



House of Commons  
CANADA

# Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

---

CIMM • NUMBER 021 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

---

EVIDENCE

**Tuesday, June 9, 2009**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. David Tilson**

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

**<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

## Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

● (0905)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC)):**  
Good morning.

This is the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, meeting 21, Tuesday, June 9, 2009. There are two items on the orders of the day. One is committee business. Secondly, pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), we have supplementary estimates (A) 2009-2010, votes 1a and 5a under Citizenship and Immigration, referred to the committee on Thursday, May 14, 2009.

Members the committee, you should have a number of documents. You should have the supplementary estimates, a draft resolution, and a draft ninth report. Does everyone have those things?

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Could you read that over again?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Ms. Chow.

You should have before you the supplementary estimates. With respect to the first item on the agenda, which is the topic of disclosure of confidential draft reports, you should have a draft resolution and a draft ninth report. I hope you all have that material.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** We don't have the supplementary estimates.

**The Chair:** They are coming, and that will be for the second topic.

The first topic has to do with the draft report, which, if all goes well, I intend to present to the House on Thursday, having been authorized by the committee to do so.

The problem is that before I have presented the report to the House of Commons I have read about it in the newspapers. The report is confidential until it is presented to the House. As chair, I'm very upset and concerned about this, and I hope you will be as well.

I trust you have read the gist of the ninth report. I'm going to read it to you, because I think it's serious.

On Thursday, June 4, 2009, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration met in camera to discuss its draft report of its study of ghost consultants and migrant workers.

On Friday, June 5, 2009, an article by Don Martin published in *The National Post* states that "a report [was] leaked to me Thursday".

I might add that I read it in other papers. It might have been *The Toronto Star*. I'm not sure, but I know one of the papers had it.

Several points of information contained in the confidential draft report were mentioned in the article, as well as a direct quotation:

"The committee regrets that such situations may occur under the live-in caregiver program".

In light of this matter, the Committee has reason to believe that a potential breach of privilege has occurred, and on Tuesday, June 9, 2009, the Committee adopted the following motion:

That the Committee report to the House an apparent breach of privilege of members that has resulted from disclosure of the confidential draft report on the migrant workers and ghost consultants; that the report indicate that media reports from last week included a direct quotation from the confidential draft report; that a reporter has indicated that he has a copy of the confidential draft report; and that the Committee request that the House and the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs investigate this matter further.

Your Committee feels it is their duty to place these matters before the House at this time since a question of privilege may be involved and to give the House an opportunity to reflect on these matters.

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings (Meetings Nos. 20 and 21) is tabled.

It's a little unusual that I read that, but I consider this most serious.

There is a draft resolution, which by now I trust you've had an opportunity to read. I would ask, if members are interested, that someone move that resolution and read it into the record.

Mr. Dykstra.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I will read it into the record. Let me read it into the record, and then I do have some comments. It reads:

That the Committee report to the House an apparent breach of privilege of members that has resulted from disclosure of the confidential draft report on the migrant workers and ghost consultants; that the report indicate that a media report included a direct quotation from the confidential draft report; that a reporter has indicated that he has a copy of the confidential draft report; and that the Committee request that the House and the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs investigate this matter further.

I'll say one thing. I did have a chance to speak to Mr. Bevilacqua about this yesterday. I'm not quite sure about how detailed an investigation we can do. I don't know if there's an additional option, whether it's an affidavit sworn by each of the members on this committee that they did not release, or perhaps our staff signing one, that would certainly put us in good standing.

There is no question that surrounding the report, we did a lot of work. We did a lot of sometimes painful work in terms of our dialogue with each other and our work with each other. Nonetheless, despite our perspectives on the report itself, whether it be content, whether it be recommendations, or whether it be direction, this committee actually works extremely well. The fact that there has been a breach... We've had this happen once before, and perhaps I was a little too aggressive in the motion that I moved at that point, and I took some good advice from my colleagues on that. The fact is, we have a report. There is no question that the folks around this table have seen the report. It's been reported on in the media. It's been released to at least one individual in the media. I think that despite our differences on the content or the result of the report, there is one thing I believe this committee has, and it's the confidence in each other to work in a fair and open-minded way, in a confidential way.

I think we have to make a mark here in terms of where we stand on this. I've certainly moved the motion. I hope we have unanimous support on this. I actually hope we have a recorded vote on it, quite frankly. I would just put it out there that since I moved the motion, I can't make an amendment to the motion. I understand that this has happened at another committee, where the members of that committee signed the affidavit indicating that they had not released the report. So that would at least put us in confidence with each other in terms of moving forward.

It's unfortunate. It's regrettable. I have no reason actually to understand why the report would have been leaked. Frankly, you're going to be introducing it into the house on Wednesday—tomorrow. It's just a matter of a couple of days and the report would have been made public. I do not understand the importance of having it out there earlier than tomorrow.

• (0910)

**The Chair:** Mr. Bevilacqua, and then Monsieur St-Cyr.

**Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

These are events in the proceedings of the committee that are of major concern, because they're a true breach of privileges. I'm concerned about it because it really is very disrespectful toward the work of the committee and toward opinions expressed by each committee member.

I also want to say that when leaks such as this occur, one of the things I look at is the angle that is presented to the press, and from that I draw my own conclusions. I can therefore tell you that when I read the articles you referred to, I certainly was not happy about the fact that a member, or somebody, who had the report in their possession felt that they were actually more important than the parliamentary work being done on behalf of the people of Canada, to improve a program that needs improvement, the live-in caregiver program, that requires our attention as parliamentarians.

I'm not pointing fingers here. I read the article. I've been around for 21 years in this place. I know how these things occur sometimes. But they're the bad side of public policy; they're the bad side of what parliamentarians and what the entire process is truly all about. If we want to move forward as a committee, and we if we want to move forward as a Parliament, we'd better get a grip on this kind of behaviour, because it demonstrates lack of respect.

Quite frankly, whoever the person is and whoever the person or persons are who are responsible for these leaks, I hope when they look in the mirror they see exactly what they look like, because these are individuals I have zero respect for, personally—zero respect because they obviously don't respect the work of the committee, they don't respect the interventions made by the witnesses in the committee, they don't respect the seriousness of the issues we're dealing with when we're dealing with human lives.

These hearings were difficult hearings for many individuals and for members of this committee, and to have someone act in that fashion speaks to the fact that there's some serious thinking that needs to take place in that person's head. These are not individuals worthy of participating in the process. These are individuals who are contravening some very basic rights that we have as parliamentarians.

I hope, Mr. Chair, that in your statement to the House, if that is the course of action you will take, you'll be very firm and relay a message. As well, this should be brought to the attention of the Speaker, the attention of anyone who is responsible for the management of parliamentary business here in the House of Commons.

Let me tell you, I feel poorly for that person or those persons who did this, because I think there are some deep-rooted problems in their head, quite frankly. They lack the dignity to belong to a chamber such as the House of Commons. They also lack the dignity to participate in any way in this process.

I hope they're listening, and I hope they enjoyed their little moment of glory when they leaked it to a reporter. Probably these are very small people who probably thrive on that particular way of conducting their business and probably feel important that perhaps a reporter gave them attention, attention that's perhaps missing in their own personal lives.

• (0915)

So have a good time breaking down the democratic process of this committee. Have a good time with your action, and I hope you sleep very well at night, being the small person that you are.

**The Chair:** The chair isn't supposed to take sides, but I couldn't have said it better.

Monsieur St-Cyr.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am also very concerned by this situation, which I learned about this morning. I do not read the *National Post* regularly. In fact, I rarely read it.

This situation is very worrying. As Mr. Dykstra pointed out, it is not the first time that this type of situation happens at this committee. When we were studying the previous report on ghost consultants, the minister announced certain measures, which coincidentally resembled the ones we had developed. At the time, I pointed this out and people took notice. So this situation must change.

I think that everyone around the table does not like what happened. Mr. Bevilacqua noted that the person who leaked the information was lacking in morals and had no respect for democracy. Apart from the 12 members who sit at this table, there are several others, including assistants, employees or others who had access to the report. So before engaging in a witch hunt to find the guilty member, each of us should speak with members of their staff who had access to the report, and make them understand that confidentiality is of the utmost importance, and that no one, of their own initiative, is allowed to leak this type of document.

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

Ms. Chow.

[English]

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Mr. Chair, everything has been said already. I don't need to repeat it.

I will certainly support the motion and the invitation to sign affidavits. I think all committee members should be asked to sign, including those who may not be here today. I have no problem if you even ask our staff who may have access. Certainly it's regrettable.

I actually heard from the reporter, a different reporter, the next day when the story came out. I unfortunately didn't see the story until it was mentioned to me, and this second reporter said he also had a copy. It sounds as if it was more than one reporter who got a copy. It sounds as if it was two reporters or maybe even more. I don't know, but someone is obviously passing out something, whichever report it was. So definitely, I think it should be investigated.

• (0920)

**The Chair:** It sounds as if someone had a press conference. That's how serious it was.

Are you suggesting an amendment?

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** I think Mr. Dykstra had something about a practice. I'm not aware of that kind of practice and I don't know how it would be done.

**The Chair:** The difficulty, as Monsieur St-Cyr has listed off... There are members who sit at this committee. Each member can have one staff person at these meetings. There are others in the room, and I'm not casting aspersions on anyone, but there is a whole bunch of people here through whom it could have happened. I think Mr. Bevilacqua has laid it all out to us, as to what we think of whoever that person is.

Is there any other discussion?

Mr. Clerk, there has been a request for a recorded vote.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Chaplin):** Will you give them the question, or shall I just call the vote?

**The Chair:** Just call the vote.

Does everyone understand what it is? Mr. Dykstra has—

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** On this one, not the one that was submitted here.

**The Chair:** No, no. It's on this one.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** It's on this one, the amended one. Okay.

**The Chair:** This amended thing. Okay.

**The Clerk:** Sorry, I didn't catch the amendment. Where is...?

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** It's a sentence that actually makes it a little lighter to read. That's how I see it.

**The Chair:** Is everybody clear what's going on here?

I'm going to read it:

That the committee report to the House an apparent breach of privilege of members that has resulted from disclosure of the confidential draft report on the migrant workers and ghost consultants; that the report indicate that a media report included a direct quotation from the confidential draft report; that a reporter has indicated that he has a copy of the confidential draft report; and that the committee request that the House and the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs investigate this matter further.

Mr. Clerk.

**The Clerk:** We will have a recorded vote.

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

**The Chair:** We will continue with the second item on the estimates, which you all have before you. We have several guests before us.

We have the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. From the Department of Citizenship and Immigration we have Mr. Richard Fadden, the deputy minister. We also have Mr. Amipal Manchanda, acting chief financial officer, finance sector.

Good morning.

Minister Kenney, I trust you have some introductory remarks to make to the committee.

• (0925)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I'll try to reduce my remarks, given the fact that there's less time than usual for questions.

Before beginning I'd like to acknowledge that Mr. Manchanda is here as the acting CFO for CIC. We appreciate his professionalism. This committee has been used to Mr. Wayne Ganim, who was our CFO for the past four or five years and appeared before this committee on supplementary estimates on several occasions. Wayne just took his richly deserved retirement from the public service, and I want to acknowledge his tremendous service to our ministry and the Government of Canada as a true professional.

I'm sad to report that this will be the last time Mr. Fadden will appear before this committee as deputy minister at CIC, where he has served over the past three years as part of a very distinguished record of service to the Government of Canada. He will be moving on to become the new director of CSIS at the end of the month. I have to say that our nation's security will be in very safe hands with Mr. Fadden there. I've only had the chance to be with him for a few months, but he is a consummate professional and represents the very best in our public service.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** That's the first time you've ever had applause at this committee, isn't it?

**The Chair:** I don't think that was for you, Minister.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and colleagues.

I have the honour today to place before the committee my department's supplementary estimates (A) for fiscal year 2009-10.

[*Translation*]

It has been just over two months since I last appeared here, so I am pleased to update you on the work of my department.

Mr. Chairman, the supplementary estimates (A) include new funding requests of \$76.7 million to increase departmental spending authorities to \$1.43 billion for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

In particular, Mr. Chairman, this funding involves several key areas in 2009-2010.

[*English*]

First, the department requests funding of \$37.4 million to reflect the transfer of the government's multiculturalism programs from the Department of Canadian Heritage to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, as announced last year by the Prime Minister. This will link our multiculturalism programs with initiatives to encourage newcomers to integrate into Canadian society. Some items concerning this matter remain to be negotiated between the two departments, after which any remaining funding will be transferred to supplementary estimates (B).

Secondly, we request \$14.3 million to manage the backlog and continue to modernize and better manage the immigration system. This will position us to improve our responsiveness to increased demands in both the temporary and permanent applicant categories. I will speak more about the specific results we've achieved in reducing the backlog shortly.

[*Translation*]

Third, we request funding of close to \$7.1 million to help us to explore ways to improve foreign credential recognition and help prospective immigrants understand our labour markets before they come here. Pre-integration of newcomers allows them to hit the ground running the moment they arrive in Canada.

This will support development of a pan-Canadian framework on foreign credential recognition and related activities to enhance the capacity of the existing foreign credentials referral office.

We also request funding of \$12.1 million to continue the activities required to plan the implementation of biometrics in the temporary visa program.

[*English*]

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we request funding of \$2 million to support and access a multilingual departmental advertising campaign to inform newcomers about government services available to them in Canada.

Mr. Chairman, I propose to continue my remarks by highlighting some major areas and to address issues of particular interest to the committee in the time allotted to questions.

Mr. Chairman, when I appeared before this committee earlier this year, first in February and then in March, I explained how the action plan for faster immigration is yielding results. I noted that our backlog of people in the skilled worker category, which had reached approximately 600,000 individuals in 2008, had dropped to approximately 515,000 by the end of last year, a significant drop of 15%. I'm pleased that we continue to make progress on this. As of April 30 this backlog had dropped to 481,000 people, a further reduction of 7%. In other words, less than one year after our plan was introduced, we have reduced the backlog of skilled workers by over 20%. I'm confident that this reduction will continue. A smaller backlog means faster processing times.

Mr. Chairman, as Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, I've worked to link our multiculturalism policies with the work of the other areas of this portfolio. I want to steer the discourse away from a kind of superficial multiculturalism to a deeper one that focuses on the successful and rapid integration of newcomers into Canadian society, while recognizing the contribution of all cultural communities, including those that are long settled in Canada. We need to talk more about how all communities can better integrate into our country and build bridges with each other as well as what the Government of Canada can do to commemorate the sometimes tragic experience of past immigrants to Canada.

That is, among other reasons, why our government is funding community-based commemorative and educational projects that recognize the experiences of communities affected by historical wartime measures and/or immigration restriction measures applied in Canada and that promote the contributions of these communities to building this country.

Exactly a week ago I was proud to announce that the government is partnering with B'nai Brith Canada, for example, to invest in a newly formed national task force on Holocaust research, remembrance, and education. This three-year agreement will bring together scholars, legal experts, and educators with Holocaust survivors and Jewish community stakeholders in an effort to share and enhance the important Holocaust research and educational work being done in Canada.

● (0930)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, we need to encourage citizens already here to welcome newcomers into the Canadian family. To support this, our approach is a two-way street: to encourage both integration by newcomers and accommodation of newcomers. We expect them to be responsible to Canada and Canada to be responsible to them.

The key to this unity in diversity model is the successful integration of newcomers.

[English]

One particular focus of our efforts is to increase the uptake of settlement programs—in particular, language training. This is why we are exploring new tools to increase uptake, including a pilot project to test whether giving some sort of certificate to newcomers would motivate them to take complete language training at the service provider of their choice, empowering them as consumers.

I should note that I'm a strong supporter of the excellent organizations that currently provide services to newcomers. In visiting with dozens of them I've been impressed with their professionalism, their commitment, their drive. To better support newcomers, we need to allow for new approaches to serve people whose integration into Canada is so vital for our future.

I'll just say a few words about immigration representatives and then wrap up, Mr. Chairman.

I read with interest the report of this committee with respect to immigration representatives. I've taken note of the many very sound ideas therein. I want to let the committee know that I wanted also to hear directly from newcomers who have been exploited by ghost consultants in this field, and we've had public meetings across the country where I've heard many very disturbing stories about individuals who lost thousands of dollars and incurred great pain as a result of having been exploited by ghost consultants. We've also had online consultations to get a clearer idea of how we should proceed in this respect. We've received over 4,200 completed responses, and the results are very interesting. I'd be happy to share those with the committee if anyone is interested.

As a result of the input we received from this committee as well as from the broader public, it is my intention later this year to act to ensure the better protection of prospective immigrants to Canada, to ensure that they know they do not need to use third parties, that if they do use third parties these parties should be properly licensed, that there are real, meaningful sanctions for ghost consultants, and that we are looking at meaningful changes to the entire framework of regulation in this respect.

I always stand alert to any further suggestions from members of this committee.

**The Chair:** Perhaps you could wind up, Minister, please. We're almost at ten minutes.

• (0935)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes, I was just about to do that.

Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I look forward to receiving your questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Bevilacqua, please.

**Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua:** Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

And thank you so much, Mr. Fadden. I'd like to express my congratulations to you on taking on that new job. I hope it's not the result of working with Mr. Kenney for a few months. I'm just kidding. I really appreciate the service you've given to our country thus far. I look forward to an even greater contribution, and for that, on behalf of the Liberal Party, we are very grateful for your participation.

Minister, thank you for appearing and making this presentation. A lot of things are going on, obviously, in your department. I guess you're double-shifting as multiculturalism minister and immigration minister, which I always find fascinating, because you're either a part-time immigration minister or a part-time multiculturalism minister.

I wanted to say to you that there are so many challenges, in all seriousness, in the department. Waiting times in certain areas have gone up. You have some major challenges on the refugee system, which I hope in the near future we will be looking at in a very serious way. I've often wondered whether this government has provided you with the necessary financial resources to do the job this country needs in the area of immigration. That's one side of the story.

The other side is I was really struck by an article in *Maclean's* magazine, where you were interviewed. Also in that article I saw a poll that concerned me a little bit about the trends, as it relates to Canadians' tolerance—if that is the proper word to use—as it relates to the interrelationship between cultural groups and religious groups. I think this is some serious work that this committee and you as a minister need to address. There are some real warning signs that the poll indicated and outlined in a very clear way.

While this committee is really interested in working on the issues of the day, whether it's the caregiver program or the refugee system, this trend is of concern to me and requires a great deal of leadership to turn the tide. I was wondering if you share that point of view, and what you are going to do about it.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you for those excellent questions.

First of all, with respect to the first question, on resources for the department, obviously, as minister, like everyone in every department, I could always do more with more resources, but we do live in a world of limited fiscal resources, now more than ever in terms of the economic situation. Having said that, I would remind the member that the budget for the ministry is significantly larger than it was a few years ago. As I mentioned in my remarks, we're at a total budget of about \$1.43 billion. I think it was in the range of about \$900 million in 2004-2005. Now, a large part of the increase has been a tripling, in rough terms, of settlement funding, but there have been increases in operational funds for the department. As one example, one of the things I mentioned in my remarks is the \$25 million additional that has been provided to CIC in this year's budget to work with HRSDC on the issue of foreign credential recognition. I've also discussed today the new funds for the biometrics program. There was the \$109 million in last year's budget for expediting processing and dealing with the backlog, part of which is in the supplementary estimates today, I believe.

There are new resources, but could we do more with more resources? Of course. But I can't, in conscience, go to the finance minister and say that ours is the only ministry in need of greater resources. I have to commend the department for managing an ever-increasing workload with the current resources. Right now we're going through a process of strategic review, which means economizing. I'm getting some very sound ideas from the department on how to do it without reducing service levels.

As to your second and very important question, you were referring to some polling that was published in *Maclean's* magazine about three or four weeks ago, which indicated a troubling level of ignorance and even to a certain degree intolerance toward certain religious minorities in Canada. That is of grave concern to me, obviously, and that's why I'm saying that in a multiculturalism program I think we need to focus on building bridges between one another. In Canada we're very good at congratulating ourselves for being tolerant and diverse, but unless we know one another, that doesn't really mean a whole lot. It's important for new Canadians to get to know old-stock Canadians and vice versa. It's important for new Canadians from different countries and regions of origin and different faith groups to get to know each other. I mentioned in that interview that sometimes I find some of the greatest hostility between people who have come from similar regions of origin, and that's really what I'm focusing on.

I'll just give you one example. There's a project that we'll be announcing shortly in Toronto that I've been working on for a long time for young people from the Somali community who came here as children of refugees with very little or nothing and faced social exclusion, limited economic opportunities. We're setting up a program for those people to find internships in professions typically but not exclusively owned by members of the Jewish community. It's a great way of bridge-building between two different faith communities and providing social opportunities to those kids.

• (0940)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. St-Cyr, you have the floor.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

During the last Parliament, Bill C-280, a bill to implement the Refugee Appeal Division, was adopted in the House at every stage, as well as in the Senate. However, it died on the *Order Paper* before receiving Royal Assent.

In this Parliament, Bill C-291 also aims to implement the Refugee Appeal Division. It has been adopted and is moving forward.

I know that the Conservatives are against the implementation of the Refugee Appeal Division, as it was set out in the legislation of 2002, but has your department nevertheless set aside money, or created mechanisms, in case Parliament decides to adopt this bill?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I will ask the deputy minister to answer that.

**Mr. Richard Fadden (Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** Mr. Chairman, yes we do have estimates for supplementary costs. We also have the agreement of cabinet. If Parliament passes Bill C-291, the means to obtain supplementary funds have been provided for.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** Thank you.

I also wanted to ask you a more technical question. I see in the list of votes that will have to be passed, that there are funds for planning activities, and police and security services at the Olympic Games and at the Winter Paralympics in 2010. What exactly is the connection with immigration?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, our department shares responsibility for security with regard to human trafficking. We will be working with the Canada Border Services Agency and other authorities in order to ensure that victims of human trafficking do not come to Canada during the Olympics.

Perhaps the deputy minister has something to add.

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** The minister is absolutely right, Mr. Chairman.

Furthermore, we have established a system allowing individuals to apply for visas from outside the country before their arrival in British Columbia.

We will have to ask our Immigration Services throughout the world to begin discussions with Olympic committees in order to ensure that we receive these applications before the games begin. Three or four people from the department will also be in British Columbia during the Olympics.

This is mainly for planning purposes, in order to avoid long waits at the airports in British Columbia.

• (0945)

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** That answers my question.

I'd like to talk to you about multiculturalism, which is raised in your report.

As you know, for a long time now Quebec has used a different approach with respect to integrating newcomers. We talk about interculturalism. It is an approach that is widely supported in Quebec.

Multiculturalism Canadian-style was rejected from the very outset by Robert Bourassa, who was a Liberal. It was also rejected by the other political parties in the National Assembly.

Even one of the NDP figureheads in Quebec, Julius Grey, stated that this model was not applicable in Quebec. We want to be able to advocate a more proactive approach to integration, based on the idea that we're all Quebecers without exception, whether we arrived two years ago or whether our ancestors arrived two centuries ago.

This approach is always somewhat contradicted by another message that immigrants are given. In Quebec, they're told that the goal is interculturalism, that there is proactive integration into Quebec society and that they contribute to Quebec society.

On the other hand, the federal government sends a message about multiculturalism that emphasizes differences, and cohabitation that is defined by respect for each other. This message can even be found on the department's websites and its promotional material. There is a clash.



Your remarks do however indicate an interesting reconciliation. You talk more about integration than highlighting distinctions. Nonetheless the two approaches still are different.

The Bloc Québécois tabled a bill that would have removed Quebec from the Canadian multiculturalism message so that immigrants choosing Quebec would receive one straightforward message rather than two contradictory messages.

Would the government be willing, in the next session, to support such a bill, that would give the Quebec government the right to craft its own policy to integrate immigrants, especially given that most of the responsibilities required for integration already fall under the Quebec government's jurisdiction?

[English]

**The Chair:** Monsieur St-Cyr, you're giving the minister no time for response, so unless you're going to talk for a minute....

[Translation]

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you. We were talking about this earlier, Mr. Chairman.

I don't really want to put too much emphasis on the terms "multiculturalism" and "interculturalism". There are good ideas in all models. Models change, they are organic; they are not static.

As I stated several times in my remarks, the federal multiculturalism program has to focus increasingly on building bridges between communities in order to improve mutual understanding and to avoid having parallel communities, as has happened in some major European centres.

We can learn from the Quebec model. Ultimately, your multiculturalism bill... The legislation is federal legislation and it applies to all of Canada. We have an agreement on immigration with Quebec, which gives it the responsibility for managing that program in that province. It is our opinion that diversity is one of the most important symbols in Canada. It can be found in the Constitution, in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is the legal basis for federal multiculturalism.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

Ms. Chow.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Thank you.

Mr. Minister, I noticed that according to the Canada Immigration Centre statistics, it takes about 40 months to process 50% of the privately sponsored refugees' files from your Nairobi office. Let me rephrase that: it takes more than three years to process 50% of the privately sponsored refugee claims filed in Nairobi. We know that this office is responsible for countries such as Burundi, Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda. These are the countries that have been subject to violent conflicts. And people from Sudan, for example, are lately making their way to Kenya, thus adding to the workload in the office.

We have millions of displaced people in that region all seeking refuge, and there are a lot of smart individuals—motivated, skilled folks—who are languishing in refugee camps. Their children are

growing up in camps; pregnant women are giving birth to children. Refugee camps are not a place to raise a family.

These are people with aspirations. We know that; we've seen it. We know that many refugees—for example, the boat people—have come to Canada and done really good work here. They want to raise their families and give their children a good life. Many Canadians, and I believe you met with quite a few of them through the churches—Groups of Five, as you recall—understand the plight of these displaced people. They are privately sponsoring the refugees. Many Canadians are willing to support refugees, and there's no cost to your government other than the processing time.

But what I can see is that there's a huge backlog, and it's taking years for people either to bring their children from refugee camps to come to Canada to be united with them or to sponsor them into Canada. I have cases, recently one of a 14-year-old daughter waiting in a refugee camp. The Nairobi office told me that the officer in charge was away for three or four weeks and that no other officer could deal with that case.

Something is wrong in that office. Instead of spending \$12 million fingerprinting parents visiting their children, during wedding times, the birth of babies, funerals—all these visitors you are planning to do biometrics on—why aren't you putting more funding into your overseas office to ease the backlog? It's incredibly sad to see these refugee camp people stuck in the most dangerous place in this world, really.

And the numbers have dropped. I looked them up. Since 2000 and 2001—I look at Congo—the numbers have dropped tremendously for people coming from these dangerous places. Take, for example, Somalia. A female humanitarian population that was 338 in 2001 is now down to 60. It's not as if there's no need, and the numbers are dropping and the waiting time is growing.

What's wrong, and why isn't more funding being put into those places and the target being increased?

• (0950)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you for that very meaningful question, Ms. Chow.

First of all, let me say that we are increasing somewhat the targets for resettlement, particularly among privately sponsored refugees. When I was last at the committee, I announced our augmentation of the targets for the Middle Eastern region, with a particular focus on privately sponsored refugees. If you add up all of our targets globally, we anticipate that in 2009 you'll see an actual increase in the numbers for resettlement.

So Canada is playing its role. We do better than virtually any other country in the world in relative terms in welcoming refugees for resettlement and for protection, both as government-assisted refugees referred to us by the UNHCR and as privately sponsored refugees as well.

The issues you've raised out of Nairobi I am familiar with. I understand the frustration of people who have made applications for sponsorship of refugees in the African countries you've mentioned. On the other hand, my understanding is that the department faces some very obvious logistical difficulties operating in that region. Each one of these refugee applicants requires an interview. Frequently these interviews have to be conducted in very remote locations, sometimes in rural villages that are hundreds if not thousands of miles away from Nairobi.

We have a fully staffed immigration program in our mission in Nairobi. The department advises me that there's no physical space to add people in that mission, that we are at full capacity. I'm going to invite the deputy to fill in here, because these are operational issues, but I don't think it's a question of lack of resources. There are just some very serious logistical challenges in processing applications in a region such as the one you've raised.

● (0955)

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** Mr. Chairman, to supplement what the minister said, Nairobi is responsible for 19 countries of accreditation. In some cases, in order to get to a particular country you have to go through three airports. In some cases you cannot use the mail or courier services, because they don't exist. In many countries it's unlawful to use the mails to transfer passports over international borders. So it is extremely time-consuming. In some parts of the area that's covered by Nairobi, it's dangerous to travel.

I think everybody in Nairobi is doing the best they can. We review on a quarterly basis staff assignments in our missions around the world. While I don't think we have a lot of room left in Nairobi, if we come to the conclusion that we can do more with more bodies, we'll try to send people in on temporary duty.

But the issue in Nairobi is not really bodies and it's not really money. It's just 19 countries. The way Canada has divided up its diplomatic representation in that part of the world is not something that we control, so we're doing the best we can.

Also, we have a responsibility to protect program integrity. In many cases, the simple fact that somebody puts in an application doesn't mean that they're even distantly related. We have a responsibility to ensure that we check into these matters. Very often, because of the conditions I've just outlined, it takes a long time.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Fadden and Ms. Chow.

Mr. Shory, please. You have seven minutes.

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

First of all, I'd like to thank Minister Kenney and the department for being here today.

The issue of foreign credential recognition is not only an important issue for our country, Minister, but it is very near and dear to my heart as well. After coming to Canada from Punjab, India, with my law degree, it was nearly ten years before I was finally called to the bar in Canada in 1998. So, Minister, I understand and appreciate our government's strong investment in integration programs for all new Canadians. I also know that our government

invests heavily in evaluation of foreign credentials and is moving forward to shape the practical outcome of it.

The issue, I understand, is that once foreign education is evaluated and new Canadians complete their required courses, there are certain professions—for example, medical doctors—who have difficulty acquiring residency. My question is twofold here. What is the federal government doing in this regard? How is the federal government reaching out to the provinces to deal with this serious issue?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Certainly the experience of Mr. Shory is not unique. The regrettable thing is that there are so many foreign-trained professionals, like Mr. Shory, who never do get accredited in their chosen professions. I commend Mr. Shory for overcoming the obstacles and persevering and for being called to the bar in Canada. It is a great example for many others who feel frustrated and give up.

As the member knows, Mr. Chairman, this is a problem that's vexed successive federal governments, because at the end of the day, labour market regulation is not a federal responsibility. However, we have seen, I believe, under this government, a growing federal leadership role in accelerating and creating more transparent pathways to foreign credential recognition in the provinces. The Department of Human Resources and Skills Development has a robust foreign credential recognition program, which, among other things, provides support to local organizations that assist individuals in making their applications and in dealing with the more than 400 credentialing, recognition, and licensing bodies across the country. There are more than 40 in each province.

In the 2006 budget we created the Foreign Credentials Referral Office, which is working to provide information on the process for immigrants before they land in Canada so they can get the ball rolling before their arrival and can get a head start. Most importantly, at the January first ministers meeting here in Ottawa, the Prime Minister led his provincial and territorial colleagues to agree to the creation of a pan-Canadian framework for foreign credential recognition. The target date for an initial report is September of this year. Our budget put a \$50 million investment into putting the meat on the bones of that pan-Canadian policy framework for credential recognition. Twenty-five million dollars of that \$50 million is being invested through my ministry. We are focusing on the priority occupations included in the ministerial instructions under the Bill C-50 amendments to work with the relevant professional agencies in Canada.

The bottom line is that in the framework of credential recognition, a necessary precursor is labour market mobility within Canada. Part of the problem is that there are 10 to 13 different regimes in each single profession. It's ridiculous that you can go from Poland to Portugal in Europe as a medical doctor and be recognized, but you can't go from Manitoba to Saskatchewan. We need to solve that problem, which the provinces and the federal government are working on. That itself will help create a simpler, more transparent pathway to recognition.

● (1000)

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** I'm wrapping up, but I don't know if my time will allow it. I'll put three questions into one question.

Can you please describe the foreign credential situation you inherited after some very hard work by your two predecessors? What are the remaining issues with foreign credential recognition on which you see the government being able to make good progress in the short term?

Finally, I want you to make a comment on what you expect as a minister from our committee that will assist you in making progress in foreign credential recognition.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I would invite the committee to study this issue and perhaps engage in a joint study with the human resources committee. I think it would be very useful to call before you representatives from various key licensing bodies to have them explain to you why it sometimes takes several years for a foreign-trained professional to get a clear answer. We need to exercise federal leadership, and we are, unlike ever before.

The people who are ultimately exercising the delegated authority are the licensing bodies. I think some of them have become quite progressive about this. They understand that they need to do much better and are streamlining the process. Some of them, it would appear, continue to have obstacles that are designed to maintain a closed-door approach. I don't point fingers at any particular bodies, but we all know this to be the case. I think we should call them to task. I commend a number of provinces that are getting more direct with the licensing bodies that are creatures of the provinces, including Ontario, with its Fairness Commissioner, British Columbia, and other provinces.

What have we inherited? I would say that the situation is getting significantly better, because this is a top concern among the ministries of human resources, labour, and immigration in the provincial governments and in the federal government. That wasn't the case five years ago. We all recognize that the declining economic outcomes for newcomers to Canada are in large part because of the lack of opportunities for foreign-trained professionals.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Karygiannis, please. You have five minutes.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Fadden, it's a shame to see you go. We were getting more answers from you than we're getting from the minister's office.

Minister, if a letter comes to you requesting information and data, how long does it take for us to get an answer? Is it two weeks, three weeks, four weeks, a month, two months, three months? How long does it take? Just a short answer, Minister.

● (1005)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** It depends on from whom the letter comes and to whom it's sent. If it's an MP—

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** A member of Parliament, Minister—

**The Chair:** Mr. Karygiannis, you have to give the minister a chance to answer your question. They're good questions.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** He's a master at running the clock out, and I have more questions for him.

**The Chair:** You're asking some good questions, but give him a chance to answer.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** If it's an MP writing directly to the minister, typically we try to turn around a response within about three weeks. If it's a member of the general public to the department, it can be a little longer.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Something was written to your department and four subsequent requests have come in since January 30. Do you think it's fair that I haven't received an answer yet? Your deputy minister was copied. The people in the department were copied as well. Your departmental aides were copied. That's four and a half months.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Would you like me to answer the question?

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Do you think it's fair, Minister, yes or no?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I don't know about the particular piece of correspondence. I'd be happy to review it, Mr. Karygiannis. You can give it to me in the House any time. I would say that, no, it's not acceptable if in fact you're not getting a reply to correspondence within four months, and I'd be happy to look into that.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Minister, you said your department has decreased the length of time that it takes to process applications and yet you might have succeeded in the skilled work categories. Let me also present to you, sir, that in the family class your record is dismal. For children it has gone up by 20%, and spousal sponsorship applications have gone up by 37%. In Sri Lanka alone, children's sponsorship has gone up by 268%, from 16 months to 43 months. You are keeping parents away from their children. Worldwide, it has gone up from 10 to 12 months. Spousal sponsorship with Sri Lanka has gone up by 66%, from nine months to 15 months, and in some cases they're waiting up to three years because there are second, third, and fourth interviews from your department and CBSA on background checks. Worldwide, it's gone up by 38%.

Although you're saying you're reducing service levels, in Sri Lanka you're failing. Minister, is it because your department and your government have a view that if you're a Tamil you're a Tiger, you're a terrorist?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** No, of course it's not. The reported statistics reflect a combination of processing times for more recently received applications as well as for progress made, prioritizing, and finalizing older and more challenging applications.

Mr. Chairman, if the member would like to compare records in terms of waiting times or inventory of files, I would remind him that when he was a member of the government that took office in 1993 the total backlog—

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Mr. Minister—

**The Chair:** Excuse me. Order. Mr. Karygiannis, you have to give the witness a chance to answer. You can't interrupt the witness.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** I don't want to know what happened before. They've been in government for three years, and they have a responsibility to answer. Let's not compare what happened 20 years ago.

**The Chair:** You know, sir, I'm not stopping the clock because I think it's inappropriate for you to interrupt the witness. Now, you give this witness a chance to answer your questions.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, to frame things in perspective, when Mr. Karygiannis was a member of the government that took office in 1993 the total inventory for all streams of immigration, I understand, was less than 50,000 cases. When our government took office in 2006, it had grown to over 800,000 cases. We are trying to contend with a very serious problem in all streams of immigration and in all source countries—

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Stay on course with Sri Lanka, Minister.

**The Chair:** Mr. Karygiannis, every time you interrupt a witness I'm going to interrupt you. This is your time. You let him finish.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** We're doing our best, Mr. Chairman, on all streams of immigration and in all source countries. I can report, for instance, that given recent developments in Sri Lanka, our department has added some additional temporary staff to help to accelerate processing times out of that mission in Colombo.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Minister, you're saying that you're going to spend something like \$12.1 million on biometrics for temporary visitor programs. Will that be for everybody coming into the country, or for certain countries?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** The biometrics program will eventually roll out to include biometrics for people coming to Canada from all countries. It will be phased in starting in 2011, at which time I believe about 15% of visitors to Canada will be obtaining visas with biometric data. By 2013 we hope and anticipate that the coverage will be 100%. This will be bringing us up to the international standard. The United Kingdom already has 100% coverage, as does Australia, I believe, and other like-minded democracies are moving in the same direction to help ensure the safety and security of our citizens. Obviously there is increasingly sophisticated documentary fraud and counterfeit documents, and this is an important tool for dealing with that problem.

• (1010)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister and Mr. Karygiannis.

Mr. Calandra, you have five minutes.

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

Minister, I also want to take a moment, because I haven't had a chance to congratulate you personally on being elected parliamentarian of the year. I suspect one of the reasons you were selected parliamentarian of the year by your colleagues on both sides of the

House was the tremendous amount of work you do in actually responding. I know I've given you a number of notes in the House, and you have always been quick to respond. So congratulations and thank you.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you.

I don't think Mr. Karygiannis voted for me, but it can never be unanimous.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** I wonder how many minister's visas you gave them, Minister, in order to get that.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Chair, last week was admittedly a very difficult week for me in the House. There was Bill C-302, which on the surface appeared to be a bill that talked about the redress to Italian Canadians for their being classified as enemy aliens by a Liberal government in World War II. I was so disappointed. I voted against this bill, and as I mentioned in my remarks, one of the reasons I voted against the bill was that I believe it sought to divide the Italian-Canadian community, not to bring it together. I don't believe it focused on all the good things Italian Canadians have accomplished in their time in Canada.

I noted in my speech that there were five Liberal administrations, and at no time was redress ever contemplated. And one of the things that really solidified my belief in Conservative ideology was after the then-Conservative Prime Minister in 1991, I believe, made that apology to Italian Canadians.

I wonder if you might comment on how our approach to this issue is different—and, I believe, superior.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, I'm looking forward to appearing before the heritage committee when it reviews Bill C-302 to discuss this at greater length.

Mr. Calandra is right that in November of 1990 Prime Minister Mulroney said, at an event of the National Congress of Italian Canadians:

On behalf of the government and people of Canada, I offer a full and unqualified apology for the wrongs done to our fellow Canadians of Italian origin during World War II.

In my capacity as Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, I was pleased to work with representatives of Italian-Canadian organizations in trying to find a resolution to their outstanding requests for some form of symbolic redress for the injustices done to Canadians of Italian origin during the Second World War with respect to internment, when I believe some 680 Canadians of Italian origin were interned for a certain period of time.

We discussed various possibilities for funding, commemorative projects within the context of the community and national historical recognition programs. I do recall their request was to have an endowment established. We had officials look at the possibility of that, and the platform the organizations were suggesting as the basis for an endowment didn't have a sufficient financial track record to qualify for endowment status, based on the terms and conditions the government has had in place for a very long time.

As an alternative, what we came up with was to offer \$5 million of project funding, to be administered through the community historical recognition program, out of the multiculturalism program of our ministry. We have appointed a distinguished expert panel of three highly recognized Canadians of Italian descent to help review the applications that come in for commemorative educational and research projects. That's because what we want to do isn't to forever dwell on the sins of the past; we want to learn from them. We want to ensure they are not repeated.

That's why the program we've introduced is in a sense, yes, focused on the events as they happened, but also on teaching current and future generations. What motivated these events? How can we avoid these things happening in the future? I think it's a very sound approach, and I think it's one that the vast majority of people think strikes the right balance between acknowledgement and focusing on the future.

• (1015)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur St-Cyr, I'm sorry. Somehow the order got out of whack. It's your turn now.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would simply like to conclude the discussion that we had on multiculturalism earlier today. You said that you didn't want to get too caught up in words, labels. Yet words are important for the immigrant and for the host society. The concepts we articulate with respect to the integration of newcomers have a value. This is so important that in a recent study on reasonable accommodation in Quebec, the Bouchard-Taylor Commission concluded that Canadian multiculturalism should not apply to Quebec. This opinion was shared by all those involved and was expressed in the majority of the briefs tabled before the Commission.

Lastly, you say to Quebecers on the one hand that they can do what they want within their jurisdiction but that the federal government applies its legislation from one ocean to the other, regardless of any Quebec consensus.

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

We offer the multiculturalism program to all Canadians. We don't make Quebecers benefit from it. It is the community organizations in Quebec that choose to participate in this program. We impose nothing on Quebec nor on Quebecers. The purpose of our program is to assist cultural communities, especially those that are experiencing difficulties and that are located in underprivileged areas.

In Quebec, we offer youth training about racism and we assist individuals in having their foreign credentials recognized. We take very concrete action. We're not asking Quebec to convert to the Canadian religion of diversity, we are not imposing a federalist ideology. On the contrary, our program is rather modest and is aimed at community organizations that wish to benefit from it.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** Minister, several of those programs would probably be provided if those funds were transferred to the Government of Quebec. Everyone supports the fight against racism, but it could be done based on the Government of Quebec's perspective.

Parliament acknowledged that Quebecers form a nation. It seems contradictory to me that Parliament would vote against Quebec having its own immigrant integration policy when that is such an integral part of building a nation.

I won't pursue this any further because I also want to talk to you about acknowledging credentials. The Bloc did not agree to establishing an office for approving credentials because that falls under Quebec's jurisdiction and the jurisdiction of the provinces. We believe that the 7 million supplementary dollars that are going to be provided this year would be much better invested if they were invested directly in the provinces that have the jurisdiction to approve credentials.

The Conservatives promised a more open federalism—which strikes me as being rather similar to that of the Liberals—in which the federal government would establish national standards and attempt to encroach on the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. But it can't even do its own work right now with respect to admissions.

Would this money be better invested in the authorities that have the jurisdiction to approve credentials?

• (1020)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, Premier Charest said he supported a Canada-wide approach to credential recognition. We are working with all the provincial governments including Quebec. Some things happen at the federal level, including the advice that our department provides to newcomers, before they come to Canada, on how to apply for credential recognition. Our department can do some things in its foreign missions to assist newcomers before they come to Canada.

We are trying to create a more helpful space for individuals, whether that be in Quebec, Ontario or other provinces, and to establish a process for recognizing credentials that will be easier and healthier. Even if Quebec weren't part of Canada it would make eminent sense. The European Union has a framework for recognizing diplomas from all countries. It just makes sense.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** That's time. Thank you.

Ms. Wong is next.

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

First of all, I'd like to thank the panel for coming over. You've given us a lot of information that clarifies some of the concerns our community and the other multicultural communities have.

This question is for the deputy minister. Your department has announced that in response to the humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka, your Colombo visa mission is expediting immigration applications. This has led to protests outside the Colombo mission from Sri Lankans who are concerned that Canada is letting in more Tamil Tigers and isn't doing proper vetting and screening. In fact, a sign was put on the Colombo visa mission saying it was "LTTE HQ".

What is your ministry doing to keep Tamil Tigers out of Canada?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** First of all, we are insisting that all applications that have any possibility of involvement with the LTTE be referred for secondary review by either CBSA or by CSIS. Over the course of the last several months, we've made special arrangements with CSIS to have officers based in New Delhi travel to Sri Lanka to conduct secondary and in some cases tertiary interviews, third-level interviews.

We've also made it very clear that while we want to do everything we can to expedite the handling of files, the one aspect that can slow down these files is a security concern.

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** Thank you very much for your answer.

Just now we also mentioned some of the measures our government has taken regarding how we deal with past tragic events relating to certain communities. Just now the Italian community has been addressed. I would like the minister to comment further about the commemoration events relating to other communities. Examples might include Jewish, Ukrainian, South Asian, and Chinese communities.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** These particular projects are all encompassed within both the community historic and national historic recognition programs. As Mrs. Wong will be aware, we're quite advanced with respect to the redress project for the Chinese head tax and exclusion act. We all know about the Prime Minister's apology three years ago. In addition to that, outside the CHRP there were \$20,000 *ex gratia* payments offered to surviving head tax payers and their surviving spouses. Also, we have launched a \$5 million commemorative fund, overseen by an advisory board of eminent members of the Chinese-Canadian community, to help educate future generations about that experience.

Similarly, we have created, as I already mentioned, the \$5 million education fund with respect to the internment of Canadians of Italian origin during the Second World War. We have worked out a special arrangement for all communities of people whose predecessors were affected by internment during the First World War. These are principally Canadians who were immigrants from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. They are from many different countries and are principally but not exclusively of Ukrainian origin. This arrangement is being implemented through the transfer of \$10 million to an endowment fund operated by the Taras Shevchenko foundation through a special board that includes members of other affected communities, such as the Croatian and Serbian communities.

With respect to the Jewish experience, Jewish refugees were turned away from Canada or were not accepted by Canada before and during the Second World War, so we have set aside, within the context of CHRP, \$2.5 million to better understand the experience of immigration restrictions with respect to Jewish refugees. We are most notably focused on the *St. Louis* incident in 1938. At this time there were over 800,000 European Jewish refugees, and this ship carrying European Jewish refugees was not permitted to enter Halifax harbour. In Toronto we recently sponsored a conference of leading scholars from around the world, and as I mentioned, there's a \$1 million project being headed by B'nai Brith to help do research and educate future generations about this incident.

I apologize if I'm forgetting any other projects.

Oh, yes, there's one last one, the *Komogatu Maru*. We have set aside \$2.5 million through the CHRP for educational projects in this respect. Then we'll shortly be announcing an advisory committee of eminent Canadians of Indian origin to assist us in disbursing those funds.

• (1025)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Ms. Mendes, you have five minutes.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Minister. Thank you for coming today.

My first question is about the funds allocated under the supplementary estimates to a program whose purpose is to enhance driver's licences in order to provide easier access to the United States. Eight hundred and twenty thousand dollars has been allocated under the estimates to improving this program. Three provinces have already taken measures to improve their driver's licences, including Quebec.

I would like to know if the \$820,000 includes transfers to Quebec, Ontario and Alberta, the three provinces that have already begun providing enhanced driver's licences. If not, why will there be no compensation for those provinces that have already taken the initiative in preparation for these changes?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, I thank the member for her question. In general, I'll say that the \$820,000 being spent by Citizenship and Immigration Canada is not being given to the provinces to help them improve their driver's licences. However, we are working with the provinces that have adopted that policy, in order to assist them.

I'll ask my deputy minister to expand on this.

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

I would simply add that CIC is not the one taking the lead on this file. The department taking the lead is the Department of Public Safety. The funds being discussed here are only for the department. If my memory serves me well, the overall program did actually include federal funds to be transferred to the provinces but that was the responsibility of the Department of Public Safety.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** Thank you very much.

My other question is on the program for biometric systems. I would like you to explain what that means and how it will be done. The description seems rather general. What added value will that program acquire?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, this issue has been raised several times today. For two years now the government has had a policy to establish a biometric system for visitors to Canada. There are many reasons for this.

First, as I already stated, there's a growing problem with fraudulent documents that do not provide the true identity of those people who wish to visit Canada. Biometric identification is the only way of determining the true identity of an individual. A biometric system will reduce the amount of fraud on the part of individuals applying to visit Canada.

Obviously this is also an issue of national security. If criminals, for example potential terrorists, come to Canada, they do not come with their own passport, their own identity, their own name. They come with another name and a false pretext. In terms of security, biometrics is the only way to verify the identity of visitors to Canada. That is why most democratic countries are opting for biometrics.

Do you have something to add to that?

•(1030)

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** Mr. Chairman, I would only point out that the intention is to establish...

All right?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Just ignore what I'm doing here.

Go ahead and answer.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** The intention is to establish the identity of an individual when they make their initial application abroad. The photos and fingerprints are sent to the Border Services Agency so that when an individual comes to Canada, we can check that their identity is truly the one they're claiming. Often, the individuals applying from abroad are not the same as the people who come here to Canada with the documents. So the purpose is truly to establish their identity permanently. The British, French and American authorities tell us that simply having these systems encourages people to go elsewhere. So there is also a deterrent effect.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fadden.

Mr. Harris, welcome to the committee. You have five minutes, sir.

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I want to start by congratulating you. I think in the short time you've been minister since October of 2008, you've certainly gone a long way to putting your personal stamp on how your department operates.

**An hon. member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Richard Harris:** And I know Mr. Fadden as your deputy has been working closely with you. It's a shame to see him leaving. I think you have a good team going, and we expect that by the time your tenure in this job is finished, the bar will have been raised much higher, and good on you for that.

I want to ask about a particular program or initiative that you did, the online information regarding immigration consultants and your advising potential newcomers to Canada about ghost consultants, who unfortunately many, many people have paid a lot of money to and received virtually nothing from them. Have you had a chance to really assess that program and how effective it's been?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, I thank Mr. Harris for the question. This is a really serious concern, obviously, for thousands of new Canadians and prospective immigrants to Canada who have been defrauded in various ways by ghost consultants. I think we all recognize that the current regulatory framework is not up to snuff; it's not up to par. It's not getting the job done to protect people from ghost consultants. Certainly this standing committee made that point very evident in its report on the issue, which I have read. I've had these consultations across the country. I know Dr. Wong participated in one in Vancouver. I know that the stories of these people are very sad.

You can go into newspapers in Canada or abroad and see these advertisements saying, "Visas to Canada guaranteed". You can go to certain cities throughout the world and see billboards with scammed, ripped-off versions of the Canadian government wordmark implying that these consultants are operating with the approval of the Government of Canada, or perhaps even are agents of the government. The fraud is massive. It's widespread. It's deliberate. It is probably a multi-hundred-million-dollar industry at the international level. It is taking advantage of the dream that people have of coming to Canada, for which some people are willing to pay a very great deal—thousands of dollars in some parts of this world.

The challenge is that overseas, obviously, we can't apply Canadian law to regulate immigration consultants in these other parts of the world. But what I've asked is that we make the proper regulation and policing of third parties in this field in foreign countries a priority bilateral issue in our relationships with certain countries. It's certainly something I raised in India when I was there, with the government in Punjab, and in Delhi with the national Indian government. I would like to see much more meaningful action on the part of our principal source countries to protect their own citizens from this kind of fraud. We are stepping up our advertising efforts. We have warnings posted in 17 languages on our website and in all relevant local languages at our missions and visa application centres abroad, letting people know they don't need to use consultants. If they are using them, the latter should be licensed, and the people should be aware of ghost consultants.

Finally, in terms of the regulatory framework here in Canada, I agree that what is happening now is not adequate. That is why later this year we will be coming forward with some meaningful changes to increase the penalties and the sanctions for operating outside the law, and to provide a more robust regulatory framework for the consultants who operate legally.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** Thank you, Minister.

I have more questions.

● (1035)

**The Chair:** No, I'm going to give Mr. Bevilacqua a minute.

**Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua:** Thank you, Mr. Harris, for your generosity.

Mr. Calandra raised a very important issue that is related to the issue we were talking about earlier in reference to diversity and understanding and how power structures in this country need to be reflective of the composition of the society in which we live, given the fact that we both agree we do face challenges. I have to thank Mr. Calandra for something that struck me as he stated the reasons why he didn't vote in favour of Mr. Pacetti's motion on internment of Italian Canadians. I was struck by something I hear as I speak to the over one million Canadians of Italian heritage: why this government does not have an Italian Canadian in cabinet. It's a concern. It's a concern the community has, because they feel they're not represented around the table. That is an issue.

The only reason I raised it, Mr. Chairman, is because Mr. Calandra spoke about the Italian-Canadian internment issue, which is a very serious issue, and I know the minister takes that particular issue seriously.

As a courtesy question, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister what this committee can do to help him do his job better.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** A few things come to mind.

I think Mr. Bevilacqua knows I feel like I'm Italian at heart—

**An hon. member:** Oh, no.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** —even though I'm Irish.

**The Chair:** As someone of Irish descent, I don't care.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I'll pass on to the Prime Minister Mr. Bevilacqua's recommendation for Mr. Calandra to become a member of the ministry.

Perhaps if... Well, I'll just leave it at that. I don't want to get into trouble.

Actually I'm proud of our government's diversity. All parties can always do better in this respect, for sure.

I've raised some issues before. You've raised the question of a lack of understanding among different faith groups in Canada, for instance. This is a concern to me. The first issue I invited this committee to look at broadly is the question of integration, the program side of our settlement services, and how effective we are being. We really need advice on that, because we've tripled the money for this but we haven't seen a commensurate increase in the uptake or in the outcomes. This is a subject for real study. Are the settlement agencies doing as good a job as they could? Are they being responsive to consumer need? There are all those issues.

But there is also this question of foreign credential recognition. I would love to have a parliamentary forum where you could call onto the carpet the heads of the main licensing bodies for the professions in this country and ask what's going on. Why is it taking ten years for

a foreign-trained lawyer or doctor or engineer to get credentialed in Canada? That would be a great place to shine the light of public exposure: the practices of the licensing agencies. I think that could help all Canadians.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

Mr. Calandra and Mr. Dykstra, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Bevilacqua, for your overwhelming support. Being a new member, I think I'll learn a little bit more.

Minister, I want to get back to something this committee talked about some time ago, and perhaps Mr. Fadden might also comment on this. In particular, it was a motion that was brought forward by a Liberal member and the opposition forced through with respect to deportations of individuals from Canada to Sri Lanka.

As you may know, I was a strong opponent of that. One of the things I worried about was that the motion made no reference to those with serious issues of criminality and who may have been convicted of crimes in Canada. I struggled with that motion. We've brought forward some examples of individuals: one man who had been convicted of a clever attack and destroying a community centre.

I note a large Tamil Canadian community in my riding. Some of the individuals who run businesses in my community were extraordinarily disappointed with that motion because some of them had been the target of criminal activity.

Especially now in light of the fact that we are bringing more Tamil Sri Lankans to Canada to deal with the humanitarian situation, I wonder if you might be able to comment on that type of motion and how Canadians are served by what I believe is reducing our ability to protect Canadians by bringing forward a motion that would do that, and if this could also lead to other examples in other areas of our immigration system where we'll be passing motions to deal with other countries that might fall into this situation.

● (1040)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I would point out that it's been the longstanding practice of the Government of Canada under different parties in power to ensure that criminals, particularly dangerous criminals, are removed from this country if they're foreign nationals. Even though Canada has long had a system of temporary stay of removals for certain countries in conflict, countries it is unsafe to remove individuals to, there's always been an exception in the temporary stay of removal policy, so that with regard to criminals, particularly dangerous criminals, their removal is not stayed by virtue of the country's conditions.



This is consistent across the world. I can't understand why we would pick out one particular country. Right now, I think we have seven countries on the temporary stay of removal list. I don't know why we would say, okay, we'll remove dangerous criminals to those seven countries, but not this one. That doesn't make sense to me, and it doesn't make sense to me from a public safety point of view. Foreign nationals who come here and break our laws, particularly those who create social disorder or violence in Canada, have no right to stay in Canada, and we as the government have an obligation to see that they are removed, I think much more promptly than they are.

I would encourage committee members to reflect on the public safety dimension of this issue, whether we're talking about Sri Lanka or any other country of origin, quite frankly.

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** One of the things that I want to actually compliment the department on is that in February when you were here, Minister, a number of questions and requests were made by the parties opposite in regard to a number of issues. In the area of those responses, a lot of work has gone into putting that response together.

Would the deputy mind updating the committee on a couple of things that were pointed out, in particular on the levels of immigration since 1990?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** You catch me a bit unaware. I'm not quite sure of the gist of your question. I think we've tried to answer all of the questions put by the committee. Do you mean to update since then? If so, I don't have them with me, so I can't do that.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** No, I think the updates are pretty clearly laid out for all of us. It was more of a general observation on where we've gone since 1990 in terms of the levels and the numbers with respect to immigration.

**The Chair:** Perhaps next time.

I guess there won't be a next time. Your successor will be next time.

Mr. Karygiannis.

• (1045)

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Mr. Chair, I can certainly let you know where we have gone since the Conservatives took office: first year, 20% up; second year 70% up; third year 53% up on skilled workers. Just this year alone, we've seen 20% up on children and spousal at 37.5%. Certainly these figures have not been disputed at all throughout the number of years.

Mr. Fadden, I'm going to come to you, sir, directly. On January 30 I put a request in to the minister. You were copied. I got a read receipt. Four times since then I got a read receipt on the timelines and the refusal rates in Moscow and in Armenia. That has taken four and a half months, and I do not have a reply. Is it because you don't want to release these figures, or are these figures sitting somewhere in the minister's office, or with his chief of staff, and he doesn't want to release them? It's been four and a half months, sir.

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** Mr. Chairman, I believe my minister has already answered that question.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Okay. Then, sir, let me ask you another question.

Mr. Stewart, I believe, about a month ago, had a public meeting and the question was asked of him, "Is the department allocating extra resources to Sri Lanka?" At that time, he said no. Has that changed since then, Mr. Fadden, sir?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** Yes. We're sending two officers on temporary duty for the period covered between June and September.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Thank you.

Minister, you said that you're going to do biometrics and you're going to spend \$12.1 million on biometrics. So this will target countries such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the countries of Africa, and all the countries that require a visitor visa application. That is certainly not going to be the same for countries in Europe and the other countries that do not require a visitor visa. Am I correct? Will the biometrics only be for countries that require a visitor visa?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** No, that's not correct.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** So somebody coming into Canada from the U.K. or from France will also need biometrics. How are you proposing to do this, since they don't require a visitor visa?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** Mr. Chairman, the intention is to capture in the program citizens from all countries who are coming to Canada on a temporary basis. For example, visitors from the United Kingdom don't require visas if they're only visiting. They do require visas if they are studying or working. The intention is to capture everybody. The idea is to increase our capacity to know who is in Canada at a particular point in time.

As the minister I think indicated earlier, we're going to phase this in and we're going to pick countries where there are more concerns. But the intent is to cover all temporary visitors.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Since people don't require a temporary visitor visa to come in from Britain, from France, from Germany, how would you be capturing their information?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** The broad intention is to develop worldwide a series of visa application centres that would be private enterprises under contract with the department who would handle the taking of biometric data. I think we have something of the order of 20 or 25 of them around the world now. The intent would be once the biometric program is up and running, these VACs, over and above accepting the applications, would take in the biometric information. Then these are channeled through the Canadian missions abroad and eventually to Canada.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Thank you.

But, Mr. Fadden, people from the U.K., people from France, people from Germany, people from Italy, and people from Greece are not required to get a visitor visa. The only thing they are required to do is get on a plane and show their passport, and in they come. How are you proposing to capture their biometric data?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** When this program is fully implemented—and I want to stress, as the minister did, we're doing this in a phased way—to get into this country at some point in time, and I don't know what that time is, under a temporary arrangement you're going to require biometric data. Eventually we're going to set up arrangements either in Canadian missions or in visa application centres everywhere.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** If I understand this correctly, the Germans, French, people from Britain, Italians, Spanish, Portuguese, Greeks, and people from the EU would one day have to apply for a visitor visa to come to Canada?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** No, I didn't say they'd need a visitor visa; I said we would need biometric information.

Part of the difficulty, Mr. Chairman, is that there are significant program integrity and national security issues originating from people who are citizens of EU countries. We don't see any program basis on which to distinguish our treatment of them, as opposed to people who come from other parts of the world.

• (1050)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fadden, Mr. Karygiannis.

Monsieur St-Cyr.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I didn't have time earlier on to wrap up on the issue of foreign credentials.

I think it is clear that the federal government's attempt to interfere in jurisdictions that clearly belong to the provinces is indicative of an ideology based on Pierre Elliott Trudeau's nation-building. In that regard there isn't much difference between the Conservatives and the Liberals.

If all were well at the federal level, if there were no problems, if everything were under control and there were undue wait times, then I might understand why one would invest money in areas that clearly fall under provincial jurisdiction.

Given that there are significant immigration problems, do you not think that money would be better invested if it were entirely allocated to wait times or if it were directly given to the provinces? The provinces are already working on having foreign credentials recognized.

We support that. I believe there are also problems. I am a member of the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec and I have been putting pressure on my own association for progress to be made. I think there's also the issue of efficiency. The provinces already have to work with professional associations. If another layer is added—the federal government will impose standards for national frameworks and national policies—if there's no acceptance of the fact that there

are differences between different provinces, then we're no longer dealing with a federal system, we're dealing with a unitary system.

If one believes in federalism, one has to be able to live with the fact that Quebec may have a different way of doing things from that of Ontario, Saskatchewan or Manitoba. That is federalism.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Let us be clear, Mr. Chairman.

Each province is responsible for managing their labour market and the organizations that are responsible for recognizing credentials, among other things.

If Quebec does not want to participate in a Canada-wide approach, then it can withdraw. It is very simple. We are not doing anything that threatens Quebec sovereignty with respect to Quebec's jurisdictions or credential recognition.

However, Quebec has just reached an agreement with France for the recognition of law degrees. If Quebec can reach that kind of an agreement with France, I would hope that it could do so with Ontario as well.

As I said, it just makes sense. It does not diminish Quebec's authority, or any other province's authority, to reach agreements with other provinces within the framework of a Canada-wide approach. Yes, we work within a federal system, but federalism does not prohibit cooperation between all provinces.

For your information, the 10 premiers and 3 territorial premiers signed an agreement in January for cooperation in that area, and we are here to assist them.

We are not here to dictate to Quebec to recognize foreign credentials from such and such a country. In the end Quebec is responsible for its professional associations. As I stated, I would hope that if it can cooperate with European countries, it can also work with Canadian provinces.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Ms. Chow, you have only three minutes.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Thank you.

Going back to the question I had about Nairobi, Minister, you said there is no more room in that visa office. I suggest that you turn that swimming pool that is in the embassy into a place where you can process applications. It's too cold in Nairobi to swim, and the swimming pool is empty all the time anyway. You have a lot of refugee claimants, or children of families of Canadian refugee claimants here, who are desperately trying to connect with their parents, their mothers. They wait for five years, even eight years in some cases. They come to the Nairobi visa office, and what greets them? A swimming pool. So I'm sure you have room to put a few more staff in there to assist some of these folks who are desperately trying to connect with their families in Canada. These are children, for heaven's sake.

The case I was just talking about is that of a 12-year-old kid with a mom here. There are sad stories all the time. In the refugee camps, you can't wait for two years, four years, five years. It's dangerous.

Next week is refugee week, Mr. Minister. Can you please look into this situation? I know we're talking about the supplementary budget. Surely out of the \$39 million that we are approving—well, \$41 million in total, minus the vote—surely in all of the supplementary estimates you can put some of the resources toward helping, in a region that is a most desperate, poor, and dangerous place, to bring some of the people into this country faster.

• (1055)

**The Chair:** It's a long two minutes, Minister. You have to mumble a few words.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Just say yes.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, as the deputy minister said, the department is always prepared to look at reallocation of resources up to a certain point.

One thing that I have to point out, which the member may not be aware of, is that the Department of Foreign Affairs governs the overall management of our foreign service, including immigration officers, in our dozens of bureaus overseas. It's very expensive. I believe they assess a total gross sum of approximately \$800,000 for the first year to situate a foreign service officer abroad. It means that every time you add a Canadian visa officer, the cost in the first year can be approximately \$800,000 or more.

There's demand everywhere. Mr. Karygiannis would have us add a whole lot more in Colombo. I'm sure everyone at this table could offer to me a suggestion of an office where we should put more personnel. The question of managing our resources in our missions abroad is a very difficult question.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I take the member's point very seriously. As it relates to the slightly demagogic point about the swimming pool, you know, I'll take a political risk in defending this by saying that we ask people to go abroad for two or three years, in sometimes very difficult circumstances, to live in places with few or no amenities. The fact that our diplomatic families who are working in Nairobi, for instance, have a place to go on the weekend that is safe, with their children, where they can actually have a little bit of

family time or something I don't think is unreasonable. I don't think it is unreasonable to provide a basic level of amenities to the thousands of Canadians who, quite frankly, sometimes risk their lives in very difficult places abroad, or to provide them with some quality of living.

I would not want to convey to our foreign service officers in any ministry that we should strip away from them the very few amenities they have to enjoy with their families.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Manchanda, and Mr. Fadden. I thank you all for coming today.

Mr. Fadden, I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Witnesses, you're now excused. Thank you very much.

Shall the supplementary estimates carry?

#### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

##### Department

Vote 1a—Citizenship and Immigration—Operating expenditures and the payment to each member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada who is a Minister without Portfolio or a Minister of State who does not preside over a Ministry of State of a salary not to exceed the salary paid to Ministers of State who preside over Ministries of State under the Salaries Act, as adjusted pursuant to the Parliament of Canada Act and pro rata for any period of less than a year—To authorize the transfer of \$14,585,526 from Canadian Heritage Vote 1, Appropriation Act No. 1, 2009-10 for the purposes of this Vote and to provide a further amount of.....\$36,289,071

Vote 5a—Citizenship and Immigration—The grants listed in the Estimates and contributions—To authorize the transfer of \$22,848,962 from Canadian Heritage Vote 5, Appropriation Act No. 1, 2009-10 for the purposes of this Vote and to provide a further amount of.....\$3,000,000

(Votes 1a and 5a agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall I report the supplementary estimates to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** This meeting stands adjourned to the call of the chair.





**Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons**

**Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes**

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:  
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

---

**The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.**

**Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.**