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# Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, November 24, 2011**

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**Chair**

**Mr. David Tilson**



## Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Thursday, November 24, 2011

•(1105)

[English]

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

This is the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, meeting number 11, on Thursday, November 24, 2011. This meeting is televised.

Pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), this is supplementary estimates (B), 2011-12, votes 1b and 7b under Citizenship and Immigration, referred to the committee on Thursday, November 3, 2011.

We have as our guest this morning the Honourable Jason Kenney, who is the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, and a whole bunch of other people we have all met before.

Mr. Minister, you may proceed. At your discretion I'll let you introduce your colleagues.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism):** Thank you, Chairman, and thank you, colleagues.

I'm sure you all know our senior officials quite well. We have Deputy Minister Neil Yeates; assistant deputy minister for operations, Claudette Deschênes; ADM for policy, Les Linklater; and Daniel Paquette, CFO—our chief financial officer.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Chair and colleagues. I am pleased today to present to the committee my department's supplementary estimates (B) for fiscal year 2011-2012.

The major components of the 2011-12 supplementary estimates (B) include net new appropriations of \$53.4 million. The most significant items include: \$33.3 million to support the Interim Federal Health Program; \$11.7 million to continue work on the inclusion of biometrics in the temporary visa stream—this is a project we started two years ago that will come into effect in 2013; and \$9.5 million to continue to modernize the immigration system and manage backlogs. This is of course the subject of your current study.

[English]

As you know, in 2008 we introduced the action plan for faster immigration, which gives the minister of citizenship and immigration the ability to control the number and type of new applications we receive. Under the action plan we can now focus our efforts in the federal skilled worker category on bringing in people with the

skills who are most likely to succeed in Canada. Those applying as federal skilled workers must now have experience in one of the 29 identified in-demand occupations and have an arranged offer of employment, or, as we announced earlier this month, must have studied at the PhD level in Canada.

The new PhD initiative, together with the Canadian experience class that we launched in 2008, represents what we hope is the future of immigration to Canada: typically bright young people who have Canadian education or work experience that will be recognized by Canadian employers, and who have improved or perfected their English or French language skills. Such newcomers are set for success in Canada.

We've also capped, at 10,000 per year, the number of new applications we will accept in the federal skilled worker program, to help further reduce the backlog of federal skilled workers.

As I explained at my last appearance, and as you can see on the charts to the side here, the controls we introduced in 2008 to manage the intake of new federal skilled worker applications have helped to reduce the backlog very significantly. We've reduced the backlog of 640,000 people by more than 50%.

While we are making progress on the federal skilled worker program, clearly there are other stresses in the system. In the parents and grandparents category, for example, there are currently about 165,000 people with their applications in process. That is why earlier this month we announced the first phase of the action plan for faster family reunification.

•(1110)

[Translation]

The four points in phase 1 of our action plan have three ultimate goals: reduce the backlog; speed up processing times; and make it easier for parents and grandparents to visit.

[English]

First, we will increase the number of parents and grandparents admitted to Canada by 60%, from an operational target of just over 15,000 this year to 25,000 next year. This will be the highest number of parents and grandparents admitted to Canada in nearly two decades.

Second, as of December 1, parents and grandparents will be eligible for a new 10-year, multiple-entry parent and grandparent super visa. Under this visa, they will be able to stay for up to two years at a time, without the need to renew their temporary resident status. The new super visa will also ensure that parents and grandparents can come to Canada sooner. They will now be able to visit with families in Canada, in principle—we hope, in many cases—in eight weeks, instead of waiting the current average time of eight years for permanent residency applications to be processed. They will also be required to obtain and demonstrate to us that they have acquired health care insurance for their visit to Canada, to help protect the interests of Canadian taxpayers during their visit. This will help us to ensure the integrity of this program.

Third, starting in the new year, the government will consult widely on how to redesign the parents and grandparents program in the future so that it is sustainable over the long term. Of course, the findings of the committee study on backlogs will factor heavily into informing our consultations. I mean that sincerely. We do hope that your report will delve into the issue of how we can eliminate these long backlogs and manage these programs in a more responsible and sustainable way in the future.

In order for this program to be sustainable, it must be redesigned to avoid future backlogs. I made this point at my last presentation, Chair. The problem on this is a simple one. It's a question of math. When applications exceed admissions, over time we end up with growing backlogs and longer wait times. When admissions exceed applications, the backlog and wait times shrink. It's a question of math. The problem is that we've been receiving on average up to 40,000—in some years up to 50,000—applications for parents and grandparents per year, far beyond our ability to admit that many people. So the Government of Canada has been, I would argue, a little bit disingenuous, making promises that we could not keep. I think all of us, regardless of our party orientation or philosophical approach, could agree that we must do a much better job of only accepting roughly the number of applications relative to the number of people who we are able to admit. The question is, how do you do that?

The parents and grandparents program must also be sensitive to our fiscal constraints, obviously, such as our generous public health care system and other social benefits. We will need to ensure that we admit a number of grandparents and parents whose families can afford to support them.

[*Translation*]

I have therefore asked my officials to look at how we can better manage this program, and right now we're examining a range of options.

Some of these include proposals already raised during the committee's study on backlogs.

●(1115)

[*English*]

For example, in order to reduce the number of applications, we could perhaps look at changing the requirement for sponsorship. One way we could do this would be to increase the minimum income threshold for sponsors, or increase the length of time a sponsor must

meet that threshold. This would ensure that sponsors are well settled and have the ongoing financial ability to support family members, or we could adopt an approach similar to that of Australia, which is known as the “balance of family” test. This option would prioritize parents or grandparents who already have the majority of their children living permanently in Canada.

Another suggestion I've heard, I think perhaps at this committee, is prioritizing applications for widowed parents or grandparents who have no immediate family in their country of origin and for whom one could make a stronger humanitarian case for reunification.

To reduce the fiscal burden of parents and grandparents on our generous social services and health care system, another option could involve requiring sponsors to cover their health care costs through an upfront bond. I believe that immigrant lawyer Richard Kurland suggested such a tool at this committee.

[*Translation*]

We intend to make all the options publicly available once my officials have compiled a list, before our consultations begin, in early 2012.

There will be lots of opportunity for Canadians to state their opinions and weigh in on this debate.

[*English*]

The fourth and final point in phase one of our action plan is a temporary pause of up to 24 months on the acceptance of new sponsorship applications in this category. A temporary pause will enable us to bring down the backlog until wait times are shorter and more reasonable. This part of our plan is absolutely essential. If we were to leave the program open for applications during this period of consultation and redesign, there's no doubt, based on previous experience, that our system would be flooded with new applications and the backlog would go from 165,000 to over 200,000. In fact, as you know, we've estimated, based on current trends and not taking such measures, we would be looking at a backlog of 340,000, I believe, with a 20-year wait time by the end of the decade. It's our hope that within the next two years we will be able to cut the backlog of parents and grandparents applications roughly in half, to a more manageable size.

Phase two of our action plan will take place after our consultations to redesign the program. Our vision for phase two is a more efficient immigration system. The end result will be faster family reunification and a program that is sustainable over the long term.

Mr. Chairman, once newcomers arrive here in Canada, our priority is to help them integrate as quickly as possible. That's why we've tripled the settlement funding since 2006, making more services like language training available to newcomers.

[*Translation*]

The government has placed a renewed focus on integration of immigrants into Canadian society. We believe that in order to succeed in Canada, you need to speak either English or French. You need to know about Canadian culture and Canadian history.

[English]

While we are committed to helping newcomers succeed, the government must also manage tax dollars responsibly. As this committee is aware, we are engaged in a review across the government in order to reduce spending and balance the budget, as we are at CIC. For 2011-12, funding for settlement services in provinces and territories outside of Quebec was reduced by \$53 million. In 2012-13 it will be reduced by \$6 million, for a total reduction of \$59 million. But even after those reductions, the total spending outside of Quebec will be \$600 million, three times more than the \$200 million allocation in 2005.

To advance fairness and meet settlement needs across Canada, starting next year allocations for all jurisdictions outside Quebec will be determined using a new national settlement formula. This formula is based on the number of immigrants that each province and territory receives, and it gives additional weight for refugees. This will ensure equal and fair funding across the country, with the exception of Quebec, which has a separate formula because of their accord.

Chairman, the Government of Canada is committed to helping new immigrants and their families succeed. We believe that funding for settlement services must follow immigrants so that services make their way into the communities where they settle.

[Translation]

The 2012 settlement allocations will continue to build on this trend and distribute funding more fairly across the country. I should note that in the last five years we have seen a significant change in settlement patterns: a decline in the number of immigrants settling in Ontario, particularly in Toronto, and a large increase in the west, particularly in the Prairie provinces.

Mr. Chair, my officials and I are now prepared to answer any questions the committee may have.

• (1120)

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm amazed, Mr. Minister. You're just over 10 minutes. Perfect.

Mr. Leung.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Willowdale, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you, Minister, for your very precise explanation of the changes that you're envisioning.

Many of your proposed changes have already been announced and phased in over the past couple of weeks or so. Could you give the committee a feel of what the response has been from the public with respect to these changes, the action plan for faster family reunification, please?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** To be honest, I've been very pleasantly surprised with an extraordinarily positive response.

One thing I've learned in this job is not to underestimate the understanding new Canadians have of our immigration system. They understand we don't have the capacity to welcome everyone who wants to come to Canada, and certainly not everyone right away.

They understand there are practical limits, even though we're maintaining the highest levels of immigration in Canadian history on a sustained basis, and the highest per capita in the developed world.

I have done dozens of radio talk shows, town hall meetings, and round tables since this announcement three weeks ago. The response that I've received has been that people appreciate this initiative because (a) it will substantially reduce the backlog in wait times for those currently in the parents' queue, and (b), it will increase the ability of parents and grandparents to visit their loved ones.

What many new Canadians tell me is that their elderly relatives—their parents and grandparents—don't necessarily want to immigrate permanently to Canada. They are well established in their country of origin where they have other family and friends. Many of them simply want to come to Canada on extended visits to perhaps help their children with childbirth, for example. The new super visa will help them to do so.

I found the response to be very positive.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** The second question I have is with regard to the reduction of the backlog for parents and grandparents. I have also engaged my community in Willowdale, which has an over 65% visible minority, and probably more than 50% were born outside of Canada. I have a feeling there's a request that the sponsor should show some sort of engagement in our community by taking this one step higher. Only citizens can apply for their parents and grandparents.

Would you care to comment on that?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** What I would say, Mr. Chairman, is that we need to find tools to make the management of this program sustainable in the long run so we don't end up with a massive excess of applications over admissions. The task for this committee, and ultimately for me as minister, is to find a balanced and reasonable way of limiting future applications to the number of people we are able to admit. I don't think we should rule anything in or out. We should look at all possible options. In one of our peer countries the privilege of family sponsorship is limited to citizens. You may want to ask the researchers to look at that. We'll certainly be looking at all of those options.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Thank you.

My last question has to do with more of a philosophical approach to immigration. Traditionally, immigration was tied to the nation's need for manpower, growth, and so on. I trust your department has looked into this and how we tailor our immigration for that purpose. For the future of Canada, for what we are doing here right now, we're looking at the challenges of the 21st century. Do you still feel that is an applicable strategy for our national immigration policy?

• (1125)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes, absolutely. This is why I say unapologetically that the focus of our immigration program must be on Canada's prosperity. Within that context, of course, we must continue our openness to family reunification and refugee protection, but the emphasis must be on prosperity, because of our aging population and our shrinking workforce.

I think one thing that's different now from the early decades of the last century, with high levels of immigration, is that we were really focusing then on settling virgin territory. We were farmers and people with basic skills. In today's highly competitive global economy, where value is often added by people with higher levels of education, I think we need to focus—not exclusively, but focus—on those newcomers who bring the skills that are most likely to succeed in the Canadian economy.

The new PhD program that we just announced was based not on some guess but on the data, which tell us, for example, that foreign-born, Canadian-educated PhD students do much better in Canada than most other newcomers. It is not entirely surprising.

Having said that, I do think that in the future we need a more flexible immigration program. We've made it more flexible through the large expansion in the provincial nominee program, which does allow, for example, skilled tradespeople to come into Canada and go to those regions where there are labour shortages. We've made it more flexible through the creation of the Canadian experience class, and next year we intend to make it more flexible through reforms to the skilled worker program, to put more emphasis on those traits that our data say lead to faster economic success in Canada for immigrants, such as people with arranged employment offers, people with higher levels of language proficiency, and people with Canadian work experience. But one thing that we're also contemplating is a skilled trades stream, so that people who would not normally qualify for the points system, which places a great emphasis on higher education, would still be able to immigrate through our skilled worker program.

So I think *grosso modo*, yes, we should.

Finally, frankly, one of the problems we've had in our immigration system is that about two-thirds of the people who obtain permanent residency in Canada are not primary economic immigrants. Either they're dependants, they're subsequently sponsored relatives, they're humanitarian refugees, or they're other humanitarian permanent residents. Only two out of every ten are actually assessed for their human capital before coming to Canada.

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

Go ahead, Mr. Davies.

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

I'd like to thank the minister for being here today. The minister has a reputation for being very accessible, and I'd like to thank him for that.

Mr. Minister, we've had a number of witnesses testify before this committee. We had the Canadian Restaurant Association come and tell us:

We face significant labour shortages by 2025, with over 142,000 full-time jobs projected to go unfilled. Thirty per cent of our members are concerned about labour shortages right now.

We met the other night with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, and they told us that they clearly face serious shortages of workers, particularly in the skilled trades.

We know demographically that the number of Canadians over the age of 60 is projected to go from one in five today to one in three by 2020.

A 2009 study by the C.D. Howe Institute concludes that we would need an improbably large increase—and that's something we're suggesting—from the 2010 level of 0.8% to almost 4% just to stabilize Canada's current old age dependency ratio.

Of course, CIC, itself, has said:

Very soon, the number of new entrants from Canadian schools and universities will equal (or fall short of) the number of retirees, leaving immigration responsible for all labour force growth.

Mr. Minister, we know that you've kept the annual levels flat over the last five years, at 254,000. If we keep our annual average the same, as you've announced, as the previous five years, how do you foresee Canada dealing with our looming demographic changes and upcoming labour shortages?

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

First of all, just to correct you, we, as a government, haven't kept levels flat. The average level of admissions of permanent residents under the previous government, from 1993 to 2005, was 222,500. Since our government has come to office, in the past five years the average number of admissions has been 254,000. That represents an increase of 14% in admissions, the highest sustained level in Canadian history. Although there were a couple of abhorrent post-war years that were higher, it's the highest sustained level. It also represents the highest per capita level in the developed world.

Now, Mr. Davies, I agree with you. I think you make a very good point, that we are facing a problem with future labour shortages. That's why we need immigration. But as I've pointed out before, immigration in and of itself is not a solution to those problems. According to the C.D. Howe Institute and other reports, our merely maintaining the average age of our population through immigration increases would require quadrupling levels to about 4% of the population per annum. That would be well over a million immigrants per year right now.

Some people might want to make a case for that. I think that's completely unrealistic.

• (1130)

**Mr. Don Davies:** We do too, Mr. Minister.

I realize that when I said flat, I meant over the previous five years. Since you've been in government, you've increased it, I agree, over the previous Liberal numbers, from approximately 220,000 to 254,000. You've filed your 2012 labour or projected levels plan, and that plan is what proposes to keep it steady at the 254,000 mark.

I'm just wondering why your government saw fit to raise the levels over the last five years from the previous Liberal number of 220,000. What was your reasoning for raising that 14%?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** There were two reasons. First, we do see immigration as a tool to address labour shortages. Second, we've accommodated significant growth in the provincial nominee program, which has led to a better distribution of immigrants across the country and through which immigrants are getting very good initial economic results. A third reason was frankly to help us reduce the big backlogs that we inherited. Last year, for example, we decided to add another 10,000 admissions for the federal skilled worker program to draw down on that backlog. On further reflection, I don't think we should allow levels to be established by mistakes of the past. I don't think we should be artificially raising levels just for backlog reduction purposes.

Finally, Mr. Davies, I think the challenge here is that as we look at the economy, to state the obvious, we're living in a period of real uncertainty. We can see what's going on in Europe today, as we speak. We see a softening in the labour market in parts of Canada.

Here's the challenge: the restaurant association with whom you were speaking and the oil and gas producers have very acute labour shortages in their industries, particularly in the prairie provinces and northern British Columbia. But in central Canada and in parts of eastern Canada, we see the opposite problem. We see far more people who are unemployed. So we have to be very careful and very prudent.

With respect, I believe your suggestion to go to 1%—so to 340,000—and to give permanent residency to all temporary foreign workers, which would mean another 140,000 net for those who have access to permanent residency, would take us up to close to half a million—

**Mr. Don Davies:** Let me clarify, because that's not what we said. We said to raise the annual levels prudently over the next five years to approaching 1%, and within that global number to allow temporary foreign workers to apply for citizenship. Obviously if the annual level is, say, 310,000 or 320,000 permanent residents and you allow temporary foreign workers to apply, it's not in addition to that, Mr. Minister. It's within that number. That's just to clarify, if you've been adding the two numbers together.

Mr. Minister, when one keeps in mind that the total annual immigration levels are being kept constant next year, which you've done, but you've raised the number of visas in certain categories, then obviously there must be reductions in others. One witness before this committee said we have to realize that with the target level we've established, immigration is essentially a zero-sum game, and that if we process more in one category we have to process less in another.

In the previous two weeks you announced that annual levels would be kept flat and that next year's target would be 254,000. There would be 10,000 more visas for skilled workers; 10,000 for parents or grandparents; and 1,000 more visas for a special program for PhDs. So if you have increased visas by at least 21,000 in these areas, where will the reductions be?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I haven't announced that levels will stay flat at 254,000. In fact, our global operational target for next year is 259,000, and in fact our range goes up to 265,000. We may hit the high end of that range. I think you're perhaps confusing targets and ranges here.

As you can see in our plan, which is published on our website, we're anticipating that fewer applications will be submitted this year for spousal reunification. That's not a quota we set. It's an estimate of demand. But generally we will probably be receiving more newcomers next year than we have this year.

A final point on overall levels, and I've made this point before, is that we have to pay attention to public opinion on immigration. Eight out of 10 Canadians are consistently telling us that immigration levels are already high enough or too high. Only 10% to 15% say we should be increasing levels, and I don't want to end up in the situation of western Europe, where there's a huge disconnect between policy-makers—

• (1135)

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to both of you. We're well over. We have to go on.

Monsieur Coderre, welcome back to the committee.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Yes.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** You have up to five minutes, sir.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** We have here the brotherhood of former and present ministers of immigration.

I find it unusual that you have brought your set with you. It gives you a good backdrop. You don't need a set to talk about funding, minister.

I am replacing my colleague. I have some specific questions, but I will come back to them afterwards. We are going to talk about the Auditor General's report.

It seems the agency has trouble determining at the border whether a visa applicant is inadmissible for health or security reasons. In terms of the tools being used at present, the operational guidelines or the country-specific risk profile guide, they are said to be sometimes incomplete. When they are used, the information is not up to date.

Obviously, when people are being allowed to enter and we are working with visas.... I know the pressure you are under, because you are in charge. You have major responsibilities.

I would like you to give me a quick overview of this. What do you intend to do, what actions are you going to take?

I know you are of the same opinion as the Auditor General. You have said you are going to rectify the situation. But what does this mean specifically?

You have a decision to make tomorrow morning, because obviously it is a question of security and a question of public health. What do you do?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** The Auditor General's report contains a number of points. We agree with him concerning his recommendations. On several points, we have already taken actions to improve how visa applications are checked in terms of and public health and safety.

For example, the Auditor General said there are 26 diseases on the Public Health Agency of Canada's list, but we regularly check for only two diseases. That is why we have initiated consultations with the Public Health Agency of Canada to see whether there are more diseases that we should be checking for.

Second, in terms of security, that involves all the security agencies, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the RCMP, and so on. We are doing our best to cooperate with them.

Ultimately, as you know very well, Mr. Coderre, the border security agencies make the decisions about inadmissibility, not the officers at the Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. I can ask one of my officials to add a few words on this subject.

**Mr. Neil Yeates (Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** Yes, certainly.

Mr. Chair, we are doing a lot of specific things. For example, we are making changes

[*English*]

the visa application form

[*Translation*]

to simplify it.

[*English*]

We're doing a review of admissibility provisions of IRPA. As members may know, there's a very complex set of provisions within IRPA that determine admissibility.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** I understand, Mr. Yeates, but a form is not going to change anything. You can change the form, you can talk to each other more often, but there is a situation, you know, when it comes to risk assessment.

I know very well that when you have to make a decision, you are at the mercy of the people who do the security reports. You have to wait. And I would note in passing that this also has an impact on backlogs. It is not just a matter of internal administration; there is also an issue on the outside.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** In terms of the form, the Auditor General said that we do not have enough information to make admissibility decisions. The problem is that the only way to get more information is to request it and require that applicants provide more information. However, all MPs complain about the fact that the process is already too difficult.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Too complex.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** So a balance has to be struck.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Are you currently working with your colleagues, and in particular the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the issue of public safety in order to enter into more bilateral agreements with other countries so there is a better process for exchanging information?

• (1140)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** There is a group of five countries—Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada—that are increasingly sharing their information and their practices.

For example, there are problems with fraudulent marriages in India, in relation to immigration. We are all working together to identify trends and problems, and share information. We are doing it globally. I have spoken with the French minister of immigration with a view to better coordination.

The answer is yes.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Menegakis.

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

Minister, thank you very much for appearing before us again. I want to thank the officials who are here yet again.

First of all, Minister, I'd like to give you an opportunity to finish your thought. In a previous question, you were saying we don't want to get into a situation like we currently have in western Europe. Would you like to finish that thought?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Sure.

One of the things we should really be grateful for in Canada is that we've never had a serious organized political expression of xenophobia or anti-immigrant sentiment, that generally Canadians are remarkably open and welcoming to newcomers. We want to keep it that way. We want to maintain the broad public consensus in favour of immigration, because we need newcomers to build our country in the future. In order to maintain that broad consensus, I think it's very important that we constantly demonstrate to Canadians that immigration is working for Canada and that we are welcoming a number of people who we can realistically accept, employ, and integrate.

It's interesting, Mr. Menegakis, that in the polling I've seen, typically new Canadians, foreign-born Canadians, are those most opposed to increasing immigration levels. I don't think that's because they're cynical; I think it's because they're realistic. I think it's because in their experience it's not easy for many newcomers to find good jobs or to start successful businesses. They recognize there's a very competitive labour market, and in parts of the country there are unacceptably high levels of unemployment. They also want to make sure that on a cultural and social level we have the capacity to welcome and integrate people into Canadian society.

My point is that we should listen to those 80% of Canadians who are telling us consistently that immigration levels should not go higher than what are already the highest sustained levels in our history and the highest per capita levels in the developed world.



I would refer back to our colleague, Mr. Davies, who sent me a thoughtful letter on October 14, which I really do appreciate. It's the first time I've had an immigration critic actually provide specific advice on levels, and I commend him for that. We may not agree on the substance of everything, but I appreciate his good faith. I would invite Mr. Davies, if he wants to clarify it, to send me a revised version, but in that letter he calls for an increase in levels to 1% of population, 336,000, and he says which categories that should come in. Then later he says, "...we urge your government to provide an option to all [temporary foreign workers] to apply for permanent residency".

Well, we grant work permits to about 180,000 temporary foreign workers per year. About 40,000 of them already have access to permanent residency, either through the live-in caregiver program, the Canadian experience class, or the provincial nominee program. That means it's another 140,000—the way I read this—on top of the 336,000. I would invite Mr. Davies to send another letter to clarify.

I think that is disregarding the 80% of Canadians who are telling us not to increase immigration levels, but let's focus on settling the people we're already receiving.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Minister, the NDP proposal is to significantly increase immigration levels.

In relation to the backlog, what would that do to the backlog if that were the only tool we were using?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** If that were the only tool, it would have a very negligible effect on the backlogs, unless at the same time there were limits on new applications.

We demonstrated at our last committee meeting—I showed you the graphs and the charts—how this applies. Let's put it this way. Both opposition parties here opposed Bill C-50 in the 2008 Parliament, which gave the government the ability to manage the intake of new applications. They said this was unfair. It was cherry-picking. Some even went so far, demagogically, to suggest that it was somehow anti-immigrant. However, the bill did pass, and we have used that tool to limit the intake of new applications.

If they had won that fight, had we not put in place Bill C-50 and the action plan for faster immigration, the backlog in the skilled worker program alone would have gone from 640,000 in 2008 to over a million this year. Thanks to the action plan and that legislation, we have been able to reduce the old skilled worker backlog from 640,000 to 310,000.

I've heard members of the opposition during these hearings say—and by the way, I do read all the transcripts, and I really am interested in what goes on here—that this hasn't worked. I've heard certain witnesses, I think invited by opposition parties, say that C-50 and the action plan for faster immigration has been a failure. Well, it's true that we haven't eliminated the backlog, but it's true that we have reduced it by 50%. And had we not taken these measures, which were opposed by everyone else in Parliament, we would be over a million in that one program alone. This demonstrates the velocity....

Under the previous government, in many years they were receiving up to 400,000 to 450,000 applications in all of the programs, but they were admitting 220,000 people. Let's say we take

away controls on incoming applications for all of our programs. I think it's fair to estimate that we would be receiving between 400,000 and 500,000 applications per year. So even if we were to increase the level of admissions to 330,000 to 340,000, we would be adding to the backlog by 100,000 to 200,000 per year. The backlog and the wait times would continue to go up.

The only way you can avoid growth in backlogs, let alone reduce backlogs, by increasing admissions is to admit each year the number of people who apply. Without limits on applications, that's again where we're going up to the 400,000 to 500,000 range.

• (1145)

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Thank you. I'm done.

How much time do I have?

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Oh.

Minister, in your opinion, if we do significantly increase it, what do you think the financial implications of doubling immigration levels, for example, would be?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Every new permanent resident is a new customer for our publicly funded health insurance system and is someone who's eligible for our entire suite of social benefits.

What we're trying to change in our immigration selection is the unfortunate trajectory of the last 25 years, where we saw a decline in incomes and employment and an increase in social dependence on the part of new immigrants to Canada.

The good news is that we're starting to see the results increase. But that's a point we should all be mindful of.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Ms. Sitsabaiesan.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** A point of order.

**The Chair:** Stop the clock. We have a point of order.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Mr. Chair, I am looking at how the panels are arranged. In the other committees, when the panels show charts, I have no objection to that. However, that looks a lot more like advertising for the Conservative government.

[*English*]

It looks like a prop, and frankly, I don't believe it should be there.

[*Translation*]

It is blocking the media's view and they can't see. They would like to see your public performance. I think these two panels should be removed. I have no objection to the charts because that is information, but the rest is advertising. It seems to be advertising for the Conservatives. In the public interest, they should be removed.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** I have a point of order in reply.

**The Chair:** Yes.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston:** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments. I understand, but it really is the name of the program we are discussing at the moment. It is a constant reminder of what we are discussing in this committee.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** That is exactly what it is, Mr. Chair, advertising.

We already have it in hand, in any event. If I feel like looking at it, I will look at it that way, but I would ask—

[English]

**The Chair:** Okay. We're going to move on and we're going to take the blue things down—just the blue things. Those other charts are fine. In my view, it's blocking members of the public from seeing the minister's back, and, more importantly, Mr. Minister, me.

• (1150)

**Mr. Don Davies:** From the official opposition's point of view, we're quite content to see the minister's back.

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

**The Chair:** Okay, let's stop this.

Ms. Sitsabaiesan, we're in the second round. You have up to five minutes.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Minister, you have frozen applications for sponsorship of parents and grandparents for the next two years. Can you give Canadians an assurance that they will be able to sponsor their parents and grandparents after the two-year freeze expires?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** So you're guaranteeing that at the end of two years, I can submit my application for my grandparent to come here.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I'm guaranteeing that after two years, when we put in place the new redesigned program about two years from now, we will reopen the parents and grandparents program for new applications. But it will not be unlimited. We will not go to a situation where we're receiving 40,000 and 50,000 applications a year, because then we'll just find ourselves back in a serious backlog all over again.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Basically, it's going to be revamped and potentially have limits on the number of applicants allowed in?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes, that's the idea.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Okay.

With respect to the super visa, obviously you must know that Canada has had a five-year multiple entry visa for decades now. Somewhat surprisingly, to me anyway, testimony last week revealed that it appears our visa posts around the world do not keep track of how many of these we actually issue.

I suspect this is maybe because they're not used frequently. People are not told that this is an option when they apply for a visa. There isn't a check box on the visa application form indicating that this is an option for people.

In my constituency office, I hear many stories of parents who are denied temporary resident visas because they have a permanent residency application pending. The fear is that if the TRV gets approved, they won't actually go back to their country and will just stay.

My question is, will there be different criteria for the super visa than for regular TRVs and the five-year multiple entry visas so that we can ensure that they are granted to our parents and grandparents who want them?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** That's a very good question. I will say that one of the reasons we require people to demonstrate they've obtained health insurance when they come to Canada is to add greater certainty for our visa officers—that admitting people is not going to end up representing a net cost to Canadian taxpayers.

The department informs me they're confident the approval rate for these parent super visas will actually be very high, so I'll—

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** So the fact that they may have a permanent residency application pending is not going to be held against them, as it has been in the past, traditionally?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** It will not be held against them.

People may apply for the parent super visa regardless of whether they have an application in for permanent residency, and that will not be held against them.

I would invite Claudette Deschênes to supplement the answer.

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes (Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** I would just add that we didn't say the last time we were here that we didn't have data. I said that we didn't have data by category. We have data on the number of people who get multiple visas.

Over the years, we've always had this concept of dual intent: you could immigrate, but you could also come temporarily to visit.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** But I've had many constituents time and again get refused for their temporary resident visa. On their letter, or when we call, the reason given is, "Well, they have a permanent resident application in process and we don't think they'll actually leave." I want to know if that practice is going to change with the multiple-entry—

**The Chair:** To both of you, we can only hear one person at a time.

You're on the floor.

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes:** The issue of dual intent is that when someone comes temporarily but is also wanting to immigrate...do we think that person, if they didn't get accepted for immigration, would go back to their country? I'm not saying it doesn't happen, but that concept is there.

On the super visa, we are going to be tracking very closely, and certainly the issue of wanting to immigrate will not be a detraction for being considered for a super visa.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Okay, thank you.

What steps are you going to take to let people know that they can apply for our super visa?

•(1155)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** We made a high-profile announcement, after which I did over 60 exclusive interviews in ethnocultural media. We will be posting all of the relevant information on the CIC website by December 1, when the program begins.

So I think people are highly aware of this, and I'm also sure that members of the immigration industry of consultants and lawyers will be advising their current and potential clients quite actively about this.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. James.

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome back, Minister Kenney and departmental officials.

I wanted to touch base on something Don Davies said about one of our witnesses indicating that our labour shortages will have to be dealt with 100% through immigration. I just want to touch base on that, because we've actually had numerous witnesses come in here and say that's not the case—

**Mr. Don Davies:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** A point of order. Stop the clock.

**Mr. Don Davies:** People are permitted to put questions, but if they're going to quote another committee member, it has to be accurate. I never said that any witness said that the labour shortages have to be dealt with 100% by immigration.

If my honourable friend checks the record, she'll find that was never stated.

**The Chair:** All right, let's try to get along.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** My mistake. I thought—

**The Chair:** No, it may or may not be your mistake. It's a debate, and we're not into debate here, so you may proceed.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Sorry, I thought he indicated that one particular witness had said that. My mistake if that's not the case.

I wanted to touch base on that, because numerous witnesses actually did come in and say that's not the particular case, that we in fact should look internally within Canada to the people who are already here, such as our youth, maybe the unemployed, and also within our aboriginal community. I just wanted to confirm that this is in fact what you think as well, Minister Kenney.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes, very much so.

Look, as I've said, there's no realistic way that we can address projected future labour shortages through immigration alone. So we must do a much better job of maximizing our domestic labour market potential.

That means addressing regions and populations within Canada that have historically high levels of unemployment. It means, for example, aboriginal Canadians in western Canada, where there are significant labour shortages often close to first nations communities, with 80% to 90% unemployment. It means asking the question, why is it that in certain parts of eastern Canada, where we have double-digit unemployment, employers aren't able to get people to apply for

work and we have to bring in temporary foreign workers? To me, it's inexplicable.

It means a greater focus on apprenticeship and training in the skilled trades, and our government has been trying to facilitate that through the apprenticeship tax credit and the tradesperson tool deduction and so forth. But it also means provinces must continue investing more in our trade and vocational schools.

It means more flexibility within the Canadian labour market. It means greater productivity. All of these things together must be part of addressing future labour shortages.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you very much.

The departmental officials were here last week, and Ms. Deschênes, I believe, actually made a link between the bigger the backlog, the longer the wait time, and the greater chance the application is going to have inaccuracies, which in turn create inefficiencies in the system and are really a waste of productivity in getting things done.

I wanted to confirm whether you agree with this, that if something is in the queue for eight years, by the time it gets to the actual processing stage it's going to have inaccuracies, and by reducing the backlog we're going to improve the efficiencies of the system overall.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes. Very often members of the public or members of Parliament will present cases to me involving visa refusals by our officers, which they think are unreasonable. Then we look at the case and find out that applications were incomplete or unhelpful, applicants didn't provide the reason for travel or they didn't indicate whether they had relatives in Canada, or they didn't provide evidence of a history of travel. The best way that people can ensure they get a positive answer on a visa application is to provide complete information and a perfect application, and to be very careful about hiring an unlicensed consultant overseas to file their application for them.

We have a big problem overseas with an industry of what I call bottom feeders, who will guarantee people a visa in Canada. They will often intimate that they know someone in the Canadian consulate or immigration bureau and that if they are paid, in India, five lakhs or something, they will be guaranteed the visa. In fact, they don't know anyone; they don't have any inside track. Very frequently they will then submit a sloppy application on behalf of their client, often supported by fraudulent and counterfeit documents, which are often easily identified by our visa officers, which lead to a refusal. Then the client is upset because they think they didn't get a fair shot at this. Part of this is *caveat emptor*, buyer beware, which is why we have made available advertising, YouTube videos, warnings in 17 languages, both here and abroad, about the risks of engaging an unlicensed, unscrupulous immigration agent.

•(1200)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Thank you, Minister, for coming back, along with your very worthy staff. Congratulations on being voted yet again the hardest working parliamentarian.

Our constituents have said time and again that jobs and growth are their major priority, so they're delighted the Conservative government has echoed that in overarching policy. You have made that a theme as well in trying to improve our immigration. You said this morning that the focus in immigration must be on Canada's prosperity because of our aging population and our shrinking workforce. You talked about making it more flexible through the provincial nominee program and the Canadian experience class.

Can you elaborate and answer the question that is on Canadians' minds when it comes to immigration? How are we promoting our immigration policy and making sure jobs go to Canadians first and ensuring that immigration complements the labour force rather than displaces it?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** That's a very good question, and I would invite members to look at the public comment boards. Whenever I see a story on immigration on one of these media websites, I'll often go and do an online consultation, looking at the comments that have been entered. It's always amazing to me how many people ask why we are maintaining such high levels of immigration when there are Canadians who are unemployed. Why are we giving jobs away to immigrants that Canadians could be taking?

I don't think we should be dismissive. I think we need to explain to those Canadians that in fact there are significant labour shortages in certain industries and regions, as Mr. Davies has pointed out, but we should also be mindful that they do have a reasonable concern in a period of economic uncertainty.

Now I would point out to them that our data indicate that the vast majority of newcomers to Canada, particularly primary economic immigrants, do find employment. In the past three or four years we've seen a very encouraging upward turn in employment and income levels for immigrants generally. The data we have is up to 2008. I'm very eager to see the 2009-10 data, because of changes that were made to the skilled worker points grid by the previous government, which I would like to give credit for, focusing on higher levels of language proficiency, for example, and because of our expansion of the provincial nominee program, which is often based on an arranged employment offer. We have seen things improving. We've gone from a two-decade slide in economic results for immigrants to a three- or four-year turnaround. I think we're really headed in the right direction.

What I find exciting is the new Canadian experience class, which is growing, the new PhD stream, the better results we're getting from skilled workers who are now being selected and admitted, the fast good results for provincial nominees, plus other changes we're planning on doing. All of that adds up, for me, to much better economic results, higher levels of employment, and higher levels of income for those who come here.

Finally, the concern that you underscore, Mr. Weston, is often expressed in relation to the temporary foreign worker program. It's important to underscore that this program operates on a Canadian

first basis. In order to hire temporary foreign workers, an employer must first obtain a labour market opinion from Service Canada, which they can only get if they have demonstrated that they have offered the job to Canadian residents or citizens at the prevailing regional wage rate.

So here's the weird thing. We actually have parts of eastern Canada, as I mentioned, with double-digit unemployment. Fish processing plants, a chocolate factory, Christmas tree farm operators, and other businesses tell me that in those regions they put ads in the paper and online to recruit local Canadians to take those jobs, which are often very good paying jobs, but Canadians don't apply. The business owners then say to me, "Minister, if you don't allow us to access the temporary foreign worker program, we're going to have to shut our doors and close down the business."

I met recently with executives from a global pipeline manufacturing company that has an operation in Alberta. They are looking desperately to hire people who merely are high school graduates and pay them, if I'm not mistaken, \$26 an hour on average to help them manufacture pipes. They cannot find Canadians to apply for those jobs. So now they're looking at possibly moving operations to Mexico.

How does that make any sense when we have, what is it, 14% youth unemployment?

• (1205)

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

Ms. Ayala, you have up to five minutes.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP):** Good afternoon, Minister.

Several witnesses have said there are big differences in processing times between various Canadian embassies around the world. For example, Nigel Thomson, a colleague from the Canadian Migration Institute, commented on the differences in processing times in the cases of spouses and partners, which range from six months at some visa offices up to more than 27 months at others.

Now this program is one of the most—

[English]

**The Chair:** Stop the clock, please, Madam Clerk.

[Translation]

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** I am smelling smoke coming from the interpreters' booth. Could you slow it down a bit, please?

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you again for coming, Mr. Coderre. I appreciate it very much.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paulina Ayala:** Well then, call the fire department!

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm helping you.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Paulina Ayala:** Several witnesses have said there are big differences in processing times between various Canadian embassies around the world. For example, Nigel Thomson, our colleague from the Canadian Migration Institute, commented on the differences in processing times in the case of spouses, partners, which range from six months at some visa offices up to more than 27 months at others, when this program is one of the priorities in the processing system for our communities.

Another person gave the example of a Nigerian woman who sponsored her husband. The visa office in Accra, Ghana, gave a wait time of two years. Those stories seem to be commonplace, and the situation seems to be getting worse.

And that is not to mention the visa issuance rates, which vary hugely from one country to another for no discernible reason. For example, 95% of visa applicants from Chile are accepted, while 30% of applications from Venezuela are rejected. And yet we are talking about countries that are comparable in economic terms.

I have two questions. Why is there such a huge difference in processing times and the criteria applied, from one country to another? Why do spousal sponsorships take so much time and what are you doing to rectify the situation?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Thank you for your question, Ms. Ayala.

Overall, we are trying to have similar processing times in all the countries where we offer our services. Sometimes, the differences occur for specific local reasons. Ms. Deschênes will give you more details.

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes:** We are trying to keep processing times even throughout the world. In earlier appearances, we talked about modernization. That is why we want to move increasingly toward a process by which applications will be improved before being sent abroad. The delays are often partly attributable to the mail. It takes more time, for example, to get the results of medical examinations and to finalize that sort of thing. If we can make applications more complete in Canada or if the sponsor can help us to get this information rather than leaving it to the department to try to contact the spouse or the partner, we will be able to shorten the time, we think.

Obviously, there are higher risks in some applications. That can certainly cause more delays. With modernization, we are studying the possibility of doing things a little differently. At present, if an interview is needed, the spouse is asked to attend at the embassy for the interview, or they have to wait for us to travel to the region. We are currently testing certain models. For example, using Skype would let us do interviews faster.

You mentioned Chile and Venezuela and you said their economic situation is comparable. There are also other criteria. For example, sometimes analyses dealing with security, criminality and so on may take more time in one country or another. Our goal, however, is to try to arrive at a system where ordinarily the processing time would be comparable. We hope in part that our modernization is going to give us more tools. In the past, we had to have more officers in those countries to do more work. If we can ask the sponsor to give us more

information, I think we are going to be able to reduce the variables that are based on communication problems.

•(1210)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Opitz.

**Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

To our witnesses, welcome. Welcome, Minister. Thank you all for appearing once again.

Thank you, Minister, for all of your work. Having worked for you for the last two years, I know how hard you work, because you ran me off my feet in the endless hours of consultation coast to coast and with all the communities of Toronto. I know that's bearing fruit in everything you have done today. I know together we have also seen those "bottom feeders", and the impact it has on individuals when their dreams are stolen. So that is absolutely tragic, and certainly something we want to avoid for everybody wanting to come to Canada in the future.

I'd just like to compliment Ms. Deschênes right now, too. The comment you made on the modernization of new technologies is tremendous. That's going to allow a lot of flexibility in being able to screen applicants and get them through the process faster. That shows a lot of innovation on the part of the department. So well done to all of you.

Minister, I know that recently you've been very busy and you've made some important announcements. For example, the federal skilled worker program—from which applicants have incredibly successful outcomes—is increasing compared to last year. I was pleased to see that the government announced a new initiative to admit up to 1,000 PhD students each year through the federal skilled worker program, and that the Canadian experience class has already welcomed its 10,000th successful applicant. I know that's a tremendous program.

Can you elaborate a bit on how these are bringing Canada closer to an immigration system that attracts and quickly integrates the skilled workers that we truly require in our economy?

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

In the past, we had this bizarre situation where Canada would welcome foreign students to come and pay high levels of tuition at our colleges and universities. They would get a Canadian education, they would improve or perfect their English or French language skills, they would have a degree that would be recognized by Canadian employers—which is typically not the case for skilled worker immigrants—and then we would say, "Great, you've got that Canadian education, you've got the language skills, now please leave the country, and if you'd like to immigrate here, get in the back of a seven-year-long queue." It was just plain stupid.

That's why in 2008 we opened the new Canadian experience class, which allows foreign students—who have completed at least a two-year degree or diploma in Canada and who obtained at least one year of work experience using the open work permit suite we grant them—to apply for and obtain permanent residency from within Canada on a fast basis. Instead of going overseas and having to get in the back of the skilled worker queue and wait for six, seven, or eight years, we process these Canadian experience class applicants typically in a year or less.

As I say, these people are set for success. All of the research, not just by my ministry but by the think tanks who focus on immigration, tell us that the number one reason why employers don't hire immigrants to Canada, particularly in licensed professions, has to do with language proficiency. Language proficiency is an indicator of a whole suite of what we call soft social skills—understanding how to deal with Canadians in the work environment and so forth. These foreign students have obtained those soft social skills. They have high levels of official language proficiency. Most important, they have a degree that a Canadian employer will recognize on the face of it. That's why we opened up the program.

We were a bit disappointed at the beginning that it didn't have very high levels of take-up. Our first year we planned for I think 8,000 and we got 3,000 applicants or something. But this year, as you mentioned, we've just welcomed our 10,000th. This year we're planning for 7,000.

I should also mention that within the Canadian experience class we permit high-skilled temporary foreign workers who have completed two years of work in Canada on a work permit to also apply for that program. Again, it's the same kind of thing: they've got work experience, they've already got a job, they're in it, and they've improved their language skills. Why should we not welcome them as immigrants?

We did find, however, that the CEC was not working very well for foreign PhD students. The CEC is predicated on doing a diploma or a degree and then working for a year, whereas the PhD students are involved in a multi-year course of studies—four to eight years typically. But we want to keep them here, because their human capital is enormous. All of the data say that foreign students who obtain Canadian PhDs do extraordinarily well in the Canadian labour market. Their incomes are above the average income very quickly.

That's why we've opened up a special stream within the skilled worker program for up to 1,000 foreign PhD students who have done at least two years of their PhD studies in Canada.

•(1215)

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** That's a tremendous program.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I have to say that I hope that the CEC in particular will grow and grow and grow.

Now, some of the foreign students have also been coming in through the provincial nominee programs. I would just add parenthetically that we say to the provinces, if you want to use more provincial nominee spots for economic immigrants, then don't be giving those allocations, those spots, to people who could get permanent residency through a federal program like the CEC. Send the foreign students, the kids graduating from Seneca College or

UBC, through the Canadian experience class—that way the numbers will track up there—and use your provincial nominee allocation for skilled tradespeople and others.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

You and Mr. Dykstra have three minutes.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** I know that you've been active in meeting regularly with the live-in caregiver community in Canada and that the government has taken several actions to address the concerns of live-in caregivers. So I really have two questions for you.

Can you please tell us about some of the initiatives the government has introduced to address the concerns of live-in caregivers? And is the government open to taking additional actions, if warranted?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes, we did announce in December 2009 and implement in the summer of 2010 a number of significant changes to better protect live-in caregivers. This is a program that allows families that have particularly acute care needs—in the past, typically, young children with two working parents, and increasingly elderly or infirm relatives who need in-home care—to have access to people from abroad to help them at home. And here's the thing. When Canadian families advertise for live-in caregivers within Canada, Canadian residents and citizens don't apply for that work. So the only accessible labour pool for that unique and important position is from abroad.

Given the generosity of Canada, we provide a pathway to permanent residency for those live-in caregivers. There have been problems with the program in the past, which we addressed last year. For example, we have now instituted a mandatory contract that clarifies the rights of the caregiver, the obligations on the employer, and the obligations on the caregiver—to avoid disputes, to make their rights clear.

Secondly, we're providing more information on what their legal rights are in Canada. We're providing training to caregivers, for example, in the Philippines and written information on who they can call if there are problems with their employer.

Thirdly, we've negotiated information sharing agreements with the provinces so that if the labour departments of the provinces report that a caregiver's employer has been abusive or violated their rights, we can then blacklist that employer so they don't get access to a caregiver in the future.

We have moved the cost of recruitment fees and health insurance from the caregiver to the employer, and 50% of the travel costs, to make sure the employers are committed to that caregiver.

We've also effectively eliminated the requirement for a second medical check on the caregiver when she applies for her permanent residency. So if she's medically admissible on the temporary, initial phase of the program and becomes sick in the interim, she will not be penalized.

We've also expanded to four years the number of years during which the caregiver must obtain the requisite number of hours to qualify for permanent residency. So if a caregiver has to leave an abusive employer and transition to a better one, there's more flexible time for them to do so.

Let me say that some people say we should end the caregiver program; our approach has been to mend it. We'd like all of the stakeholders to work with us in implementing these significant changes as we go forward.

• (1220)

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Do I still have some time left?

**The Chair:** Thirty seconds.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Very quickly, Minister, previous witnesses have suggested that the government update the point system to attune it more closely to what Canada's changing demographic situation is on an annual basis. Could you comment on what kind of change that would mean? And is it something we would consider?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** We've done consultations, online and elsewhere, on prospective changes to the skilled worker points grid. I'm taking those public comments into consideration and working with our officials with an intention to announce a revised skilled worker points grid in mid-2012, which will, as I have said publicly, likely place more emphasis on higher language proficiency for those seeking to work in licensed professions.

**The Chair:** We'll have to finish this in another round.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** And perhaps the skilled trade stream as well.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kellway, you have up to five minutes.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and through you, thank you, Minister, for coming today.

I was struck when you came a few weeks ago by the premise that I think you set out for us, for this study, in your presentation. I wanted to get a comment from you on the premise of this study because I think the testimony we've heard has contradicted the premise you set out.

They are related. The first one is that this isn't a resource issue. Our backlog in the current system really stems from the requirement to process applications. I think as an illustration you showed us a plane and so many seats, etc.

What we've heard consistently through particularly the department folks who have been witnesses for us, either implicitly or explicitly, is the suggestion that the resources are really determined by the targets that are set. I was wondering if you could give me a brief comment on that.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes, of course they are.

Last year we admitted 280,000 permanent residents, the highest number in 56 years, the second highest number in the history of Canada. We have the resources, but we have practical limits to how many people we think Canada can integrate and how many jobs are available for newcomers. That's the point.

Sure, I could say to the department, as Mr. Davies does, that we want 340,000, plus admit 140,000 temporary foreign workers, so we'd go to 480,000 next year. And let's say I could go to the Minister of Finance and get the funds to double the number of visa officers. So what? If we're getting 600,000 applications that year, the backlog will grow. As long as the number of applications exceeds the number of admissions, the backlog will grow.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** That's very helpful, and I appreciate that.

The second premise, then, that I think your response leads us to, is this notion that immigration is a zero-sum equation. You set out in the consultation you had in the summer around the backlog and for us in the presentation a few weeks ago that this is really a matter of balancing streams of immigration as opposed to the issue of how much immigration we accept. Effectively, the limit on how many people we can let in is set.

Yet we know—and my colleague, Mr. Davies, touched on this earlier, I understand—there are labour shortages existing or certainly looming in this country. Between what the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association testified and what we heard from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the building trades, they're talking about another 150,000, related only to their industries in one part of the country. That's 300,000 jobs identified as not being filled. I know there are a number of policy prescriptions that can deal with these sorts of things, but certainly immigration has to be one of them.

What struck me about the testimony we've heard is that what's missing here with respect to the economic stream is any kind of study that looks at the labour market and labour market plans going out over a significant time horizon, maybe five years, maybe ten years. In fact, some of our witnesses actually commented on the absence of such studies.

My question is, how do we do immigration policy without the benefit of labour market planning and labour market studies to identify shortages? How do we know that there's a limit to the economic stream that we can let into this country?

• (1225)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I don't accept the premise of the question that we do immigration planning without labour market information or studies. In fact, we pay very close attention to all of the available labour market data. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has an occupational projection. They are in fact putting in place even more robust information on labour markets that will be useful to us.

Every year when we do our annual immigration levels plan, we consult with provinces, industry, sector groups, labour unions, and others, to identify what the projected future economic needs are and what the labour market situation is. Indeed, it's our intention next year to move to a multi-year levels plan so that we can, apropos of your point, do a little more mid-term to long-term planning, as opposed to short-term annual immigration plans. So we do take all of that into account.

Perhaps I could briefly say I'm very encouraged to hear your line of questioning and that of Mr. Davies. You're focused on economic immigration, and it is a tool to address labour shortages. Typically what we hear from your party, frankly, is that you want higher levels of family reunification and higher levels of humanitarian immigration, and right now only two out of every ten immigrants to Canada are primary economic immigrants. So to the question of mix within programs, if you want to address those labour shortages, then we should be getting more out of the immigrants we receive, in terms of people who are employable.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Kellway, you're way over time.

Ms. James.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** We're now back to seven-minute rounds, you'll be pleased to know, Monsieur Coderre.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Last week departmental officials were here, and there was some discussion on the federal skilled worker program and the fact that the government has been able to reduce that backlog considerably. I think I asked a question, if I remember correctly, and the answer was that the actual backlog could be eliminated within the next few years, which is truly remarkable considering the size of it back in 2008.

I think the results of what our government has done over the last couple of years with regard to the federal skilled worker backlog and the intake of the actual applications shows it's an important tool that we need to carry on to make sure that backlogs are certainly not developed or increased in the future.

Minister Kenney, would you agree with that statement? And do you think we could apply that same management of intake of applications to other immigration streams?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes, and actually we have. Not only have we applied the tool of ministerial instructions through our action plan for faster immigration to reduce the old skilled worker backlog by more than half, but we have applied the same tool, for example, to the immigrant investor program.

We now have a backlog of nearly 30,000 cases in the investor immigrant program, which is why I announced this summer that we would accept only 700 new applications this year. The other several thousand investor immigrants we admit will come out of the backlog for several years until we can get the IIP backlog down to what we would call "a working inventory". Then we could expand the number of new applications we'll receive in the future.

Similarly we've applied the same tool to the privately sponsored refugee program. We had sponsorship agreement holders in that program, irresponsibly, I think, submitting thousands of applications—well beyond our ability to admit people—so we have ended up with a large wait list. In some regions, such as Nairobi, it is as long as 10 years because of the huge numbers of applications. We are now working with the sponsorship agreement holders to reasonably limit the number of new applications until we can draw down on the backlog.

Finally, we would encourage the provinces to be mindful of the need to avoid the development of backlogs in their provincial nominee program.

• (1230)

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you.

I noticed in your speech, and also in the hard copy I have here, that you have listed a number of things that have come out of our committee's work on backlogs. Some of the suggestions include minimum income threshold for sponsors, balance of family test, and also an upfront bond of an incremental amount of what we've heard to be up to \$75,000.

My colleague, Mr. Opitz, touched on the points system, and a few of the witnesses suggested the government take that action. There has been a real focus on making sure the ability to speak English or French, one of our two official languages, be part of that points system.

I am wondering whether you could comment on that. Is that something you would consider as the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes. In 2001, the previous Liberal government adopted a new grid for the skilled worker program that allocated higher points for higher levels of language proficiency. It was controversial at the time, but in retrospect it was the right thing to do. Since 2006 we've seen those people getting admitted under the current points grid and we've seen much better results.

As I mentioned, we've gone from a 25-year decline in income and employment rates for skilled workers...and we've turned the corner. We're seeing higher levels of employment and income, we believe in large measure thanks to the higher levels of language proficiency.

This is based on data. The data tell us, employers tell us, that economic immigrants with higher levels of official language proficiency do better faster. That is not to say, by the way, that people cannot succeed without high levels of language proficiency; they're just more likely to succeed with high levels of English or French. So we are looking at reinforcing language proficiency in the new points grid that we hope to unveil in a few months' time.

Let me add a caveat. I think we need a flexible immigration system, and that is where we've been headed. For example, one of the big areas for future labour shortages is in the skilled trades: construction trades, welders, boilermakers, etc. These people would never be able to get in through the skilled worker programs because they typically don't have university degrees or high levels of language proficiency. But upon arrival, especially if they have arranged employment offers, they can go straight to work making very good money. A welder or boilermaker in western Canada could be making \$70,000, \$80,000, or \$90,000 a year upon arrival.

What we are looking at is perhaps a more flexible system that doesn't impose the high level of language requirement on skilled trades people, for example. That's essentially what we have now in the provincial nominee program.



Basically what I'm saying is that for those people who need strong English or French, require it before they get into the country; for those who don't, be a little bit more flexible.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you. May I ask how much time I have?

**The Chair:** One minute.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Okay. I'm going to get this in quickly. It is important.

We continually hear from the opposition that simply increasing resources and letting more applicants into the country is going to resolve our backlog.

I know we have touched on it several times throughout questions in this last hour and a half, but I'm wondering whether you can comment further and explain why increasing resources is not the answer, and it's more that we need to look at a multitude of different things to improve our immigration system.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Backlogs arise when the number of applications exceeds the number of admissions. There is virtually an infinite number of people who would like to come to Canada. According to Ipsos Global, they estimate, based on their polling, that just among the OECD countries, two billion people would like to migrate here. If we included the other 175 countries of the world, we're probably talking about several billion people who would like to migrate here. It's a good problem to have.

Before we brought in the tool of ministerial instructions, we were often getting over 400,000 applications a year. If resources were the issue—sure, we could spend more money and hire more visa officers in order to process 400,000 to 500,000 immigrants a year. But Canadians would say that's ridiculous. We can't reasonably integrate that many people.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Davies.

•(1235)

**Mr. Don Davies:** Thank you.

Mr. Minister, I don't think I got an answer as to where the trade-offs are in increasing the number of visas in a number of categories and where there will be categories that will see decreases in visas. But one program I do know about is the live-in caregiver program, because the numbers are out.

We've heard from witnesses before this committee that there is a backlog in the live-in caregiver program. One of the quotes was that "...visa offices face backlogs in...processing, notably in the live-in caregiver program".

As you've said—and I think quite rightly—the program has been very successful, because thousands of Canadian families are in need of care for their children and their aging parents, with the latter becoming increasingly important as the Canadian public ages.

I want to quote you, Minister. You told caregivers at a conference in Toronto in March 2010 that you saw the LIC program as a "growing and important part of our immigration system".

Now, the numbers have just come out: we issued 13,909 LIC visas in 2010. The range for 2011 was 12,000 to 16,000—we don't know the final numbers yet, of course—but in your levels plan that you tabled a few weeks ago for 2012 you cut the target to 9,000. That's a drop of anywhere between 25% and 43% from 2011, depending on whether you take the low range or the high range.

Minister, can you explain why you seem to have reversed your own words and the priority of this program, particularly when many Canadians need this program and there is a backlog?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I'd like to make a couple of points, Mr. Chairman.

When I said it's likely to be a growing program in the future, I meant that over the long run, there will likely be growing demand for in-home care with the aging of the population. I wasn't talking about our plan in any given year.

In every program that operates on a demand basis, there are going to be variations. For example, if we go back a few years, the number of work permits issued to caregivers—and then ultimately permanent residencies—was 4,000 to 6,000 a year. Then, a few years ago, we saw a significant increase where we were issuing up to about 12,000 work permits to incoming caregivers, and we saw that reflected at the back end of last year.

You see, there's a delay, a time lag. The front end is the first phase, where caregivers get the work permit. When we saw an increase in demand for caregivers a few years ago, that went up. Then there is a time lag until three or four years later, when they're admitted, which is what happened last year. Basically, what we see is that the projected number of admissions of caregivers as permanent residents tracks the number of work permits issued a few years before. That's why it will move up and down.

I will say, Mr. Chairman, that I recently learned of an operational problem, due to our implementation of the global case management system in processing open work permits for caregivers who have completed the requisite number of hours for permanent residency as they wait for final processing of their PR applications. I've worked with the department, which is trying to find a solution to speed up the processing.

Maybe, Claudette, could you—

**Mr. Don Davies:** Actually, Mr. Minister, I'm sorry, I have many questions I want to get to.

You had a backdrop behind you at first that said, "Action Plan for Faster Family Reunification". The LIC program is one where we know from the beginning that 99% of the caregivers who come here are going to sponsor their spouses and children. We know that because that's the design of the program.

Under your program, it takes an average of seven years for a caregiver to bring over their spouse and children. That's because they have to work for their 24 months, and often it takes longer; then can they sponsor their children and their spouse. What we see, Mr. Minister, are marital breakdowns and traumatized children, because we have a designed program where usually—let's face it—wives are separated from their husbands and children for years.

I'm just going to ask you, why not let the spouse and children come with the caregiver at the beginning, the way it happens for senior executive-level skilled workers who are coming here under the skilled worker program, who often are allowed to bring their spouses and children? We know they're going to come. The only question is whether you want that family unit to come intact or whether we want to risk the inevitable marital breakdown and trauma that occurs by having such a long gap between their unification. Would you consider that?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, I would say that first of all Canada is the only country I know that provides a pathway to permanent residency for caregivers. Second, some people have suggested that we do away with the live-in requirement in the program. The problem is this. There's no shortage of Canadians prepared to work as caregivers living outside the home. People apply for that job; they do that work. But when employers ask for live-in caregivers, Canadians and residents don't apply.

Here's another interesting thing. People who have worked in Canada as caregivers on a work permit as temporary foreign workers quite typically, as soon as they can, apply for an open work permit and leave the live-in caregiver field. So here's the problem. If we fundamentally change the character of the program to essentially grant people conditional or immediate permanent residency and family sponsorship, that undermines the labour market point of the program, which is to give Canadian families access to live-in caregivers.

● (1240)

**Mr. Don Davies:** But there is a solution, Mr. Minister. The reason the economics of the program work, from my understanding, is that a family will pay that person a lower wage because they're providing board. So when you offer someone room and board in your home, you pay a smaller salary because you're taking into account the board you're giving.

If you allow a caregiver to live outside the home, but you keep the wage the same, then if those people were allowed to bring their spouses, and maybe children, who could have temporary work permits and work, they could at least live together and they could keep their family intact. But they would obviously receive the same amount of money because if you're charging the family an uneconomic amount, they won't have the caregiver.

The reason Canadians don't work—

**The Chair:** You're running out of time, sir.

**Mr. Don Davies:** —in those homes is that nobody will work for the amount of wages that are paid just as wages, without the board being factored in. But I think there are caregivers who would rather live outside the home with their husband and children, all working together, than be separated for five or six or seven years, even if that means some economic sacrifices.

**The Chair:** We're going to have to move on.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Coderre, you have five minutes.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, the backlog is not just a matter of money; it is a matter of process.

I recall that at the time we centralized the data. There was an issue relating to the regional offices, and so on. First, I would like to be more specific.

You know that people who want to get a visa or who make an application to immigrate to Canada from Lebanon have to travel to Damascus. Given the political situation in Syria, are you prepared to transfer the process from Damascus to Beirut, for example? Is this the kind of thing you would be prepared to do?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Yes, Mr. Chair, we are obviously concerned about the situation in Syria.

Mr. Coderre is right to raise this question because the Citizenship and Immigration service centre in the Middle East is in Damascus.

To date, we have been able to continue offering our services, in spite of interruptions. Our local staff are experiencing some concern. We are monitoring the situation.

If some services have to be transferred to another office, we would be prepared to do that.

Claudette, do you have something to add?

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes:** Yes.

I would simply add that now, with the automated system, it is not necessary for it to be transferred to another office abroad. Some parts of the work could be done in Canada.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Ms. Deschênes, there is a problem.

Obviously, the Lebanese community is very important in Canada. You know that. It is an historical and traditional fact. Many in the community come from the Montreal region, for example.

I am not talking about a specific case. At present, people are coming to see me and telling me they have to travel to Damascus for examinations or tests. If that is not the case, I want to know.

However, there is a significant geopolitical situation in Syria at present, and like every good minister of immigration, you have to do something concrete.

Given that it is not getting better and there are growing problems in Syria at present—some of our local employees cannot even move about because their lives are in danger—what is your turnaround time?

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes:** We are currently examining all the options. One of them is to transfer some parts of the work to other missions or to Canada, which we have already done. We are currently studying what else could be done.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Does Beirut have a role to play?

**Ms. Claudette Deschênes:** The Beirut office has a role to play, but it is not the only solution.

• (1245)

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** That's right, but you are considering it and you are keeping a close eye on things.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** We transferred a lot of services from Beirut to Damascus because of the political uncertainty in Beirut 15 years ago.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** I understand, but today there is more stability in Beirut. In fact, our role is to make sure that people who want to apply to immigrate to Canada are able to do so without disturbance.

A lot has been said about backlogs. The reality is the security process. At present, what is the impact of security clearance problems on backlogs? Essentially, that is one of the problems. You cannot go and see the RCMP and tell them to go faster because people are waiting too long because of these security checks. It is not just because of what happened under the previous government. On the contrary, it is because you are having to deal with problems that come from the outside. Do you have a clear percentage for the portion of the backlogs that relates to the security process?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Coderre, between 1993 and 2005, the government accepted, on average, 222,000 permanent residents, but during some of those years it received over 400,000 applications. During that time, one of the reasons why the number of permanent residents admitted declined may have been related to security clearance problems, I don't know. All I know is that we accept over a quarter million applications a year at present, and with the security agencies, we have the ability to check applications from a national security perspective.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** The problem you—

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Time's up.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Time's up?

**The Chair:** Your time's up.

The government has the final questions.

Mr. Dykstra.

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

I've listened with interest to this entire meeting. I know I'm going to break the mould here, because there were no introductory comments on the estimates and there hasn't been one question on the estimates. I don't want to throw this out of kilter, but I was going to ask a couple of questions—

**The Chair:** We'll vote on estimates in a very short time.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** I hope it's okay if I ask a couple of questions on the estimates, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Please do.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** I know Daniel hasn't had a chance to hang out here at committees, so maybe I can direct these questions to him as well. At least the first question is more of a description of the funding part.

We've noticed an increase, at least in this quarter, of \$83.6 million. Could you give us a brief overview of that, because it does seem like a substantial increase from the last quarter?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I'll defer the question to Mr. Paquette.

**Mr. Daniel Paquette (Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** You're referring to the quarterly...?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Yes, I am. The budget is going to rise by about \$83.6 million, which is pretty significant, and our total expenditures are \$1.532 billion. Could you briefly describe what those increases mean and if this is a dramatic increase from last quarter, but more importantly, is it going to average out over the entire year?

**Mr. Daniel Paquette:** I want to make sure you have the right quarter here.

**Mr. Neil Yeates:** I think the explanation, Mr. Chair, is actually fairly straightforward. Part of what affects the quarterly statements is the actual timing of the estimates. What was within the first quarter last year is in the second quarter—or third quarter in this case—this year. That's part of what happens, and it affects our cashflow. The overall budget is, roughly speaking, the same.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Okay, so this isn't a significant increase overall. It will mean we will be where we need to be. All right. Thanks.

One of the questions that has been referred to—this is a slight estimate question—and I think it's an issue that was raised with respect to our refugee reform and the additional costs we are incurring based on our interim federal health program... We have a significant increase of about \$33 million, or at least the request for \$33 million, in 2011-12, to augment the \$50 million already in the reference levels. Can we get some clarification? It shows we're obviously taking on a larger number of refugees this year, which is very positive for the country, very positive for our commitment to the refugee system throughout the world. Could you give us a bit of an overview as to why there is that request and that bump?

• (1250)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Well, Mr. Chairman, to be honest, every year we come back with a similar supplementary estimate for the interim federal health program, because as an artifact of the government's budgeting, we are given a certain amount for IFH each year in our A-base budget, and every year we end up with a large number of asylum claimants, more than we can afford to provide health care to under the A-base budget. So that's why every year we end up coming back for a supplementary "ask" to provide interim federal health to those asylum claimants through supplementary estimates.

I would say we anticipate that when we are able to implement our new, streamlined, balanced refugee reform system next year, there will be fewer false asylum claims made in Canada. In the long run, we estimate that if that is the case, it will help save tax dollars with respect to IFH and other benefits for asylum claimants.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** I've had questions in my constituency about the federal health program and whether or not it's consistent with the health care that Canadians receive—whether refugees receive less than what average Canadians receive or whether they actually receive more. Could you give a brief description of what the status of that is?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** That's a very good question.

Mr. Chair, IFH provides the basic suite of health services that would be available to Canadian residents through their provincial health care plans. It also provides certain supplementary benefits that Canadians typically have to pay for through their own private supplementary benefit packages for such things as dental or ophthalmological care or drugs and so on.

I've heard concern expressed by Canadians on the same grounds: many Canadians, particularly seniors, have a hard time understanding why asylum claimants, particularly those who are illegal migrants who don't really need Canada's protection but are bogus refugee claimants, should be receiving better health care benefits than they do. That's something we're looking at.

I think there's a strong equity argument that we should not be providing to such migrants more generous benefits than Canadians can receive through their publicly funded health care insurance system.

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

Those are all my questions. I understand we need to have a vote, Mr. Chairman, so do we have enough time to do that?

**The Chair:** We do.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** I would like to thank the officials again for being here, especially Mr. Linklater, who usually has to respond to a lot of questions. He actually didn't have to respond to any questions.

**The Chair:** Mr. Minister, we have had a lot of questions on backlog and a smattering on the auditor's report.

We're now going to vote on estimates.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the opposition, I also want to thank the minister and his staff for coming in and giving their time. I know he's very busy, and I appreciate all the thoughtful answers he gave.

**The Chair:** Well, we can all say thank you.

Thank you very much for coming. You and your colleagues are excused.

Okay, members of the committee, we will vote on supplementary estimates.

Shall votes 1b and 7b under Citizenship and Immigration carry?

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Department

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$51,749,542

Vote 7b—Pursuant to Section 25(2) of the *Financial Administration Act*.....  
\$1,700,056

(Votes 1b and 7b agreed to)

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** As soon as possible.

**The Chair:** We will probably do that next Monday.

The meeting is adjourned.







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