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Mr. David Tilson

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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•(1100)

[English]

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

This is the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. This is meeting number five. It is Tuesday, October 25, 2011. The meeting is televised today. It involves, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), study of the immigration application backlogs in light of the action plan for faster immigration.

We have three witnesses with us this morning. We have Patrick Grady, an economist at Global Economics Ltd.; Herbert G. Grubel, a senior fellow of the Fraser Institute; and Joseph Ben-Ami, the president of the Canadian Centre for Policy Studies.

Good morning to you all.

You each have up to eight minutes to make a presentation, and then the committee members will ask questions of you.

We will start off with Mr. Grady. Thank you for coming, sir.

Mr. Patrick Grady (Economist, Global Economics Ltd., As an Individual): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It's an honour to be here today and to be able to talk to you about immigration issues.

The backlog is an important issue, but it's not the main important issue. It's really a symptom of an immigration policy in Canada that wasn't working and was generating large numbers of people who are not able to succeed in Canada's labour market. It is also something that was growing out of control, which caused the government to take action.

I give the government credit, with their Bill C-51, for amending the IRPA and implementing the action plan to do something about the backlog. But I think there are real questions about the effectiveness and the efficiency of the action plan.

First, there are many issues about the data on the backlog, and good data is necessary in order to make appropriate decisions. You have probably noticed that, unless they've given you additional data, the main official data was as of December 31 of last year; that was the data used for the consultations. There have been some selective updates provided, but it's very sketchy data and it doesn't really mesh very well with some of the other data. I find this a little bit of a puzzle.

But the global case management system has been implemented. I'm a little bit surprised that it can't produce reasonable data and data

that will provide information on who the people in these backlogs are—their age, their sex, their education, where they come from—and various things about how long particular groups of them have been in the backlog. It's just overall data that is presented on the length of the backlog, making an unrealistic assumption that no new applications are accepted after March 31.

I think you have a hard job here. You really have to probe the government a bit more to get information out of them.

Then, of course, there's the real problem. If you consider the backlog to be the main problem, the government has met the objective to a certain extent, as they said, in that the pre-2008 federal skilled workers have been roughly halved. But if you look at the overall federal skilled workers in Canada and the applications that have come after that time, it has gone down only a teeny bit. And worse, the overall backlog is still over a million people. So there has been no improvement there.

The question this raises is why the backlog hasn't come down. I think it's obvious: the federal government doesn't really control the intake flow into the backlog; it only controls a small proportion. Quebec has its own program. The federal government has made commitments under the provincial nominee programs, which they think constrain it.

As a result, the federal government has been relinquishing its ability to control the total numbers under the immigration inflow. It has only been able to apply ministerial instructions to federally selected economic class immigrants mainly, the federal skilled workers and business immigrants, and the inflow of these has been cut down to a low level. The latest cutback was to 10,000 per year. There's a cap on the federal investor program of 700, and the cap was on each of the individual occupational categories. You can see that some of them have already been filled, and we're only three months into the year.

And then on the other hand the backlog of parents and grandparents has increased by almost a half, according to the recent data the minister gave, which showed that the backlog was 165,000, which was higher than the one they presented for the consultations. Wait times for parents and grandparents, with no new applicants, was already at seven and a half years, so it's probably much higher.

I'll make a few critical observations on the backlog.

I think the backlog has been cherry-picked by the government at this point by applying their ministerial instructions with respect to occupational categories and job offers. Although I don't have any data on this, I think those remaining in the backlog are likely to be the least desirable and least likely to succeed in the labour market. Not only that, but they're five years older now than they were when they started this process, and they were already disadvantaged in the labour market, so they're even in a worse position.

• (1105)

The cap on federal skilled worker applications and the occupational filter is really not a very good way to select immigrants who will make the greatest contribution to the Canadian economy. In my view, it represents an excessively bureaucratic approach to what is a serious economic problem: the poor performance of recent immigrants and the government's lack of success in selecting immigrants who will do well in the labour market. It excludes those who may be much more highly qualified new foreign federal skilled worker applicants in favour of the less attractive pre-2008 applicants. And while the arranged employment override is a step in the right direction, it's weighted in favour of temporary foreign workers and doesn't really seem to make very much of a distinction about the quality of the jobs of the people who are being admitted under the employment override.

Parents and grandparents.... Well, that's something that's very expensive for Canada. Just to give you a little bit of a number, Dave Dodge and Richard Dion did a study of the health costs in Canada. Their estimate was, taking men and women, that the cost per person between the ages of 65 and 84 would be about \$192,500. If you just do a simple arithmetic calculation and apply that to the backlog, that would cost Canada \$31.8 billion during the senior years of the people in that backlog.

Live-in caregivers is a program in the backlog. It's small at 29,000, but I find it very hard to understand why this program survives for so long and who the constituency for it is, given that the main beneficiaries are upper-income people who get a subsidy for taking care of their children in a very expensive way of at-home child care. Of those who come, 40% come to work for relatives. Then, unlike the other temporary foreign worker programs, these people get opportunity for full status after two years and they are entitled to bring in their family.

• (1110)

The Chair: One minute.

Mr. Patrick Grady: One more minute? Okay, I won't get into this....

Herb and I did an estimate of the cost of immigration. If you apply our number to this backlog you get a cost of \$6 billion a year, if you allow all these people in. Also, you can calculate, based on the Statistics Canada data, that if you allow everybody in the backlog in and they do just as well as the previous one million people allowed in, 26.4% of them—or 265,000—will go into poverty.

I think it's quite clear that the government's approach for dealing with the backlog isn't working. The caps are undermining the performance of economic class immigrants by excluding many wanting to apply for immigration now in favour of older immigrants who were taken in under less demanding selection systems. I think

the government needs to restructure its immigration policy in order to maximize the potential economic benefits—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Grady.

Mr. Grubel, thank you for coming.

Mr. Herbert Grubel (Senior Fellow, Fraser Institute, As an Individual): Thank you very much for having me. It's a pleasure to be here on the other side. As you know, I spent four years as the finance critic for the Reform Party, spending many hours in this room.

I'd like to note that I am both a professor of economics emeritus at Simon Fraser University and a senior fellow at the Fraser Institute. Neither institution has official positions on anything. I am here in my personal capacity as an economist.

I'd like to begin my presentation with a very radical proposition. The question before this hearing should be whether to get rid of the backlog altogether, not how to make it shorter.

The question about the best immigration levels to shorten the list involves a moral, bureaucratic, political, and practical morass. As you will have noticed already, no witness has produced any objective criteria for determining the number of immigrants. The reason is simple: there are none. All recommendations of numbers are basically arbitrary and driven by hidden moral and political motives.

Let me suggest that instead of moral and political criteria we should adopt the following fundamental principles: first, let us set policies so that immigrants benefit Canada, not so that Canada benefits immigrants; second, let us use our country's desire to help foreigners only after we have provided adequately for the many of our compatriots who need health care, caregivers, housing, special education, and so on. If we want to contribute to the welfare of foreigners, let us continue to admit genuine refugees and send foreign aid to the needy abroad.

My suggestions are based on the realization that there is almost universal agreement among economists that immigration has no significant positive effects on the incomes of Canadians. But if they come in large numbers, these large numbers depress wages and raise profits, effects that most of us don't really support.

This traditional view of the merit of immigration that I have taught and written about for decades as a professor has become obsolete with the existence of the welfare state, in which everyone in Canada is entitled to a large array of social benefits and the progressive income tax system requires recent immigrants with average low incomes to pay fewer taxes than the average Canadian.

In a joint study with Patrick, we have estimated that these provisions of the welfare state are putting a fiscal burden of about \$20 billion to \$30 billion on Canadians every year. That's what we'll spend over the next 15 years to renew our navy. We spend this every year because of the selection procedures we are using to admit immigrants.

All traditional arguments about the merits of immigration are bogus and do not stand up to careful analysis. To mention just a few, immigrants are not needed to fill job vacancies. In fact, they can create shortages with their demands for housing, infrastructure, and doctors. Ten years' worth of immigrants require 5,500 new doctors. Where are we going to get them? Immigrants do not solve the problem of unfunded liabilities of social programs, and may worsen it. Their contributions to multiculturalism are marginal and at the borderline of becoming negative. Many countries without immigration are doing very well indeed economically and socially, from Korea and Singapore to China and India.

For these reasons, I recommend that we should adopt policies that bring into Canada only immigrants who pay taxes high enough or have access to funds that match the costs they impose on our social programs.

Before I offer some thoughts on a system for attaining this objective, let me present my radical proposal for dealing with the backlog. Simply pass a law that repeals the existing legislation, promising that anyone who pays a fee is guaranteed consideration for an immigrant visa. Dissolve the existing backlog by sending each applicant a letter saying, in diplomatic language of course, that "Parliament has decided that Canada is no longer obligated to consider your application; attached to this letter is a refund of the fee you have paid, including interest".

•(1115)

Parliaments pass this kind of legislation all the time: the Wheat Board will be dissolved; the gun registry will be scrapped; the national energy policy no longer exists. When I was in Parliament in the 1990s, transfers to the provinces were changed. I could go on, but the point is clear: no past legislation is immune from change or repeal by new Parliaments.

All such changes are accompanied by much opposition and debate, and sometimes it is very heated, but this is not something to be regretted or feared. It is intrinsic to democracy. Elections are the ultimate arbiter of the public on the merit of such changes.

Now to a brief discussion of an immigration policy that brings benefits to Canadians living in the welfare state. I suggest that immigration visas be issued only to Africans who have a pre-approved employment contract, at a pay that is at least equal to the average earned by Canadians and is subject to their passing normal health and security standards. Parents and grandparents should be given visas only if their offspring post a bond that is large enough to cover their expected cost of health care and pays for the living expenses they might need. Under these provisions, immigrants no longer impose a fiscal burden on Canada.

The principle underlying my proposal is simple and clear: let market signals, not politicians, technocrats, and vested interests determine who should be admitted and how many immigrants

should enter Canada annually. Relying on market signals in the operation of the economy has served Canadians and the rest of the world well; it should do so for the selection of immigrants.

Let me conclude with some observations about the immigration policy. Recent opinion surveys show clearly that most Canadians are in favour of reduced levels of immigration or the maintenance of current levels. In considering these results, it is important to note that these sentiments are strongest in the country's largest cities, where immigrants have settled in the past—

The Chair: One minute, Mr. Grubel.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: Yes, sir, I am on track.

—but where, importantly, also the largest numbers of parliamentary seats are at stake.

Through my own limited contact with immigrants, I have noticed they are very much aware, more than the average Canadian, of the cost that immigrants impose on us fiscally, through congestion and pollution, high housing costs, and other channels.

For these reasons, parties that embrace policy reforms of the sort I am proposing can expect electoral gains rather than losses in ridings in which immigrants reside in large numbers. To verify the correctness of my view, I urge politicians to make their own surveys and remain skeptical of survey results produced by organizations that may be supported by the immigration industry and allege that Canadians want more immigrants.

Thank you.

The Chair: You were right on the button. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Ben-Ami, you have eight minutes, sir.

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami (President, Canadian Centre for Policy Studies): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to members of the committee for inviting me here today to speak with you.

We've been asked to talk about the growing backlog of applications for admission to Canada, but before addressing that subject I'd like to take a minute to say a few words about my own background and qualifications to speak on the matter.

As a first-generation Canadian, my experience and my family's experience is typical of most immigrant families. My father came to Canada in 1952 from a Europe that was only just beginning to recover from the devastation of World War II. He was admitted to this country as a farmhand, and worked on a farm not far from here for more than a year while he learned the language.

He eventually became a Canadian citizen. He acquired a trade and started a small business that at its height employed more than 20 people. He met and married my mother, and together they raised four children, who I hope are all productive members of the communities in which they live.

Before joining the Canadian Centre for Policy Studies I was the director of communications and later director of government relations and diplomatic affairs for the Jewish human rights group B'nai Brith. As most of you probably know, it is very much involved in immigration from both a policy and a practical point of view.

In short, I am here today not just as a spokesperson for a public policy think-tank, but as someone with a strong personal interest in the subject as well.

Mr. Chairman, we all know the numbers. The backlog of people qualified to come to Canada as permanent residents who are waiting for their admission to be processed now exceeds one million. Some have to wait for years before being admitted. This isn't a new problem. The blame can be shared by different political parties. The number of qualified applications for admittance has exceeded both immigration targets and our capacity to process those applications for more than a decade.

There are two possible ways to reduce this backlog. The first is to relieve the bottleneck by either implementing reforms that will reduce the time required to process individual applications, or directing sufficient resources to the problem area to ensure that even without reforms, the department has the capacity to process more applications than are being fed into the system. The second way is to throttle back the number of applications by reducing the number of people who automatically qualify for admission as a result of an individual's successful application. I place the word "selection" in quotation marks, because really there is no true selection process to speak of. That's a subject for another conversation, however.

Although there are no doubt many things that can and ought to be done to improve the speed and efficiency of the admissions process, we at the Canadian Centre for Policy Studies believe that the proper course of action for the government to take is the latter of these two: that is, reduce the number of people who qualify for admittance simply because an individual to whom they are related has been selected. Furthermore, we believe that the best and fairest way to accomplish this reduction is by limiting relatives, who automatically qualify for admission to Canada under the family class, to spouses or their equivalent and dependent children.

We don't make these recommendations lightly. There are, however, a few inconvenient and unavoidable facts that compel us to do so. Ladies and gentlemen, the plain truth is that we actually don't manage immigration well in this country, despite the rhetoric.

To begin with, despite all the talk about immigrants filling labour shortages, there remains no credible mechanism in Canada to ensure that admissions are prioritized to meet current and emerging labour force needs. And even if there were, it would be useless, because we don't address the issue of recognizing foreign credentials.

Let's say hypothetically that we identify a need for doctors, and the department is empowered to fill that need by admitting doctors, regardless of where they are in the queue. None of those doctors would be able to practise medicine—in other words, fill the need for which they were admitted—unless their credentials were recognized, and more often than not they aren't. This is a serious problem, for which no serious solution has ever been proffered. The result is that

we have a flood of highly qualified immigrants who are unemployable in their professions.

Let's assume that credentialing is not a problem, and after reforming admission procedures we're able to process 350,000 people a year, as opposed to 250,000. Provincial governments are barely able to keep up with the escalating costs of health care associated with current immigration levels, when combined with an aging population. Adding an extra 100,000 people a year to the system requires long-term, comprehensive planning that just hasn't been done.

Education budgets are also a concern. Where does the money come from to build the schools that are going to be needed to educate the children of so many new residents, especially when provincial budgets are under so much strain due to growing health care costs? There is no plan there either.

What about the infrastructure that has to be provided to service new housing? Our urban areas are unable to keep up with the current rate of growth of their populations. Anyone who spends time in Toronto, for instance, will understand the effects of urban sprawl and existing transportation leaks.

● (1120)

Let's not forget unseen services such as water supply, sewers, sewage treatment. What would be the impact of increasing the number of new arrivals on this aging, and in some cases failing, municipal infrastructure? Once again, no plan.

These are issues that other levels of government, and ultimately taxpayers, have to contend with that rarely, if ever, are taken into account when decisions are being made here with respect to the number of people being admitted into Canada each year.

Consider something as simple as garbage. The challenge of garbage disposal, which is directly related to population growth, is reaching crisis levels in some of our urban centres. Yet I'll wager that nobody here has ever thought about the impact on this problem of maintaining current levels of admissions, let alone increasing them.

Then there's the question of social and cultural integration. The character, ladies and gentlemen, of immigration has changed significantly over the years. We in Canada have not adjusted to these changes. We have yet, for example, to resolve the conflict between our desire to respect the cultural integrity of immigrant communities and the pressing need to encourage members of those communities to abandon certain aspects of their cultures that impede their successful integration into the broader Canadian society.

This is just a small sampling of the issues that must be taken into careful consideration when deciding on the proper level of immigration, but which are not. The point is this, my friends: immigration levels cannot be set in a vacuum. They impact a wide range of policy areas at all levels of government. We believe that Canada's capacity to successfully absorb new arrivals is now stretched to the breaking point and beyond. It may be that we can increase that capacity, but that would require careful and coordinated planning by all levels of government, and that's just not happening.

● (1125)

The Chair: You have less than a minute, sir.

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: Until and unless it does, any policy that would result in an increase in migration to this country would be, frankly, irresponsible. Hence, our decision to recommend that the best way at this time to clear the backlog of applications for admission is to reduce the number of applications by modifying the criteria by which an individual could qualify for admission indirectly. In our view, this is a matter of putting facts before fantasy and reality before ideology.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you to all of you. You've given some interesting presentations. I know that my colleagues will have some questions for you.

Mr. Opitz is first.

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Thank you very much. It's a very strong trio of witnesses today, and I welcome you all.

Mr. Grubel, welcome back. I know my colleague Mr. Weston follows in distinguished footsteps

And Mr. Ben-Ami, your characterization of your family coming here sounds exactly like mine, so it's a little bit of *déjà vu* for me.

My first question I'll address to all three of you in turn. The NDP has asked for a significant increase in the proportion of family members and refugees who we accept every year compared to economic immigrants. I would note that when the minister presented last week, he pointed out that family members currently constitute the highest number of immigrants who we let into the country, albeit through different streams. What would you comment on the NDP proposal?

Why don't we start with Mr. Ben-Ami.

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: Thank you very much for the question.

Yes, I mentioned the selection process. We don't really have a credible selection process. The fact is that only around 20% of people who applied for admission into Canada are "selected", and everybody else qualifies automatically by virtue of some sort of relationship to the selected applicant. We don't think that's a very sensible way of selecting immigrants.

With respect to increasing the number of people who qualify for family reunification, look, in theory this is not a bad thing. We're not arguing that in principle we shouldn't be allowing parents and grandparents. We're just saying that if we're allowing parents and grandparents to come to this country, then we have to deal with the

practical realities of it. We owe it not just to citizens who live here already but to new arrivals as well to ensure that we're able to handle the numbers of people and the characteristics of the demographics of the people who are coming here.

At this point in time, we set these numbers and we establish all these criteria in a complete disconnect from the realities on the ground. Listen, I can't give you a definitive answer, except to say that in principle it's not a bad idea. Nobody is opposed to it in principle. Certainly we aren't. But it has to reflect the reality on the ground as well. If we're not going to deal with those realities, then we have a responsibility to ensure that we're dealing with the levels of immigration and not expanding them.

One last thing about refugees: it's a totally different issue altogether, which none of us have really touched on, but we do have to consider the number of people who are being admitted to Canada not just as permanent residents, but as refugees and temporary workers as well. We let in a lot of people under temporary work permits in this country, and a lot of them actually don't go home after those visas expire. So that's another thing that should be taken into consideration.

● (1130)

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Grady.

Mr. Ted Opitz: I apologize, but I only have seven minutes and I have a few to get in.

Mr. Patrick Grady: The problem in immigration is that the performance of immigrants has deteriorated over time, and this reflects the performance of both family class and economic immigrants, not to mention refugees. The government has been trying to deal with the whole issue of selecting the best economic immigrants by looking at the selection criteria. So they recognize the problem and they're trying to deal with it.

On the family class, though, the problem is that they're not subject to the same sort of screening. They don't have to pass language tests. They don't have the labour market readiness. So you're always going to have bad performance from family class immigrants.

I don't see a problem with giving family members extra points on adaptability, as the government does, but to bring people in just because they're family, I think you're just asking to have a larger and larger number of people who are going to be marginalized in the Canadian labour market and society.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: It is essential to make a distinction between family members who are part of the core family: spouses, underage children. I don't think anybody has any problem with that.

The issue we're facing is the one concerning parents and grandparents. If you apply the principle I think you all have a responsibility to apply, and that is let us have immigrants serve Canada, not have Canadians serve the immigrants, by that criterion the parents and grandparents certainly do not qualify.

We can protect against the cost they impose on us by asking them to post bonds, as I and Mr. Kurland suggested. Instead, however, of paying it to the government, I think it should be put into escrow, and whenever they go to a doctor they should be required to draw on that money. If they need financial support because they can't work, they have no pensions, or anything of this sort, their children are responsible for that, not our welfare system.

I think that is fair for Canadians, and we have no obligations to the people who came here on their own family basis.

The Chair: You have one and a half minutes.

Mr. Ted Opitz: The NDP keeps saying that we have decreased immigration. On average, our Conservative government has admitted, I think, the highest level of immigrants in Canadian history. We've admitted about 255,000 immigrants per year, and that's 14% more than the average under the Liberals.

A previous witness suggested that we look at what Australia does with its family class. It allows you to bring your parents and grandparents to Australia but only if the balance of the family is there. That's something you already commented on. In other words, if your parents and grandparents have other children in another country, they do not allow you to bring your parents or grandparents because that's splitting up the family.

Do you think that Canada should take a similar approach? Why, or why not? I'll direct that right now to Mr. Grubel.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: I think it would be a compromise between my radical proposal and the one that exists.

But I can't stop myself from commenting on the NDP proposals. Immigrants are adding very large numbers to the people who are living in poverty in Canada. Not only are they themselves part of the poverty population, but they are causing lower wages for the people with low skills, Canadians of many generations who are poor. The number of people who live in poverty is significantly increased as a result of all this immigration of people who are not performing well.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Davies.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to all three of you for being here today. You have some very provocative views that I think are important to hear in this debate.

Mr. Grubel, if I understand your perspective properly, you say it would be a mistake to increase the annual admission of immigrants that our country receives. Do I have that right?

Mr. Herbert Grubel: Yes.

I would like to see a clear, non-political, non-moral criterion for selecting who should come in, and as we do so it will automatically

determine the numbers. I don't care what the numbers are. I'm not anti-immigrant. I'm against immigrants who are imposing significant economic and social costs on our country.

• (1135)

Mr. Don Davies: I understand that, sir. I'm just trying to get a feeling of levels.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: I do not know.

Mr. Don Davies: So it may not be a bad policy to increase the annual level to 300,000 per year. In your view, that could be okay?

Mr. Herbert Grubel: If they pay their way, they will pay for health care, for the disposal of the garbage that Ben-Ami was talking about. At the moment, they don't.

Mr. Don Davies: Does anybody else have a perspective on that?

Mr. Grady.

Mr. Patrick Grady: Given that the current level seems to be too high, judging from the performance of the immigrants, raising it doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. If you raise the limit, given the bureaucratic approach we have to immigration policy, what it means is that we will bring in more immigrants, either from out of the backlog or from a higher number of applications accepted. So if you raise the number, more will come.

That doesn't say whether they're going to do better or not. My suspicion is that if you raise the number, they'll do worse.

Mr. Don Davies: The reason I asked is that the minister was here last week, and he said that under the Conservative government, since 2006 they have increased the levels 14% over the previous Liberal government, which had let in for the 10 years previous to that about 220,000 per year. The Conservative government has raised that to an average of 254,000 a year, including the largest number in the history of Canada last year—280,000.

I'm just trying to get a feeling from you whether you think that was a wise policy move on the Conservatives' part to raise levels, or not.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: No.

Mr. Patrick Grady: You won't know whether it's a wise policy or not until 2015 or 2020, when you see how the immigrants have done.

Mr. Don Davies: Sure.

Mr. Patrick Grady: Given that they've abandoned the long-form census, you're not even going to have the information now.

Mr. Don Davies: So you think the lack of having the long-form census will have a negative impact on our ability to assess the value in our immigration system?

Mr. Patrick Grady: That's right.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: No, that's not true.

Mr. Don Davies: I'm not a demographic expert, but I have been told by a number of sources that our population is aging, that our birth rate is declining. And a number of sources, including the Conference Board of Canada and the citizenship and immigration department itself, are telling us that within as soon as five years from now we will be dependent on new Canadians—immigrants—for 100% of our new labour growth. If I understand that properly, it means that with our natural production, we can replace our jobs now, but five years from now we won't be able to grow our economy.

Do you have any comment on that?

Mr. Patrick Grady: I do have a comment. If the problem is in five years, you're not talking about the demographic impact. What you're talking about now is that the labour force will stop growing in five years. That doesn't mean you need to take in more immigrants now; that just exacerbates the problem. If you want to take in enough immigrants to keep the labour force growing, you don't need to take in as many as we're taking now. It has to be gauged on how many are needed to grow the labour force.

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: Mr. Davies, that argument is an argument for maintaining or increasing levels. First of all, I have no confidence in those projections. Mr. Grubel hit the nail on the head: there is no credible, comprehensive process in place to determine what our labour force needs in the long term, what we need in this country in terms of immigration. It could be 100,000, it could be 500,000 a year, it could be a million a year. There's no way, no process in place, to assess those numbers. So I don't have a lot of confidence in those things. But even if I did, that's an argument against allowing parents and grandparents to come in automatically by virtue of the fact that their children have qualified to come in.

Mr. Don Davies: Let me just delink that for one moment, because some assert that family reunification has been credited as one of the reasons for Canada's success in attracting and retaining so many experienced and highly skilled professionals. For instance, if an engineer or a doctor in some country—I appreciate your concern about credential recognition, but that's a different issue—or an architect is thinking of coming to Canada, with the kind of money that Mr. Grubel would like to see in our wealthier type of immigrant that he's proposing come to our country, would the fact that the person is choosing between several countries and may be able to bring their aging mother or their parents, to keep their family intact, be one of the reasons they're attracted to Canada? Would you see that might be possible in some cases?

• (1140)

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: I submit to you that on the credentialing issue that you said is a separate issue, I think you missed my point. The credentialing issue and associated issues are exactly the point. Unless we're dealing with those issues—and I agree that it's not the purview of this committee or probably even the Parliament of Canada to deal with them, certainly not exclusively—we can't talk seriously about how we're going to absorb the numbers of people we're bringing into this country. I simply fundamentally disagree with you. I don't think you can ask the questions you're asking and make decisions and recommendations in isolation from everything else. I think that's one of the fundamental flaws of the process we're engaged in right now.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Grubel, time is up.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: Only a quick comment.

The Chair: Okay, very briefly, sir.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: I think all of the arguments that you've made about people who say we need more immigrants to make the country grow use the wrong criteria. There is no interest in having a large national income, aggregate GDP, or else China would be the best place to live in. What we need is policy set to increase the per capita income, and all these policies are not addressing that issue.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lamoureux.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): There are a couple of issues I want to quickly address, because I find that we'll probably agree to disagree on many of the points you've raised.

When you talk about family reunification, not all parents are to the detriment of our community. Parents who come to Canada continue to contribute to Canada. As for the economy, you get many young parents at 48 to 55 who come to Canada and they still have a lot to offer in terms of economic production. There are many parents who provide assistance to small businesses. There are many parents who provide child care services and other health care services to family members. Many would argue that they play a role in providing stability in the family. Would you not see those as assets and things that can be healthy for Canadians as a whole?

Please answer very, very briefly, because I only have five minutes.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: Sure. It means a transfer of income from the general taxpayer to the people whose parents are providing these services.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes. The point is—

Mr. Herbert Grubel: Why should we be subsidizing immigrants?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: The point is simply recognizing that the parents, especially if you break it down, of immigrants do have a role to play through immigration. That's the point I was going to make.

When we make reference to immigrants stealing jobs, some of you give the impression that if we didn't have immigrants we would have more jobs or higher-paying jobs. I'll reflect on Manitoba. In Manitoba, there are certain industries that would not be healthy today if it were not for immigrants coming to the province of Manitoba. It's one of the reasons why, as a province, we have been doing well in the last decade. It's through the provincial nominee program and recognizing the important role that immigrants have to play in the economy, and it has allowed us to expand our economy. By expanding the economy, the per capita increases.

So would you at the very least acknowledge that there are certain industries across the country in which if we didn't have immigrants participating, there's a very good chance that those industries could have shrunk, maybe even possibly disappeared, and that takes away from the per capita? Would you at least acknowledge that there is some merit to that argument?

Mr. Patrick Grady: I think the problem is that the types of industries you're talking about, where you bring in a large number of people and generally from similar places, are not the industries of the future. These are usually the industries of the past and are having trouble attracting labour.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: But these industries contribute to the GDP of our country, and that means the lifestyle of everyone improves.

Mr. Patrick Grady: All work contributes to the GDP of our country. The question is, which type of work contributes the most?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I want to pick up on the immigrant credentials. I think that's a serious problem. The federal government has to play a stronger role in working with the provinces to start getting provinces to recognize those doctors, those nurses, those engineers. If in fact, as I believe to be the case, there is a shortage of workers in those areas, we need those workers, but there's an issue of recognizing their credentials.

I look to you, Mr. Ben-Ami, in terms of whether you can provide a comment. Is there a stronger, more important role for Ottawa to play in getting credentials recognized?

• (1145)

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: The issue of credentials recognition is exceptionally complicated, partly because of the different standards of training in different areas of the world and partly because for many professions governments actually don't issue credentials. They're part of trade and professional associations, and governments require these credentials, so the stakeholders involved are beyond governments.

I would say that the federal government probably has a role to play—and I think this is an excellent question, by the way—in perhaps convening some sort of a body made up of representatives from municipal governments, provincial governments, the federal government itself, and stakeholders to deal with this issue and perhaps to deal with some of the other issues I've raised. That would be my suggestion for what could be done.

Mr. Patrick Grady: Could I just add something?

I think it is important that the federal government have a role there. I think one of the issues that need to be addressed is getting pre-clearance on credentials before people come here so there isn't the problem that many people have of being admitted but once they get here not being able to pursue their own profession or trade.

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: Mr. Lamoureux, perhaps I could just say one very brief thing to follow up my comment.

The problem again—and I sound like a broken record—is that that is what we should be talking about today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I agree.

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: But we're not talking about that. We're talking about this other thing that really, as my colleagues here have said quite rightly, is just a symptom of the bigger problem.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes, and I agree with you wholeheartedly on that. I'd rather be having meetings and discussions and dialogue on policy with the Minister of Immigration, quite frankly, than going through this process now.

The Chair: Sorry, but we're over time.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: My time is up.

Thank you for coming.

The Chair: Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Ben-Ami and Mr. Grady.

Dr. Grubel, I want to extend a special welcome. You come here as a former member of Parliament. Mr. Ben-Ami said a minute ago that you hit the nail on the head. That was said of you many times. You didn't care if it was popular or not popular to hit the nail on the head, but you did it, and you won great respect both in the riding that you represented, which I now represent, and across the country. So thank you for your service to Canada.

I want to steer us to backlogs. I think at least my own perspective on backlogs is that they produce a 3-D view for Canada. There is a distortion, in that the people who apply for immigration to Canada become perhaps different people by the time they find their place in the queue to be admitted. Second, there is a distaste, a bad reputation for Canada, in that we keep people waiting for so long. Third, it's a disadvantage that the best and the brightest may simply go elsewhere if they know that there are long waits.

So looking at these backlogs, our minister has attacked that problem head-on, and over strident opposition from the opposition parties has reduced the backlog in federal skilled workers programs. That's been established beyond doubt.

I'm wondering, starting with you, Dr. Grubel, if you can just look at the backlog issue, its reduction, and how successful this measure has been. And furthermore, what would the impact have been if the backlogs attending the federal skilled workers program had continued to grow?

Mr. Herbert Grubel: As a politician, I was told never to answer a hypothetical question, and I will continue to do so.

I think these issues should just be chucked aside and we should concentrate on the question of whether we can pass legislation in this Parliament to say “We're sorry, guys who are in the lineup, we made a mistake. The previous government made a mistake. Here is your cheque back with interest. Apply again. Get yourself a job in Ottawa at the right pay, and we will consider your application.” That is what I think we should be doing. This fussing around over whether that backlog should be shortened, be allowed to increase, and how to go about it is all beside the point. If we want immigration policy that benefits you, me, the poor in our community, our society as a whole, this is what we ought to be doing. We should not be asking immigrants to come in just so that a corner-store grocer of Chinese origin can have more profits. Why should we as general taxpayers subsidize those kinds of activities?

• (1150)

Mr. John Weston: So Dr. Grubel is going again to the bigger issue. I'd like to focus on this question of backlogs.

Mr. Grady.

Mr. Patrick Grady: I think you have a very good point. The situation was unsustainable under the old act where you had the “shall” clause that said they had to process all of these applications. The way they set it up with the points, if you got a minimum score, you were accepted. So the immigration policy was on autopilot.

At that point it could have ballooned to who knows what, so something had to be done. I'm not so sure that what they did was the best way to deal with it, because I think it's good to get as many applications as possible so you can pick the best immigrants from them. I think the problem is our selection system doesn't discriminate well enough, so maybe we should have a two-stage selection system in which you let everybody apply and then you pick the ones who are most appropriate and tell the others they can't come, instead of setting up minimum qualifications and then saying that whoever meets them is in the backlog and will be admitted. I think that is just a non-starter.

Mr. John Weston: It's interesting that in the area of immigration it's almost impossible to focus on a specific issue, because there are so many interrelated ones. I recognize the conundrum. But you're saying, Mr. Grady, that we're in a better position if we don't have an unsustainable situation.

Mr. Patrick Grady: It would be much better.

Mr. John Weston: Mr. Ben-Ami, would you like to comment?

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: I don't think I can add anything more than my colleagues have already said.

Mr. John Weston: Let me switch to the question of resettlement. Another change under this government is that resettlement programs have been more robustly funded than previously. I'm wondering what your comment is on that in terms of backlog as well. Has having better resettlement programs contributed to the progress we've made on reducing backlogs?

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: I don't think it has an impact whatsoever on the backlog.

Concerning allocating resources to resettlement, I have a fundamental problem. I've been involved in some discussions around what we're trying to accomplish by resettlement. I touched on

it very briefly in my presentation. It's largely cultural integration—helping people adapt to Canadian values, learn the language, all of these things. These are all noble goals, but of course it begs the question, why we are bringing in people we have to spend money on to educate them in Canadian values?

To me, there's something fundamentally wrong with that equation. If people don't want to learn either French or English in this country, if they don't want to be part of the broader Canadian society, then how is it that they've been selected to come here in the first place? And then we have to invest resources in changing their minds on these things.

I think the whole area of immigrant resettlement is an area that needs to be looked at that is not being handled well.

Mr. John Weston: Of course you're operating on a premise that they don't want to. I think the minister would suggest that they want to and that these resettlement programs just make it easier for them.

Mr. Grady, would you care to comment?

Mr. Patrick Grady: I think the government spending on resettlement recognizes the fact that over many years many immigrants have been admitted without language skills, without job skills, without knowing how to get a job. We have to spend this money: these people are here; they're Canadians now. We have to spend money helping them to integrate. The other question is, would it not in the future be better to bring in immigrants who don't require such large resettlement expenditures?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weston.

Madame Groguhé.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here.

I would just like to say that, in terms of immigration, I think everyone here, those around the table and everyone else, would recognize the major role that demographics and the economy play. In my opinion, that's not a matter for debate.

For example, I would quote what the Minister of Immigration said last week to stress the importance immigration has for Canada. He pointed out that we are competing with other countries for immigrants.

At one point, you said that quantity is certainly not key to our plans and our immigration choices. We have to look at quality too. Quality considerations come into play and are just as important in dealing with the backlog. As a result, the immigration process may well become more selective, as is already happening elsewhere. The plan for qualified immigrants includes precise targeting of the manpower the country finds useful.

With those qualitative aspects, shouldn't we expect that the delay in processing applications open up? In other words, don't we have to put qualitative steps in place in order to reduce the delay in processing applications?

• (1155)

Mr. Patrick Grady: I think you are raising a very important point. It is absolutely necessary to reduce the delays in processing applications.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Grubel.

Mr. Herbert Grubel: I would like to say generally that I have great respect for my friend Mr. Kenney, the minister, but I think he's wrong. He's wrong that immigration is not needed in order to increase per capita income. It is possible to increase per capita income if we select the right kinds of immigrants.

I would dispute Mr. Lamoureux's assertion that just because these immigrants came to Manitoba, income per capita in Manitoba went up. I'd like to see the evidence on this. This is part of the Canadian myth. This is part of what we have been propagandized into believing. It is simply not true. Show me the evidence.

On demographics, the C.D. Howe Institute and demographers everywhere know that our problem of aging cannot be solved by more immigration. Immigrants themselves will age. They themselves will need social security benefits.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Mr. Ben-Ami, do you have any concrete solutions for the committee in terms of recognizing foreign credentials? If so, what are they?

[English]

Mr. Joseph Ben-Ami: Frankly, I haven't come here today prepared to address the specific issue of credentials. I suppose that if we were to convene a forum that is going to focus on this, I'd be happy to do some preparatory work.

The main point I'm raising is that we're not dealing with this problem and other associated problems effectively. And once again—I'm a broken record—if we're not going to deal with those issues first, then all of this other stuff is irrelevant.

The Chair: Mr. Leung, you have two minutes.

Mr. Chungsen Leung (Willowdale, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll make my comment very brief.

It's a pleasure to be in the company of economists, because I think we can speak on a macro and a micro scale.

We're talking about immigration purely from a numbers point of view, and I think that is totally wrong. If you are students of economics, you will remember the very basic macroeconomic model of the IS-LM curve, whereby you need to have your manpower, your money supply, your interest, and your labour in balance.

For those of you who are not familiar with the IS-LM curve, I'll bring it down to a micro level. When you run a company, if you're an entrepreneur you go out and hire the people you want to run your business in order to grow your business.

Perhaps the three of you could quickly comment on how immigration should really serve the economy, rather than the other way around, and what the best solution is. What is the vehicle? What is the policy we should put in place to do this?

Anyone...?

• (1200)

Mr. Herbert Grubel: Let the people whose own money is involved in hiring people decide whether the person who lives in a foreign country and wants to come to Canada has the qualifications and abilities to earn the wage they have to pay, rather than have some technocrat in some remote embassy decide: "Oh, he has so many points for education. Well, I'm not quite sure whether a PhD in Greek studies from a university in Manchuria is adequate or proper, but after all, Ottawa has said that if he has a PhD, we should let him in." Then he comes here and we find out that his ability to teach Greek in a university is not there. This is a caricature of the problems we face.

My wife is a doctor. I can tell you that the amount of knowledge she has to acquire every day in order to keep current is unbelievable. I do not see how people graduating from a medical school in some remote university in a developing country claim that they are doctors, yet are running around driving taxis and telling everybody who will listen, "I am a poor discriminated-against doctor who could help Canada so much." Who is going to decide on these qualifications? Would you be willing to admit this person to treat your daughter?

The Chair: Mr. Grubel, the time has come to say good-bye. I want to thank you, Mr. Grady, and Mr. Ben-Ami, for coming. You've given us food for thought—three most interesting people. Thank you very much.

We will suspend for a few moments.

• (1200)

(Pause)

• (1205)

The Chair: This is the second hour of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. We have three witnesses: Mr. Tom Pang, from the Chinese Canadian Community Alliance—good afternoon, sir; Ms. Amy Casipullai, senior policy and communications coordinator of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants; and finally, we have Mr. Thomas Tam, chief executive officer of an organization called SUCCESS. That's a great name—you'll have to tell us what it means when you get your chance.

Mr. Thomas Tam (Chief Executive Officer, SUCCESS): It means "successful".

The Chair: Being successful—well, we need that in this country. Thank you.

Each of you has up to eight minutes to make a presentation.

Mr. Pang, we will start with you. Good afternoon, sir.

Mr. Tom Pang (President, Chinese Canadian Community Alliance): Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Tom Pang and I'm here representing the Chinese Canadian Community Alliance, a community organization in Toronto, Ontario. I was, during the late 1980s, the president of the Chinese Community Centre of Ontario, which is an umbrella group of over 40 Chinese Canadian organizations. Later I also served as co-chair representing Ontario on the National Congress of Chinese Canadians, a national umbrella group of over 200 organizations.

Back in 2008, when the federal government proposed changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in order to reduce immigration application backlogs and improve wait times, the Chinese Canadian community, at large, was very divided on this issue, and mostly on the pro side. After studying these changes thoroughly, the Chinese Canadian Community Alliance decided to support this view. During that period I was often invited to appear on radio and TV interviews, public forum debates, and also to write columns for the local Chinese paper to explain the true nature of the changes. Looking back, I'm glad the Chinese Canadian Community Alliance made the right decision.

Minister Kenney commented recently that the backlog of federal skilled worker applications is now half of what it was in 2008; however, this is just the first step. On June 24 of this year, Minister Kenney announced additional measures to further improve our immigration system.

Back in the 1980s, I once remarked to the media that if Canada needs taxi drivers, let's bring in taxi drivers, let's not bring in highly educated people who will wind up driving taxis. I understand changes are made to give priorities to applicants of arranged employment and also to applicants with experience in an occupation in high demand. This is really what I would call a great leap forward.

However, I will emphasize that foreign credential recognition is still a major problem. I appreciate that the ministry has been working very hard on trying to solve this issue. The complications seem to be with dealing with various provincial governments and professional groups.

The ministry has also kept new federal investor applications. One thing that often puzzles me is the investor program. Obviously, it is a common and acceptable practice for investor applicants to borrow the capital from local financial institutions, provided they pay the interest on the money up front. If this is true, there doesn't seem to be any new capital coming to Canada. How does this plan benefit our economy?

• (1210)

I have also noticed Minister Kenney put emphasis on official language skills. I totally agree that new immigrants should brush up their English or French language skills before—and not after—their landing in Canada. Canada's also increasing refugees under the United Nations refugee program from 10% to 20%: taking in two out of ten refugees worldwide. On the other hand, more than 50% of refugee applicants were rejected. This is of course due to some unethical so-called consultants and human smugglers. The ministry is obviously doing a good job to stop those criminals. But the problem is not only limited to consultants and smugglers. On several occasions I personally have witnessed some goings on in that regard.

Finally, let me talk about family reunification. At present there's a huge backlog of parents and grandparents trying to come to Canada. Indeed, if they only want to come to Canada to be with their family and not to take advantage of our generous social programs, then all we need to do is to give them an extended visa. They will pay for their own transportation, their own health insurance, their own living expenses. That way we solve the backlog problem and they get to be united with their family.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and honourable members, for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pang.

Ms. Casipullai, you have up to eight minutes.

Ms. Amy Casipullai (Senior Policy and Communications Coordinator, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)): Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members.

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants—OCASI—is the umbrella organization for immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies in Ontario. OCASI is a registered charity founded in 1978. We are governed by a volunteer board of directors. At present, we have more than 200 member agencies in communities across Ontario, including a very active community agency in committee member Rick Dykstra's riding of St. Catharines.

OCASI acts as the collective voice of our member agencies on the issues and priorities that impact on them and the communities they serve. For more than 30 years, OCASI has worked with communities, government, and policy- and decision-makers to advance the economic, social, and political rights and interests of immigrants and refugees in Ontario. Our work is informed by the experience of our member agencies and the experience of the communities they serve. We also work to build the capacity of our membership through training and professional development for agency workers, management, and boards, and through developing tools and materials to strengthen areas such as service delivery and governance. We also manage the website settlement.org, a premier resource for immigrants in Canada and those who intend to come to Canada, as well as for those who work with them.

The council has had the opportunity and privilege to appear before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration as well as other parliamentary committees on a number of different issues that affect immigrants and refugees. We thank you for granting us this opportunity to present our position with respect to immigration application backlogs in light of the government's action plan for faster immigration.

Family reunification, or family class sponsorship, continues to be one of the foremost priorities for immigrant and refugee communities and the agencies that serve them. The other priority, of course, as it is for many other equity-seeking groups, is effective labour market integration.

For more than ten years, family reunification has taken a back seat to the economic class immigration to Canada. Immigrant selection has favoured skilled immigrants since the mid-1990s. Family class immigration, which was over 50% at that time, began dropping steadily. Throughout the early 2000s the rate was between 30% and 25%, and by 2010 it was at an all-time low of approximately 21% of all immigration. Canada received 280,674 immigrants in 2010, and less than a quarter of that number, 60,220 immigrants, were sponsored family members.

Over the last six years the government has shifted its focus from prioritizing permanent resident applications, both in the skilled worker class and the family class, to applications under the temporary foreign worker program. It has meant that applicants in the family class have to compete for processing resources with an even greater number of people who want to come to Canada, even if they were coming as guest workers.

OCASI is troubled by what this shift might mean for Canada in the long term. On the economic front, we already recognize that immigration is the primary source for labour force growth. The Conference Board of Canada has said that even if immigration levels were to rise to 350,000 by 2030, that will not bring in enough workers to arrest Canada's declining overall economic growth potential. And this was in a report that was published last year.

A media story in the *Calgary Herald* in September this year noted that the Petroleum Human Resources Council and others have estimated that Alberta will experience a labour shortage of up to 77,000 people in the coming decade, unless companies again take steps to connect with under-employed groups in Canada, such as women and native people. And they also suggested bringing in temporary foreign workers.

Some jobs are clearly temporary in nature, and it makes sense to bring in temporary workers to fill them. We are troubled, however, by what appears to be a growing tendency to turn to temporary foreign workers to fill, in a number of different industries, jobs that are not temporary. A media story from an Alberta newspaper last week narrates the experience of about 200 insulators who were laid off, while the company went on to hire more than 100 temporary foreign workers to do the same type of work.

●(1215)

On the social and political front, it will be difficult if not impossible to build a sense of social cohesion and community among a population that is not expected to stay beyond four years at the most, and who have few rights and entitlements or obligations because of their temporary resident status. Temporary residents cannot develop and in fact they are not encouraged or allowed to develop an attachment or commitment to a community.

We believe that one of the results of the shift from permanent to temporary residency is the increased delay in processing applications for permanent residency, with the lowest priority for resources being

given to family class. We believe that shift has contributed to the backlog in applications.

OCASI is also troubled by the fact that the longest delays are occurring at visa posts in countries with a significant racialized population. The longest processing time for sponsorship of parents and grandparents is 55 months at Accra, Ghana, and 51 months in Nairobi, Kenya. These are the times that are posted on the CIC website. In reality, we know that many sponsors wait much longer than four or five years to reunite with parents and grandparents.

As the total number of family class applications approved every year has declined, so has the acceptance rate of parents and grandparents. In 2010, parents and grandparents were 25% of all family class immigrants, approximately 5,000 less than the number accepted in 2006.

The current immigration system has a number of challenges and barriers, such as cost, challenges in obtaining required documentation, long wait times, sponsorship breakdown, and exclusion from family class such as the prohibition to sponsor a family member who was not declared at the time the sponsor applied to become a permanent resident.

Helping clients with immigrant sponsorship applications is a significant and time-consuming part of the workload for many immigrant service workers, and I'm sure in many of your constituency offices as well. In addition, they have been called upon to help clients deal with processing delays, long wait times, the uncertainty—

●(1220)

The Chair: You have one minute, please.

Ms. Amy Casipullai: I'm going to fast-forward to my recommendations.

We will likely see an increase in family class sponsorship applications, particularly as Canada's foreign-born population increases. Family reunification has been credited as one of the reasons for Canada's success in attracting and retaining so many experienced and highly skilled professionals. It's a popular and well-used aspect of Canada's immigration program from as far back as the 1950s, when Canadian residents sponsored thousands of dependent relatives.

Apparently over 90% of the people sponsored at that time were Italians and their sponsored relatives. The settlement and integration experience of Canadians of Italian origin is evidence of the success of the family reunification model. In fact, parents and grandparents, like most other sponsored relatives, bring their knowledge and skills as well as a commitment to Canada.

There is no evidence one way or the other that speaks to the benefit or the downside or the cost of family reunification or bringing in sponsored relatives—parents and grandparents—so it's really hard to conclude that they will be a drain on our economy and our resources.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Tam, I've been waiting patiently to find out what SUCCESS means.

Thank you, and you have up to eight minutes to make your presentation, sir.

Mr. Thomas Tam: Thank you, Mr. Chair and honourable members of the standing committee.

I am Thomas Tam, from SUCCESS, which is a multicultural organization that serves new immigrants in British Columbia. We serve over 180,000 people through over 20 offices in greater Vancouver and Fort St. John—that's in northern B.C.—and through our three overseas offices in China, Korea, and Taiwan.

The focus of my presentation here today is on how to deal with the application backlog that has accumulated over the previous years. I will address four major aspects.

First is administrative measures. Canada has a public consultation process on how many immigrants should be accepted into the country per year and what classes of immigrants will be accepted and in what quantity. SUCCESS supports ongoing government consultation.

As for the implementation, capping intake quotas for a specific period of time or adjusting them to meet changing labour market demand for economic class applicants is a reasonable way to stabilize and rebalance the system. We also support capping the number of applications. However, the backlog in family class applications has not been effectively addressed. The existing long waiting time of seven to ten years is totally unacceptable.

I think the government's latest intention to apply the same administrative measure by capping the quota on parents and grandparents should be more carefully examined, with more consultation with ethnic communities. Family unification is an important issue in Asian cultures. Given that the Asia-Pacific is and will be the main source of immigrants into the future, that is where we as service providers in ethnic communities have heard the most complaints.

There are economic reasons for most Asian immigrant families to sponsor parents and grandparents to immigrate to Canada. They take care of the young and the domestic affairs of the household while both adult immigrants, driven by economic necessity, are often hard at work re-establishing themselves in the host country. We agree with the minister that we need to calibrate those limits based on our economic needs. My opinion is that maintaining an overall annual

target of 1% of Canada's total population while being flexible about the parents and grandparents would make a good policy.

As a matter of fact, Canada's ability to compete for skilled immigrants from some Asian countries also hinges on this preparedness and flexibility to accept the parents or grandparents down the road. A group of child psychiatrists and psychologists working with immigrant families at Richmond Hospital in B.C. is drawing increasing attention among the allied professions to the "satellite baby" syndrome. Satellite babies are infants or preschoolers who are sent to a parent's country of origin to be raised for a period of time by other family members. This type of separation has far-reaching mental health implications for the child and family, and it eventually affects the greater community, including the school system. Satellite babies are one of the sad situations caused by parent and grandparent backlogs.

As for the flexibility and efficiency in the system, I notice that there are significant variances in processing time for family class applications across different CIC visa offices and different regions, which is not happening with the economic class applications. I believe that CIC knows its own statistics. The action plan for faster immigration is not happening fast enough. The unwanted and unwelcome variances for family class applications across CIC visa offices in all continental regions must be eliminated. A global central processing system inside Canada should be considered.

● (1225)

The third area is about fairness and transparency. In light of the action plan for faster immigration, a consistent application service standard across the board is required in dealing with backlogs and moving on to the future. A consistent service standard for each class of applicant will ensure efficiency, accountability, and a sense of fairness and open process for all applicants across the world.

Finally, in terms of the outcome evidence, drawing a baseline, setting a benchmark, establishing a worldwide service standard, posting the objective evidence publicly on the CIC's website, and delivering annual reports to Parliament, we will stand up to the measure of public accountability and provide evidence of achievements in addressing the backlogs and meeting the preset immigration targets per year. I believe the people of Canada want to see that progress is being made by the government to close the gap and achieve the goals. I expect this government will continue to do just that with vigour and openness for all to see.

Honourable members of the standing committee, I respectfully submit my testimony for your deliberation.

Thank you.

The Chair: Well, we thank you, Mr. Tam, for coming. And I know members of the committee have some questions.

Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I'd like to thank all three of you for being here today, so well prepared and so well spoken. Thank you very much for your insightful presentations.

I am particularly delighted to see Mr. Pang here today. For those of you who don't know Mr. Pang, he's not only a leader in the Chinese community in Toronto, but very well respected in the multicultural community for many, many years of contribution. So thank you for being here, Mr. Pang.

I have a couple of questions for the three of you.

In testimony from a previous witness, someone suggested that the government be provided with a \$75,000 pay-in if they want to bring their parents or grandparents to Canada. This, of course, is to cover the cost of social services over the time that they're here. I'm just wondering what you think of this suggestion, if you think \$75,000 is reasonable or not.

• (1230)

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Can I respond?

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Sure.

Ms. Amy Casipullai: There are no studies that conclusively establish that parents and grandparents are either a drain or a benefit in the context of services, the economy, or health care. In the absence of that data, we are troubled by the assumption that parents and grandparents would use up the services that we cannot afford. So we are disturbed by this proposal.

It would just be a new head tax under a different name and it would only serve to create a two-tier immigration system, one for the rich and another for the majority.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Tam.

Mr. Thomas Tam: For over a hundred years Canada has been admitting parents and grandparents for our older citizens, for our older generation, and they contribute to our national development. Again, I agree, I wonder if this is another type of head tax when we implement these amounts at this moment in time.

Mr. Tom Pang: As I said just before, all you really need is to give them an extended visa, a visitor visa, and they're on their own. If their purpose is to unite with their family, they're welcome to come and stay as long as they want, as long as they don't become a burden on this society.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you very much.

I want to visit a little bit again the issue of backlogs. It's a fairly significant number, almost a million people, 800,000 of whom were even on the list before 2006. I don't want to focus, as we often do, on quantity, but a little bit on quality. It's not just about the sheer number of people we let into Canada; it's about making sure that the folks who come here can properly integrate, join the workforce, and participate in the economy and become active in the community.

For our government, the integration of new Canadians is a key goal. As a matter of fact, it's a priority. Would you agree? And can you please expand on what the practical limits are on how many people Canada can welcome a year?

Ms. Amy Casipullai: I'm sorry, I didn't catch the last part of your question.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Simply, would you agree, and can you please expand on what the practical limits are as to how many people Canada can welcome every year?

Ms. Amy Casipullai: I would like to go back to a bit of history. Between 1903 and 1913, Canada welcomed people that were in excess of 1% of the population. In fact, in 1913 it was a little over 5% of Canada's population. A number of them were refugees, a good number of them were dependent relatives, including parents and grandparents.

In 1957 Canada welcomed again more than 1% of the population in immigrants. I think it was almost 1.6%. Again, a number of them were refugees, a number of them came as a result of the Suez crisis. I think we can tell now, several decades later, it wasn't a disaster. We were not overwhelmed with problems of sewage and garbage in our communities. Our economy thrived, our communities thrived, and we are beneficiaries of what those immigrants brought to this country.

I think we have evidence that shows that family reunification is a success, that people have settled, that they have contributed, they have participated. In fact, their children and they themselves are sitting in Parliament today. That's testimony to the success of the immigration program.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: I agree with the fact that the immigration program has been successful. That really wasn't my question. My question was dealing with practical limits of how many people we can actually accept to the country annually.

Mr. Pang.

• (1235)

Mr. Tom Pang: How many is not the issue. Canada's a big country, whether they're taking in two million, five million, ten million, whatever. The issue is whether after they arrive in Canada we have a job for them so they can reasonably settle down, that we have schools for the kids to go to. This is the real issue.

I think everybody is talking about this 1% thing. For years and years, for the last 20 to 30 years now, I guess the actual number of immigrants should depend on how many of them we can successfully handle and settle in Canada.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: That really is the point. Thank you.

Mr. Thomas Tam: I also support that the number of incoming immigrants has to match the capacity of the country. One percent is a good reference. When we look at the distribution of new immigrants, ten years ago 90% of new immigrants settled in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, but the recent figure shows that it's down to 70%. That means more and more people settling in communities outside the major urban centres. I also see a lot of smaller communities, including Fort St. John in northern British Columbia, long for more new immigrants to help to build the community. So I think we are still not at the kind of maximum capacity that we cannot accommodate any extra immigrants.

The Chair: I'm afraid we're out of time.

Mr. Davies.

Mr. Don Davies: Thank you.

I'd like to thank all the witnesses for being here.

Being from Vancouver, I want to extend a special thank you to Mr. Tam for being here. For the benefit of those on the committee and all Canadians watching, SUCCESS lives up to its name. It is one of the pre-eminent immigrant servicing agencies, I think, in Canada. On behalf of the committee, we're very honoured to have you here.

Ms. Casipullai, a thank you to you also, for the work you do in Ontario, for contributing so much to our country.

There's a lot of mis-characterizing of different positions that goes on here. We're here studying the backlog, and we know that we get about 400,000 applications every year. This government has been processing about 250,000 every year for the past five years. You don't have to be a mathematician to see that 150,000 applications a year get added to the backlog. There's now a backlog of over a million.

One of the suggestions of the official opposition is that we look at increasing the annual levels in a prudent way. Last year we let in 0.8% of the population. This government took us from 220,000 annual entries in 2006 to 250,000 today. They've increased 14%.

We also know that Canada's going to face a labour shortage in as little as five years' time, and we will be dependent upon new Canadians for up to 100% of our new labour growth. The official opposition's position is that we should be prudently looking to improve or increase the number of admissions per year up to the 1% number over the next five years.

My question is on temporary foreign workers. Last year we let 182,000 temporary foreign workers into this country. When we talk about getting the capacity right, letting enough immigrants into our country because we do want to see them successfully integrated and working, what is your comment on the policy of this government of growing temporary foreign workers every year, and yet shrinking the number of family class visas that are granted and not increasing the number of annual permanent resident applicants to this country?

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Thank you for the question, Mr. Davies.

We think this is one of the reasons that has contributed to the backlog. It's probably a diversion of resources in processing that has seen more resources put into processing temporary foreign worker applications. As I mentioned earlier from that story from the Alberta

newspaper, it's really troubling that more and more temporary foreign workers are being used to fill what would typically be considered as permanent or long-term jobs. This is not a commitment to Canadian communities, and it's really hard for us to understand how—

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Point of order.

I don't have a problem with folks being critical of a particular story or a particular employer, but we're hearing judgment calls on particular areas of focus that the government uses that are incorrect, and I want to point that out, that it continues to happen.

I know the point that Amy's trying to make, but it is factually incorrect.

● (1240)

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

Carry on.

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Sorry.

The Chair: It's not a point of order.

You may proceed.

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Thank you.

We are deeply troubled by the trend to move towards temporary as opposed to permanent immigration. We can see it's going to have a long-term impact in our communities, in how we build the capacity for our communities, because we don't think that economics is the only basis on which Canada is built. We have to look at the social and political consequences as well.

Mr. Don Davies: Thank you.

There's been some talk from previous witnesses about parents and grandparents, and even the insinuation is coming from certain members of this committee that allowing parents in is an economic burden on our society.

Mr. Tam, have you seen any research or do you have any testimony to give us on whether you think that having parents coming to our country is an economic benefit or a net economic burden to our country?

Mr. Thomas Tam: Thank you.

I think it's always our position that parents and grandparents have a very significant economic role to play to support the family. That's what I mentioned in my presentation. Of course, you know, admitting parents and grandparents, not just focusing on economic variables.... In Canada we value family, and we are very proud of our Canadian heritage that families are an important component of the whole social system.

On top of this family agenda, we also look at the economic contributions from parents or grandparents of the principal applicants to take care of the young kids and the household affairs. As you know, the child care service in Canada is getting worse and worse. A lot of working parents are immensely distressed about how to take care of the kids while working outside during the daytime. That's why I brought to the committee the phenomenon of "satellite babies". It's not only for one particular country. It's getting more and more common for Chinese, Mexicans, and people from South Africa to send the baby back to the home country to be raised by their parents or grandparents.

Again, that's no good to our economy. That's no good to our future generations.

Mr. Don Davies: My last question is something that people maybe all agree that it might be a positive proposal, which is that many parents and grandparents in the queue—there are about 150,000 waiting in queue right now—perhaps aren't necessarily interested in coming to Canada to become citizens, but simply want to spend a portion of the year here, stay with their families, and help with child care. The idea has been to consider Canada creating a ten-year multiple entry visa that would allow them to come in and out of the country.

Provided that those people established health insurance, as many Canadians do when they go to the United States—they don't pay \$75,000 up front, they just arrange health insurance when they travel—provided that we have some measure like that, would you think that might be one small way we could facilitate families being together, clear some of the backlog, and actually cure some of the problems with our visa system at the same time?

Mr. Thomas Tam: I would like to see that tried out, at least to solve the immediate backlogs and also to help a lot of families who are in need of a caretaker at home.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tam.

Mr. Lamoureux.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: To all three presenters, I appreciate your presence here today.

I want to get right into the issue before us. The Minister of Immigration comes here and talks about the numbers game. Time and again we hear from the Conservatives that we had the most immigrants come in the last year and how wonderful they are for doing that type of thing. At the end of the day, often when you're travelling abroad, you don't talk about it in terms of hard numbers but in terms of a percentage of your population base.

We often talk about the 1% as being that mark, that generally speaking 1% is at least an acceptable target. We came close to doing that in the early 1990s, in the 1980s we exceeded it, and that's pointed out. But the most important issue in dealing with how many immigrants Canada can have or sustain has a lot more to do with the mixture of immigrants you're allowing to come in. Would you agree? When I say the mixture I'm talking about all the different classes. We know, for example, that if we had 250,000 grandparents come into the country, that wouldn't be acceptable. On the other hand, we could develop a mixture. Would you agree with me in the sense that it's

more important to get the mixture right than the actual number of immigrants?

• (1245)

Mr. Thomas Tam: That's what I had in my first presentation. I appreciate the existing government's consultation process. It has been a very good exercise for a community to participate in, not only the level of immigration but also the composition, different classes among newcomers.

I totally agree that the level of immigration depends on the capacity, as I think some of the members mentioned. So 1%, or whatever percentage, is one of the references to represent the capacity of our country to accommodate newcomers, strangers. Of course we have to look at the distribution among different classes. I totally agree that it has to match the economic development, the labour shortage demand, as well as our traditional values.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: The second thing I want to pick up on and get a response from the other two presenters is whether it's the Liberals or the New Democrats, we talk about having multiple-year visiting visas. We see seniors as a positive thing. Many of these parents and grandparents, in terms of the foundation they can set, go far beyond economics, even though they would continue to contribute in an economic way if they were afforded that opportunity. A short-term measure that's been suggested for quite a while now has been multiple-year visiting visas. What would your thoughts be in terms of allowing those multiple-year visiting visas so parents can be reunited with families and still be able to contribute to things such as child care as being that foundation? Do you see that as a short-term solution?

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Absolutely. It's a really good idea. I believe the proposal was also multiple-entry visitor visas that would extend for a period of at least ten years. I believe previous discussions have touched on the fact that it could be a way for parents and grandparents to be here while their applications for sponsorship are being processed. It's also true that not every parent or grandparent wants to come here to stay.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: That's right.

Ms. Amy Casipullai: It's also true that they would want to come here just to visit for a short period or a longer period. But for many the only way they can enter Canada is through the sponsorship process. So the multiple-entry visitor visa will open up opportunities for many more people and that will definitely cut down on the backlog.

Mr. Tom Pang: I certainly agree in principle with what you have already mentioned, as long as they will not become a burden to this country.

I do not want to see change in this thing with Vancouver. But nowadays if you walk into a subsidized seniors home, say in Scarborough, over 30% of the people living there are recent immigrants who have never worked a day in Canada. Most of them don't even speak the language. That's what I'm referring to. I worked all my life in Canada and got a pension. If you look at income, I really don't make that much more than some of those people living in subsidized housing.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pang.

Ms. James, you're next.

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you as well to each of our guests. It's a pleasure to have you here today and to listen to your speeches.

My colleagues across the floor have touched base on the ten-year multi-entry visa. I'm going to ask a few more questions on it as well.

Our government made that announcement back in July of this year, raising the period of time from five years to ten years. We have touched base on it very briefly. But I'm curious. We realize that many parents or elders or grandparents and older parents want to come to Canada but don't necessarily want to make it a permanent residence. They want to come to visit family for taking care of the household and the children and so on.

I'm going to direct this question first to Mr. Tam. I wonder whether you have an idea offhand of approximately what the number of parents or grandparents is who want to come here to visit, to use this multi-entry ten-year visa.

• (1250)

Mr. Thomas Tam: Of course we don't have any empirical data; we haven't done any research on it. But from our observations, many of the principal applicants want to sponsor their parents mostly just so that they can come to visit them, stay with them for a while, and take care of the children.

My gut feeling is that at least one third or half of the parents do not have very strong intentions to stay permanently.

Ms. Roxanne James: So in your opinion, it's up to one half.

Mr. Thomas Tam: Yes.

Ms. Roxanne James: And Mr. Pang, I can get your ideas on that as well?

Mr. Tom Pang: I really can't say. I have a feeling that at least the ones who are already here, as I mentioned already, who are trying to get some kind of supplementary income from the government, will try their best to move into subsidized housing—plus all these language courses, and blah-blah-blah. I don't know how many of them would actually come if they didn't come as immigrants.

Ms. Roxanne James: I'm just going to ask Amy as well. You touched base on this. You just mentioned that you feel there is a proportion of the people who want to come for a visit but do not necessarily want to stay here as permanent residents. Do you have any idea what the number would be for the grandparents and parent class?

Ms. Amy Casipullai: I'm sorry; I cannot speculate on the number. I know that the number of people who apply for sponsorship simply because there's a visa requirement because of the country they're from is quite significant, from what front line workers say. It's really hard to say what that number would be.

Ms. Roxanne James: Thank you.

I'm going to direct this question to Mr. Tam and Mr. Pang concerning your communities, the Chinese communities. Now I know what success means, so that's good to know. Thank you.

Do you have any personal experiences, or have you talked to people within your community about their thoughts, concerning this ten-year multi-entry visa and whether they deem it to be a good initiative? Obviously it doubles the number it was before, from five years to ten. That obviously makes for more efficiency and fewer applications being processed. Do you have any stories to tell?

Mr. Thomas Tam: I can share with you my personal experience. My mother came 15 years ago; I sponsored her to come. Then after a couple of years she returned, back to Hong Kong. She stayed there in Hong Kong and doesn't want to come back. Both of my parents-in-law came, again under sponsorship, 12 or 13 years ago just to visit and know what was happening here and what the lifestyle was, and they returned. Of course they came to visit the grandchildren as well; that's the most important reason they came.

This is my own personal experience. I have three parents altogether, and 100% of them went back.

Ms. Roxanne James: So you would agree that the multi-year entry visa going to ten years is a good thing?

Mr. Thomas Tam: Yes.

Ms. Roxanne James: Thank you.

Mr. Tom Pang: As I said, I agree in principle that we should give them an extended visa to come, a visitor's visa—whether five-year, ten-year, or even twenty-year, I don't care, but multiple—but as I mentioned, as long as they don't become a burden on society.

On the other hand, at least the government has said we tried; we are not here to stop you from coming. It's your choice whether you want to come on a visitor's visa or not.

Ms. Roxanne James: Thank you.

We are obviously reviewing backlogs, and this is the reason we're all here. Obviously, if you're raising the limits from five years to ten years for a multi-entry visa, mathematically you're going to reduce the number of applications that are repetitive or coming more often. I think that is more or less the answer. But I wonder whether in your opinion it is more convenient for people to visit family and friends when we make the application process easier. And do you think it is going to make a difference in the number of applications that are being sent in?

• (1255)

Mr. Tom Pang: I think the backlog would definitely drop. Either people would take the visa and come as visitors or some people would realize there is no chance of getting an immigration visa and would drop out of the queue.

Ms. Roxanne James: Thank you.

Mr. Tam.

Mr. Thomas Tam: Yes, I think so.

Ms. Roxanne James: Okay. I wasn't sure you understood my question, so I was going to reword it a bit.

Amy, I'm going to ask for your opinion as well, but I expect you would agree with extending the length of time during which people can come into and go from Canada.

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Yes. It raises another question, though, which is what the reason for the backlog is. I'm sure the people at the department know. We've heard some speculation, but it would be really good to look into the reasons, because there could be different reasons for it.

Ms. Roxanne James: Thank you. That's actually why we're here studying this important issue.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: You have less than a minute.

Ms. Roxanne James: We've touched base on immigration levels. There was an NDP proposal, and we have talked about it at this table, to raise the immigration levels. But we've also heard, and I've heard from each of you, about the need to make sure that immigrants succeed in Canada. Simply raising the levels and not allowing immigrants the full benefit of participating in the economy and the job market... I think we have to be very careful when we talk about increasing levels, given the fact that we need to not simply throw money at resources.

Mr. Pang, in your opinion... Increasing levels, I feel, is not the answer. I think we need to make sure that those who come to Canada have the resources available, which is Amy's area, and that they can fully succeed.

Mr. Tom Pang: How many more PhDs do we need driving taxis in Toronto?

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kellway.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And to the witnesses, thank you very much for your testimony today. One of the great benefits of having you here is your ability to talk about reality on the ground. On our last panel we had some economists talking about reality on the ground, which always worries me and makes me a bit suspicious.

So I wonder whether, through the eyes of your organization—and perhaps starting with you, Amy—you could talk about the economic reality on the ground for immigrant communities and about how parents and grandparents assist in the family's acting as an economic unit.

Very briefly, I know from my own experience that my little family, with three young kids, has always acted as an economic unit, and my absence from my home in Toronto has given rise to the need for my wife's parents to come up and spend some time with us to look after our kids so that my wife can be at work.

But through the eyes of your organization, could you please describe how parents and grandparents could help families as an economic unit in Canada?

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Absolutely. As Mr. Tam has already mentioned, the assumption is that parents and grandparents bring

nothing or contribute nothing to Canada, and that is simply not true, and not fair to our sponsored relatives or refugees either.

In the absence of a national child care strategy, or even a provincial child care strategy for Ontario, what parents and grandparents do is critical in terms of providing child care, of child-minding so that they free up the adults in the family to pursue other opportunities.

More than that, they actually contribute to the cohesion of the family and the community as well. And parents and grandparents—some of them, anyway—are definitely participants in the economy in one way or the other—even the underground economy, and we hear stories of that all the time.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Tam, would you like to—

Mr. Thomas Tam: One fairly common phenomenon among new immigrants is that they travel back to their original country once or twice a year at least, because they need to visit their parents. So they take a lot of Canadian dollars outside Canada. I think that's another phenomenon that has some economic implications, on top of Amy's point that the parents and grandparents play a very important role in helping their family get together.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Thank you.

One of my first experiences as a member of Parliament was to attend a meeting of a South Asian women's organization in my riding on Mother's Day, and the tears were flowing. Usually these things are celebrations of moms and all the rest of it, but there was a tremendous amount of sadness. I think it had to do largely with the social role that parents and grandparents play in the community and around the issue of child care in particular.

I was wondering if you could comment. Amy, you've talked about the issue of social cohesion. Could you elaborate a little further on how important the role of parents and grandparents is in providing that kind of social support to families here?

• (1300)

Ms. Amy Casipullai: We know, again from talking to front-line workers, that parents and grandparents provide a sense of stability, often a sense of continuity for young children as well as other members of their family. They also help to knit the community together. I'm sure many of you know from going to community events that the people who are there in large numbers are usually typically seniors, typically parents and grandparents, and they create an environment that is positive. They also help to mentor and raise children, not only their own but children in their communities.

We know it has a positive effect on communities, and we know all of Canada benefits as a result.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm sorry, Mr. Kellway, the clock has ticked on, and the meeting has come to a conclusion.

Mr. Pang, Ms. Casipullai, and Mr. Tam, thank you for your presentation. It was an interesting contrast from the first set of presenters this morning, and I know the committee appreciated your taking the time and making a presentation to us. Thank you very much on behalf of the committee.

Before I adjourn the meeting, I want to remind the subcommittee members that there will be a subcommittee meeting at the conclusion of the regular meeting on Thursday, which would be at 1 p.m.

The meeting is adjourned.

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