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# Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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EVIDENCE

**Tuesday, December 1, 2009**

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**Chair**

**Mr. David Tilson**



## Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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•(0905)

[English]

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

This is the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, meeting number 37, Tuesday, December 1, 2009. We are dealing with supplementary estimates (B) 2009-2010: votes 1b, 5b, 7b, and 10b under Citizenship and Immigration and the report on the operation of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act for the year 2009.

We have before us the Honourable Jason Kenney, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Multiculturalism, and his colleagues. There are too many of them to introduce. I'm going to let the minister do that.

Welcome, Minister Kenney, and thank you for coming once again to make your presentation to us and listen to our questions.

You have the floor, sir.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism):** Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman and colleagues. It's great to be back.

I'm joined today by our new deputy Neil Yeates, our director of operations Claudette Deschênes, our ADM for policy Les Linklater, and Mark Watters, our chief financial officer, who will answer any difficult questions about the estimates.

I am pleased today to place before the committee my department's supplementary estimates (B) for fiscal year 2009-2010. These estimates include new funding requests of \$127.1 million to increase departmental spending authorities to \$1.56 billion for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

This funding involves several key areas. First, we request funding of \$90 million to reinstate in this year funding related to the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, which was initially re-profiled in the 2009-2010 main estimates. This is funding related to contributions to settlement organizations, principally in Ontario.

Secondly, we request funding of \$32.5 million in 2009-2010 to support the imposition of a visa requirement for Mexican citizens.

[Translation]

The increase in refugee claims and the immigration violation rate for Mexico have resulted in significant costs for the refugee determination system. This funding is to establish a new permanent

infrastructure for temporary resident visa processing for visitors, temporary workers and students.

[English]

Third, we request \$3.5 million in 2009-2010 to significantly reduce citizenship proof inventories and processing times. These investments should allow CIC to respond to concerns by clients and other government departments through a reduction in processing times.

[Translation]

I propose to continue my remarks by addressing some matters concerning citizenship and immigration that might be of particular interest to the committee.

[English]

Let me first address the November 3 report of the Auditor General. I wish to thank her for her review.

We agree with her on the importance of a modern, efficient, and well-run immigration program and we are considering her recommendations very carefully. I am pleased to say that we have already begun making key improvements, and my officials have developed a plan to address the areas of concern identified by the Auditor General.

[Translation]

She has pointed out some administrative matters regarding temporary foreign workers—matters that we had already started to address through new regulations I introduced in October.

[English]

To guard against the abuse of foreign workers, our government has proposed regulations that allow for greater cooperation between my department and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, as well as with the labour ministries in the provinces and territories who actually oversee and enforce labour market standards.

[Translation]

These changes will help us recognize bad employers and provide better oversight to minimize the chance of exploitation and abuse of foreign workers. Many employers tell me that they would go out of business if they could not find foreign workers, which is why we need the kind of tools and regulations that we are developing to protect workers and support our economy.

[English]

Our immigration program is constantly evolving to respond to Canada's changing economic goals. As the committee is aware, the ministerial instructions as part of our action plan for faster immigration are a key tool in that respect. I would like to note that the government is addressing the AG's questions regarding the quality of analysis used to develop the ministerial Instructions. They were developed after extensive consultations with both public and private stakeholders, including provinces and territories.

[Translation]

Second, the department is taking the necessary steps to ensure that the instructions remain as up-to-date as possible. We are doing so by monitoring labour market trends, gathering information on changing national and regional employment needs, and we are closely monitoring the flow of new applications.

[English]

Mr. Chairman, the reforms our government has introduced have resulted in new applications in the federal skilled worker category being processed in six to twelve months, and a reduction of over 30% in the backlog of federal skilled worker applications received prior to the reforms. These are major improvements. Going from five years on average to less than a year puts us back in the game and competing for the world's best and brightest.

This is a substantial improvement, and the world is taking notice. To quote the CEO of Microsoft:

The Canadian government is more welcoming of getting the best and the brightest from around the world than the U.S. government.

As the committee is probably aware, last month I introduced some significant changes to how newcomers can become Canadian citizens. I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about them.

I'm committed to ensuring that new Canadians understand the values, democratic institutions, and history that have made Canada one of the greatest countries in the world in which to live.

● (0910)

[Translation]

That is why I was enormously proud three weeks ago to introduce a new study guide for those who wish to become new Canadian citizens.

[English]

This new guide, entitled *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*, is more reflective of Canada's diversity, history, and values than the previous edition. It aims to make Canadian citizenship more meaningful by providing information that all Canadians should know and be proud of.

[Translation]

For example, we recognize the history of New France—which goes back over four centuries in Quebec—and acknowledge the collaboration of French and aboriginal people.

[English]

We highlight the contribution of Canadians of Chinese origin to building the country, acknowledging the injustice of the Chinese head tax, and we note the government's apology for the same.

We talk about the waves of refugees who came to Canada seeking our protection, such as the Hungarians in 1956 and the Vietnamese in the 1970s, who fled communist oppression.

We recognize Canada's leadership in fighting slavery, the movement of the black Loyalists to Canada, and the contribution of abolitionists like Mary Ann Shadd.

We also highlight a broad spectrum of successful Canadians, including Olympic swimmer and athlete Mark Tewksbury.

Finally, I did not feel that the previous guide acknowledged that every year this country celebrates the contribution of over a million Canadians who served in our uniform in the past century and the more than 110,000 who made the ultimate sacrifice to defend our freedoms. This needed to change.

Compared to the previous edition, *Discover Canada* aims to underscore the diversity of Canada and our traditions of pluralism, unity, and diversity. It emphasizes that new citizens inherit both rights and responsibilities, something that I think was insufficiently emphasized in the previous guide.

[Translation]

It also emphasizes the importance for newcomers to Canada to integrate into our society and to learn one of our two official languages.

Many newcomers, Mr. Chairman, have told me that they found the outgoing book somewhat insulting—that it underestimated their interest to learn about this country.

I am confident the new guide will help them to adapt more quickly and take advantage of the economic, social and cultural opportunities that Canada has to offer.

[English]

Before I conclude, Mr. Chair, I hope the committee members saw our announcement yesterday, which I made with my colleague Diane Finley, Minister of HRSDC. It was the fruit of a lot of hard work, launched with the agreement that the Prime Minister arrived at with the provinces and territories in January of this year, to create a pan-Canadian framework for the recognition of foreign credentials.

We made the announcement on the way forward as a result of a \$50 million investment in the economic action plan that will provide an agreement right across the country for common standards and a transparent pathway to credential recognition. We can't do that all at once for all 40-plus licensed professions; we have to engage those who are prepared to work with us. The initial list is eight professions from coast to coast. Next year we hope to roll it out to another six, and I believe and hope it will pick up momentum.

In those professions we are now getting a guarantee from the provinces who will be working with the professional agencies that people who apply will be getting an answer within a year, rather than two years of evaluation and another two years of testing. In many professions I think we will be going from a four-year processing time to less than a year. It's not perfect. We cannot and never will guarantee anyone will get a yes answer. But finally I think we see strong cooperation between the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to get some meaningful progress on the vexatious problem of credential recognition.

Thank you for your time, Chairman. I look forward to the questions.

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Minister, the foreign credentials issue is certainly an area you need to be congratulated on. It's a difficult issue, and I'm sure there are many areas that need to be worked out.

I'll bet you the committee has some questions, and the first round is led by Mr. Bevilacqua.

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

Minister, thank you for your comments.

I'd also like to welcome the officials from the department. We appreciate, obviously, your work as public servants on this very important issue of immigration and citizenship.

Minister, I read your comments, and every time I read—and I recognize these words, by the way—that people “reprofile funding”, I wonder what that means. Essentially, it's a polite name for money that actually wasn't used or was cut, and that, of course, is related to your fourth sentence, about the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement.

One of the concerns I have vis-à-vis the whole issue of immigration as it relates to immigrant settlement as well as language training is the amount of funding that actually lapsed. I think we all recognize in this committee that one of the major barriers for the integration of immigrants into Canadian society is in fact language. There are \$81 million lapsed in that area, and \$11 million, I believe, in the area related to settlement aid. I'd like an explanation for that, number one.

Number two, Minister, if I may, this is not necessarily related to the estimates per se, but it is an issue that you and I have shared concerns over, and that is the refugee reform package that was promised a while ago. We still have not seen the package. We would like to give that particular issue the respect it deserves when you have a staggering 62,000 backlog of refugee claims and a system that I think everyone in this room agrees is broken.

I wonder what the story behind that is. Have you presented a package to cabinet? Do you have the support of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for the funding required? If yes, then when would you expect the package, and if no, then let's be honest with the Canadian people and say that's just not part of the agenda.

● (0915)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you for those questions, substantive as always, Mr. Bevilacqua.

First, with respect to lapsed funds, I think we need to understand the magnitude of the increase in funding for settlement that came about in 2006 between COIA, the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, and subsequently the changes in budget 2006. We effectively about tripled the federal investment through my ministry in settlement services in provinces other than Quebec. Quebec goes up on an automatic escalator, but the other provinces are now finally in rough parity with Quebec in terms of per immigrant or per capita settlement funding.

This involved effectively tripling funding in one year, starting in 2006. When you do something like that, you need to make sure the money is being spent responsibly. Officials will tell you they worked very hard with the settlement sector—the settlement agencies in Ontario in particular, where we have most immigrants—to ensure those funds are responsibly invested.

Earlier this year it appeared we were going to lapse \$90 million in the Ontario portion of settlement funding simply because we couldn't find enough projects to fund that match the terms and conditions in Treasury Board guidelines. I signalled to officials that we wanted to respect the spirit and the letter of COIA, and they worked very hard. I'd like to commend our officials for working very hard with the settlement sector to find ways to get these services out the door in ways that complied with the accounting rules of the government.

Initially we were going to take \$90 million for this year and reprofile it into next year. We were not going to take it away but just keep it on the table, so it did not lapse in the budget year, and move it forward to next fiscal year. Because of the good work of our officials, we were able to invest those funds this year that will go into language training and other relevant programs this year. We're developing a system to make sure that goes forward without these blips in the future in terms of funding.

Second, on refugee reform, I appreciate the very thoughtful approach you've taken on that. I think everyone recognizes that we need to make improvements to the system, and I can tell you—Mr. Chair, I'm obviously not in any capacity to violate cabinet confidentiality or to discuss what may or may not be before cabinet—that as the Prime Minister indicated in September of this year, Canada and Parliament need to address this issue. I'm confident that both Parliament and government will be doing so in the fairly near future. I won't put a timeframe on that, but our officials have been working very hard on this issue. It's a very complicated piece.

Any kind of meaningful reform to the refugee system would involve statutory amendments, regulatory amendments, operational changes, with CIC, with CBSA, and the IRB, etc. It's a complex area in which some very sound ideas are coming up about a balanced system that obviously respects our legal and humanitarian obligations while creating a more efficient system, providing faster protection of the real refugees while disincentivizing abuse of the system.

● (0920)

**Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua:** Is there funding for this?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chair, again, there is funding for the current asylum system. The IRB is fully funded. In fact, I'm pleased to announce in that respect that as of today, the IRB is at 98% of its full occupancy in terms of Governor in Council decision-makers, and I anticipate it will very shortly be at 100%.

The IRB itself is currently at full speed. In terms of any potential changes, I would just have to say we'll stay tuned.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. St-Cyr.

[*Translation*]

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

Thank you for being here today, minister.

I would like to continue on the question of the use of French at the Immigration and Refugee Board. We've been talking about that for a long time, you and I, and I am still as concerned about what is going on.

We are observing that, increasingly, newcomer files are systematically being opened in English by default. In fact, that has become the rule in Montreal. There are cases in which, even if the newcomer is neither francophone nor anglophone, the file is still opened in English. There are cases in which, if the newcomer is a francophile, or at least someone who has an affinity with the French language, the file is opened in English. Consequently, later on, when the matter goes before the immigration tribunals, the evidence is filed in English, government representatives want to proceed in English, and it is very difficult to get permission to proceed in French.

There was the specific case of Mr. Handfield, who asked, on behalf of his client, to be able to proceed in French in his case. The tribunal ultimately agreed, but refused to order the evidence to be translated. At the time, I questioned you about this matter, and you answered that the tribunal had made a decision and that, as minister, you could not interfere in the matter.

This matter of the use of French at the IRB is now before the Federal Court. In that case, the respondent party was the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. I have before me the brief filed by the Deputy Attorney General of Canada, which clearly states that he is acting on behalf of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. He sets out the points he is addressing, that is the claim of counsel and his client that the latter has a right to a trial in French, which, it seems obvious to me, presupposes that documents can be produced in French.

When I asked you the question in the House, you answered me that the applicant in question had first asked to proceed in English, which was inaccurate to say the least, not to say false. The briefs submitted by counsel representing you contain excerpts from the proceeding, and at no point did anyone say they wanted to proceed in English. At most, the board member asked him if he spoke English.

Minister, you know from having spoken personally with me that I speak French. That does not mean that I would agree to proceed in English before a tribunal. Those are two different things.

In view of all these arguments, why is your department engaged in this legal guerilla warfare to avoid proceeding in English from the outset and translating the documents?

● (0925)

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

Thank you for your concern in this regard, Mr. St-Cyr.

Obviously, both of us strongly support the Official Languages Act. I clearly told the members of my department and those of all the agencies, including the IRB, that we expect the agencies to comply with the Official Languages Act.

It is possible that there may be an appeal to the Federal Court. As minister, I cannot comment on a case that is before the court for reasons you know very well. The proceeding is under way.

I have commented on the basic facts of the case with the IRB. Counsel requested at the outset that English be the language of proceeding. At that time, he had accepted all the documents in English. It was therefore counsel's decision on behalf of the applicant to accept all the documents in English, and they were all provided. I believe the IRB subsequently decided to change the language of proceeding at counsel's request. At that point, the documents were therefore provided in French.

Perhaps the matter should be taken up before the Federal Court. In the event it is, I should not make any comments out of respect for the proceeding under way.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** You previously commented on the matter in the House of Commons. This concerns me because the government is spending taxpayers' money, part of which comes from Quebec, to conduct what I consider legal guerilla warfare against the use of French in the Montreal court.

In the brief your counsel submitted, they were unable to show that any exchange had taken place before the court or that any form had been completed stating that the person wanted to proceed in English. If you don't want to talk about this specific case, let's speak more generally. The problem is that they only provided us with the form completed at the very start of the process by an immigration officer with the person, and the officer checked the "English" box.

The problem is that immigration officers in Montreal almost always check the "English" box, regardless of the person concerned and without really ensuring that is what that person wants.

Shouldn't you proceed in French by default in Montreal, and shouldn't English be the exception rather than the rule, as is currently the case? That's the nub of the problem.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** First of all, I believe this involves the Canada Border Services Agency and not my department, directly. Second, I agree on the principle that clients should have the right to be represented in the official language of their choice.

In specific cases, however, should we translate documents that have been accepted and requested in one language in particular? Should we change languages at some point? What are the implications of that kind of thing? Here's an example. If counsel decide to change the language of proceeding and all documents have to be translated into a second language during a criminal trial, what will be the implication of that action for Canada's judicial system? These are issues that—

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We have to stop.

Colleagues, before I have Ms. Chow speak, I've spoken to her about her motions and she has agreed to put the motions on Thursday, so we can give our full attention to the minister.

Ms. Chow, you have the floor.

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Welcome to the committee again, Minister.

The Auditor General last week said that the department has no strategic plan, no vision, made decisions without considering their cost, risk, potential impact on other programs, and delivery impact. So we have 192,519 temporary foreign workers in Canada. We have fewer families coming in, according to your 2010 targets. We have far fewer, half of the refugees, that are going to be accepted in Canada.

Since 2002, because the former Liberal government changed the point system, people who have low skills or manual labour, including the live-in caregivers, cannot come into Canada as permanent residents through the federal program. So they're coming in. We need low-skilled workers, there's no doubt about that, StatsCan tells you that, yet they cannot come in as permanent residents. How are they coming in? They're coming in as temporary foreign workers. So how many foreign workers do you expect to come in this coming year, 2010?

Let me read you one line that the Auditor General said:

Until it develops a strategic roadmap for the future and it evaluates the performance of its current programs, CIC will not be in a position to demonstrate that its programming best meets the needs of the Canadian labour market.

To make it even worse, she said there's no quality assurance framework to obtain assurance that decisions made by its visa officers are fair and consistent. So there's no plan, and the assurance framework is not there.

Then the third piece are these unscrupulous consultants out there telling people how to lie. It's a small number of them, but they're criminals, basically, and they are abusing the system, yet the victims are the ones who get punished. They lose their money, get deported, or never make it here, or the families never arrive in Canada because of these unscrupulous consultants.

We had a concurrence motion last week where Parliament said "act, please act". We are sick and tired of these unscrupulous consultants—not all of them, but some of them. And right now there are no regulations. They basically do whatever they can. They can set up shop and—CIC is not working, we know that.

You talked about taking action on this front. When are you going to crack down on these criminals, some, a few? We don't even know where they are. So when are you going to take action?

What is the plan for this coming year, 2010? Are you going to balance the needs of the labour market and also Canada needing permanent residents? We need their kids here, not just their labour. Your October changes deal with some of the abuse, but it does not deal with the core problem of the entire program. In fact, it makes it worse, because you're letting them work four years and then you say to them that they cannot come back for six years. You should do that to the employers rather than the workers. So this is now reversed, and that means the temporary foreign workers have even less power.

● (0930)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you, as always, for these insightful remarks by our colleague Ms. Chow.

There is a plan, a very clear plan, to improve economic outcomes for newcomers and ensure that immigration is working for the Canadian economy. I agree entirely with you, Ms. Chow, that this means we must maintain a robust stream of economic new permanent residents. We're doing just that.

I don't think you give Canada enough credit in this respect. We are one of the only major developed countries in the world that is plowing ahead with ambitious targets for permanent residents in the midst of the global economic downturn. We are doing so because we think it's necessary to plan for the mid to long range, even though there is some softening in the labour market right now.

Everything we've done is calibrated to improving economic outcomes for newcomers. That's why we brought in the action plan for faster immigration to focus on people whose skills are most in need on a national level in Canada. It's why we've increased processing times in that stream, federal skilled workers, from five years to less than one year. It's why we've worked with the provinces to expand the provincial nominee programs.

Now we get criticism from some that supposedly we're reducing the federal skilled worker program, and people wrongly allege that we're giving up spaces in the federal skilled workers stream and moving them over to temporary foreign workers. As you know, that's ridiculous.

• (0935)

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** I didn't say that.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I know you didn't, but I was just getting this at a press conference yesterday from some people who might vote for your party, I'm just guessing.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Really? Tell me who they are. I'll go find them.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** But my point is, as you well know—I need to be clear about this—there is a permanent residence stream that we are protecting, that we are maintaining at 0.8% of the population. It's the most ambitious level in the developed world. The temporary stream is entirely separate from that—

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** But that's huge.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Particularly the temporary foreign workers stream is responsive to demand. We do not plan.... In fact, this year we anticipated we'd see a reduction in the number of visas issued to temporary foreign workers in 2009 because of the slowdown. But in fact, demand was very strong. Even though in January, HRSDC increased their requirement for advertising for Canadians to take up these positions.

So the overall goal is to improve economic outcomes, and we've done that through the action plan for faster immigration. We've done it through the expansion of the provincial nominee programs. We've done it through the introduction of the Canadian experience class, the first new pathway to permanent residency in a generation that will allow some of those temporary foreign workers and many—

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Not the low-skilled ones.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes.

But many foreign students will become permanent residents in Canada. We've done it through our tripling of the federal investment in settlement and language training. All of these things together are

combined to get better outcomes for newcomers and also, of course, to address the issue of credential recognition.

But you've also raised the issue of consultants. I agree. This is an area that we must work on and we are working on it. I'll get back to it in another question, I'm sure.

**The Chair:** We have to carry on to the next round.

Mr. Dykstra.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for appearing here yet again. I know one of the issues that committees have faced in the past is the difficult schedule that a minister may have in not always being able to get to committee on as regular a basis as a committee might like. Each and every time we make a request, you've been here. So thank you.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** With lots of pleasure.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** I'm sure I'll take some flak for the work that I may or may not do at this committee, according to the opposition.

I know the reason you're here this morning—I wasn't quite hearing it from folks across the table—is the Auditor's report. While the opposition may have found a couple of things in there that we need to work on—which we have, and the ministry and you have agreed to—there are some positive components to that report.

One of them that I want to build on is yesterday's announcement regarding the foreign credential recognition program. The Auditor certainly stated that it has increased awareness of foreign credential issues. We've obviously invested a lot of money over the last number of years. I wonder if you or one of the ministry officials could tell us about the different conditions in immigration source countries that might make processing a visa or immigration application more time-consuming here relative to other countries.

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



Certainly this ministry has the enormous challenge of operating what is, in relative terms, the largest immigration program in the developed world. We do so with I think 64 offices abroad in radically different circumstances, from Buffalo, New York, where we have a large processing centre, to Nairobi in East Africa, which services, if I'm not mistaken, 18 countries. Many of them are war-torn, dangerous areas. There are significant variances in processing times. I know the Auditor General points to this. It would be impossible to create consistent, identical processing times across all of our foreign missions. It takes enormously more time and human effort, for instance, to interview a client in one of the East African countries, out of Nairobi, than somebody who's immigrating from London and can take the tube down to our high commission. These are realities we have to deal with.

I'd like to invite ADM Deschênes to supplement the answer.

• (0940)

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes (Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** One of the other things that we haven't had historically is a filter to stop applications coming in. So every year we can process the number of applications we have in our annual levels. The ministerial instructions are really a great tool for us, because they will permit us to fine-tune. A long part of the processing is cases that have to stay on a file until we can actually get to them. So if we can look at what the country needs and be able to decide how many we're going to take over a period of time, then we'll be able to adjust and not keep applications pending for a long time.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Claudette, I would like to welcome you back to the committee. I know it was a bit of a rough ride last time, but thank you for being back here again.

Yesterday's announcement, which you mentioned in your remarks, Minister, goes back to the 2008 throne speech, in which we talked about a stronger relationship with the provinces and territories. We were looking at breaking down the barriers between provinces and developing a pan-Canadian approach. This is what we need to compete, economically and in trade, in the international world. Perhaps you could outline what led to yesterday's announcement and the potential impact it's going to have on our foreign credential process.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** This is a problem that has long vexed all governments. It is frustrating to newcomers that the federal government is principally responsible for selecting economic immigrants through the federal skilled worker program, which is based largely on education, skills, and experience. Yet, when they arrive here, the 20% of economic immigrants who fall within regulated professions often find themselves unable to get clear answers on their applications for credential recognition from one of the over 440 licensing bodies that exist in the ten provinces. The resulting chronic underemployment has led to the tragic joke about our having the best-educated cab drivers in the world.

I agree completely with Ms. Chow, Mr. Bevilacqua, and others who have raised this concern. We don't want to be bringing skilled people, who are often from the top economic tier of their countries of origin, to chronic underemployment in Canada. It's bad for them. It's a waste of talent. It's an opportunity cost for us. That's why in 2006 we created the Foreign Credentials Referral Office, with a \$32

million budget. We wanted to invest in helping people begin the process of accreditation before they arrive in Canada. This was done to cut down on the time between arrival and accreditation. We are doing this through the Canadian immigration integration project, which will shortly be expanded and rolled out in additional missions. We're doing this through our innovation fund—providing these services in Korea, Taiwan, China, the Philippines, and India. We are giving people an opportunity now, either through the Internet or through those offices, to begin to make their applications and to understand how to get their credentials recognized.

More important, in January the prime minister, for the first time, exercised federal political leadership on this vexatious issue. He said to the ten premiers that this was something we had to get right, that we were letting down too many newcomers, and that we needed a pan-Canadian, national approach. Remarkably—I never thought I'd see the day—he got all ten premiers and the three territorial leaders to sign off on an accord. This accord will create an open labour market in Canada by 2014, where there will be mutual recognition of international credentials, and cause a framework to be developed that will accelerate credential recognition for foreign-trained professionals.

That's what we announced yesterday. It was the consequence of a \$50-million investment in the economic action plan. We announced that we've identified with the ten provinces eight professional licensing agencies across the country, licensing bodies that include engineers and pharmacists, among others. By the time the system starts, people applying for recognition from one of these professional bodies will get an answer within a year.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Karygiannis.

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

Minister, I have a number of questions I will ask and then you can take your sweet time answering them. Usually when I ask a question you seem to want to eat into my five minutes. Anyway, I'll take the opportunity to ask all the questions and then you can go for it.

Last week we had Ms. Fraser here, and she said:

We found that Citizenship and Immigration Canada has made a number of key decisions without first properly assessing their costs and benefit risks and potential impact on the programs and delivery mechanisms. For example, program changes in recent years have resulted in a significant shift in the types of workers being admitted permanently to Canada. We saw little evidence that this shift is part of any clear strategy to best meet Canada's labour needs. A strategic road map for the future, such as the national framework the department committed to develop in 2004, would help to provide a clear vision of what each program is expected to contribute to the economic objectives for immigration....Our chapter on selecting foreign workers notes that evaluations of the programs we audited are either outdated or have not been done at all.

In 2004, Minister, 113,442 skilled workers came in. In 2008 that shifted: the skilled workers went down to 103,736, and the temporary workers went up to 192,500.

I asked Ms. Fraser what she would think if she were auditing a public industry and she saw numbers like this. She answered:

I wouldn't be too impressed by the planning, the strategic vision, and the potential consequences of all of this, the fact that there is no analysis to justify the changes and the shifts that are occurring, and that no one seems to know whether this is the right thing to be doing.

● (0945)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I was expecting more questions there. Thanks, Mr. Karygiannis.

First of all, I think you just perhaps made the mistake I was alluding to before, which is to confuse the slight reduction in intake in the federal skilled workers stream with the increase over the past four years in a temporary foreign workers stream. The two are unrelated.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Sir—

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** You made that comparison.

We are receiving the same number of economic permanent residents. The small reduction in the federal skilled workers stream has essentially moved over to the provincial nominee programs, which is another stream of permanent resident economic immigrants. I think it's important to understand. My predecessors, in various governments in various parties, said for a long time that we've got to ensure that immigrants are settling right across the country, not just in two or three big cities. The PNPs are allowing that to happen. I encourage you to invite to this committee the immigration minister of Manitoba, or of Saskatchewan, or of the maritime provinces, and let them talk to you about how important this PNP program is to attracting immigrants not just to settle in our three big cities.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Minister, what would the numbers be of the PNP programs?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** It was 8,000 three years ago, and this year we're targeting for 40,000, so it's an increase of fourfold.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Okay. Can you also, for this committee, tell us why there's the increase from 90,668 to 192,500 on temporary workers?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** In fact in 2005, when there was a previous government in place, Canada received 110,000 temporary foreign workers.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** It was 99,146.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Last year that was a notch under 200,000.

The reality is, that is a demand-based program, and where employers are unable to find a Canadian citizen or resident to work

for them they can apply for that program if they guarantee and demonstrate they're going to pay the prevailing Canadian regional wage rate and respect provincial labour market rules.

I didn't get a chance to respond to Ms. Chow's question, but we now have in place a monitoring system that will penalize employers who are abusive of the program.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Minister, if I were looking at these numbers, I would say that there is a failure and we're not letting enough immigrants in. We are justifying the positions that we need to fill by letting in temporary workers. We're letting in temporary workers. These people are coming over here and working two or three years, and after they're finished and their bosses don't need them any more, they send them on their merry way. How are we building a country that way?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** We're building a country with the most ambitious immigration program in the developed world, the largest relative intake of newcomers in the developed world.

I know a lot of Canadians thought it was counterintuitive that we should maintain these targets of a quarter of a million plus permanent residents in the midst of an economic downturn, but we did it because we believed in building this country through immigration. At the same time, there are a lot of jobs that not even new permanent residents are applying for. Just yesterday, down in the Byward Market, I was getting a bagel at a little shop owned by Chilean immigrants to Canada—they came here as refugees—and the owner, who I know, said to me, “Mr. Kenney, my husband and I are going to lose our business. We're here seven days a week, working full-time, and I can't find any Canadians to come and work for me for ten dollars an hour. How do we access the temporary foreign worker program?” That's a refugee to Canada who started a business, is an entrepreneur, and she can't find people who are willing to work here. So if she wants, she can apply for the temporary foreign worker program if she can demonstrate that Canadian permanent residents and citizens aren't working.

I think the worst thing we could do in an economic downturn would be to turn off the motor of tens of thousands of businesses that are growing and succeeding. I don't want to penalize employers because of a labour market shortage.

You know what? I understand there are problems with the temporary foreign worker program; that's why we responded with the regulations.

● (0950)

**The Chair:** I've got to cut somebody off here. I choose the minister.

Madam Thi Lac or Mr. St-Cyr.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Ève-Mary Thāi Thi Lac (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Good morning, minister, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to discuss the issue of workers who come here and are bound to an employer. You do market research, and you check to see whether employers meet the criteria enabling them to employ immigrant workers. However, the fact that the workers are tied to those jobs may be a problem. If things don't work out, those individuals may have to wait a number of months before they get another permit. The permit covers exactly the same job, but somewhere else. This has the effect of leaving the workers vulnerable. We're talking about domestic workers and agricultural workers in particular here.

What do you intend to do to help the people who wind up in this vulnerable state? They don't necessarily have any family here who can support them.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you for raising that question, madam. This situation concerns me as well. That's why we have worked together with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada to accelerate the work permit replacement process. I believe the waiting period used to be 90 days. Now, however, it is 23 days, on average. In some cases, live-in caregivers arrive and realize that the job offered no longer exists. They then have to find another one as soon as possible.

I would like to ask Ms. Deschênes to give you more details.

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes:** We're aware of these problems, especially in the context of the economic slowdown. At the Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, we have changed our procedures so that we can manage cases involving new employers more quickly.

A number of employers were in this kind of situation, and we worked in close cooperation with Service Canada and the provinces to accelerate the process. In October last year, the waiting time for this kind of case was at least 72 days, including mailing times and everything else. Today, that period is 23 days. It's still long, but at least we are aware of the situation and are trying as hard as possible to expedite the process.

**Mrs. Ève-Mary Thāï Thi Lac:** As regards skilled workers, I'm going to tell you about one case in my riding that took 11 years to get settled. It involved a man of Tunisian extraction who was specialized in veterinary medicine. In fact, he had done his doctorate in Saint-Hyacinthe. So it wasn't a case involving an education acquired outside Canada or of having credentials to be recognized. He did his studies here in Quebec.

He returned to Tunisia and subsequently was unable to be recognized here as a skilled worker. His wife was a woman he had met here. He wanted to come back as a skilled worker, but, a few years later, became gave up. It was his spouse who sponsored him. He nevertheless managed and is now working, but he wasn't able to come back as a skilled worker. He had to be sponsored by his wife.

Canada and Quebec are said to need skilled workers, but many students who have studied here find it hard to be accepted as skilled workers. We're talking about a doctorate in veterinary medicine here. I find that really—

• (0955)

[English]

**The Chair:** If you want to get an answer, you're going to have to stop.

[Translation]

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, I'm obviously unfamiliar with the specific cases that have been presented. However, I can say that, on the whole, we give priority to spousal sponsorship cases. I believe that, on average, we process those cases in eight months. That's too long for the people concerned, but the problem is that we are processing millions of cases. The situation concerning the people who want to come to Canada in the context of a sponsorship application is very difficult.

The case of a permanent resident in your riding who is a skilled worker, an economic immigrant, may be under Quebec's responsibility, in view of Quebec's selection certificates. I don't know.

Claudette, do you want to add anything?

[English]

**The Chair:** Maybe we'll have to continue that on another round.

Mr. Young, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Welcome, Minister, and to your senior staff as well. Thank you for being here today.

Minister, I want to thank you, first of all, for what you've done with regard to increasing the settlement funding.

The Halton Multicultural Council in Oakville does a fantastic job of serving new Canadians in a whole range of areas. It's actually been able to expand its space. It's serving people, I think, in about 30 different languages. It does language training and computer training, and it is invaluable in helping people find new jobs. So it's making a huge difference in my riding. I'd like to invite you, on the record, to visit Oakville if you can, some time, and visit that site to see what's going on.

The other thing is I want to congratulate you for yesterday's announcement. This problem of foreign credential recognition is one that all of us in public life have seen, because it has been around for literally decades, so that foreign professionals come here and can't find a job in their area of expertise and end up driving cabs, etc. So this is a huge step forward, and I want to thank you for that as well.

My question is with regard to refugees. As of yesterday, I understand, the Immigration and Refugee Board is filled to 98% capacity, which is effectively 100%. You're always going to have some turnover. Can you tell us about the new process of selecting and filling the board's seats with qualified individuals?

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

First of all, actually I did visit the Halton Multicultural Council for their Canada Day picnic celebration, north of Oakville, and I would like to come back and actually see their operations. I personally benefit from seeing how the services are delivered. I like to go in and actually observe the language classes, etc., because it gives us a much more concrete feeling of the good work on the ground that these settlement agencies are doing.

In terms of the Immigration and Refugee Board, as you know, we have been making aggressive progress on filling GIC appointment positions, and as of today we are at 98% capacity. There are 164 GIC positions, and we're at about 160 positions filled, if I'm not mistaken. There will be a press release coming out later today on that. I anticipate that before Christmas we'll be pretty much at 100%.

**Mr. Terence Young:** That's great.

Minister, you talked about how you addressed the problems we've had in the refugee system. Can you talk a little bit about the economic impacts of the changes you've been able to make, including, potentially, the change announced yesterday? What would be the economic impacts on our economy? How much would there be in new revenues? What would be the value of getting, for example, foreign professionals into Canada more quickly and dealing with refugees more efficiently, etc?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Well, I've addressed the issue of foreign credential recognition, on which we are making progress, but I want to be clear. There is no silver bullet on that. We're not going to magically resolve the problem, and everyone who is waiting for an answer now is not going to get one tomorrow, nor can we now or will we ever be able to guarantee a yes answer for everyone who comes in. We want to make sure that doctors who are licensed are properly trained, that the engineers building bridges know what they're doing. So we cannot guarantee 100% success for newcomers.

In fact I've asked my ministry to make sure that applicants for our federal skilled worker program know that there is no guarantee that they will get a fast or positive decision on their credential recognition application. I'm told that our visa officers often find that when they tell people this, the response is they'd like to take their chances anyway. They understand that there's no guarantee and it might take time, but they'd still like to come to Canada and make an effort.

In terms of the refugee asylum system, as I've mentioned, it's our intention to come forward with improvements to the system that will make it more balanced, to provide much faster protection for real victims of persecution and people facing risk in their countries of origin, while at the same time removing the incentive for the fairly widespread abuse that we have seen. In the past two years we've seen a 60% increase in the number of asylum claims made in Canada. Most other western democracies have seen no increase or a reduction in the number of asylum applications. The 58% rejection rate at the IRB, the acceptance rate of which, by the way, is about twice as high as that of Britain or France, indicates to me that there is a fairly significant degree of abuse.

I know people criticize me for saying this, but I'm going to tell the truth, which is that there are de facto immigrants who come to Canada through the back door of the asylum system, and we need to indicate to those people that doing so is wrong. That is violating our

laws and our generosity as a country, and it is my intention to address that issue in the near future.

• (1000)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Mendes.

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

[*Translation*]

Good morning, minister, madam, gentlemen. Thank you for being here.

Minister, I want to second the comments by Mr. Dykstra, who thanked you for being here. I had the sad experience yesterday afternoon of learning that three ministers of state had refused to appear before the committee. It is therefore very pleasant to see you here every time we invite you.

If possible, I would like to address the issue of computerization at the department. This is something the Auditor General mentioned in her report—

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** I'd like to talk about the issue of computerization of the department, about the program introduced in 2000, which has experienced a series of failures and cost overruns. This will be my number one issue. Today, in the 21st century, I believe our department is a little behind in this regard, not to say far behind. I am deeply convinced that upgrading it will help us enormously in dealing with and resolving the backlog.

I would like you to talk to me, if possible, about what is being done and to tell me what timetable is set for implementation. It doesn't seem that that will go ahead before 2010.

Then I'll have another question on family reunification. The levels are declining and that's a concern for me. I'd like us to touch on that.

If I have time for other questions, I'll go back to sovereignty.

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

First of all, we had to meet some challenges with regard to the Global Case Management System. That's necessary. That project started in 2002-2003, I believe. It has been underway for a long time, and it was implemented in September 2004. We need this kind of system. If you visit our missions or offices, you'll see that there are enormous rooms full of files. This is ridiculous; we need a much more efficient system, a computer system. That is the purpose of the Global Case Management System.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** It may be better in environmental terms as well.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes, that's correct; fewer trees will be cut down as a result of our files.

The first phase of the GCMS concerning the citizenship sector was implemented in September 2004, as I said. It currently permits processing of 200,000 Canadian citizenship applications and proofs of citizenship a year. The next version of the GCMS is under construction. The results of the June 2009 independent review conducted by an outside IT auditor—

• (1005)

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** Could we have those results? Could we have a copy?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** That's possible; why not?

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** I would appreciate that very much.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** It's always available under the Access to Information Act. We can provide them to the committee. The independent project review confirms that the project plan is achievable, that the technological choice is well founded and that success is within our grasp.

With regard to the family class issue, I can tell you that, in overall terms, we have maintained the targets for permanent residents in the family class, except that the targets have been slightly lowered for next year, especially because we observed an increase in fraud in family sponsorship cases. At some overseas missions, such as Hong Kong, nearly 50% of sponsorship applications are false, according to our officers.

Can you add anything, Ms. Deschênes?

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes:** Don't forget that the rates are based on who will be coming to Canada. We will probably do the same amount of work, if not more, but because our acceptance rates are lower, we expect that fewer individuals will receive a visa to come to Canada. That's why the figures are lower for the coming year.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** That concerns me as well because the number of applications has not declined.

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes:** Yes, but the acceptance rate, especially in Hong Kong, is much lower than in the past because of the nature of the cases. There appears to be a network that is trying to get people in.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** That's recent.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Calandra, I apologize for putting you out of order.

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC):** That's okay, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thanks again to you and your officials for being back before us.

I want to echo what Mr. Young said about foreign credentials recognition. I represent part of the most ethnically diverse town in all of Canada—Markham—and foreign credential recognition is an enormous issue. It's something that I've been listening to governments talk about for a long time—even in my time as an assistant in the provincial government. Finally we're seeing some light at the end of the tunnel, so congratulations.

I've had so many requests in my office for copies of the new citizenship guide. I don't know how I'll ever keep up with all the

requests and all of the links we've been sending out. It's a huge success.

On the temporary foreign workers program, my riding has an urban component as well as a very important rural component. I talk to my farmers all the time and they tell me the same thing. They don't know how they would ever get their crops in the ground and back out if it wasn't for the temporary foreign workers program. I'm blessed to see the workers in the fields throughout much of the summer—so extraordinary work there.

In her report, the Auditor General said that one of the big factors in the growth of the backlog was the change in the act in 2000. She said it was a key factor in the growth of the inventory. In 2003 there was a reduction in the target levels for foreign skilled workers, and that was another key factor. There are obviously some lessons to be learned there in how new legislative changes can have a huge impact on hundreds of thousands of people.

Further on in her report she singled out some of the work that had been done on the Canadian experience class. She said it was a good example of how programming decisions should be supported.

Obviously some planning will go into any future changes, but what are some direct things that are being done to ensure that we start seeing an even greater reduction in the backlog? I know we're going in the right direction, but perhaps you can comment on some specific things we're doing to address the backlog.

• (1010)

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

As I've said to this committee before, the single biggest challenge that our ministry faces is managing what we call the various inventories, the backlogs. When our government came to office in 2006, the overall immigration backlog was pushing up to one million cases.

Let me say first of all that in the main stream of economic immigration—the federal skilled worker program—we've made enormous progress. The backlog had peaked at 640,000 cases, I believe. Had we not taken action through the action plan for faster immigration involving the ministerial instructions and related operational changes, we would have seen that backlog for federal skilled workers grow to over 800,000 cases by now. On processing times, the five-plus years edging up to over six-plus years was unacceptable. The system was on the brink of collapsing under its own weight. Something had to be done and was done through amendments to IRPA and operational changes, in addition to a \$109-million incremental investment in budget 2008.

Thanks to those measures we have seen the backlog in the federal skilled worker program processing reduced by 32%, which is the latest figure I have. People who are making applications—as of February 2008—are now getting answers within a year. I have to say that when I speak to immigration practitioners, lawyers, and people who follow this closely, they are delighted with the program and how it's working.

The Auditor General has pointed to certain challenges, and we take her comments very seriously. She appeared to make her comments or projections based on the assumption that we will maintain the 38 categories indefinitely into the future. In point of fact, we've always indicated that we will adjust the ministerial instructions for the occupational categories as necessary. If that means we'll need to refine the categories following consultation with the provinces and other stakeholders, we will certainly do so. In fact it's our intention to refine the ministerial instructions. That will help us maintain the progress we've made on backlog reduction for the skilled worker category.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Grewal.

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

Thank you, Minister, for coming to our committee.

Last week the committee heard about CIC initiatives to address inefficiencies in the processing of applications abroad. The Auditor General had high praise for the third-party language test and the news of these application centres. Can you tell us more about this?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** About the language training?

• (1015)

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Yes.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** When we came to office in 2006, the provinces outside of Quebec were massively underfunded in terms of settlement services, including language training. One of the first things we did in the 2006 budget was to effectively triple federal funding for settlement services to help ensure successful integration of newcomers. We did this through the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, specifically for contribution agreements with settlement agencies in Ontario, and through transfers to the provinces of B.C. and Manitoba, with which we have devolution agreements. They deliver the services on our behalf. We did it through direct federal services being provided in the four Atlantic provinces, plus Saskatchewan and Alberta. Quebec of course has its own system.

There has been a huge increase in services. You and I visited Progressive Intercultural Community Services, PICS, which provides an important range of settlement services, including language training in the lower mainland. They are doing so much more than they were a few years ago because of this.

We are ambitious for newcomers to succeed, and all the available empirical data indicates that the single most important factor in the economic success of immigrants is language proficiency. That is not to say that people with limited English or French abilities cannot succeed in Canada; we all know of great success stories where that has been the case. But increasingly we have a knowledge-based economy, where people's success will be tied in part to their language abilities. This is why we have invested so much in helping people improve their language abilities.

What concerns me is that only about 25% of eligible permanent residents enrol in the free English- and French-language classes we are providing through the settlement agencies or the provinces.

That's not good enough. We are ambitious for newcomers to succeed, and we want to encourage them to make every effort.

I know it is difficult. If you are working two survival jobs and your spouse is at home taking care of kids, it's not easy to spend two hours in a language class. I understand that. That's why we're trying to find more innovative programs, like the HIPPY program, which provides at-home integration counselling and language support to at-home parents. With the pilot program we've recently launched, we will send vouchers that are worth up to 500 hours of free language classes to randomly selected newcomers in Ontario, Alberta, and Nova Scotia. That will increase their knowledge of the availability of free language training and hopefully create a positive competition for better hours, locations, and service within the settlement sector, which is the objective of the pilot program.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Minister, do you have any ideas for improving our Canadian missions abroad?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** As I mentioned, through the foreign credential referral office and our \$32-million investment, we opened up the Canadian immigration integration project, partnering with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. They have been operating two-day free seminars plus personalized counselling to selected federal skilled workers in Delhi, Manila, and Beijing. Through our innovation fund in the ministry we've also opened up offices, partnering with groups like SUCCESS, from Vancouver, in Seoul, Korea, and Taipei, Taiwan. We will, as I mentioned, be expanding this program in the near future to include more people.

This isn't language training. This is pre-integration counselling, to let people know what the job market looks like where they hope to settle, the housing market, how to find a job—applying online—how to begin the process of credential recognition, how to get a health card, and getting their kids enrolled in school. I've met these people. They are getting a head start before they even arrive.

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

Mr. McColeman, welcome to the committee. You have the floor.

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Minister, for being here.

Although I'm a fill-in today, I'm going to take a little privilege and opportunity to ask you about a motion that I'm bringing to the House of Commons next Monday. It's on the British home child. When I heard your initial comments and heard about the new guide that your ministry is bringing out about Canada's history and values and diversity, I couldn't help but think there's a really strong linkage here to the motion I'm bringing to declare 2010 the year of the British home child. The British home child is part of our history that most Canadians don't know about, which touches many. Up to 12% to 14% of our population are descendants of British home children.

Of course, in my mind, this is a great Canadian story of overcoming adversity. There were over 100,000 British home children who immigrated into this country from the late 1800s to the early 1930s, and they overcame diversity. They have made our country great. They served in both world wars. They represent part of our history that hopefully will be told in the year 2010, as a result of this motion I'm bringing. I'm bringing this to the committee today. I know you've been involved in this and have communicated with me and my office and my staff. I'm just wondering what your overall view of such a motion is, and of the contributions these British home children have made to making Canada great.

• (1020)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thanks.

I'd like to welcome our colleague, Mr. McColeman, to the committee and commend him for his efforts in this regard.

The experience of the British home children was a significant part of building Canada. I believe something like 100,000 British home children arrived in this country between the 1880s and the early 1930s. While many of them had very positive experiences and had welcoming families and were able to have a future moving out of terrible poverty in Britain during that period, we also recognize that many of them experienced very difficult treatment, and in some cases abuse, and certainly we acknowledge that fact. This is what you're helping to educate Canadians about, their contribution and their important role in our history. I commend you for that.

Certainly for all parties, private members' bills and motions are free votes, but the cabinet always votes taking a government position, and I'm pleased to inform you that the cabinet has decided to support this motion, because we think it's a great way of highlighting this remarkable period in our history.

This is joined by various other educational efforts supported by federal departments and agencies. For example, I understand that Canada Post intends, on the advice of their commemorative stamp advisory committee, to issue a special British home child stamp in 2010. I understand that Pier 21, the new federal museum of immigration, has done exhibitions on their experience and will continue to, as has the Museum of Civilization across the river in Gatineau. Your motion I think will help to bring these different initiatives together at the federal level to raise awareness. Really, as you say, it corresponds to what we're trying to do in our new citizenship study guide, "Discover Canada", which is to give people a better sense of our history.

I think Mr. Young was asking about how you get copies. We'll be getting printed copies, and I'll be letting all MPs know shortly, and asking them how many copies they want to order to distribute within

their constituency offices, or wherever. If people would like to get their own copies, they can contact us online or they can download it from our website at [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca).

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That concludes the second round of questions.

The chairman has a brief question that has to do with the foreign credential issue that you announced yesterday and with the wait times being reduced for foreign credential recognition. It was pointed out, as you have also done, sir, that \$50 million has been set aside to work over two years with different levels of government to address this issue. When you're talking about professional organizations, medical associations, law associations, and those types of things, those are the associations that actually grade the people who are going to join those particular organizations. Obviously you had discussions with the provinces. Can you tell us what discussions you've had with the different associations across the country, and whether they will receive financial assistance as well?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thanks.

I should point out that for several years we've had a foreign credential recognition program situated in the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development Canada. That is the program and the ministry that has been the interface on the federal side with the licensing bodies. Minister Finley has taken the lead on this issue, working with the provinces with particular intensity since the first ministers' agreement in January of this year.

Obviously we don't have a direct oversight role with respect to the some 440 licensing bodies in Canada. They are creatures of the provincial governments, which under the Constitution, of course, have exclusive jurisdiction in their domains for labour market regulation, including for the regulated professions. It's principally the provinces that have been the interlocutors, but some of what I would call perhaps the more progressive professional agencies have gotten into a dialogue with the federal government through HRSDC and the FCR program.

We've been able to identify, of the 40-plus regulated professions, which of them are more willing to knock down some of the barriers to credential recognition for newcomers. The list of eight that we announced yesterday is a pretty good indication of the ones who are willing to play ball.

Some of the major professional agencies—let's make no bones about this—are less willing to collaborate, less willing to streamline the process, cut the red tape, and reduce the processing times. I have to share the observation that some of them appear to be acting in a way as to keep closed labour markets and to keep closed the doors of opportunity for foreign-trained professions, and that is a shame.

We are exercising political pressure, as are the provincial governments—Ontario through its fairness commissioner, and B. C. with the recent legislation. We are putting considerable pressure on those agencies not to reduce their standards, but to streamline the process. As I keep saying, we can't guarantee a yes answer, but we should offer them a clear, transparent, and fairly brief process so they can get a yes or a no.

An example is the medical profession. Here we have a profession that is much in demand in Canada and we have foreign-trained doctors who are clearly not getting licence to practice. It's not just foreign-trained doctors. I have a constituent, born in Canada, who went down to Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in the United States, got his M.D., got his specialization, and came back to Alberta where he found that it was going to take him a couple of years to be able to practise. He went back to the United States. There are hundreds of cases like that.

So we hope that next year, in the second year of the pan-Canadian framework rollout, the relevant colleges and licensing bodies in the medical profession will come to the table and give us a streamlined process for a maximum one-year answer on applications to be licensed.

• (1025)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Karygiannis.

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

When the minister was here on March 10, questions were put to him about persons coming into Canada. This was regarding Mr. Türkkaya Ataöv. The minister said,

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

The minister went further to say,

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

If someone is guilty of a crime in the country of origin and we believe they may commit a crime in Canada, the visa officer is likely to deny the person a visa.

Minister, you said that back in March, yet your officials allowed Mr. Sebastian Seeman to come to Canada when fully well you knew this individual was going to have trouble.

I'm going to read you what's in Wikipedia. I'm sure that Wikipedia is something your officials can also read. Wikipedia says,

On October 24, 2008, Seeman was arrested after taking part in a rally condemning state atrocities against Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Minister, why did your officials let the man in? Did they allow him in so you could have a big show and get him arrested and the whole nine yards, or was this still another failure that you let him in after you had let Mr. Türkkaya Ataöv in and he created the same thing?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thanks, Chairman.

I'm not familiar with, nor could I comment on, the details of a particular case, for reasons included in the Privacy Act, as you know, Mr. Karygiannis, but I will restate that the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act renders inadmissible anyone who belongs or has belonged to an espionage organization, a terrorist organization, a criminal network, or anyone who has committed a serious crime abroad that would also be a crime in Canada. The Canada Border Services Agency does its very best to enforce those provisions—

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** With all due respect, Minister, your officials failed—

**The Chair:** No, Mr. Karygiannis, you can't interrupt the minister.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Your officials failed. They knew it and they let him in—

**The Chair:** Mr. Karygiannis, I'm going to talk through your time and I'm going to ask Mr. Bevilacqua to ask questions.

Mr. Bevilacqua has a question.

**Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, on behalf of the Liberal Party, I want to express to Mr. McColeman that we will be supporting the British home child issue that you've raised.

Minister, we in this committee and I'm sure in your work as minister we're dealing with a lot of issues, whether it's foreign credentials, various streams, language training, immigrant aid, or settlement. But sometimes as we deal with these specific issues we forget the real big macro picture.

Unfortunately, what is happening with immigration in Canada, which is very different from immigration after the world war, is that you have immigrants who are over-represented in the poverty rates, the unemployment rates, and the under-employment rates of our country. This issue is important for two reasons. Number one, of course the immigrants are not fulfilling the so-called Canadian dream they talk about abroad. Number two, it's also bad for our own national interest. When individuals are not maximizing their human resources potential, it's very hard for a country to maximize its potential.



While we are dealing with immigration as a specific department, one of the concerns I have is that immigration is not a government-wide issue. That is a concern, and it's been a concern for me for a long time; it's not just a recent issue. I think it's myopic and parochial to just think of it as your ministry. Is this going to change? I understand how important the refugee reform package is to you, for example, but I'm not so sure the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister have the same appreciation. I'm being quite frank. Nor do I particularly believe that immigration and citizenship is viewed as a top-tier file. I'm fully cognizant of the economic challenges they face, but immigration is one of the pillars of nation-building, and I don't think it gets the respect it deserves.

● (1030)

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

We've certainly had this discussion and agreed on the need to improve economic outcomes for newcomers, which is why we brought in the action plan that is better aligning economic integrated selection with our labour market needs. It's processing our applications faster. It's why we've expanded the provincial nominee programs that typically include pre-arranged employment for people who come to Canada, which certainly helps their immediate economic success. It's why we've tripled the funding for settlement services and language training, it's why we created the Canadian experience class immigration program to allow pre-integrated, highly skilled temporary foreign workers and qualified foreign students to have a pathway to permanent residency.

I get your larger point absolutely. I would, however, challenge the assertion that this ministry is neglected or sidelined. If you look at the Minister of Finance's 2006 budget, it clearly underscores that future labour market development, including immigration, is central to Canada's mid- to long-term economic success. That was the policy rationale for my colleague, the Minister of Finance, to increase the budget of this department by hundreds of millions of dollars to invest in settlement services. That was real money. As you know, budget-making is about choices, and the government chose to invest and we are continuing to invest in these areas.

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

Monsieur St-Cyr.

[Translation]

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

I also wanted to emphasize the fact that the Bloc Québécois will be supporting Mr. McColeman's motion. He will no doubt be delighted to know that one of the descendants of those persons is an illustrious promoter of Quebec sovereignty in the person of Gilles Duceppe.

I want to go back to the French question. In our previous exchange, minister, you said that the language of proceeding could not be changed at every turn during a trial, that that would require translation, which would result in costs.

However, in the case before us, at the first opportunity, even before the first hearing was held, counsel asked on behalf of his client to proceed in French. The problem is that, at the start of the process, when the respondent was summoned to meet with the official, the material had already been produced in English. A form

had been completed by an official in Montreal, who had checked the "English" box systematically. However, if you say that, once the material is produced in English, it can't be translated, there will be virtually no material in French, since, unfortunately, immigration matters are dealt with in English in Montreal.

You said earlier that that was ultimately the fault of the Public Safety people. First, could you undertake to ask your Public Safety colleague if the agency could proceed in French by default? Second, if the first opportunity not yet early enough, when must the francophone lawyers in Montreal make the request in order to be entitled to proceed in French?

● (1035)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

I visited the offices of my department in Montreal, and I believe that 100% of the employees I met were francophones who function entirely in French. I can tell you that I visited the operations office of the Canada Border Services Agency at Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport in Montreal. They operate completely in French. So it's obviously a bilingual service.

If you have any knowledge of specific cases in which people have not received service in French, across Canada, but particularly in Quebec, please inform me of them. It would obviously be completely bizarre and unacceptable. I assure you that we are here. I believe the Commissioner of Official Languages has previously given the Department of Citizenship and Immigration good directions concerning the Official Languages Act. I therefore don't understand the problem.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** Mr. Kenney, the problem is that I have been informing you about the matter before us for months. One lawyer asks, at the start of proceedings, to proceed in French and ultimately has to fight for that right. However, the court refuses to order translation into French. I have informed you, and not only have you not acted, but what is more, the Attorney General and your counsel are working to continue this legal guerilla warfare to prevent this client and his lawyer from receiving documents in French. There's a problem.

The immigration lawyers, the specialists, have told me, they have all confirmed it: when someone appears before immigration, if he doesn't speak French, it's English by default, even if that person doesn't speak English either. The problem is there. It's at the very start of the process.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, I get the impression that, in the case in question, counsel for the asylum seeker requested at the outset that the language of procedure be English. And the documents were then provided in English. That's the rule; that's just common sense. Then they decided to change languages. I believe it is up to the claimant—a Spanish speaker—to choose the language of procedure.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** He is entitled to proceed in French all the same.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** He decided at the outset to proceed in English, then decided something else for reasons of which we are unaware. Ultimately, we must ensure that, on the whole, counsel do not use the Official Languages Act in the judicial system to change the translation of all documents a number of times. There have to be reasonable guidelines for applying the Official Languages Act in the context of legal proceedings.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** The problem arose before that, minister.  
[English]

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

Ms. Chow is next.

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

The Hong Kong rejection rate for spousal application, as you mentioned, is 50%. Are we saying that half of the spousal applications, these marriages, are fake marriages, that they are cheaters? Is there a consultant network teaching people how to get married, etc.? What percentage of these cases are then overturned by the Immigration Appeal Board?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I'll defer the question to Madame Deschênes, except to say that globally, I think you know very well, Ms. Chow, we do have a problem of marriages of convenience, commercialized fake marriages, to get into Canada. I saw in India the wall of shame that you've probably heard about, with fake marriage photos.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** But 50%, that's half.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I'll let Madame Deschênes address that.

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes:** I would address it by saying it's a trend we're starting to see, and the department is concerned that there's organized fraud around that movement. In terms of what the ID is doing and so on, we're starting to look at that, but the great majority of cases of refusals right now are not proceeding to try to appeal.

I repeat, we're looking at that. It's a new trend, but we are concerned that it's an organized movement.

•(1040)

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Is the Prime Minister going to be addressing that when he's in Hong Kong? He'll be there in a few days.

Never mind.

What percentage of foreign credentials recognitions are actually done before the person arrives? I know that has been something we've been pushing for. We've been saying get them recognized; get the training done, get all the paperwork done. Do you have that percentage?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** No, we don't, and that's part of one of the objectives of the pan-Canadian framework that was announced yesterday. It is to have better information. Obviously, the Nova Scotia dentists licensing body doesn't share with CIC their acceptance rate, or when people applied. Within the pan-Canadian framework, there will be much better information sharing, so hopefully we'll be able to take a look in a couple of years' time and see what the acceptance rates and processing times are for the 440 licensing bodies across the country, and how many of those folks applied from abroad.

I can tell you that we have had some success. I think very few people are likely getting their credentials recognized before they arrive in Canada, but we're starting to move the curve ahead by several months, by encouraging people to apply before arrival.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** One of the recommendations coming from the committee is to provide some financial incentives to the provinces, so they can offer internships for the doctors. Your colleague from the U.S., even if he gets his credentials recognized, he still can't practice here, because there's no internship. The hospital was saying we don't have money to offer more internships, etc. Is there any kind of pilot project that you can move toward that area?

Some of the small businesses and medium-sized businesses say if you want them to mentor people, it takes them time and energy and it takes a lot of work, so you need to provide them with some kind of loan or something, so they can give the new employees their first Canadian experience.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I agree. In global terms, internships, mentorships, and apprenticeships are part of the way we can help integrate people in a regulated profession to step up their skill levels to Canadian standards, or to get licensed. I can tell you that in terms of providing bridge funding for skills upgrades, new permanent residents already qualify for some of the federally supported student financing programs. I know Minister Finley is looking at ways in which this could perhaps be expanded.

I'm going off message here to say that I personally think the federal government, the public service, should emulate some of the progressive private sector employers—those who are partnering, for instance, with TRIEC, in Toronto—in opening up opportunities for mentorship. I can tell you our own ministry has been very progressive in this respect with our student refugee program, where we brought in 20 student refugees, I think, from WUSC—World University Service of Canada—to have internships in our ministry, and a number of them have now been hired as full-scale members of the public service.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Chow.

Mr. Dykstra.

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

One of the things we talked a little bit about here was the new study guide, Minister. I know that through your office we're actually working hard this morning to make sure that each member of the committee has one before we leave today so that we actually get a chance. This one's warm. It's just hot off the press. I'll make sure everyone gets one.

The minister is doing everything he can to make sure we all have a copy before we leave this morning. I wanted to thank you for that, Minister, and also to give you the opportunity. I know a couple of my colleagues have a couple of questions, so for the sake of being able to get those questions out, perhaps you could just address it. The fact that we have this document put together... You are to be congratulated for the work and your ministry is to be congratulated for the work that they did on it.

Perhaps you can comment just for a minute about the content and the intent over the next couple of months for distribution.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** In terms of the content, the intent of this was part of our citizenship action plan to invest a greater sense of meaning, of the importance of citizenship, and also to deepen the knowledge of the symbols, values, and institutions that are rooted in Canadian history. It's not just for new Canadians, but for all Canadians.

I view the citizenship part of my mandate as being relevant to the native-born Canadian citizens and deepening for them an appreciation of Canadian citizenship. One of the things I've been most encouraged about in the response to this guide is the demands from schools and school boards and libraries to make this available to young native-born Canadians as well as new Canadians.

I should also mention that it was designed following broad consultations with a blue-ribbon panel of historians, thinkers, journalists, and others from across the political, demographic, and geographic spectrum. I'm very pleased to see the positive response it has received. All MPs will be receiving a letter shortly asking them how many copies they'd like, within reason. We can't break the bank in terms of printing.

I can tell you that public demand has been amazing. I think in the first week we had 85,000 downloads or so from our website of this guide.

• (1045)

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** I'll turn my time over to Mr. Calandra and to Mr. Young, but I thought you made a really interesting comment. A bestseller in Canada is 20,000 copies, and their first print is going to be 500,000. You'd have to argue that this is one of the bestsellers in the history of Canada.

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

**The Chair:** Mr. Calandra.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Minister, we strayed from the Auditor General's report. The other day we were in front of the heritage committee. As you know, my parents came to this country in the late fifties from Italy, and I was called bush league by my NDP counterpart on that committee because I expressed my relatives' and my uncle's feelings on this Italian apology bill that is currently before Parliament and how they disagreed with it.

You made some really good points, but I wonder if you could comment briefly on the department's position with respect to the Italian apology. It mirrors quite coincidentally with my own feelings on that.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Well, thanks.

I did appear before the heritage committee on this issue last week, Chair. I can reinforce that in 1990 former Prime Minister Mulroney made what he characterized as a full and unqualified apology on behalf of the people and the Government of Canada to Canadians of Italian origin for the injustices that occurred at the time of the internment of Canadians—the 632 Canadians of Italian origin—between 1940 and 1943. In addition, our government has provided \$5 million of specified funding under the community historic recognition program for projects involving education and commemoration of the Italian internment experience. Those funds will be dispersed based on the advice of a panel of eminent Canadians of Italian origin.

I find some of the politics on this a little unfortunate, because previous governments had many opportunities to act on this and other issues of wartime internment or immigration restriction measures. They chose not to do so. Fine, that was their choice. To then turn around and criticize the Mulroney government for making the apology and our government for providing real funds—\$5 million—for commemorative projects is unfortunate.

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

Ms. Mendes, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

With your permission, minister, I would like to do a little follow-up to what Mr. Bevilacqua tried to discuss with regard to nation building in Canada, as well as your comments on citizenship.

You believe this concerns all Canadians, not just newcomers. I entirely agree with you. In fact, it seems to me that we often fail in our duty to provide information to our longstanding citizens. I am virtually certain that, if the vast majority of Canadians had to take the citizenship examination, the vast majority would fail it, including those who are currently in school and studying the history of Canada. I agree: it should really affect the entire population of Canada.

I would nevertheless like to note a few deficiencies. Perhaps this information can eventually be added to the guide, including mention of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I think it is important to include it, as well as the fact that Canada was one of the major players in the establishment of the International Criminal Court, that it was also one of the major promoters of the concept of responsibility for protecting states, one of the major instigators of the anti-personnel mines treaty. I think those are among the major accomplishments that Canadians can boast of in the world and that should also be known to all Canadian citizens.

Sometimes I'm saddened to see the extent to which our citizens do not even understand how Parliament operates. They don't understand at all the difference between Parliament and the provincial parliamentary assemblies.

These are all deficiencies that I believe we should remedy in a guide for all citizens, not just newcomers to Canada.

I'd like to have your comments on that subject.

● (1050)

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

The goal, madam, was to increase the knowledge of Canadians of all origins of our systems, traditions and democratic values. We cannot take it for granted that people understand them.

You noted certain aspects on which you would like there to be more information. I can tell you that the guide obviously includes references to the importance of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It also summarizes, on page 8, some of the fundamental freedoms contained in the Charter. On page 24, we talk about Canada's international role in a number of organizations, including the UN, peacekeeping and other areas.

I believe everyone has ideas about items that should be added. However, it was impossible to have a 100-page guide. We had to make certain choices to limit guide content. This is not an encyclopedia of the entire history of Canada; it is a summary, but if you have any suggestions on items that should be added, we are open to future revisions.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** I submit them to you. Thank you, minister.

I am sharing my allotted time with Mr. Karygiannis.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes.

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

Minister, the waiting numbers have gone sky-high for spousal partners and dependent children from African source countries. For example, in Accra it went from 18 months in 2006 to 20 months, an increase of 11%. In Cairo, the increase is 57%; in Nairobi, 92%; in Pretoria, 20%; in Rabat, 42%, in Kingston, Jamaica, 75%; and Port-au-Prince, 12%. That's for spousal.

**The Chair:** You have about 30 seconds, Mr. Karygiannis.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** When it comes to children, in Accra it's 29%; in Nairobi it's 73%; in Pretoria it's 114%; and in Kingston it's 50%.

Minister, you talked about a wall of shame. I'm just wondering if this is your wall of shame.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, since this member likes to politicize things, I'm required to point out that when the government of which he was a part took office in 1993, the overall inventories for immigration were well under 100,000. When they left office in 2006, it was up to nearly a million cases. The processing times that he talks about, in any stream and in any mission, largely developed under the government of which he was a part. So I'm not going to take that kind of politicization.

Our officials do their very best, in tough circumstances—

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Minister, this was—

**The Chair:** No, no, you've made your shot, Mr. Karygiannis.

Are you finished, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I'll just say that our officials do their very best in tough circumstances to maintain our goals for acceptable processing times, and that they're constantly innovating to improve processing.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. St-Cyr.

[*Translation*]

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

Minister, I have focused on the language issue in immigration because an important message is being transmitted to immigrants through government policies. The message that your department is currently sending, and perhaps that of Public Safety as well, is that immigration matters are being dealt with in English and that French is the exception, not the rule.

We've talked about the citizenship guide. In my opinion, that would have been the perfect opportunity to talk to immigrants about Bill 101 in Quebec and the fact that children must be registered in French-language schools. The House of Commons has moreover unanimously passed a motion stating that, in Quebec, immigrants are expected to learn French first and foremost. This guide would have been the ideal opportunity. Several passages concerning the Queen could have been suppressed. I agree that we should talk about her, but glorifying her to this degree may be a bit excessive.

I'm going to change subjects, since we won't be agreeing on that today in the context of this committee. We may do so later perhaps. I would like to know what follow-up there has been regarding the citizenship frauds reported by journalists on the *Enquête* program. It was shown that these frauds were being committed in Quebec, among other places, and that people were living outside the country while claiming that they were in Canada in order to obtain citizenship. To my knowledge—and you'll correct me if I'm wrong—formal charges still have not been laid in this matter. The citizens I represent and the public wonder how it is that journalists can conduct investigations and discover very troubling cases using hidden cameras but that no charges have been laid to date in this matter.

● (1055)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I will not comment on any specific cases, but I can tell committee members that the Border Services Agency and the RCMP are investigating immigration and citizenship fraud. The reports are obviously a concern to us, and that is why we are considering imposing more serious penalties on false consultants who have committed fraud as such.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** The Bloc Québécois proposed—

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. St-Cyr, we have to conclude the discussion because we have to vote on the estimates.

[Translation]

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** I have only two minutes left.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but we're running out of time. So the discussion has come to a close.

Colleagues, shall votes 1b, 5b, 7b, and 10b carry?

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Department

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$43,404,571

Vote 5b—The grants listed in the Estimates and contributions .....\$90,000,000

Vote 7b—Pursuant to section 25(2) of the Financial Administration Act, to write-off from the Accounts of Canada 3,013 debts due to Her Majesty in right of Canada amounting to \$828,006 related to immigration loans issued pursuant to section 88 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act – To authorize the transfer of \$492 from Citizenship and Immigration Vote 1, Appropriation Act No. 2, 2009–10 for the purposes of this Vote and to provide a further amount of.....\$827,514

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Vote 10b—Program expenditures.....\$23,666

(Votes 1b, 5b, 7b, and 10b agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Ms. Chow.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** I want to indicate my opposition to one vote—the \$32.5 million towards establishing visa offices in Mexico.

**The Chair:** You're voicing your objection to that?

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Did I see another hand up? No more hands? All right, that's it.

Ms. Chow, thank you.

Shall I report the supplementary estimates (B) to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister and your colleagues, for coming and talking to us. I know you'd like to talk some more, but that's what happens when you have a great committee—we run out of time.

Thank you very much.

We're adjourned.





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