rate for asylum claims than virtually any other parallel democratic country does. So I don't think we have a system that's imperilling the rights of refugee applicants. I think we have quite a fair and, in fact, generous system.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Shory.

Mr. Devinder Shory: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before I ask my question, Mr. Minister, I'd like to give you an opportunity to respond to, or address, any issue you think you were not given an opportunity to respond to.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Oh, there are far too many!

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Jason Kenney: I'll probably get into trouble if I take you up on that, Mr. Shory, so I'll just take any question you might have.

Mr. Devinder Shory: Do you have any comments, suggestions, or information that will help this committee do some productive work?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you for that.

Yes, there are two things that I raised in my opening statement. One was the issue of immigration fraud and how we can combat it, the whole issue of third parties. I know this committee has looked at that in the past, but what can we do more systematically to protect applicants for immigrant status or visas to Canada, or prospective applicants, from unscrupulous operators, who often get people into trouble and who clog up our system? This is a very important issue, and I think you could actually make very useful recommendations to the government on this on a non-partisan basis.

Secondly, we're spending a lot of money on this whole issue of integration and settlement services now. We've basically tripled the federal investment in settlement services, and not infrequently when I'm out there talking to people in the immigrant communities, they raise concerns with me about the effectiveness of the investments we're making.

When I was in India, I sat in on an interview of a Canadian citizen who was sponsoring a spousal application. This was a Canadian citizen who had lived in Canada for, I think, 14 years, but who could not conduct an interview in English with the immigration officer. It was a woman in her thirties who's lived in Canada for nearly 15 years and who was not competent in English, which says to me—and I hear many, many anecdotes like this—that we're failing, and that we're failing that woman. If she didn't know that the LINC program was available before she became a citizen, if we're not... We don't want to end up in a situation in this country where people are excluded from opportunities in our society because they don't have language capability.

This raises another question as well—which I raised the last time I was here, and which could be another subject of study for the committee—about the citizenship process. How could someone like that become a citizen, which requires basic competency in one of our two languages, without actually being able to demonstrate it?

So I think these are all important questions. I'd like to see best practices. There are some immigrant settlement organizations that I think have a very strong track record, perhaps more so than others. There are different jurisdictions abroad that have very successful programs, as I understand Germany does. So I think we could review both international and domestic best practices in that respect.

• (1045)

Mr. Devinder Shory: It's very good, Minister, that you touched again on the settlement and language training programs. We have been spending and we intend to spend, as a government, a lot of money on settlement training programs and foreign credential recognition. I personally have been through this process. My question is, once your foreign credentials are assessed, what opportunities can we provide to newcomers to upgrade their education or requirements?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Those education opportunities are obviously largely administered by the provinces.

One of the things we're trying to do, through the foreign credential referral program and an innovation fund that we've created, is to get people to assess, after their invitation for permanent residency in Canada, before they're landed here, their education and qualifications *par rapport* of the requirements of credentialling and licensing agencies in Canada. If they see they're falling short, perhaps they could go back and pick up supplementary education in their country of origin.

Another idea that's been floated would be for us to work with Canadian colleges that could set up abroad and provide training to Canadian standards. For instance, set up a Canadian nursing college in Manila, where we get a lot of applicants as nurses, to ensure there is a supplementary training program to reach Canadian nursing standards before they come to Canada so that they can practise as nurses immediately.

These are some of the things that I think we're all looking at in the context of the new program funding for foreign credential recognition.

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I like to make one last sentence, if I could, on the invitation to pick up on other questions. I do have the information Mr. Karygiannis was looking for. I have signed, in fact, 19 subsection 5(4) recommendations that cabinet has approved since becoming minister.

The Chair: Mr. Bevilacqua has some questions, and then we're going to have a vote, so thank you.

Mr. Bevilacqua.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: Minister, I just want to follow up on Ms. Wong's question. I found interesting the whole notion of multiculturalism and immigration coming together.

Just for interest's sake, on your workload, what percentage do you spend on your immigration duties versus your multiculturalism duties?

Hon. Jason Kenney: It's hard to say precisely, but I would say probably 70 to 30 immigration to multiculturalism, in terms of my time.

• (1050)

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: That doesn't make you a part-time Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and a part-time Minister of Multiculturalism.

Hon. Jason Kenney: It makes me very tired, is what it makes me.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: Anyway, when I asked you the question about why 50,000 fewer landed immigrants were accepted into Canada since you formed the government, the answer you gave me was an aggregate number, just for the record.

On the issue of processing time for skilled workers, you responded by giving me general numbers. And I understand it's a strategy or a tactic that you may use, but just for the record, I want to make sure people understand that the question was not answered.

I also have a follow-up question to a question that was asked of you in question period by my friend and colleague Mr. Wrzesnews-kyj, from Etobicoke Centre. Basically, in Kiev in 2004, for skilled workers, the processing times were finalized within 34 months. Today in Kiev, 80% of all cases are finalized within 77 months, and this means an increase of 126% in processing times for skilled workers. That's also an issue I want to address.

But the biggest issue facing immigrants today—and I mean this sincerely, in the sense that we as a committee and we as a Parliament and we as a country need to address this—is that for far too many of them, the Canadian dream is really dying. And that's a major concern I have. I'm wondering whether we as Parliament and you as government are really taking the lives of immigrants as seriously as they should be taken. They are underemployed, it takes a longer time for them to arrive at incomes that are considered average here in Canada, and they are falling behind every single day.

If we as a country are going to go out there and advertise that this is a great land of opportunity, then we owe it to people when they come here that this dream be fulfilled. Some of the things we need, quite frankly, are better funding and better management of programs to make sure the Canadian dream is in fact fulfilled.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I certainly agree, Mr. Bevilacqua, that we all are concerned when we see some of the data that suggest that new Canadians are doing less well economically than in the past. That's why I think it's critically important that we more closely align our immigration intake with economic opportunities here. That's what we've sought to do with our action plan for faster immigration, which will bring people here more quickly and into professions that are in greater demand. It's what we've also done by creating a pathway to permanent residency for qualified temporary foreign workers and students. These things I think will help to improve the economic performance of newcomers. It's also why we've increased by threefold our investment in settlement programs. We're not just talking about the importance of success in integration for newcomers, we're actually investing in it as well. We're taking real action and investing real money in foreign credential recognition so we don't have the tragedy of highly educated people who are working in survival jobs, which I think is a disgrace. I think we're making real progress on these fronts. But I agree with your general sentiment.

As it relates to Kiev, I just wanted to report that in 2005 there were just under 1,300 permanent residents processed through Kiev. Last year there were over 1,500 permanent residents, so there's been an increase. Mr. Wrzesnewskyj suggested that we're taking too long to process temporary resident visas out of Kiev. In fact 85% are processed within two days and the rejection rate for TRVs out of Kiev has gone down from 30% in 2005 to 15% last year.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: I'm talking about skilled workers.

Minister, you would have to agree with me that when you consider how government spending has escalated under your administration, when you consider the fact that your department has only seen an increase of I think approximately 1%, I would come to the conclusion that immigration is really not a priority for this government. It's very consistent. I believe your department is underfunded. I think the immigrant services are underfunded. I also believe that the fact that you essentially would not provide 50,000 individuals with an opportunity to become permanent landed immigrants in Canada speaks to the fact that around that cabinet table—and I mean this in caring way—you've got to exercise greater weight to obtain the type of funding required to bring about the type of change that is needed in Canada's new Canadian community.

• (1055)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Bevilacqua, as Mr. Coderre has noted, I am one of the heavyweights around the cabinet table.

Voices: Oh, oh!

With respect, as it relates to immigration, though, the government of which you were a part spent \$882 million as a departmental budget for this department. We are spending \$1.392 billion; that represents a 57% increase, not a 1% increase. That doesn't include some of the other investments we've made, such as the recent \$50 million for pathways to credential recognition.

As it relates to intake of immigrants, I think you're constantly using 2005 as a benchmark, which was an aberrant year because of the tsunami and the acceleration of applications in Southeast Asia. But the reality is that the average intake of permanent residents since we came to office is greater than the average intake under the governments of either Prime Minister Chrétien or Prime Minister

Martin. Last year there were 247,000 permanent residents and 508,000 newcomers altogether, if we include students and temporary workers, many of whom, by the way, thanks to our government, now have a pathway to permanent residency, which is a major reform in our immigration system.

With respect, I share your passion for immigration, but I reject your analysis of the figures.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

That concludes the questions.

On a point of order, Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I would like to talk to my colleagues around the table and seek consent that after the minister leaves and we vote on the estimates we invite Mr. Chapman to come and tell us how his brother and their grandchildren were allowed to get citizenship and how his sister's children, because she is woman, were denied citizenship.

The Chair: That's not a point of order, Mr. Karygiannis.

I'd like to thank Minister Kenney, Mr. Fadden, and Mr. Ganim for coming and providing us with the information that you have. The three of you are excused. Thank you very much for coming.

I'm going to ask two questions.

Shall vote 1c carry?

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Department

Vote 1c—Operating expenditures.....\$22,302,790

The Chair: Ms. Chow.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Other than the votes on the main estimates 2009-10—I have no problem with that—in vote 1c of the supplementary estimates (C), I'm moving the deletion of the \$3 million advertising budget.

The Chair: I think the problem is that vote 1c is the dollar. It's just a switch—

Ms. Olivia Chow: No, no, vote 1c is for the supplementary estimates (C) of last year.

The Chair: I apologize, you're absolutely right. So your amendment is what, Ms. Chow? You want it reduced by how much?

Ms. Olivia Chow: By \$3 million, which is the deletion of \$3 million on the advertising budget.

And I want a recorded vote on that one.

The Chair: Okay. Are we ready?

An hon. member: No.

The Chair: Sure, we'll have discussion. The meeting is going to end in a minute, but that's quite all right.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: It won't take me a minute—I think that's a song title.

Mr. Chair, the money that is committed, which Ms. Chow is referring to, is an assistance in an advertising program to assist lost Canadians. I know it's an issue she supported in the 39th Parliament in terms of moving this issue forward to assist lost Canadians. I cannot imagine why she would be fundamentally opposed to now not helping them. It's in all of our best interests to try to assist those who, for whatever reason, have slipped through the cracks in terms of Canadian citizenship. They deserve to be Canadian citizens. They've earned the right to be Canadian citizens. Taking away this opportunity to let them know how they can do that is really unacceptable, and we will not be supporting that amendment in any way, shape, or form.

The Chair: We're voting on the amendment, the reduction of \$3 million.

(Amendment negatived: nays 10; yeas 1)

(Vote 1c agreed to)

Vote 5c—The grants listed in the Estimates and contributions.....\$1

(Vote 5c agreed to)

The Chair: Do I have the permission of the committee to report this to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned until Thursday morning at 9 o'clock.

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