



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

CIMM • NUMBER 013 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, December 1, 2011

—
Chair

Mr. David Tilson

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Thursday, December 1, 2011

•(1105)

[English]

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

This is the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, meeting number 13, on Thursday, December 1, 2011, and today we are televised. The orders of the day, pursuant to Standing Order 108 (2), are that we will have a briefing on the provincial nominee program.

We have three guests with us today from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Mr. Manicom is the director general of the immigration branch.

I seem to recall you on a televised program. I can't remember what it was for, but I remember you.

We also have Natasha Parriag, who is the acting director of intergovernmental relations.

This is your first time here?

Ms. Natasha Parriag (Acting Director, Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Yes, it is, with pleasure.

The Chair: It's a piece of cake, this committee. You'll have no trouble with us.

Ms. Natasha Parriag: That's what everyone said.

The Chair: Yes, it's just a very relaxing place.

We also have Sharon Chomyn, director general of the international region, who of course was here when we had the missions.

Welcome to the committee.

Mr. Manicom and Ms. Parriag, I understand you are jointly making a presentation. You have the floor. Thank you for coming.

Mr. David Manicom (Director General, Immigration Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today about the provincial nominee program, and more specifically about how the program has developed in recent years.

[Translation]

Immigration is a shared responsibility and provincial and territorial governments are primary partners of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Our shared goal is to make immigration

programs responsive to the unique economic, demographic and labour market needs of each province and territory.

Introduced in 1998, the Provincial Nominee Program is one tool to encourage the spread of immigration through the country while providing provinces and territories with a mechanism to meet their specific economic development needs.

Each province and territory is responsible for the design and management of its Provincial Nominee Program. Provinces and territories establish the nomination criteria for their programs, including requirements and policies relating to business investments. These criteria must respect the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, and bilateral immigration agreements. Applicants are nominated on their ability to become economically established and on their intention to settle in the nominating jurisdiction.

Roles and responsibilities for the Provincial Nominee Program are defined through bilateral agreements between CIC and provincial and territorial governments. All provinces and territories, with the exception of Quebec and Nunavut, have Provincial Nominee Program agreements.

After being nominated by a province or a territory, applicants must make a separate application to CIC for permanent residence. A CIC officer will then assess the application based on Canadian immigration regulations. The visa officer must be satisfied that the nominee has the ability to become economically established in the nominating province. In the case of nominees under a business stream, they must also demonstrate that they will be actively engaged in the day-to-day management of the business.

Passive investment, or the provision of capital in a business or organization without active involvement in its management, is prohibited in Provincial Nominee Programs by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations.

Lastly, CIC is also responsible for ensuring that applicants are not inadmissible on medical, security and criminality grounds.

[English]

In just over 10 years the provincial nominee program has grown from being a niche program to becoming a key component of provincial and territorial demographic and economic strategies, increasing sixfold since 2004. Provincial nominee programs had over 36,000 admissions last year. Almost one out of every five economic class admissions is now a provincial nominee. In 2010 the provincial nominee program represented the primary source of economic immigration for several provinces, such as Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Yukon, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

In addition to growing in size, Mr. Chair, provincial nominee programs have also become increasingly complex in scope, now accounting for over 50 provincial and territorial subcategories, each with its own nomination criteria.

The 2011 levels plan established an admission range for provincial nominees of 42,000 to 45,000, making the provincial nominee program the second-largest source of economic immigration to Canada, after the federal skilled worker program. This range is being maintained for 2012. From these numbers, it's evident that the provincial nominee program is a very significant source of economic immigration for Canada.

Eighty per cent of provincial nominee cases are processed by CIC in 14 months or less. This time does not include processing times for provincial or territorial candidate processes. Under ministerial instructions, new federal skilled worker files are now processed in about 12 months. At the federal level, the approval rate for provincial nominees is 97%.

In addition, the provincial nominee program has helped spread the benefits of immigration across Canada by promoting immigration to areas that were not traditional immigrant destinations. Twenty-six per cent of economic immigrants are now destined for locations outside Ontario, B.C., and Quebec, compared with only 11% in 1997.

About 55% of applicants nominated by provinces and territories in 2010 either had a job offer or indeed were already working in Canada as temporary foreign workers. As well, in recent years there has been an increase in semi- and low-skilled provincial nominees, who now account for over one quarter of all admissions.

Although the provincial nominee program has had proven successes, there remain outstanding concerns that CIC is committed to addressing.

Four provincial audit reports, from 2008 to 2010, from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick have highlighted a number of significant program integrity concerns. Among them were concerns regarding the absence of information on retention in the nominating province and the lack of adequate monitoring of nominees after landing, particularly for individuals who were nominated based on intent to establish businesses. The reports also noted that performance management and evaluation measures were not adequate.

Similar to the findings of provincial reports, the 2009 federal Auditor General report pointed out that although provinces and

territories are required to conduct due diligence to ensure applicants have the ability to economically establish, CIC is unable to assess the extent to which provinces and territories have carried this out. The report recommended that CIC work with provinces and territories to put quality assurance mechanisms in place in order to ensure that nomination decisions are consistent and compliant with the act, regulations, and provincial nominee program criteria.

In the fall of 2010 CIC launched a national evaluation of the nominee program to assess its performance, with a focus on economic outcomes and mobility of provincial nominees. We expect the results to be published in early 2012, and we will work with provincial and territorial governments to implement recommendations flowing out of the evaluation.

In the interim, CIC is addressing issues arising out of the auditors' general reports both bilaterally, through an ongoing review of agreements, and multilaterally. In terms of multilateral work, CIC is working with provinces and territories to improve program design, management and accountability, and integrity. We are also working together to conduct a comprehensive review of economic immigration programs and to identify areas of overlap. These initiatives will lead to stronger economic benefits and a better response to labour market needs.

• (1110)

[Translation]

I will now give the floor to my colleague Natasha Parriag, Acting Director of Intergovernmental Relations; she will speak to you in detail about collaboration with the provinces and territories.

[English]

Ms. Natasha Parriag: Merci, David.

Good morning again, Mr. Chair.

Jurisdictions across Canada have recognized the significance of increased federal-provincial-territorial collaboration and partnership in immigration. In June 2010 federal, provincial, and territorial ministers agreed that the future of immigration would embrace welcoming and supporting newcomers to join in building inclusive, diverse, and welcoming communities and a prosperous Canada.

[Translation]

This discussion recognizes the increased involvement of provinces and territories in jointly managing the immigration system, as well as Quebec's responsibilities under the Canada-Quebec Accord.

[English]

CIC is working with the provinces and territories on several fronts. For example, the development of a multi-year levels planning process. Multi-year levels planning sets the stage for transforming the immigration system so that it is focused on the economic role of immigration and supported by a common evidence base while remaining responsive and flexible.

[Translation]

CIC and the provinces and territories are working to ensure that newcomers continue to choose Canada as their desired destination; that we build the communities across the country that will welcome them and help them achieve positive social and economic outcomes, and that we share the benefits of immigration across the country. We know that we need to do this collaboratively, working together in new ways to achieve improved outcomes.

[English]

Clearly, the provincial nominee program is critical to this work. It provides an effective tool that allows provinces and territories to design programs that meet their individual needs and address local labour market and economic development challenges. The program also serves to promote regionalization and spreads the benefits of immigration across Canada. Moving forward, CIC will continue to work with all jurisdictions to ensure the overall integrity and accountability of all provincial nominee programs.

Thank you for your attention. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you for your presentations. You're a little bit over time, but that was good enough.

Mr. Menegakis is first, and he'll ask you some questions.

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

Thank you very much for your very informative presentation. I appreciated getting all the detail.

We've heard a lot about the provincial nominee program and how it is a shared responsibility with the provinces. I have a few specific questions related to that.

First, who is responsible for the design and management of the provincial nomination programs, including the criteria for nomination?

Mr. David Manicom: Provinces and territories are responsible for the design, management, and evaluation of their own provincial nominee programs. That said, provincial nominee programs have to respect federal immigration law and regulations.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Is it the same for all provinces? Can you share that with us?

Mr. David Manicom: The same principle applies to all provinces. The province has responsibility for the design, management, and evaluation of their own provincial nominee programs. The bilateral agreements are not identical, but they're very similar with regard to that principle.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Do the criteria for nomination differ from province to province?

Mr. David Manicom: Oh yes.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Could you give us some examples, perhaps?

Mr. David Manicom: In effect, I guess that's the reason for provincial nominee programs, since they're designed to enable provinces to work on specific local needs, whether they be demographic or labour market oriented. There's a wide variety of different programs; there are about 50.

For example, British Columbia has programs that are focused on trying to encourage immigrants, especially business persons, outside of the Lower Mainland area. In Manitoba, there are programs that focus quite a bit on community ties, to ensure that immigrants coming in have community and/or employer support. Alberta uses its provincial nominee programs quite a lot to ensure that they're getting skilled tradespersons; it's quite directly labour market oriented, with a high proportion of nominees already working in the province as temporary foreign workers.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you.

Could you elaborate a little bit for us the difference in the responsibilities the provincial governments have in comparison with the federal government?

Mr. David Manicom: Basically, in general terms, the provinces' nomination authorities are a substitute for the selection processes that the immigration act and regulations lay out in categories like skilled workers, or the Canadian experience class, or our business programs. They are an alternative economic program. They nominate a candidate and effectively move them into the final selection process.

As the 97% approval rate demonstrates, the federal official will normally simply be accepting the applicant as having met the selection criteria as long as they are assured that the applicant intends to reside in the province of destination and that they are capable of economically establishing. That is normally presumed from a provincial nominee certificate, and it's only in fairly exceptional cases that this would be looked at. They have to be sure in the case of business programs that it's not a passive investment. According to regulation, the provincial nominee business person must intend to be actively engaged in the functioning of the business.

At that point, the applicant has now been selected and they move to the final stages of process, which is a federal role to ensure that the individual is not inadmissible to Canada for health, safety, security, or criminality issues. Then the federal government issues the immigration visa and they are landed at port of entry in the normal way by our colleagues at CBSA.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you.

I know the provinces and some others have asked for an even further increase in the provincial nominee program. What, in your opinion, would be the implications of that happening?

Mr. David Manicom: It's probably best not to express my opinion but to outline the policy of the federal government in that regard.

•(1120)

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Fair enough. Sure.

Mr. David Manicom: At the current time, and over recent years, the levels of the planning ranges have remained constant, although at a very high level, as you know—at historically high levels.

Should the provincial nominee program continue to increase in size within a stable overall levels framework, and assuming that we continue to do family reunification, refugee resettlement, and those other programs, which are very high priorities for us, the increasing numbers of provincial nominees would have to be offset by decreasing numbers in a federal economic program. That would effectively be the trade-off, unless we were to look at limiting family reunification or humanitarian programs.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: So you're saying that this would mean decreasing admissions in other streams, basically. Is that fair to say?

Mr. David Manicom: Yes, the pattern over recent years has been for the provincial nominee programs to increase dramatically as a share of the overall economic program component. At this time, the federal government has felt that it is important to maintain the space for the federal skilled worker program, which works on broad national needs in of course a very mobile labour market.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: If you were to recommend an improvement to the current system, could you quickly tell us what your top three recommendations would be? What would you like to see done?

Mr. David Manicom: I don't think it would be good for me to speculate about improvements, other than to say that the processes, which the minister has put in place through ministerial instructions to enable us to manage our inventories and backlogs, have started us down a road where we can see that in coming years—the trends are now clear—we will be able to rid ourselves of very large, unproductive, non-client-friendly, expensive-to-maintain, not policy-agile inventories.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Manicom.

Mr. Davies.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

I form the impression that the provincial nominee program is a bit of a program of contrast. When run well, it has been very successful in a number of provinces and has really met, and I think exceeded in many cases, the objectives of the program that, as you pointed out well in your report, is to spread the regional benefits of immigration and allow provinces some say in targeting immigration settlement to their particular demographic and economic needs.

There have been some problems as well. We're familiar with some of the problems that occurred, particularly in some maritime provinces—difficulties over meeting the objectives of the program. In your report you touched on the fact that in 2009 the federal Auditor General pointed out that although provinces and territories are required to conduct due diligence to ensure that applicants have the ability to economically establish, it says, "...CIC is unable to assess the extent to which provinces and territories have carried this out."

The 2010-11 departmental performance report notes that the first federal evaluation of the provincial nominee program began in 2010. We're almost at 2012, so I'm wondering if you could update us on any preliminary evaluation findings that might touch on this subject.

Mr. David Manicom: Thank you, Mr. Davies.

You'll understand that I can't talk about the details of the evaluation report prior to its publication, which is coming very soon, early next year. The department has been consulting closely with the provinces through the process of doing that evaluation in an iterative way, and the evaluation report is almost complete. Certainly, the evaluation report will show a variety of outcomes in different provinces, as you've indicated. I think we'll see that the overall outcome is really quite positive. I'm not able to go into further detail about that, other than to say again that it will be published very shortly.

Mr. Don Davies: Leaving aside the report, which I won't ask you to comment on, is CIC able today to assess the extent to which provinces and territories have carried out their requirements under the PNP?

Mr. David Manicom: We're certainly working toward that with them. I don't think that either us or the provinces would say that we are where we need to be. Certainly, the issue of fraud and program integrity across all immigration categories require strong collaboration between the levels of government. We have ongoing discussions with the provinces on how to improve the program integrity design of their program.

We work closely with them both on the policy side and on the operational side—I don't know if my colleague might wish to comment—with individual provinces when individual problems appear with certain caseloads. We're working closely with them on how to improve selection standards and management of the provincial nominee programs.

I certainly think the publication of the report will take us a big step forward. There will be a number of recommendations in that report, and the federal government will be working closely with the provinces to implement those recommendations.

•(1125)

Mr. Don Davies: Thank you.

We also know that once these people come to the province, the idea is that they will settle in the province and contribute to a dispersal of immigration across the country and better regional development. We also know that there's no way to ensure that people who come to the province, particularly after they complete the requirements, will remain in the province.

Can you give us some indication of what the degree of interprovincial mobility is in this program? I take it there must be some leakage of people to other provinces after the requirements are met.

Mr. David Manicom: Of course, there is no one measure of mobility. You can look at where the provincial nominee candidates are a year after they arrive, or three years after they arrive, or further down the road. In a mobile economy, I don't think we would particularly.... We would be less interested in the very long-term mobility. We're interested in whether or not they've arrived in the province, made best efforts to remain there and so forth.

The report will show varying degrees of mobility depending on the differing provincial nominee programs, but generally speaking they've been surprisingly successful, I think, compared with the very early days in improving retention. A number of provinces have developed retention strategies that are working quite well. By having links to communities or to employers, or in nominating individuals who have already been working in the province, they are making great strides and improving retention outcomes.

There will be some hard data in the report when it comes out. I don't have that data before me, but it will be available, as I say, early in 2012.

Mr. Don Davies: Okay.

We know that the federal government recently announced a new stream in the federal skilled worker program for PhD students, yet we also know that many provinces have student streams in their provincial nominee programs.

On what basis do you decide which opportunities for immigration will be federal and which provincial? How do those dovetail?

Mr. David Manicom: That's one of the key questions going forward as the provincial nominee programs grow in size. Only four to five years ago they were really quite small, and issues of overlap or redundancy or gaps were less important than they're starting to appear now.

We are engaged in a multi-year process with the provinces to do a full survey and canvass of all of the different programs. We're working together to try to identify areas of overlap, areas you can think of; for example, in the Canadian experience class you have individuals who are either working or studying in a Canadian province, and there may be opportunities for provinces to use their spaces elsewhere in the provincial nominee programs by not nominating people who could qualify in the Canadian experience class.

I have just a couple of quick comments with regard to the PhD stream. It's only an entry doorway into the federal skilled worker program. Under ministerial instructions, those individuals still have to meet the standard points test, including skilled work experience of the federal skilled worker program. The distinction between it and other student programs is that it enables people who have not yet completed a Canadian diploma, but who have done at least two years of good standing in a PhD program.... It's unique in that regard. It captures individuals who are in the process of completing a doctorate. In a way, we want to get them while they're good, and hopefully after they complete the doctorate they will remain in Canada.

The Chair: Thank you.

The time has expired.

Mr. Manicom, can you send copies of the report you mentioned to Mr. Davies to the committee?

Mr. David Manicom: We will check with the department as to when it will be available—

The Chair: Well, whenever it becomes available, I think if you could send enough copies for all of the members of the committee and the analysts....

Mr. David Manicom: Yes, we could certainly do so.

The Chair: Thank you.

Do you have any idea when it'll be ready?

Mr. David Manicom: I think it's in translation. I think we're looking at February, something like that.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. David Manicom: My notes say early 2012.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Lamoureux.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a few quite pointed questions I'd like to get across.

The federal government designates between 42,000 to 45,000 provincial nominees. Now that doesn't mean certificates. How many certificates do you anticipate Canada will be handing out through the different programs this year?

• (1130)

Mr. David Manicom: Do you mean the number of certificates the provinces will be issuing?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: That's correct.

Mr. David Manicom: It would be very similar in scale. I don't have nomination data in front of me, but it's very similar in scale. The approval rate is about 97% once the person applies. There is a small spoilage rate, a small number of certificates that—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: That's not the question.

We might have 42,000 people coming under the provincial nominee category, and out of those 42,000 there would be a set number that were given certificates. So it might be that you're sponsoring, but I'm bringing my wife and my three kids—

Mr. David Manicom: I see.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: So how many certificates are we actually issuing?

Mr. David Manicom: I believe the provinces issue about 22,000.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Okay.

It's fair to say the number we're actually issuing is increasing. You made reference to sixfold in the last five to six years. As more and more provinces seem to be realizing the benefits of the program, is it fair to say that we will continue to see significant increases in that program over the next few years?

Mr. David Manicom: At the present time the policy of the federal government is not to further increase the scale of the provincial nominee unless or until such time as there is an overall expansion in immigration levels, in order to maintain space for the federal skilled worker program.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Does the federal government then have caps? For example, the Province of Manitoba is only allowed to have x number of certificates or x number of people coming through the program.

Mr. David Manicom: We have an allocation process with the provinces.

Just to give a precise figure, the nomination target for 2012, next year, is 20,665, so I was right on the order of scale of 22,000, but not precise, and I believe that's the same target we had for 2011. Provinces, among themselves, can switch their allocations about, but we do have a province-by-province allocation target—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I only have five minutes.

How is that actually determined? When you say provinces kind of negotiate amongst themselves, how is it determined? How many certificates would the Province of Manitoba give out last year, next year? Do they sit down with other ministers to determine that? How is it determined which province gets how many?

Mr. David Manicom: At the time in which we began to develop strategies to manage growth in the program, provincial nominee programs were already existing and were of a general size. The allocation formula was initially responsive to the existing size of provincial nominee programs. There have been small adjustments in the interim as some provinces did not wish to use the entire space available.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Is it safe to say that the demand for the program had no problem in terms of the supply, that the government was prepared to give the number of certificates? But now, because of the increased demand coming from the provinces—and we're anticipating that the increase will continue—there's going to be more pressure on Ottawa to start saying, “Okay, Province X, this is all you're going to get.” And it's going to be Ottawa making that determination. Is that a fair assessment?

Mr. David Manicom: Unless there's reallocation amongst the provinces, yes, generally.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Could you provide to the committee an actual breakdown of the number of people coming through the program and the number of certificates issued, by province? It would be very beneficial, I believe, to the committee.

Mr. David Manicom: Yes.

The Chair: Is the answer to that yes? You could send it to the clerk, please.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Thank you.

The other issue is in regard to your mention that if someone is issued a certificate.... Immigration offices abroad are concerned about health and security. Generally speaking, if people pass the health test and get the security, they're coming to Canada. Usually it's within that 14-month time period.

The issue is this. If provinces say they're comfortable that a person has the finances to be able to make the trip and so forth, is immigration concerned about that at all then? That is if the province is prepared to say that.

Mr. David Manicom: It's a federal regulatory requirement that the officer be satisfied that the individual can successfully economically establish. In the overwhelming majority of cases the federal visa officer agrees, as indicated by the 97% approval rates—so there's a 3% refusal rate, which includes refusals on health and security. There are exceptional cases where the two levels of government differ in their view, and ultimately the federal government will make the final decision, in consultation with the province.

•(1135)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Manicom.

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

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

[English]

Thanks to our guests for being here today.

In the nursery rhyme it was said about a little girl that “...when she was good, she was very, very good, and when she was bad, she was horrid”. For this program, it seems that when it's good, it's very, very good, and when it's bad, it's really not so bad, but it needs some tweaking.

In your excellent report, Mr. Manicom, you have referred to problems, especially in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, that some of the motives for the program weren't being followed. Passive investment was the priority rather than the priorities named in the program. Do we have any regulatory response to that, or is this something that will come as a result of the report you discussed?

Mr. David Manicom: I think it's a combination of both regulatory authorities—bilateral agreements with the provinces, which also lay out certain conditions that need to be met, such as that a provincial nominee has to be issued a certificate consistent with the bilateral agreement between the federal government and the province—and management issues arising out of the report. Normally when it appears that a program or members of a provincial nominee program may not be consistent with federal regulation—for example, with regard to passive investment—usually there is a discussion process between the federal government and the province. When, in the end, we have to conclude that participants in the program are not compliant with a federal regulation that prohibits passive investment through the provincial nominee program—because there is a federal investor program that also does financial allocations to the provinces and we kind of want to prevent dilution of that program—then ultimately the federal government will not be able to approve the cases, because it's a regulatory requirement.

Of course, first, as we see programs emerge, we talk to the provinces and we work together to see if we can resolve apparent discrepancies. If not, the immigration act has to apply.

Mr. John Weston: One would hope there would be some consistency and a minimization of negotiations over every application, especially given the large growth we're seeing. Are we seeing some standardization that makes the whole system more fluid and streamlined so that these things don't have to be revisited time after time?

Mr. David Manicom: Yes. My previous position was immigration program manager in New Delhi, so I have some familiarity with the actual operational front line.

The percentage of cases where you have disagreements and a back-and-forth with the province is really quite small. It's a small percentage of cases.

It's not so much making all the provincial nominee programs the same; of course, we don't want to do that. What we work hard with the provinces on is ensuring that their criteria are transparent, that they're well known to our officers, and that those criteria are consistent with the regulations. The designed provincial nominee programs are supposed to meet individually specific provincial needs, so it's natural that the programs differ. That's okay as long as they meet the fundamental framework.

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston: There have been major increases over the past six years. Today we have 36,000. This year the figure will be 40,000. What does this mean for the future of that program? It seems to me that this is one of our government's great successes. Do you think that this will continue to be beneficial for our country?

Mr. David Manicom: I am absolutely certain that the program will continue to be beneficial for the entire country. The distribution of immigration throughout the country is obvious in the figures. Last year, we set an admissions record for the Provincial Nominee Program. We are going to break that record this year, and this year's record will almost certainly be broken next year, based on the trends we observe.

However as I already mentioned, the federal government is concerned with keeping the necessary room for a broad economic program for skilled workers. Within current levels, there are the necessary exchanges. We are going to work with the provinces for the benefit of Canada's economic programs.

• (1140)

[English]

The Chair: You've got a couple of minutes remaining.

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston: If we can implement the changes proposed in your report, what are the limits to that growth, since that program is truly a very good one and the provinces benefit from it individually?

Mr. David Manicom: It does indeed depend on the total future levels of immigration. Of course there are limits to growth for all of our programs. Canada is in a good position. Indeed, we have pleasant choices to make since several programs have been successful. It is clear that the Provincial Nominee Program is a success but it is also clear according to the most recent reports that there are more people being chosen in the context of the federal program also. That program is also a great success. Choosing between the two is thus a positive choice for Canada, but choices

have to be made in the context of current levels. If we increase one category, there has to be a decrease in another.

Mr. John Weston: As the representative for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, may I ask you what the benefits are for British Columbia, in your opinion?

Mr. David Manicom: I have not had the opportunity to spend enough time in Vancouver. It is clearly one of the provinces that benefited a great deal from the Provincial Nominee Program. Its program is one of the largest. They are going to have 3,500 certificates next year, which probably touches close to 10,000 people.

In addition, the Federal Skilled Worker Program is seeing an increase in British Columbia. The levels of immigration to British Columbia are increasing, especially given the dynamic evolution of the Asian economies. Every day in the streets of Vancouver and the region, we can see the social and economic benefits of that situation.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

I have a couple of questions. Are the standards different in each province?

Mr. David Manicom: The selection criteria provinces use differ in each province.

The Chair: You said that.

Mr. David Manicom: Yes.

The Chair: My question is whether it is easier in one province than in another province. If I'm coming to this country, and it's easier in one province than in another province, guess which province I'm going to pick. I think it's important. You must be able to assess that. You must be able to assess that some provinces, or maybe one province, have standards that aren't quite as high.

Mr. David Manicom: It is genuinely a complex question to answer, Mr. Chair, because provinces are looking for different things. For example, some provinces don't select low- and middle-skilled workers at all. Other provinces, keenly aware of labour shortages in those areas, are very open to selecting low- and semi-skilled workers because of their local labour shortages. From an objective point of view, that might be defined as a lower standard. The province might argue otherwise: those persons will make a dynamic contribution to their economy and will meet specific needs. Another province may have a program that is heavily reliant on community and employer engagement so that they can ensure retention. They might feel that the standards of the individuals they are bringing in is one element. The welcome they receive and the ability to integrate are other elements. They are focused on retention and community-building. Here I think particularly of the extremely successful program, from a retention and economic participation point of view, of Manitoba, which is the largest and earliest of the big provincial nominee programs.

• (1145)

The Chair: Do you have an analysis?

Mr. David Manicom: No. We are working on a large-scale project to catalogue, if you will, all the different program streams to identify areas of overlap. We are continuing discussions with the provinces on establishing clear criteria. Generally speaking, the federal government has not said to provinces that they can only pick people with this level of education or these language skills. The report will show very broad success of the provincial nominee programs from an economic outcomes point of view. It would be a significant change in philosophy behind the program if the federal government were to mandate certain selection criteria.

The Chair: I wasn't suggesting that.

I'm sorry, committee members. It's just a thought that's crossed my mind on this issue.

You've already said that the federal government has minimum standards for the provinces to follow. Beyond that, the provinces are free to have their own standards. Common sense tells me that in some provinces it's going to be tougher to get in than it is in other provinces. I'd like to know more about that. Maybe I will let you think about that.

Mrs. Groguhé, thank you, and welcome back. We've missed you. *[Translation]*

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

Good morning to all of you.

My question is about the province of Quebec. According to the February 5, 1991 agreement on immigration between Quebec and the federal government, Quebec selects its immigration candidates and does not account for the use of the transfers it receives. Generally, the province has to deal with the problem of finding resources to properly integrate the newcomers. Does the federal government adjust its transfers to Quebec according to the number of newcomers it receives, and of the province's specific linguistic needs, in particular?

Ms. Natasha Parriag: I think you are raising the topic of transfers.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Yes, I would like to know whether there is an adjustment for the number of newcomers, and also with regard to the province's specific needs, its linguistic needs in particular? Are there any adjustments made, and how is this done?

Ms. Natasha Parriag: Very well.

In fact the Canada-Quebec Accord does contain a formula for the calculation of these funds that are transferred on a yearly basis. The services must be comparable to those that are offered elsewhere in the country.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Very well.

When you say that the services must be comparable to those offered elsewhere, you mean as compared to other provinces. Is that right?

Ms. Natasha Parriag: I don't understand.

Mr. David Manicom: No, the settlement allowances are specifically described in the Canada-Quebec Accord according to a formula that is adjusted for the number of newcomers.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Very well.

Mr. David Manicom: That formula is completely separate from the ones used to set the allowance levels for the other provinces. This was established in the 1991 Canada-Quebec Accord.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: So this is calculated on an annual basis.

Mr. David Manicom: The transfers are adjusted yearly, according to a formula that is set out in the accord.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Very well. Thank you.

My second question concerns the recognition of credentials obtained outside of Quebec and Canada. This is a matter of real concern for most of the provinces. Indeed, the integration of workers into the labour market depends on them, and that integration seems quite difficult because of the problem of the recognition of credentials.

Does the federal government intend to participate in solving that problem? If that is the case, how does it intend to do so? We know that this is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, for the most part.

How can this matter of the non-recognition of credentials and of the experience acquired abroad be settled? Have discussions been held with the provinces to study this matter? If so, were proposals made by one side or the other?

Mr. David Manicom: I can only answer you in a general way, because this is not the topic of the meeting and I do not have any experts with me.

There are important ongoing discussions, as well as a federal-provincial framework, for the purpose of improving the process of recognizing foreign credentials. One branch is focusing specifically on this project, together with the provinces. The provinces are indeed responsible for the recognition of credentials in regulated fields. In short, there is an ongoing important project for the purpose of improving that process.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: I suppose that there are discussions and exchanges between the provinces so that things that work well in one province will be taken up by another.

Is that approach being applied to some extent?

• (1150)

Mr. David Manicom: Yes, the federal government's role is to encourage the recognition of these credentials, to improve the transparency of the process, and to convey information about it to potential immigrants.

There is a process; in various places abroad, immigrants who have already been approved attend individual sessions for the purpose of facilitating their integration into the labour market before they actually come to Canada. A large part of these sessions is devoted to explaining the process so that they understand it, and to explaining to them how to go about having their qualifications recognized. We are in the process of gathering up all of the information needed to help immigrants. We particularly encourage them to begin the process before arriving in Canada.

[English]

The Chair: Merci.

Mr. Leung.

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

My question relates to the matching of manpower requirements with our immigration policy. In the province of Ontario we have a program whereby we go abroad and bring in farm workers who have the skills to pick maybe 10 bushels of tomatoes and so on, whereas the federal policy deals with a points system where we look at people with more professional skills.

Can you reconcile two questions I have? How does the business or the industry of a particular province reflect its need and requirement to the province to meet those labour needs? How does the province reflect that to the federal government to reconcile that the two immigration selection criteria are not exactly in step with each other? The federal government requirement looks at a broader skill set, whereas some of these lower skill sets are also very much needed in areas like agriculture and the mining industry.

Mr. David Manicom: Thank you. It's a very good question, and a very interesting question from a policy point of view.

There are two elements to it. There are the temporary foreign worker programs and then there are permanent resident programs.

We have specific temporary worker programs, as you may know. The seasonal agricultural worker program is a long-standing and, by many measures, a very successful program that's been going on for many years, primarily for workers from Central America and the Caribbean.

That brings in on the order of 20,000 to 30,000 temporary workers to Canada each year, the large majority in the province of Ontario, and recently some in British Columbia and Quebec. That's to meet immediate short-term needs, although most of those seasonal agricultural workers return to Canada many times. There's a very high retention rate, if you will, in the program.

With regard to permanent residents, the federal government does not have a permanent resident program for low-skilled workers at this time. The provincial nominee programs, in effect, are designed to deal with local needs that aren't national needs, and that's one of the philosophical reasons behind them. So if a province has a specific need in their province, whether it be low skilled or high skilled, that is often what they choose to use provincial nominee programs for.

A low-skilled permanent resident program is something that would certainly be worth discussing. We would have to understand, of course, that if we built a stream for low-skilled permanent residents under a federal program, we would have to take spaces away from an existing program at the present time.

• (1155)

Mr. Chungsen Leung: What I'm seeing is a bit of a redundancy here because we are bringing in low-skilled seasonal workers in the program for agricultural requirements, and we also have a provincial nominee program that nominates workers who are needed for that type of skill. Could these two perhaps be blended together so that we don't have two separate programs?

Mr. David Manicom: They could be, but they have, I would suggest, different purposes. One should not presume that the people

who come under the seasonal agricultural worker program want to immigrate to Canada. They have families in their home countries. The money they bring back to their host societies has been demonstrated to improve education outcomes for children, and so forth. Some percentage of them may wish to settle in Canada.

We do have to remember, though, that in some of those occupations, once they become permanent residents they will generally, like Canadians, not be ready and available to do that work. The seasonal agricultural worker program brings in people to do jobs that Canadians have chosen not to do. All the evidence would suggest that once permanent resident status is obtained, they are not likely to remain seasonal agricultural workers. They will migrate to other permanent occupations.

Mr. Chungsen Leung: My concern is looking at the long term with respect to the experience of other countries, like Germany and France, where there is a perpetual pool of guests, workers. And the guest workers, in turn, over the long term, because of their non-integration into mainstream society, cause a silo effect and issues with the overall population. Perhaps you wish to address that.

The Chair: Unless Mr. Opitz agrees, you'll have to wait for another round.

Mr. Opitz.

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

I'll share my time with Mr. Leung.

Carry on, please.

The Chair: Okay. I'll make it 10 minutes, then.

Mr. David Manicom: It's certainly an issue that the federal government is engaged in and looking at, not so much with regard to the seasonal agricultural worker program, perhaps, where individuals are coming for certain months and then returning on a seasonal basis. But the low-skilled pilot, which began about 10 years ago, grew dramatically in size during the economic boom of 2006-07, especially in western Canada. There you have low-skilled workers who are in Canada for multiple years on a continuous basis, who are not returning to their home country.

The growth in that program stopped in 2008, for evident economic reasons, and it has subsided a little bit. Nevertheless I think it is a policy preoccupation for the reasons that you laid out, sir. In addition to the provincial nominee programs, which do use about a quarter of their spaces for low- and semi-skilled workers, and therefore do provide a pathway to permanence for some of those low-skilled workers, it does raise the question of whether or not we should have concerns about developing those sorts of problems.

So far the order of scale is relatively small. I think the low-skilled pilot numbers peaked at about 25,000 in 2008 and have come down somewhat since. But I would agree with you that it's a serious policy issue worth discussing.

Mr. Chungsen Leung: Thank you.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Sir, the Auditor General's report made a strong recommendation that the federal government has to do a better job of screening for security and medical admissibility of entrants and immigration and refugee applicants to Canada. The opposition has stated that they agree with the Auditor General; however, some people still say that the federal government should not have the final say on whether a provincial nominee gets into the country. In other words, if a province nominates an individual, the federal government should not be able to overrule that decision if the individual is found to not meet the law under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

This really doesn't make sense to me, since the provinces do not have the resources or the ability to check for criminality, security, or medical issues.

Can you please explain why it is so important that the federal government maintain the responsibility for having the final determination as to the eligibility of a visitor or an immigration applicant already in or outside of Canada?

Mr. Manicom, go ahead.

•(1200)

Mr. David Manicom: The federal government has responsibility for the borders of Canada, and that's a fundamental federal role constitutionally. In the current immigration act, none of the provinces has authority to deal with what we call admissibility processes relating to the health and safety of Canadians and security and criminality. It would be a very profound change if we were to begin to introduce varying provincial responsibilities in that regard, given internal mobility.

Any person admitted to the country is admitted to the country. So if you're looking at local labour market needs, I think it makes a lot of sense for the provinces to have a very significant role in selecting persons to integrate into their local labour markets. But when we're talking about the health and security of Canadians, having 13 jurisdictions with roles there might be a recipe for considerable difficulty.

The Auditor General pointed out the challenges of the current system in ensuring good communications between differing government departments responsible for screening of immigrants and visitors, so that would be a very significant constitutional and legal change.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Great. Thank you.

You commented about the success of some provinces like P.E.I. and others that have very high levels of immigration; however, I'm looking at a table provided, and Ontario in particular. Can you comment on why Ontario is kind of at the bottom of this list right now? Obviously the minister redistributed some of the settlement funding recently to reflect greater immigration to other parts of the country, but I'd like you to comment on why Ontario is so low in this, and whether they are effective or ineffective in what they're doing.

Mr. David Manicom: I wouldn't want to comment on whether or not Ontario's provincial nominee program is effective or ineffective, although when the basic data comes forward it will suggest an extremely high retention rate. The Ontario provincial nominee

program has historically been very small, so data on economic outcomes and so forth would be very preliminary at this time. You always need a number of years of data to see how people are doing. The Ontario provincial nominee program is very new and very small, so we probably wouldn't have meaningful statistical data.

Why Ontario chose not to begin a provincial nominee program in earlier years when other provinces did is best asked of the Province of Ontario. We have to remember that at that time Ontario was far and away the largest destination for immigrants under federal programs. Ontario still receives a far higher percentage of immigrants than their percentage of Canada's population. That has been changing a little as migratory patterns have shifted in the country, primarily toward western Canada, as has the Canadian economy, investment, and other things. Immigrants tend to follow jobs, as we want them to.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kellway.

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

To our guests, thank you very much for coming today.

From listening to the discussion—and I don't mean this in a critical way—the provinces seem to be using the program to kind of plug holes for almost near-term labour shortages. Is that fundamentally your view on how the program is being used by the provinces?

Mr. David Manicom: They're being used in very different ways. The provincial nominee programs are so diverse that it is difficult to generalize.

Some provinces use them very directly for immediate labour market needs. Other provinces have taken a long-term larger view about developing immigrant communities, building demographics, and attempting to build self-sustaining immigrant communities.

I spoke earlier about the very large proportion of immigrants who have traditionally gone to Ontario. Immigrants tend to go to places where they know someone, or at least know someone who knows someone, and they get their foot in the door. So provinces such as Manitoba, for example, have focused on building an immigrant community, which will then become self-perpetuating.

So I think all I can say is that the programs range from very small and very specialized—and indeed Ontario's program has tended to be small and specialized, because they were getting large volumes of immigrants through the federal program.

So they're very diverse, sir.

•(1205)

Mr. Matthew Kellway: In your comments earlier—and I think it was Natasha who mentioned this in her part of it about developing a multi-year levels planning approach—is that what you're talking about, what those provinces are doing, or were you talking in those terms of something completely different?

Ms. Natasha Parriag: Multi-year levels planning is...we're moving towards an approach of consulting with the provinces and territories on a longer-term horizon—for example, three years—so that annual levels planning has this longer-term approach to it.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: So three years is the horizon you're working towards?

Ms. Natasha Parriag: That's what we are working towards.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: What exists now under the federal program for a planning horizon?

Ms. Natasha Parriag: Right now it's on an annual basis.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: It's just on an annual basis, so there's no forward-looking, labour force analysis and planning to support what the federal side is doing right now?

Mr. David Manicom: It's forward looking, sir, in the sense that we've already now finalized the plan for 2012, and in this case, we will shortly be working on a multi-year levels plan. But we would have been turning our attention toward 2013 anyway, and getting labour market analysis from HRSDC and consulting with the provinces on the trends that they are seeing.

So it's outward looking, but in the past there had been no formal attempt to establish a levels plan for three succeeding years. That's the process that we are starting with the provinces.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: The current system that you're working with—is that with a view to driving the labour force or the mix of skills in our labour force to a certain point, or is that just about identifying shortages effectively?

Mr. David Manicom: It's a very large and nuanced process because we have a lot of large and complex programs, given the multiple objectives of the immigration act.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: I was thinking more about the economic stream of things.

Mr. David Manicom: The economic programs are a combination of responding to—through the federal skilled worker program and the ministerial instructions element of it—at the present time, a hybrid of ensuring high overall human capital, but focusing on processing the applications of persons in occupations that are identified as being in shortage through consultations with the province and HRSDC.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: In terms of the provincial-federal division, when you look across Canada, my sense is that there are very unique labour markets out there. So when I see the levels that we're talking about for the PNP, I'm wondering if you have a view on, or if there's any discussion about, whether the provinces—because they know their labour markets better and the uniqueness of those labour markets—should be taking more of a lead on dealing with the kind of economic and demographic issues that the program is supposed to deal with.

Mr. David Manicom: It's perhaps a question a little bit higher and broader than my role. I would only reiterate that the provincial nominee programs are now very large, and the provinces decide how to use them. In scale, they are beginning to approach the federal skilled worker program in many ways, and the current approach of the federal government is that it's important to maintain a broad national program.

Yes, we have regional economic differences, but we're also a single labour market with full internal mobility rights. Canadians migrate a great deal within the country, and more and more so. We do see a value in a large federal program that brings in generic, if

you will, highly skilled people, who are by definition energetic and ambitious for their families because they're prepared to move around the world to meet their needs.

• (1210)

The Chair: Thank you.

Welcome, Mr. Benoit, to the immigration committee. You have up to five minutes, sir.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Thank you.

And thank you for being here today.

I'm a temporary member of this committee for today, but I was the immigration critic for our party from 1997 until 2000. One of the things I did as critic was set up an immigration task force in the greater Toronto area, and I learned certain things. One of them was that a lot of people who came to Canada were trained as engineers in Pakistan, India, and elsewhere. They were professionals who came to Canada and they had been told by unscrupulous consultants that they would be able to get a job in their area of expertise right away. In fact, those are the people who are often PhDs driving cabs, that kind of thing. There was certainly a problem with that.

I'm wondering if this provincial nominee program has helped to deal with that. Would you say that most of the people who come under the provincial nominee program actually work in the types of jobs they expect to be working in?

Mr. David Manicom: I don't have specific data broken down in that way, but I think it is safe to say that the overall answer would be yes, because of the high proportion of provincial nominees who either have a specific job offer prior to arriving or who are already working in Canada.

Intuitively, yes, there would be a fairly significant difference.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Yes, and I would expect that.

It was devastating when this happened. I had people tell me they never would have come had they known they wouldn't be working in the area they expected to be working in. But there was no going home: they had pulled up roots, there'd be the embarrassment of going back, and they left saying they wanted a better life, and all of that put together.

That makes sense, and I think this does help deal with that issue.

The second thing is, at that time about two thirds of all of the immigrants ended up in the GTA. They didn't always go there directly, but they ended up there. Has this program helped deal with that? Are there more immigrants going to the places where the need is? I would think by the nature of the program, it probably is, if in fact it is....

Can you tell me roughly...? For example, I'm from Alberta, and one of the biggest problems business has in Alberta is getting workers. I chair the natural resources committee, and Mr. Gravelle is on that committee. We hear again and again, day after day, that the biggest problem for mining companies across the country—it's not just in Alberta or the west—is getting workers.

Does this program help deal with that issue of getting immigration, of getting people who immigrate to go to where they actually are most needed?

Mr. David Manicom: Yes. The provincial nominee programs have had a fairly dramatic statistical impact, although I think they are probably also reinforcing the economic trend in the country. Twenty-six per cent of economic immigrants are now destined outside Ontario, compared to 11% in 1997. The overall proportion of immigrants outside Quebec went from 64% in 2005 to 52% in 2010. It's still very high, and still greatly to the benefit of the Province of Ontario.

I don't have the exact figures in front of me, but certainly the provinces with the greatest proportional increase in immigration in recent years have been the western provinces, particularly Manitoba because of their extremely ambitious provincial nominee program, and Alberta—both through provincial nominee programs and an increasing share of the federal programs.

Mr. Leon Benoit: I only ask the question because by the nature of this program, it is going to do a much better job of dealing with those two issues that were there before.

In my constituency, the difficulty in getting workers is unbelievable. As you say, it's not only like that in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, but in many areas across the country. It's to the extent that small manufacturers in my area—mostly in the oil and gas business—are actually moving their companies elsewhere because they simply can't get workers. In some cases they're moving to China. Better situations...maybe moving part of their business to Atlantic Canada, into a community where there are more workers. The need is there still for more workers.

I know there are difficulties in expanding any particular program, and you've already talked about this, but as this demand for workers becomes greater—and it will, the shortage will be more acute—do you anticipate that in the years ahead this part of the immigration system in Canada will be expanded?

•(1215)

The Chair: Unless Mr. Dykstra agrees, that's it.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): He can finish, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Carry on. We always let our guests carry on.

Mr. Leon Benoit: No, it's my time. Finish the question.

The Chair: Yes, you can answer the question.

Mr. David Manicom: At the present time the federal government doesn't foresee further increases in scale of the provincial nominee program unless or until there is an overall increase in immigration levels. As you know, we've had a vigorous national debate on that issue over the past month when Minister Kenney was doing his consultations. It's probably about the larger discussion of how large the immigration program should be overall. And of course—this is outside of my remit but it's a broader, socio-economic program for the country—we do have 14% youth unemployment. We do have persistent unemployment in many areas of the country. I think it's not only immigration that has something to say to help resolve those problems.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

My Dykstra, you have four minutes.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Thank you.

I appreciate your being here today. It's been very helpful and enlightening.

I'm looking at the chart that indicates where all the provinces stand, where things started, and where the growth has occurred, especially over the last three or four years. I'm struck by the fact that there isn't really any strategy, and this is why I would like it explained to folks. We've got a province like Manitoba where 77% of their immigration comes from the provincial nominee program. Then you have a province like Ontario, which is literally ten times the size and only 1.29% of its immigrants come from the provincial nominee program. Is there any discussion around why there is such a disparity between a province like Manitoba and a province like Ontario? The amounts are obviously not set on a per capita basis. They're set based on the requests you receive from the provinces.

Could you elaborate a little bit on that?

Mr. David Manicom: I think it will be a pressing issue going forward. Until very recently, provincial nominee programs simply grew based on the province's own requests, so the federal government was responsive to provincial requests. Although there's a disparity between Manitoba and Ontario with regard to the provincial nominee programs, if we look at overall immigration there is also a disparity but in the opposite direction. Provinces that are receiving fewer immigrants, naturally, if you will, or through federal programs, are obviously much more motivated to put considerable provincial resources—and it's a big provincial resource outlay for provinces with large programs—into provincial nominee programs. Provinces that are receiving lots of immigrants aren't so inclined. When the provincial nominee programs got to such a size that within the overall levels framework we had to start to manage their growth, we had existing provincial nominee programs.... The current allocation generally reflects the history of provincial nominee programs. Fundamentally, relooking at that allocation formula is not something that's happening right now, but I'm sure it will be a discussion piece around the federal-provincial table as we go forward with a multi-year levels planning process.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: What strikes me about this, and perhaps I'll get you to comment quickly on it, is.... You're right that there's a larger base of immigrants who come to Ontario, but over the last five years that's declined from 64% to 52% of the overall immigration levels. We're seeing Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island picking up the slack. They're being aggressive, and they're showing, particularly with this program, how they can use it to their advantage.

Is that type of discussion happening with provinces like Ontario and Quebec, which seem to be lagging very far behind in terms of their approach to the program?

Mr. David Manicom: I just want to clarify that Quebec isn't a participant in the provincial nominee program because of their selection authorities under the Canada-Quebec accord. They are in fact a very high immigrant-receiving province, about 44,000 on an order of scale, I believe, last year. We can provide corrected numbers if I got that wrong.

Ontario to some extent has been a different case because of its historical role as the magnet for the large majority of immigrants to Canada. Although British Columbia now has a fairly large provincial nominee program, for many years they also didn't because the Lower Mainland was attracting large numbers of immigrants.

Your question was whether there is discussion about that. There certainly is a very lively discussion between provincial and federal officials, and also at the ministerial level. The outcome of those discussions are federal-provincial discussions that are, again, a little bit above my head.

• (1220)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Sitsabaiesan.

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

Thank you again for being here. As everyone is saying, it's been very informative for us.

You were mentioning earlier that the provinces can negotiate and switch the number of certificates they will actually give out. How does this actually work? How does this negotiation process work among the provinces?

My example would be Ontario. It has an extremely low percentage of usage of the certificates, so if Ontario gives away its certificates or its spots to Alberta, let's say, because it is in need of that niche market of labour right now, then what does Ontario get in return? How does it work?

So there are two questions in one: how does the negotiation process work, and then what do the giving away provinces get in return? What's used to barter, basically is my question.

Mr. David Manicom: Yes, this allocation process is relatively new, so it's still evolving. The basic allocation formulas were set based on the size of the current programs. Then when individual provinces do not wish to use all of their allocation, they are able—in discussions among the provinces—to move the allocation to another province. That is how I understand the process works. And they advise us.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: I'm Ontario and I give away my spots to him; he's Alberta. What do I get in return for giving away my provincial nominee certificates that I could have given...?

Mr. David Manicom: Goodwill.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. David Manicom: But that's true, in the sense that the allocations are for a calendar year. If you can't use them, you still have your allocation for the next year. They would otherwise not have been used.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: As Mr. Lamoureux was asking, if we could get the targets and then the actual certificates issued and the number of people who are coming in on these programs, that would be very useful. Since the program is relatively young, if we can get the numbers since the inception of the program, I think it would be useful to see the movement or what has actually been happening in the program.

I think you said you do have it prepared already, the 2012 targets by province, because then we can see where the movement or the plan is for the future. You can give it to the clerk.

Right, Mr. Chair?

Mr. David Manicom: We have the 2012 allocations with us and we can provide a copy right away.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Perfect. Thank you very much.

Mr. David Manicom: And we can easily provide the statistical report that you requested.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Fabulous. Thank you very much.

My other question will be about processing.

We just did a study on the federal backlog, and faster processing times have generally been cited as an advantage of the PNP program over the federal skilled worker program. But we're starting to learn that there's a backlog forming in the PNP program as well. Could you please comment on that?

Ms. Sharon Chomyn (Director General, International Region, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Thank you for that question.

I represent the part of the department that's responsible for turning applications into visas, or at least we're responsible for the processing that's involved.

We receive our target allocations, which we then communicate to the missions for their specific allocations. They don't receive the targets that are broken down by province. They will receive a target that identifies the provincial nominee program as a line of business among all the other lines of business that are there.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: So is there a backlog that's developing in the PNP program as well?

Ms. Sharon Chomyn: There's not a backlog overall. For example, next year—

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: When you say “overall”, is that at the federal level within CIC?

Ms. Sharon Chomyn: No. What I mean is there can be faster and slower processing times at different missions, so there may be an inventory that's building up in a particular visa office, but nowhere near to the magnitude that exists in some of the other lines of business.

Right now we're looking at issuing approximately 45,000 visas in this category next year. We have approximately 45,000 people in the queue right now. So it's matched quite closely.

• (1225)

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Okay.

For the federal skilled worker program, under the new ministerial instructions they're saying the processing time or the end-to-end processing is getting shorter and shorter. How do you think that will affect the PNP applications?

Ms. Sharon Chomyn: I think the PNP applications will benefit from the same changes we are making to the larger processing machinery. As I mentioned last time I appeared before the committee, we have a modernization agenda we are rolling out quite enthusiastically, which will allow us to move work to where capacity exists.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaesan: Right. The question is—

The Chair: Time has expired. I'm sorry.

Mr. Lamoureux, I have good news. We are back to the seven-minute round.

Mr. Menegakis and Mr. Weston go first.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be splitting my time with Mr. Weston.

While the provincial nominee program is very popular, I'm sure it's not perfect.

What are some of the problems you've seen? How is the department addressing those concerns?

Ms. Sharon Chomyn: I can talk about some of the issues that have come up in the overseas context, but as David mentioned in the course of his contribution, the approval rate of these types of applications is 97%. It's really a very successful program from the perspective of being a streamlined movement, if I can say that.

Some of the issues that do come up, though, have to do with things related to identity. For example, sometimes applicants choose to add an individual to their application and portray them as a family member when in fact they are not one. There are sometimes issues related to education documentation or employment history documentation that proves to be fraudulent. Sometimes we may find out that an individual has a nomination certificate from a particular province, and then on closer examination we find out that their intention is to live in another province. That might occur because they happen to have already purchased property in another province or because their family is already installed there. There are issues like that.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you.

I'm curious. What percentage of the people who come in every year through the provincial nominee program are principal applicants versus spouses or dependants? Do you have those figures?

Mr. David Manicom: We can provide exact figures afterwards. The order of scale is two to one, where the certificate issuance target is 20,600 and the landings target is 42,000 to 45,000. That's a rough order of magnitude. Because quite a large number of temporary workers are nominated under the program, there seems to be a somewhat lower incidence of dependants than there is in the federal programs. I'm not sure why.

The Chair: Could you send that to the clerk, sir?

Mr. Costas Menegakis: How is the time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: It's at five and a half minutes.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Okay.

I'm wondering if you have any data on what streams most of the provincial nominees come from. Are they temporary workers, foreign workers, or students? Is there any breakdown?

Mr. David Manicom: I don't think we have statistical data on individual streams, of which there are about 50. I think I mentioned earlier that 55% of the certificates nationally in the PNP programs are issued on the basis of a job offer. The labour market is the key driver.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Okay.

Mr. David Manicom: With 50 programs it is difficult, and because they are provincial programs, our systems don't identify which provincial sub-stream they are in. So statistically, we couldn't do that very easily.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you very much.

I'll turn it over to Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you.

“Subsidiarism” is a bulky word, but it basically means pushing the decision-making down to the lowest level of appropriate government. It seems that's what's happening here. We're seeing the results in terms of less fraud, fewer rejections, efficiency, happy applicants, and happy governments.

Has any of you had the chance to observe such a program active in other federal countries such as the United States or anywhere else?

• (1230)

Mr. David Manicom: “Observe” would be too strong. There are state nomination roles in Australia that I don't know the details of. As far as I know, states in the United States don't have any influence on immigration decision-making. The provincial nominee program, as it stands in Canada, is quite unique. As I say, I don't have all the details on the Australian program; they do have some state roles, but not nearly as substantial.

Remember, it's a very efficient program from the federal government's point of view, because the provinces, through the 97% approval rate, have demonstrated that they're doing a good job of streaming through their own processes. Of course, there are applicants who are refused by the provinces. They are selecting the individuals. But when they get to the federal government, it's an effective program and therefore efficient from the taxpayer point of view and others. We're not spending a lot of federal resources refusing applications.

Mr. John Weston: As far as taxpayers are concerned, if we can do our job by getting out of the way, then we're doing our job the way they would want it to happen.

Is there any further comment on overlaps with other federal programs, things that might impede the success of this, whether they be immigration or non-immigration federal programs?

Mr. David Manicom: I think the two that come first to mind are business programs and programs for students. Some of the provinces have student streams, and we have the relatively new Canadian experience class, which is growing but not as fast as we thought it would. The business programs have been complicated because there are federal business programs and the provinces have developed various very different types of business programs that at times have, in the opinion of the federal government, crossed the line into the path of the investment sphere, which, by regulation, is reserved for the federal government. We've worked with provinces and corrected those issues.

With regard to international students, I think what we are in discussion about with the provinces is to look toward ensuring that since they all indeed want to maximize their provincial nominee spaces, by and large they're not nominating individuals who would qualify under the Canadian experience class, and therefore preserving their nominations for other individuals, since someone in the Canadian experience class living in Saskatchewan is probably going to reside in Saskatchewan.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Sitsabaiesan.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Thank you.

Perhaps I may finish my last question. The whole premise of the question was that PNP faster processing times are seen as an advantage over the federal skilled worker program. If the federal skilled worker program processing times are actually decreasing, as ministry officials have told us, do you see a decline in PNP?

Mr. David Manicom: No.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: You don't see it having an effect on the PNP program at all.

Mr. David Manicom: When the provincial nominee programs were developing, I was very often engaged in discussions with the provinces at a director level at the time. They were quite happy that the federal government was very slow and cumbersome in processing skilled workers, because it was a competitive advantage for them. At the present time, remember, the provincial nominee programs are all growing fast. They're mature. There's no indication they're having any difficulty meeting the volumes they're accorded. They all want more. So I think at this time, when the federal government improves its processing times for federal skilled workers, I would not expect to see a negative impact.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: You're not losing your competitive advantage in this point, basically.

Mr. David Manicom: Again, if we work well together to make sure that our programs aren't overlapping, then their program will be filling different needs.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Okay.

I'll go back to the international students.

Given the similarities between the PNP system or stream for international students and the federal skilled worker program for PhD students, this is a situational question. One of my constituents walks into my office and asks me about which program they should

actually apply for and what's the best avenue for them for retention or for staying in the country. What should I advise them?

● (1235)

Mr. David Manicom: First of all, only a couple of provinces have student streams. I know that British Columbia has one.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Ontario does. That's what I would be faced with.

Mr. David Manicom: I don't know provincial selection criteria by heart. There may be some individuals who meet both. There may be some individuals who meet one or the other. If someone meets the....

Okay, I'm sorry, there are student programs actually in quite a few provinces—about six.

As far as processing times in the Canadian experience class and through the provincial nominee program, I think they'd be similar. If you are someone who happens to meet the criteria in both of them, and they do have different criteria—

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Absolutely.

Mr. David Manicom: —then I don't see that there would be any obvious reason for me to recommend one over the other. Depending upon the fees and the provincial program, overall it might cost more, but they vary as well.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: So if this is a cash-strapped student, I should suggest the federal skilled worker program, because the provincial nominee program may have double the fees, or two different fees—not necessarily double, but there would be the federal fee and the provincial fee, so potentially leading them toward the federal skilled worker program....

Mr. David Manicom: The Canadian experience class is normally what they would qualify under. But again, fees vary a lot from province to province.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Right. It is the experience class. I was thinking federal program and then decided to say skilled worker.

I'm going to switch gears a little now. There have been some in the community, especially the Maytree Foundation, who have argued that a pan-Canadian framework for the provincial nominee program might be useful. Especially from the examples you have talked about today, there is so much disparity among the provinces with their criteria, their selection process, and their processing times—whatever it may be—that we should actually develop a pan-Canadian program.

How do you feel about that? How do you respond to this solution that has been suggested for some of the problems that we have been experiencing in this national program?

Mr. David Manicom: The policy of the government is one of working together to have broad concurrence on certain principles, so that the programs are successful economically, and to have relatively high standards, and, more importantly, to have clear and objective criteria, and to avoid overlap. In that sense, a pan-Canadian framework is something we are all working toward, but if we mean ensuring that provincial nominee programs become more similar to each other—

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: No, it's along the lines that they are similar to each other, but it's also the problem that was identified by the chair through his questioning about mobility, because Canada doesn't restrict it and say that you come into this country in one province, you're not allowed to leave that province, and you have to stay there. We don't say that, so with open interprovincial mobility, it's quite easy—or has a low threshold—for these people who come in on the provincial nominee programs. With some provinces having lower selection standards than others, there may be a problem that arises moving forward, so the pan-Canadian framework might be a good solution for that.

How do you respond to that?

Mr. David Manicom: Lower standards wasn't my phrase. Provinces are selecting immigrants for very different needs.

I think the federal government's point of view is that if skilled tradespersons are what Alberta needs, and provincial nominees can fill those needs, the fact that there may not be a need for skilled tradespersons in another province is okay, and that's the beauty of the provincial nominee process.

Certainly we are—

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Skilled tradespeople have a lot of mobility. They have transferable skills, but there are also some provinces that look for low-skilled workers. There are statistics that show that for those who come into the country as low-skilled workers, their ability to sustain or find work, or to find meaningful employment, may be difficult, and they may look to move elsewhere.

How are we going to ensure that these people are able to integrate—and successfully integrate—for the long term?

Mr. David Manicom: The low- and semi-skilled workers the provinces are selecting in provincial nominee programs are working in their provinces. At this time, the federal government doesn't have any intention of prohibiting provinces from using their provincial nominee certificates for such workers.

• (1240)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lamoureux.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to give you an example. This prevents hundreds, if not thousands, of people from being able to come to Canada, and quite often leads even more to misrepresentation.

The example is this. I'm a 25-year-old welder who lives in the Philippines. I have a brother who lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He puts aside \$10,000 in a trust fund because I need to have money in order to go to Canada. He then advances...and the Province of Manitoba says it's fine with that; it's comfortable with the fact that there is \$10,000 in the trust fund.

The question I have is, will that suffice, from Citizenship and Immigration Canada's perspective, in meeting the financial requirement?

Mr. David Manicom: Yes.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Good. I'm very glad to hear that.

On timelines with regard to the reports, quite often we get a commitment to bring information to the committee. My concern is that this is a very important issue. Can you commit to providing the information for next Tuesday, or Thursday at the very latest, before the committee meets next Thursday? The information I'm most interested in is the number of certificates for each province.

Mr. David Manicom: Today is Thursday?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes.

The Chair: I just want to talk to the clerk for a minute.

I'll tell you why I broke on this.

We're going to have a subcommittee meeting on Tuesday, and then we're going to be looking at the backlog report. You've asked to get this information immediately. I'm just raising the question of whether it needs to be immediately—unless for some reason this is it. I doubt that, though. I expect, Mr. Dykstra, that this topic will go into the new year. So I'm just suggesting you be a little less demanding, unless there's some reason why you want it next week.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes, there is, Mr. Chairperson, in the sense that I think we've had others make presentations before the committee, they have made a commitment to bring things to the committee, and we haven't necessarily received them in a very timely fashion.

The Chair: Oh, I bet you Mr. Manicom will get it here quickly, won't you, Mr. Manicom?

Mr. David Manicom: Of course, the issuance of certificates to the committee has to go through the department's approval process to make sure it's accurate. We believe the information that's been requested so far is relatively easy to obtain statistically, so the process of doing that won't be lengthy.

The Chair: You'll get this to the clerk in January.

Mr. David Manicom: I think we can get it to the clerk well before January, sir.

The Chair: Thank you. That would be great.

How's that, Mr. Lamoureux? We'll start the clock again.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I was thinking next week, Mr. Chair, but however soon you can get it...

Can you provide me with the number of certificates that are going to be issued to the Province of Manitoba for 2012? Do you know that offhand?

Mr. David Manicom: Issued by the Province of Manitoba?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: For 2012, yes.

Mr. David Manicom: It's 5,000, so that's 5,000 families, 5,000 principal applicants, depending on how many spouses and children they have.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: So 5,000 principal applicants. Wonderful. Thank you very much. I do appreciate it.

There is a great deal of concern, from Manitoba's perspective, that we be able to continue to maintain our numbers. As other provinces tend to want to pick up on the program now, is there any thought being given to Manitoba's numbers being reduced from Ottawa?

•(1245)

Mr. David Manicom: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Given the idea that different provinces all have different programs being made available, quite different in terms of the way in which they're broken down—who would be eligible, who's not to be eligible—and given the fact that we're trying to deal with the issue of backlogs, and backlogs have been a really important issue for us, do you feel there would be any value, as a committee, to being able to get a better assessment and a comparison of the different provinces and the potential backlog that could be created as a result?

Keep in mind that provinces like Manitoba are in a position where we do not want to lose any of our ability to issue those 5,000 certificates. I think we've been at that now for two years.

Mr. David Manicom: The allocations will be largely dependent on the overall level framework, as determined by the Government of Canada. As I say, there's no indication that Manitoba's allocation would be reduced, that I know of.

With regard to the accumulation of backlogs or inventories that my colleague was speaking to earlier, the purpose of the allocation formula is to prevent the accumulation of backlogs in the provincial nominee program. If we did not manage the number of certificates being issued, we would lose control of the number of provincial nominee applications we are receiving, and then we wouldn't be able to process them all within the levels framework.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Okay.

Do you provide multi-year forecasts for the provincial nominee program? For example, is it safe to assume that Manitoba will be able to get the 5,000 again in 2013?

Mr. David Manicom: No, at this time it's done on an annual basis. But we are beginning the process of the multi-year planning my colleague referred to. I think it's foreseeable, if that process is successful, that in the future provinces may have a three-year planning horizon.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Okay.

I noticed that there were a number of provinces, and you made reference to them, that have been audited. Was that done by their own provincial auditors who took the initiative themselves, or was it something the local governments requested?

Mr. David Manicom: I referred to the reports of the provincial auditors general on individual provincial nominee programs. In addition, the Auditor General of Canada made reference to the provincial nominee program as a whole in the report of 2009, I believe.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dykstra.

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

I have a couple of questions on the economic issues and on citizenship. But I want to follow up on one point Rathika made.

David, in response to the question on what Ontario is giving up to Alberta in the circumstance of the numbers, you said it was good will. I thought that was a great answer. But I actually think it goes a

little bit deeper than that. When you see the reduction in immigration in the province of Ontario, from 64% to 52%, and the other provinces not picking up the slack.... Quite honestly, they're actually invigorated in terms of their immigration policy as it's focused on economic development for the country. What I see Ontario trading off for the exchange, or the lack of enthusiasm for this program, is settlement funding. That leads me to ask the question about the relationship between the provincial nominee program and settlement funding.

I know you're not the experts on settlement funding, but I wonder if you could comment on the fact that we have other provinces, such as Manitoba, that are obviously, as Mr. Lamoureux has indicated, using this program to its fullest extent. Should that settlement funding, in fact, follow where the immigrants are moving? I would ask if there is a relationship between the provincial nominee program and the use of settlement funding to assist them.

Mr. David Manicom: Yes, it's slightly indirect. In other words, the federal government's funding formula for settlement is based on the number of arrivals, with an adjustment with regard to refugees because of the higher settlement needs of refugees. There's a slightly different per-head allocation for refugees. Other than that, it's based on the number of arrivals, regardless of the program.

A province that brings in more immigrants through the provincial nominee program will increase its overall number of immigrant arrivals, and therefore, under the settlement allocation formula, would, in the following year, receive an increased proportion of whatever overall funding is available.

•(1250)

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Thank you.

The Chair: Please stop the clock for a minute.

Just to inform the members of the committee, this committee apparently went to each capital in the country in 2003 on this topic. It was a similar topic. There's a report on the website that maybe you should all have a look at.

Sorry, Mr. Dykstra. The clock will begin again.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: That's no problem. I don't think I lost my train of thought. I'll do my best.

The other aspect of this you noted in your introductory remarks is in relation to the program itself. While it may be a pathway to citizenship, it is not in fact a Canadian citizenship program. I wonder if you could just expand on that a little bit, because I think people need to understand that the stated purpose of the provincial nominee program, along with the federal skilled worker program, isn't necessarily to create new Canadian citizens. But it does lead to that based on their involvement here in the Canadian economy and the Canadian community.

Mr. David Manicom: Like all of Canada's immigration programs, we certainly hope and encourage immigrants to become Canadian citizens. Historically, for many years, and it's a trend we're happy to see continuing and even improving, a very high percentage of Canadian immigrants—I believe it is in the order of 75% to 80%—eventually become Canadian citizens, a level that is, to my knowledge, unmatched by any country in the world.

Interestingly, immigrants in economic streams have an above average uptake of citizenship. It is even higher than in the immigration program as a whole. And the provincial nominee program outcomes are consistent with that. A very high percentage of provincial nominees do become Canadian citizens.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Thank you.

I know we've all alluded to this to a certain extent, but another aspect of the program itself is really a potential for each of the provinces to use it as an economic driver. You touched on this in your opening remarks. Could you outline the importance of how you view the program in its essence? That is, it is an economic assistance to the provinces to deliver on, obviously, skilled worker positions and in fact assists them with respect to their provincial economies, but the larger outcome is that it assists us in terms of the strength of our Canadian economy.

Mr. David Manicom: It's always a challenge to ask a public official to give you the essence of a program. When I'm in multilateral fora talking about Canadian immigration policy, what we tend to find ourselves saying about the provincial nominee program is that, given its focus on successful economic establishment as a baseline and the positive demonstrated outcomes that we'll see in the report that will be issued in a couple of months, Canada has produced a very interesting hybrid where we can have broad human capital national programs on a considerable scale yet have programs within that overall ambit that meet a variety of specific local and regional needs, whether that be extremely highly skilled people in a certain domain in the Lower Mainland, community building in Manitoba, or skilled tradespersons in Alberta. All of them are doing well both in the short term and in the long term—by global standards extremely well—and eventually becoming Canadian citizens. I think it gives us a policy nuance or agility or responsiveness that probably would be beyond the design capabilities of a federal government because of the way in which we do our business. That's what I'd say about it.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I really just want to confirm.... You noted that in Prince Edward Island, 98% of their immigrants are coming from this program; Manitoba, 92%; Saskatchewan, 86%; the Yukon, 87%; New Brunswick, 78%; and Newfoundland and Labrador, 52%. I don't necessarily need you to respond specifically to this, but the point I'm trying to make is that we've understood, from policy, political, and implementation perspectives, that the provinces have actually, by and large—there are a couple at the tail end of this, and I put Ontario in that category—determined that this is a program that works for them and a program that, from the policy perspective, works for the country.

•(1255)

Mr. David Manicom: I don't think that was quite a question, but I'd only add that the kind of nuance we see is, for example, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador needing nurses in outposts and setting up individual relationships with nursing training institutes in southern India, and going to India in person to work with those local schools to develop programs that benefit both Newfoundland and the training institute in southern India. I can't really imagine the federal government undertaking that kind of nuanced approach.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kellway and Madame Groguhé, you have less than five minutes.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Oh my goodness. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Very quickly, David, you mentioned earlier that the provinces want more. Have you aggregated the demand coming from the provinces to a new level? Have you figured out how much more they want?

Mr. David Manicom: No, I don't believe so. I don't think, to my knowledge, at least since my taking up this post, that we've tended to see specific numerical requests from the provinces, although I'll ask Natasha if she hears differently. Generally, it's just more, and therefore the challenge to the government has been the request for more and higher numbers from each provincial government, yet an apparent broad public consensus is that the current levels are about right, producing a bit of a mathematical conundrum.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Natasha, do you have a number?

Ms. Natasha Parriag: I don't have an overall number. These are typically numbers that would be tabled in a province's immigration strategy, for example, where they would state their own interests on an individual basis.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Okay.

Very quickly, I understand in 2002 the department committed to enhancing immigration in francophone minority communities and that the 2006 strategic plan to foster immigration to francophone minority communities set a minimum target of 4.4% in terms of immigration in minority francophone communities. I understand Manitoba has voluntarily accepted that as a linguistic target. Is the federal government imposing that linguistic target on other provinces or making any effort to fulfill that commitment?

Mr. David Manicom: We're certainly making efforts to fulfill that commitment. It has certainly been a challenging one to date, given the nature of migratory flows globally, where we don't have that many large-source countries where there are a large number of francophones.

Certainly at events such as Destination Canada in Paris, in Brussels, and in north Africa—I don't know if Sharon wants to add something—which is going on right now or is just completed.... Today I saw very exciting numbers from British Columbia, stating that it looked like 7.2% of its provincial nominees would be francophones this year or in coming...and a lot of French media reports about the attractiveness of Canada as an international education destination.

So we do work with the provinces at the Destination Canada event. You have big halls—much larger than this—with many thousands of visitors, big lineups outside provincial booths, and quite large-scale hiring being done on the spot as well as future job offers. We're not there yet, but the provinces are a key part of the strategy to get there.

The Chair: Madame Groguhé, very quickly.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My question is about the Auditor General's report, wherein she recommends that evaluations be done on the economic settlement of the persons who come here. You referred to mechanisms and quality assurance. Since 2009, have any processes been designed to perform these assessments? If so, what are they and what will they be like? Do you have any information in this regard?

• (1300)

[*English*]

Mr. David Manicom: I don't have the knowledge to answer that question in detail. We are working on some quality assurance programs with some provinces.

Perhaps with regard to this question, I'd prefer it if we could provide a written response to the committee, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Good. We would appreciate that. Thank you, and again, please send it to the clerk at the appropriate time.

Our time has expired. I thank you, Ms. Chomyn, Ms. Parriag, and particularly you, Mr. Manicom. We worked you over very well, and you've been very helpful to the committee. We appreciate it.

Mr. David Manicom: Mr. Chair, is it possible for me to correct an error I made earlier?

The Chair: Absolutely.

Mr. David Manicom: Very shortly, we had a question about the funding allocation in the Canada-Quebec accord, and I stated that it was linked to the number of arrivals.

My note here—and perhaps we can provide a more detailed response—is that the funding is not directly linked to the number of immigrants received. So it appears the formula is more complex than that, and perhaps we could provide clarification in writing.

The Chair: Perhaps you could give us that as well.

Thank you.

Mr. David Manicom: Thank you.

The Chair: Just to remind committee members, Tuesday is a subcommittee meeting. So only subcommittee members need to attend on Tuesday. The backlog report will be available on Monday sometime, and it will be e-mailed to you. I remind you that the report is confidential.

This meeting is adjourned.

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

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

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

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

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>