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CANADA

## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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**Thursday, October 20, 2005**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Marlene Catterall**

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## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Thursday, October 20, 2005

• (1105)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee:** Members of the Committee, I see a quorum. Your first item of business is to elect a chair.

I am ready to receive motions for the election of a chair.

Mr. Silva.

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** I would like to nominate Marlene Catterall for chair of the committee.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Silva that Mrs. Catterall be elected chair of this committee. Is it seconded?

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Madam Catterall duly elected chair of this committee.

We will now proceed to the election of vice-chair.

Madam Bulte.

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** I would like to propose Mr. Schellenberger for vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** It is moved by Madam Bulte that Mr. Schellenberger be elected vice-chair of this committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

**The Clerk:** I declare Mr. Schellenberger elected Vice-Chair.

[English]

Let us proceed to the election of the second vice-chair.

Monsieur Clavet.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Clavet (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** I move that Mr. Maka Kotto be elected Vice-Chair of the committee.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Clavet moves that Mr. Maka Kotto be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Mr. Maka Kotto elected Vice-Chair of the committee.

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** As always, it is by consensus and with goodwill all around.

Our business today is a reference from the House of Commons of Bill C-331, the Ukrainian-Canadian restitution act, in the name of Mr. Inky Mark.

We also have on our agenda, of course, the order of reference on Bill C-333, the Chinese-Canadian recognition and redress act. That's in the name of Ms. Oda, and we have Ms. Oda listed as a witness. She spoke to me; she's not able to be here today. She has a very special event in her riding. She indicated she's quite happy to have Mr. Mark speak to both bills, since the fundamental principles are the same.

I gather, Mr. Mark, that you and Ms. Oda had a discussion as well. If it's agreeable to the committee, we can deal with both bills at the same time.

Mr. Mark, welcome to the committee. Thank you very much for giving us such meaningful work to do.

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I also want to begin by thanking the committee for the extension on both these bills. As you know, if your request for the extension hadn't happened, it would have died on the order paper because of the summer recess, so I want to thank all members.

I also want to thank all the parties for passing both Bill C-331 and Bill C-333 in the House of Commons by unanimous consent. We didn't even have to vote on these bills, which is a good indicator that these two pieces of legislation are important, and that's why we're here today.

While I'm thanking people, I want to thank Marlene Catterall, chair of the committee, for her interest, consultation, and discussions over the last year, as well as the heritage minister, the parliamentary secretary, and the Department of Justice for the time they put into this bill, the interest they've shown, and the work they've done to help move this thing along. Hopefully we'll all succeed, because taking the partisanship out of this subject is a win-win for all of us.

I also want to recognize and thank Bev Oda for tabling Bill C-333. Bill C-333 was actually tabled once before, and it was tabled this time in her name.

I also want to acknowledge and thank the former Minister of Canadian Heritage, Sheila Copps, because Sheila actually did try to resolve Bill C-331, did get the groups together with the bureaucracy, and did try to negotiate an agreement. Unfortunately, it didn't work out, so we're still at this, but I think this time around we should get the job done.

First, let me give you an overview of both pieces of legislation. If I may, I'd like to talk about both of them together. I will tell you that Bill C-331 is about the Ukrainian community and Bill C-333 is about the Chinese community. I've been working on both these bills since 1997. It's taken all these years to get to where we are, and surprisingly, we are where we are—to my surprise and probably everybody else's. Both the Ukrainian and the Chinese communities have been seeking redress for over two decades in this country, so it's not a new subject for them. I'm just the guy at the right place at the right time; I have taken on their fight since I came to Parliament in 1997.

It's kind of ironic, because last night I attended the PRC celebration of 35 years of a relationship between Canada and PRC. It was a big deal, and it still is, because there's still a huge future, even though the head tax goes back to the pre-1900s. By the same token, this marked the 85th year since the end of the Ukrainian internment—between 1914 and 1920—so there's no doubt that it's long overdue. These two ethnic groups make up approximately two million Canadians today. There are about a million Canadians of Ukrainian descent and another million Canadians of Chinese descent, and you've heard, even three years back, that the third most spoken language in this country is Mandarin, which also demonstrates the multicultural nature of the society we live in today.

How did we get Bill C-331 and Bill C-333? Obviously it happened with a lot of effort on the part of the communities. Let me also say that these two bills really reflect the communities' views. The first task on my part was just to get them together to speak with one voice, as well as to sit down and craft a piece of legislation. Bill C-331 has been tabled three times in this House since 1997, and Bill C-333 has been tabled twice, so it's not the first time.

Let me say that Bill C-331 really belongs to the Ukrainian community, and Bill C-333 belongs to the Chinese community. I'm just the vehicle, the conduit, to bring it to Ottawa and to the House of Commons. When it comes to credit, there's lots of credit to be given to everybody—the people in this room, all the parties in the House, mainstream society. A lot of lobbying has occurred over the last eight years to resolve this in Parliament.

• (1110)

Why do we need to pass Bill C-331 and Bill C-333? Already it's been demonstrated there is party support, there is House of Commons support, and there is public support. And when you look at the nature of this country, it's good for the country, because it brings the country together. We are a multicultural society, and we are becoming even more of a multicultural society. We reflect the best of mankind around the world, so we need to fix our leftover historical problems at home.

The most unfortunate part about these two issues is that they're not part of our Canadian history. They're missed. The irony is that it wasn't until I became a member of Parliament that I really delved

into these issues and learned more about my own culture, as well as the Ukrainian internment. None of it was in our school books—certainly not when I went to school.

We need to recognize and accept our past, learn from it, and move on. It's long overdue, and we need to do that. It is indeed a win-win solution.

Let me also assure the committee that these are not money bills. Whatever debate we've had in the House, we will ensure, with the amendments, that neither Bill C-331 nor Bill C-333 will be considered to be money bills. There's never been any intent in the crafting of these bills. Perhaps it was an unintentional mistake, if that was the case, that certain clauses called for expenditures, but there was never any intent to do that.

Again, a lot of people were involved in crafting these bills. Unless you have the justice department look at it—and they didn't—previous to its being tabled in the House.... So there was never any intent for this to be a money bill. Changes will be made to ensure that Bill C-331 and Bill C-333 are not money bills.

I think one of the first questions on Bill C-333 asked why the Chinese-Canadian National Council is not listed in the bill as a stakeholder. Let me say to you that I have worked diligently with them as well from the beginning—in fact, in the first tabling of Bill C-333, both the Chinese Canadian National Council and the National Congress of Chinese Canadians were noted in the bill—but the problem the community has with the position of the Chinese Canadian National Council, and you'll hear them next week, is that they want individual compensation and an apology from the government. The National Congress of Chinese Canadians do not agree with that, and the larger community do not agree with it as well. Even though we sat down and discussed it and debated it over and over again, it reached a point at which we couldn't go anywhere.

I should remind you that the Chinese Canadian National Council was the one group that sued the government for a billion dollars just a few years back, on that same principle of individual compensation, and they lost that lawsuit. The National Congress of Chinese Canadians, the larger community, did not agree on individual compensation.

Neither do I. I'm a direct descendant of a Chinese railway worker. My grandfather came here and he paid the head tax. My father, who immigrated here, paid the head tax as well. I don't agree that we should receive an apology or receive individual compensation for that bleak moment in our history. I wanted to make that point.

• (1115)

Basically, three points need to be included in the bill. Over the last several days, I think the community has negotiated with the government on a number of amendments they brought forth, and the community doesn't really have a problem with them.

There are three points I would ask you to remember in both pieces of legislation. As it turns out, both pieces are fairly parallel in how they're crafted and what they ask for.

The first is that in the title, recognition and commemoration should be noted. That's basically it.

The preamble to the bill should call for acknowledgement and recognition of the event of the day on both communities.

The only other thing they request is an action statement at the end of the bill, calling on the government to sit down and negotiate with the community. In the case of the Ukrainian bill, Bill C-331, it's the Ukrainian-Canadian Congress, the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and the Taras Shevchenko Foundation; in Bill C-333, the main group is the National Congress of Chinese Canadians. That's what it comes down to.

I know the objections of the past have been over wording. It's always semantics—words like “restitution”. Politically it's probably not the path the government wants to go down. Historically it's correct, because during the internment, the belongings of the Ukrainian community were confiscated, and none of those were returned. Actually, restitution is pretty correct from an historical perspective, but from a legal perspective, what the government did during that day was legal, because it was done under the War Measures Act. In fact, the Ukrainians were the first guinea pigs of the War Measures Act, which was passed after the early 1900s.

We threw out the word “restitution” and we're also going to throw out the word “redress”. That will make the government very happy. Redress entails compensation. In this case, it's not about compensation to individuals; it's just about moving on into the future and seeing how we, as government, can deal with the future and learn from the past in a collective mode or manner—not in an individual manner, because if you read the bills, you'll see that both bills call for the establishment of an educational foundation. That may be too detailed. It may indicate or denote compensation of one kind or another.

Having talked constantly to both the Chinese and Ukrainian communities, I think my approach is that we are at this point in time, let's do the work, get it done, and move on. I think that's key, because I've been informed by the government side that perhaps what they're looking for is a template to deal with other cases down the road with other ethnic communities. That's fine as well.

Let me conclude by saying that both the Ukrainian community and the Chinese community—and you'll hear them next week—have bent over backwards to try to accommodate the pitfalls government may or may not see in semantics. Basically, they want this bill passed. I think the bulk of society sees it the same way. There's no doubt, after all these years, that it's time for resolution; it's time to quit talking about it and deal with it. Parliament and members of this committee can certainly lead the way.

I thank you for your time and the opportunity to be here to talk about both these bills.

• (1120)

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

On questions from committee members, we will first have Mr. Schellenberger, then Mr. Clavet, and then Madam Minna.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Thank you very much. I welcome you here today, Mr. Mark. I know we've

talked of this on various occasions. I remember when we had a vote in the House on the Armenian conflict. I know what these things mean to people, to recognize an event that happened, so I applaud you for helping with these two bills.

In contrast to Bill C-333—the Chinese Canadian recognition and redress act—this bill does not call for an apology for the wrongs of a previous government. Can you explain that distinction? That's my first question.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** I can explain that. Actually, when Bill C-333 was first tabled, it included the Chinese Canadian National Congress and the National Council of Chinese Canadians, and it actually called for an apology.

In the bill that should have been tabled, I had made amendments to delete the apology part, and the National Council was deleted, but the apology part was.... In other words, let me tell you that the wrong bill was tabled by Bev for the party. In the bill the community actually wanted, they withdrew the apology.

• (1125)

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Paragraph 2(1)(c) calls for the establishment of a permanent museum on the site of the former internment camp in Banff National Park. Do you know what, if anything, currently occupies that site, and do you have any valuation of what that property might be?

**Mr. Inky Mark:** I've been to that site in Banff National Park. It was actually the war camp at that time where the internees gathered.

Much of what you see in Banff, the infrastructure, was actually built by the Ukrainian internees, including the golf course. In talking to the community the last day, I was told they felt it was getting into details, and it would be better to delete that part of the bill, get rid of it, because that was the contentious part during second reading debate—whether this bill was a money bill or not.

If it implies in any way, shape, or form the spending of money—if they denote it as a money bill—then we just have more problems, so the recommendation by the Ukrainian community is to delete that clause totally, all of it.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Okay.

How is the educational material to be produced and the restitution to be distributed, and how will these costs be met? Will there be any provision for an evaluation of the educational materials?

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Again, following further discussion with the Ukrainian community, that portion of the bill will be deleted as well, because, again, we're getting into details. What we replaced it with is basically that action statement calling for the government to negotiate an agreement with the three national Ukrainian groups in this country, and that's it—so the reference to the foundation, even though we know that's its purpose, will be taken out of the bill altogether.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Mark, for some clarity, the minister can't be with us until noon, but essentially, in these discussions you've had, you're basically in agreement with what is being proposed as amendments, and that would make the two bills consistent with each other?

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Totally. That was the discussion we had over the last several days. The amendments the government will propose have received approval; I'm told by the two communities that they would agree to it.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Clavet is next.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Clavet:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm very interested to see that Mr. Inky Mark, who is from Manitoba, defended both of these bills for years, particularly the one calling for Chinese communities to be compensated. I like this analogy, because before entering the political arena, I lived in Manitoba. As fate would have it, with the lottery system in place, my name was among the first drawn. My initial intention — and Mr. Mark will back me up on this — was to table a bill calling for the wrongs inflicted on the Chinese community to be redressed. Mine was the 12th name selected, while his was the 10th. Ultimately, I changed my mind, since he had been working on this bill for a number of years. As fate would have it, Ms. Oda, a member of his own party, presented the bill.

Getting back to the crux of the matter, Mr. Mark, you testified that in some respects, Ukrainians were the first guinea pigs of the War Measures Act. I would have to say that in 1970, Quebeckers were also used as guinea pigs. It's rather telling to note that in this country, efforts are made to redress the wrongs done to the Japanese, Chinese and Ukrainians and that these efforts are applauded, but that nothing yet is being considered for Quebeckers. When I lived in Western Canada, I visited a cavern in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan that had been converted into a museum that recalled an attack on the Chinese, an unfortunate episode in Canada's history.

To your knowledge, Mr. Mark, is this museum still open? Are the hardships of Chinese labourers still being exploited for commercial purposes? I realize that this is not connected with the bill, but I'd like to have your impression of the steps being taken by Canada to redress the wrongs done to the Chinese community?

•(1130)

[*English*]

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Thank you very much for your question, Mr. Clavet.

Let me respond to your first question. The difference between invoking the War Measures Act in 1972 and invoking it in the First World War is that nobody knew about it in this country—except the victims of the invocation—but it was lawful. I guess the key purpose of these two pieces of legislation is based on education more than on compensation. I'll again reiterate that you won't see words like “compensation”, “redress”, or “restitution” in this bill because the community probably would rather not see them in the bill. If they were in the bill, it would probably be defeated—if not here at committee, then certainly in the House.

The purpose always has been education—to inform Canadians of the dark periods of their own history in terms of exploitation, of the tunnels.... I think that's a fact of history, just like the internment sites. In this country there were 24 of them. I've visited a number of them, and they've all disappeared. Even the one in Castle Mountain in Banff—they levelled it. The only thing left to indicate there was an internment camp there is a little bit of barbed wire you may find along a row of trees; that's it. It's basically levelled and cleaned out.

Three weeks ago I was in Fernie, dedicating a plaque to the internment site there. In the community of Fernie, most of the people who had lived there all their lives did not know there had been an internment camp in Fernie, and that Ukrainians, during the World War I period, were made to work in mines. Where the internment site actually was is now overgrown with trees. Across the road from it is a cemetery, and it's also overgrown with trees. If it hadn't been for a number of people who showed interest, they wouldn't even know the location of the cemetery of the people who were interned and actually died there.

The purpose, again, is education, acknowledgement, recognition. Let's learn from the lessons of our own history.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Clavet:** You also spoke of educational programs, Mr. Mark. What kind of role do you see the federal government playing in this area? Basically, to educate the public, do we need community driven initiatives or federal programs? If the federal government takes on this responsibility, do we not run the risk of seeing educational material used for propaganda purposes? Wouldn't it be better if the communities assumed responsibility for any educational programs?

[*English*]

**Mr. Inky Mark:** That is again an excellent question. I can tell you the Ukrainian community already has commemorated most of the internment sites on their own. They could not wait for the government to do anything over the last 20-odd years. I think the expectation of both the Ukrainian and Chinese communities is to negotiate agreements through which the communities themselves can establish foundations and put in place educational programs to ensure this story is told.

That's probably the first objective—to tell the story. We haven't even told the story to Canadians; Canadians don't even know the story of the internment, the head tax, or the harshness to the railway worker in this country. A lot of it has been done through their own communities, but I don't think they expect the government to.... The government can't make every internment site an historical site. If it did, I mean...we'd be waiting another 20 years for that to happen.

•(1135)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Clavet.

Ms. Minna.

[English]

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have to say at the outset that I obviously don't have any problems, although I understand that the bill is being changed. I haven't read it; I was told not to bother because it's all being changed, and I don't want to read something that is in a way not here.

But on the basic premise, I obviously have no problem with the direction, because I personally was involved with the Chinese and Ukrainian communities while I was the president of the National Congress of Italian Canadians. It was to lobby the government—at that time it was the Mulroney government—for redress, for certain recognition, and so on, and I've been doing so since. There is a private member's bill that I and some of my colleagues have been working on in regard to this issue for some time, and we have been liaising back and forth with some of the other communities.

I guess my question really is one of disappointment to some degree. While we have the Chinese and Ukrainian communities...we talk about guinea pigs. In the last world war, if you like, the guinea pig was the Italian community.

I don't know how many of you watched the CBC on Monday night and Tuesday night, but there was the program *Il Duce canadese*. This basically means the Canadian *Duce*. The *Duce* was a nickname for Mussolini, as you know, so that tells you a whole lot about what that program was about.

The members of the Italian Canadian community—men mostly—were in fact arrested, were never charged, were interned for two, three, four years at a time. Properties were confiscated and sold for a dollar to other Canadians. Members of the community were declared enemy aliens. Therefore, they were now enemies in their own country.

These were all Canadian citizens, and most of them actually—a fairly large number of them—were actually Canadian-born. Some of them were taken out of the internment camps after two years and put on the front lines of the Canadian military to go and fight and shoot. It was a weird situation.

So I guess my disappointment lies in the fact that I spent a great deal of my time working with the Chinese and Ukrainian communities at the time to try to put forward a collaborative approach. If we're going to have bills go through—and I'm not suggesting we don't, because the issue is not whether we do it or not, the issue is why we don't do a proper, comprehensive package and really deal with the issue of redress, however we want to do it, whether it is through the establishment of a museum somewhere, educational materials, a virtual museum even in terms of access—I think there needs to be a package.

This is the first time the public, or at least a public medium—that is, the CBC—has ever given any indication of any interest in the Italian situation. Up until now, the Italian community for the longest time actually did not want to deal with it. They denied it because it was a situation of shame and they didn't want to have to acknowledge or deal with it.

So I guess my question is that since we are going to redraw these bills—and it seems to me like a lot of amendments and a lot of rewrites—could we not then restructure them to actually reflect the realities of the various internments in society? The Italians suffered no less than the others, than did the Germans or others. They just happened to be the last ones.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Thank you for your question. I want to thank you for all the work you've done in pursuing these issues forward.

In terms of dropping these two bills, I think most communities feel we've come too far. In fact, we've come too far in terms of legislation, even if it's one or two.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I wasn't suggesting that we drop them.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Let me also say to you that in the negotiations with the government, the government amendments were crafted in a manner such that perhaps these bills can be used as a template for communities to come down the road.

Let me also say that in the first page of Bill C-331, the details of the definition of the title, it basically says, "Ukrainian descent and other Europeans".

The fact remains that over 8,000 people were interned during that period of time between 1914 and 1920, and out of the 8,000, only 5,000 were Ukrainian. Who were the rest of them? Other Europeans. But because we're going to make a lot of changes that are generic, we're going to probably remove that section as well. That's your government doing this.

• (1140)

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I understand that. It's just that this is not my committee; therefore, it has not been an area in which I have been reading the bills. I've just been involved with the issue for quite a long time on the inside, in trying to push for resolution.

I like the idea. I'm not saying I don't support the direction, which is why I said from the outset that I support it.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** I agree with you too.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'm just saying that if we're going to amend the bills, we might amend them in such a way as to reflect or incorporate a community that certainly was just as effected, but maybe later than the others.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Madam Chair, if these bills get clear sailing and get back to the House and get done, in terms of my own impression on other community or ethnic groups or committee groups that come before Parliament, I don't think it will be a big deal to go through the same process, especially if it's all documented.

It's about human justice. You know that. That's what we're trying to do. We're trying to right the wrongs of history.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Obhrai.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Mark. I know you have been working extremely hard over this period of time on this issue, which has been, as you mentioned correctly, in front of the community as a whole. What the community is trying to do, and what you're helping them to do, is recognize these injustices.

As you know, Canada's history of treating minorities in the past was not really good, as the Hon. Maria Minna pointed out in reference to the Italian community.

I just want to ask the same question that Maria is asking, frankly speaking. Yes, the Chinese head tax was very regressive. Yes, the Ukrainian...but what about the other communities? Instead of getting all this, now we have two bills coming out here, and they speak about the same thing except the injustices are different. The Chinese had a head tax, and the Ukrainians, Italians, and Japanese were interned and had property confiscated. There's a case that will probably eventually come too, in reference to the ship *Komagata Maru*, which came in and was sent back. And we do have the aboriginal injustices, as pointed out. So our history is not a great history.

I do understand about identifying all these things in maybe one bill, in making one thing that will address the whole major issue, coming in reference to an apology. In reference to compensation and everything, it can be a different issue behind that.

Would you not think we would have to keep it up for every group, asking them to come and members of Parliament to come with bills identifying each community? Could we not do an overall approach? What's your idea on that?

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Thank you for your question.

Ideally, that's probably the right thing to do. But let's look at reality. The reality is that this is a minority government, right? We have eight weeks left in the sitting of this place. Do you really think we could craft a bill that would be agreeable to the Italians, the Acadians, and whoever else has an injustice that needs to be corrected? It has taken over 20 years for these two communities to get to the table. It's unfair to these two communities, the Ukraine community and the Chinese community.

Yes, I agree, let's deal with all the injustices in the history of this country. But at this point in time, let's stay focused, let's deal with these two bills, let's get them done, so that at least we'll get two done instead of none. Remember, these are the first two that ever got to this stage in Parliament. Let's be successful, and maybe we'll like the taste of it.

• (1145)

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Do I have a minute?

**The Chair:** Your time is finished, I'm afraid. Sorry about that.

[Translation]

With your permission, Mr. Clavet, I'd like to turn the floor over to a committee member who has yet to speak.

[English]

I also just want to say that I'm sitting here noticing that the majority of the people sitting around this table are immigrants to Canada. How fitting it is that we are dealing with this bill. I think

two of us are the children of immigrants. This committee is a real reflection of the new Canada.

Mr. Silva.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I would begin by congratulating you on being back as our chair.

I also take the opportunity to thank the honourable member for bringing this issue forward and for speaking on a very important issue in front of this committee.

The whole issue of needing to find a resolution and recognition of some of these events is quite crucial. There is an element that speaks about the important role of education, and I think Mr. Mark spoke quite wisely about the need to go into the education, more than just talking about the need for compensation. This issue isn't really about compensation, it really is about education and how we go about recognizing that there was in fact an event that took place that was quite tragic in our history.

I always find how to get that message out in this country to be very difficult. We do have institutions, whether it be the CBC or whether it be some of the different media outlets we have. But overall it's very difficult in this country to get the message out, because education is a provincial matter, as you know, not a federal matter. In fact, we're one of the few western countries in which there's no national minister of education, so we don't know how the standards are from one province to another province. We don't know what the textbooks are saying from one province to another province.

With so many of these stories, we're not told. Certainly, when I was in grade school and high school, which was not that long ago, very little message was given outside the very superficial history about the founding of Canada. Beyond that, there was no mention about the important contributions of so many different communities, whether it be the Chinese, the Japanese, the Ukrainians, the Italians, you name it.

There are hundreds of communities that really made immense contributions to this country, with important roles. Some of them, specifically the ones that were talked about—the Ukrainians, the Japanese, the Chinese, and of course the Italians—were also treated shamefully by elected governments at that time. It's a sad chapter in our history. It's comforting to all of us who have seen the charter and what it has done for equality rights in this country, to be proud of where this country is moving as of today, but certainly we still have some major issues to redress from the past.

I'm hoping we will do whatever we can in terms of education. I think education is such a key part of this whole package, but it is such a huge challenge in this country. How do we get the message out, and how do we get it into our textbooks as well? How do you get that message into the material from which children are learning about this country?

You only stop these events from ever happening...and I think we are proud of the fact that we have a Constitution and a charter that won't allow that to ever happen, but you never can tell what the future is. Unless people, especially the youth of this country, the children of this country, the students of this country, know about these tragic issues and discuss them, then we could unfortunately one day repeat these same mistakes.

I just want to invite you to maybe elaborate on how we can get the message out.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Thank you very much for your commentary and your question. I agree with you wholeheartedly. In fact, the title will be basically about recognition and commemoration.

As a public school teacher of 26 years, I find it sad that it wasn't until I became a member of Parliament that I actually learned much about these two topics, and one is actually my own culture, as an assimilated Canadian. Even though I was an immigrant, I never learned about it. As Maria indicated, a lot of the older generation don't even want to talk about it, and that's what I've found through my work with the Ukrainian community and the Chinese community. They don't even want to talk about it because they're ashamed of that period of history. People were just mum. They would not speak to the next generation. Their kids are the next generation. That's why this in itself is a call to correct that, so that we record our history in a real way, because these are the people, including others, who all had a huge role to play in the development of this country.

The national government has many resources. The National Film Board has done great work already on many of these injustices. The heritage department, as you know, sends information about all kinds of events to provinces, to schools. They have the resources, and that's the difference. There are the publishers, and all the work that you do in this committee is about communication. So there's an avenue for how the story can be told to ensure that the records of history are...not corrected, but just told.

• (1150)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Can I remind committee members that the minister is due at noon? We also need to leave some time to agree on witnesses for next week. The clerk has just advised me that the committee did not do that, and we have an additional request for witnesses.

Madame Ratansi asked for a quick question, and then Madame Bulte.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Thank you for being here, and thank you for the work that you've done.

My question is really current. I look at things in context. If I look at the current context, we have the security certificates and we have people put in jail for four years without a trial. If you look at the long-term future, how are you going to ensure that every party ensures that we do not take things just as tunnel vision? How do you propose to do that?

**Mr. Inky Mark:** That's an excellent question. That thought has gone through my head as well.

We always say we should learn from history and not repeat the lessons of history. That's why I voted against the security act when I

had the chance to stand up and vote against it in the last session of the House. As human beings, the first problem is that most of us don't know our history. If we knew our history and some of the really big moments in it, some of us would scratch our heads and ask how that happened. Well, it's happening today. It can happen. The new security act basically takes away civil liberties. They can literally lock you up and throw the key away, and they're doing that.

So that's a good question. With you being on the government side, it's even a better question, because you can do something about it.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Bulte.

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** I just wish to make a comment, Madam Chair.

I thank you, Mr. Mark, for your work on these bills. I know how long you've been working on this issue since you were first elected.

I have just a comment. Mr. Silva asked how we learn about this. If you haven't been to the war museum yet, I would ask that you go through it. You need a couple of hours to go through it, but these issues are actually both addressed at the war museum. It is a testament to your work that they finally made it into the museum, and I would strongly urge everyone to go, because indeed both of these issues that you've raised are raised in the museum.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Are there any further questions?

Monsieur Clavet.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Clavet:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm not quite so familiar with the Ukrainian file. However, on reading these notes, I've learned that some Ukrainians were interned. Some worked in Banff National Park and in the forestry industry in northern Ontario and Quebec.

I'm fascinated by this subject and I'm wondering if there are any plaques commemorating these events either in Banff or elsewhere in Canada.

• (1155)

[*English*]

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Thank you for the question.

In terms of commemoration, the government side hasn't even recognized the event yet, and neither has Canadian history. On the Ukrainian community side, they have actually worked very hard and have unveiled plaques at most of the internment sites. Spirit Lake in Northern Quebec is a good example. In fact, I believe there was a member of Parliament on TV who was interested in Spirit Lake, having just recently learned about the internment. People had worked hard there.

Again, the problem is that all of these sites were levelled many years ago and there's really no evidence of them. What the community has done is to put plaques on big boulders or cairns just to tell the story in three languages—French, English, and Ukrainian. All of their plaques are trilingual. They describe the place as an internment site, that it was erected at such and such a time, and who were interned there and why.

So most communities are way ahead of the government; that's the way life is. We tend to take things on our own and deal with them without waiting for government. That's why it's taken all these years, or over two decades, to get to this stage. Hopefully they don't have to wait much longer.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Are there any further questions for Mr. Mark?

I want to personally thank you for the work you've done and the way you've been prepared to work with the department and other members of Parliament towards a bill that everybody is satisfied with, including the communities, obviously. That's of great importance to resolving an issue that I think has been troubling to many of us for a long, long time. So thank you very much for your work on behalf of all of us.

The minister is expected here now, but since the minister is not here I wonder if we could have a quick discussion about witnesses next week. Our clerk has contacted the main organizations, and we now have a much more extensive list of witnesses for both bills, as proposed by the department. We have a request from Ms. Davies, who will be replacing Mr. Angus at committee next week, for three additional witnesses.

Of course, I do not want to stifle anybody who might want to come before the committee. However, I think there seems to be general agreement that we would like to move forward with these bills. We obviously need to leave some time for clause-by-clause to consider the amendments that everybody seems to be in agreement with. I do need the decision and advice of the committee on how many witnesses you would like to hear and whether or not you wish to add witnesses at this point in time.

What we had agreed to do was have two panels, one for each bill, with four to five people from the national organizations essentially.

Perhaps, Mr. Clerk, you could explain to the committee who has been contacted already and what the additional requests are.

**The Clerk:** You have the sheet in front of you. So far I've contacted four witnesses for Bill C-331. On Bill C-333 I've already contacted five witnesses, who are on the list as well. We have a request from Ms. Libby Davies to add three witnesses, who you'll find on the last page—the Montreal Chinese Family Services, Chinese-Canadian Redress Alliance, and the Ontario Coalition of Head Tax Payers and Families.

As it now stands, we have nine witnesses altogether and a request for three more.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** I'd suggest that we have the nine witnesses; I think they are enough for us.

**The Chair:** We've already agreed to them.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** I don't think we need the three extra.

**The Chair:** So we will have one panel from the Chinese community and the one panel from the Ukrainian community.

I don't think we had made any agreement to extend beyond our normal two-hour sitting to deal with clause-by-clause, so we'll schedule clause-by-clause separately then. Okay, that's agreed.

If I could also ask, with respect to the appearance of CBC next Thursday—

• (1200)

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** Madam Chair, the government will be tabling amendments to both of these bills, and we'll distribute those amendments prior to the clause-by-clause.

**The Chair:** Is it possible we might distribute them prior to our hearing of witnesses, in case they have any comments on them?

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** Yes. They're just being translated right now, so we should have them before Tuesday.

We'll have them Monday, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much.

We need a budget for witnesses on these two bills. It's on your agenda. So I'd ask for a motion that the proposed budgets in the amount of \$19,525 for the period of October 17 to December 16 in relation to Bill C-331 and Bill C-333 be adopted and that the chair present the budgets to the budget subcommittee of the liaison committee.

This is a motion by Madam Bulte.

Monsieur Kotto.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Madam Chair, I just wanted to mention that all of the documentation is in English. Will it be available in French?

**The Chair:** I hope so. Are you all right with that, Mr. Kotto?

[*English*]

All in favour of the budget for witnesses?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Our clerk is getting me organized here.

This motion is for witnesses for the round table on the Canadian feature film industry study. It is that the proposed budgets in the amount of \$30,525 for the period of October 17 to December 16 in relation to the study on the Canadian feature film industry be adopted and that the chair present the budgets to the budget subcommittee of the liaison committee.

This is proposed by Mr. Silva.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Let me deal with the CBC agenda first. I believe we had agreed to meet for three hours when we have witnesses from the CBC in front of us. I don't think we decided what time those three hours were going to be, though. Does the committee want to meet from 9 a.m. until noon, or begin at 10 a.m. and go to 1 p.m., which would be our normal adjournment time?

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** We had asked that it be televised.

**The Chair:** I think we've talked about extending from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m., but that's only decent if we're providing lunch, and I don't think that's very appropriate for a televised committee meeting with witnesses.

We'll try to do 9 a.m. to noon. The clerk will see what committee room is available with television.

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** But it will be televised?

**The Chair:** It will be televised, yes, absolutely. I think Canadians want to see Parliament asking for some accountability on this issue.

On the feature film industry, what we were proposing was two round tables. I think the committee had felt throughout our hearings that it would be very productive before we actually draft the final report to set up the opportunity for some cross-discussions between different sectors of the filmmaking community in Canada.

We had agreed that we would do a round table or two round tables. What might be the easiest, because the situations are so different, is if we did one round table in English and one in French. The schedule you have in front of you proposed 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. for one and 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. for the other. I'm not sure that's enough time for the kind of discussion we have in mind, but we'll take the views of the committee on that.

Are there any thoughts? Do you want time to think about that?

Ms. Bulte.

• (1205)

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** I don't think I'll be here that night.

**The Chair:** On the Monday?

Well, we could look at a Wednesday as well. Wednesday is an extremely busy day; I thought we had basically concluded that we needed to do it on an off day without normal committee business, caucus meetings, and so on.

Is it possible to think of moving it back a week, perhaps to the 14th, then?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Sorry, but is it the 21st that's being changed. Is that the date?

**The Chair:** Ms. Bulte is just saying that she may not be able to be here for the 21st.

Do we want to consider moving it back a week? I don't want to move it ahead a week.

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** Well, just leave it. I will just check my.... I don't know, but I don't want you to move something.

**The Chair:** Could everybody check the Monday, both the 21st and the 14th, on your agendas and let the clerk know as soon as possible on which of those days you are available. We'll see which day most members are available and make the decision based on that.

Now what about the timing? Is an hour and a half with each panel enough?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Yes.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** I have a logistics question. If I look at the suggested list for the round table, it appears there will be about 20 people?

**The Chair:** There will be 12 English and 12 French. I think that's the maximum for the kind of discussion we hope they will have. I believe the thinking of the committee, in agreeing to this, was that we'll sit back and listen and let them—

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** We won't be asking questions?

**The Chair:** Oh, yes, of course.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** One and a half hours, 12 people, with media and television?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** It's not the first time they've been heard.

**The Chair:** Yes, we've heard from them before.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Yes, twice.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Okay. I'm new to the committee, so I just wanted to understand the logistics.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** They'll keep all their answers down to 10-second clips.

**The Chair:** So we're basically sitting from 3:30 to 8, with dinner. One thing we might want to do is to have dinner between the two panels, with both panels at the same time, and have the second panel after dinner that night. That would just work a bit better logistically. Okay?

In terms of the people to be invited....

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** I think 5 is a bit early to eat.

**The Chair:** Five is a bit early? It may be a bit early; otherwise we have one panel waiting around for an hour and a half. We can push it off until 8:30 and have dinner at 5:30 p.m., if that suits everybody. I'm hungry by 5.

In terms of the people to be invited to each of those panels, are there any comments on that list? Has everybody had enough time to kind of look at the list? This list was prepared following an examination of the responses to the questionnaires we sent out. I'm just wondering, do we have kind of every aspect of the industry covered?

Madam Bulte.

• (1210)

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** We don't have the smaller independent producers under the "producers". Deepa Mehta and Robert Lantos are hugely successful; they're people who get the performance on. Where are the members of the CFTPA? Where are they represented here? And I think Robert Lantos and Deepa Mehta are like Atom Egoyan.

**The Chair:** If we want someone who is representative, we could have one of them maybe, not two of them.

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** Yes. Actually, we've heard from Robert Lantos before, so why not have Deepa Mehta?

**The Chair:** Okay, that's one suggestion.

The other thing I note is that we don't have the exhibitors on here, and, frankly, I wanted to put them on the hot seat a bit before we finalize our report.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** They're on there.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, where did I miss them?

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** I would like to invite someone from the CFTPA to present the smaller independent producers.

**The Chair:** The CFTPA?

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** Yes.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** They're there.

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** No, no, no, not the organization, but one of their members who is a smaller producer.

**The Chair:** So are you suggesting, Sam, that we leave it to them to suggest somebody?

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** We had a number of them. You had *Screen Door* and Mary Young Leckie and Heather Haldane, who produced *The Arrow* and who are smaller producers. I would include people like them.

**The Chair:** Look, can I ask everybody to have a look at the list and give Mr. Lahaie your comments, and he and I will then try to sit down.... I'm just anxious not to grow the list, but to shrink it, if anything.

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte:** Under "broadcasters", what about the private broadcasters?

**The Chair:** Yes.

Okay. Can I suggest that we move on to Mr. Chan?

Let me or the clerk know your comments on this list of witnesses and we'll try to put together something that seems to meet everybody's needs.

Mr. Kotto.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maka Kotto:** We could make some suggestions directly to the committee clerk, Mr. Lahaie.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Chan, welcome. Thank you very much. I understand the department has been working very hard with the communities and with the movers of both private members' bills we have in front of us. There's substantial, if not complete, agreement on what changes need to be made to the bills before they're reported back to the House, which is always very helpful to a committee.

So we'd appreciate your comments and then questions from the members.

**Hon. Raymond Chan (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

First of all, I would like to apologize for being late. I was supposed to be here at 12 o'clock, so I hope I didn't delay your meeting.

I'm very pleased to come before this committee as you study both Bill C-331 and Bill C-333. I would like to begin by thanking my colleagues in the House of Commons, Inky Mark and Bev Oda, for the roles they have played in bringing these bills forward. I also want to applaud the spirit in which these bills were introduced. To a great extent, they are intended to achieve what the Government of Canada

wants to achieve: to acknowledge, commemorate, and educate Canadians about the historical experiences of communities linked to wartime measures and immigration restrictions. We want all Canadians to learn about the experiences and the important contributions the Ukrainian, Chinese, and other communities have made to the building of this great nation.

As everyone here knows, Canada is a country of diversity. It has been built as a result of the hard work and dedication of many communities, including the Ukrainian and Chinese communities, as highlighted by these two bills. Certainly this government wants to ensure these communities are given their rightful place in Canadian history. Indeed, I say it's high time the Canadian history that is taught to our school children includes the full story of the contribution of Ukrainian Canadians, Chinese Canadians, and of all the many other ethnocultural communities that have made Canada the prosperous and progressive country it is today.

The Government of Canada wants all Canadians—young and old and from all parts of the country and all walks of life—to learn about these and other communities. We want Canadians to know about the obstacles these communities have overcome and the many ways they have enriched our communities and our country. For these reasons, Madam Chair, we support the commemorative and educational aspects of the bills. However, we cannot support some of the demands made in Bill C-331 and Bill C-333—for example, demands for an apology, restitution, regrets, redress, compensation, or other gestures of this nature.

I'm very pleased, Madam Chair, to hear what you just told me. We hope we can come to a good agreement on how the bills could be amended, because we feel that apologizing, or paying individuals or communities restitution linked directly to these actions, would in fact be irresponsible. We would be assuming significant financial risk for all Canadians today and in the future. In other words, we do not want to set a precedent for this and future governments that would expose the Government of Canada, and by extension Canadians, to significant legal and financial liability.

Our government wants to look to the future and, together with Canadians, continue to build Canada for generations to come. That is why our Government earmarked \$25 million in the 2005 budget, so we can acknowledge and commemorate the experience of a number of Canadian ethnocultural communities who were affected by wartime measures and immigration restrictions and educate Canadians about these experiences.

In this context, my officials are finalizing the development of what we are calling the acknowledgment, commemoration, and education program. Instead of apologies, compensation, and regrets, we are going to acknowledge the events of the past; we are going to commemorate the experiences of ethnocultural communities; and we are going to educate Canadians about what their fellow citizens went through and what they have achieved through their hard work and ingenuity.

•(1215)

Implementing the acknowledgement, commemoration, and education program is the responsible thing to do for Canadians and for Canada. It will be open and accessible to all communities that experienced historical wartime measures and/or immigration restrictions. The program will not create a hierarchy of experiences or sufferings; it will serve to reinforce the aspects of the bill that focus on acknowledging the past, commemorating events, and educating people about what happened.

This year our country celebrated the twentieth anniversary of section 15 of the charter, which is known as the equality section. As you know, subsection 15(1) states:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

That section enshrines one of the pillars of Canada's national identity, and that is our commitment to equality and the respect for diversity that comes with it. Section 15 proclaims to the world one of the fundamental principles of this nation, that everyone, regardless of origin, is entitled to the same legal protection and equality of treatment regardless of who they are and where they come from.

The symbolism of this section is very important, but so is its impact in the real world. Canadians have been able to use section 15 to overcome discrimination and to tear down barriers—in short, to make our society a better place. Now Canada has in place the instruments we need to ensure that events such as these will not happen again.

In closing, Madam Chair, I want to stress, like all members of this committee and all fair-minded Canadians, that our government wishes we could change certain aspects of history. But obviously we cannot. As I mentioned earlier, we cannot impose liability on our taxpayers for something in which they bear no responsibility.

I say let us go forward together in a new spirit of partnership, ready to fully acknowledge our past and ready to build a prosperous and progressive future—a future that belongs to all Canadians.

Madam Chair, that concludes my prepared statement. I would be very pleased to answer any questions from the members of the committee.

•(1220)

**The Chair:** Mr. Schellenberger, *Monsieur Clavet, puis Monsieur Silva*.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Thank you, Minister, for coming today and addressing these two bills. I know my two colleagues have worked quite a long time on some of these bills. They have come up in various stages over the past 20 years, as we were told this morning.

I know you say that apologies or paying individuals or communities restitution linked directly to these actions would in fact be irresponsible. To my understanding, there have been some amendments to take any inference of restitution or any of that out of these bills, to make them primarily a bill that recognizes that these events happened. This would be, then, an educational type thing.

Will there be any problem that these bills with these amendments that are proposed will be held back?

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** We will be very happy if we can come to some commitment or some understanding that the bill will be amended as you have stated. Then I would recommend to government that we can all support the bill and have it passed.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** I appreciate that. I know it's been mentioned here this morning that there were other injustices over the past. My worry is that because of some of these other injustices, we don't use them to hold back these two bills. As these two bills go forward, we might have an opportunity to use these as a template for those other things that we can carry on and speed up some of the process.

Again, I must stress that I'm not sure whether it's the Ukrainian bill or the Chinese bill that has been to the House three times, and the other one has been there twice. I would hope that we could expedite this with some of the amendments that are proposed, that I understand are there, that this could be done *tout de suite*.

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** As a matter of fact, there's a parallel process at the same time as we're dealing with the bills in the House. With the commitment of the government on the ACE program, we have initiated discussion with many other communities.

These two bills would set an example, but at the same time, I think it's important that it be in parallel with the process in the House, that we deal with these two bills, that we take care of the complaints we have with the other communities. So I hope that within the next half a year or so we can deal with a lot of the injustice that has happened in the past.

•(1225)

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** In dealing with those, these two bills won't be held back?

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** No, they won't.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Our clerk was just passed a note that the minister has a plane to catch at 1 o'clock, which almost means that we have to have the minister back, then, at another time—unless your plane can be deferred, Minister.

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** Yes, we can stay. It is for question period that we have to leave.

**The Chair:** Okay, perfect.

Mr. Clavet, and then Mr. Silva.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Clavet:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I greatly appreciate the comment about the importance of highlighting events and the experiences of certain communities. At the same time, I can't quite understand why unfortunate events are highlighted. Such events should be commemorated and past mistakes should be denounced. You maintain that now is not the time for apologies and compensation. Canada spent three million dollars last year sending Canadians to the Ukraine to supervise the holding of free elections. This was a great humanitarian gesture. However, when it comes to a past mistake involving Ukrainians, no compensation is forthcoming. The government merely commemorates these events. Since this is not time to celebrate, do you see any kind of contradiction in the government's actions?

[English]

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** Thank you for that question.

I don't see any contradiction. First of all, what we're saying is that for compensation directly linked to those events that we have no control of, we're not responsible for those actions that were taken some 50 or 100 years ago. But at the same time, we support and we work with the community to document, to commemorate, and to educate Canadians about those issues, to make sure that those kinds of things would not happen again, to make sure that, as Canadians, we learn from the mistakes that were committed in the past.

There's no contradiction in doing that at the same time as supporting a democratic process in Ukraine. There's no contradiction between the two.

At the same time, I think the reason we say we cannot have compensation linked to those events is because if we do that, we'll be imposing a liability, unlimited liabilities, because based on the charter, if we do it with one community, then all the other communities, all the different generations of Canadians that have an issue with the government, can start claiming, and we might lose those challenges in court. So the government would be forced to pay. You would open up an unlimited liability.

That is why we don't go the route of compensation. Rather than compensation, we try to document and remember those cases and try to make sure that we learn from our mistakes. I truly do not see any contradiction between the two.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Lise Julien (As an Individual):** Let me simply say, Mr. Clavet, that the compensation principle does not apply in this instance because actions during the First and Second World Wars were taken pursuant to the War Measures Act. All of the actions were lawful at the time they were taken.

The same principle applies to ethnocultural communities that encountered restricted access to Canada under immigration laws. From 1885 to 1923 and from 1923 to 1947, Chinese were required to pay a head tax. They were subsequently excluded from the country. All of these actions were lawful at the time and therefore, we do not apply the compensation principle. Nothing illegal was done. To date, ethnocultural communities have initiated judicial proceedings in two instances. Two rulings have also been handed down by Canadian courts. Each time, the courts upheld the government's decision not to award financial compensation to the Chinese. The second case

involved a Canadian of German origin who had been interned during World War II.

● (1230)

**Mr. Roger Clavet:** It's understandable that from a legal standpoint, awarding compensation is an admission of guilt, in certain cases. Moreover, in politics, it's very difficult to come forward with an apology. However, isn't there some way to apologize for past actions without automatically having to provide compensation? We're talking about 8,500 Ukrainians and Europeans held in 24 Canadian camps. These were not camps in foreign countries, but camps on Canadian soil. It's all well and good to express our regrets or apologies, but isn't there some way to convey our feelings of sadness about an ignominious chapter in Canadian history, one that certainly won't be highlighted in one of the Heritage Minutes?

**Ms. Marie-Lise Julien:** Certainly. Our bill makes no mention of apologies or regrets, because that would be tantamount to acknowledging implicitly that a mistake was made. However, in its amendments, the government is recommending that Parliament "deplore" these incidents and the experiences suffered by these ethnocultural communities.

[English]

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** I have to say that I'm very happy to have the legal opinion that has helped to guide us in how we deal with these two bills. But at the same time, our position is that the legal opinion leads us to make the decision not to be irresponsible and impose the responsibility on taxpayers. That is the reason.

As a government, even those bills were illegal at the time. They were not right. That's our position. This is why it's important for us to acknowledge that those were wrong fiats of the government of the time. This is why, in the legal perspective, we'll go as far as we can to acknowledge, to express deep sorrow about what has happened. At the same time, we just want to protect the taxpayers. This is why we have to walk a very fine line in the approach we're taking, in the position we have to take.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Silva.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Again, I'd like to begin by first of all thanking the minister for coming before our committee to speak on an issue that is very important to all of us, especially to people like me who were not born in this country. Through my citizenship and as a member of Parliament, I share in this collective history of Canada and in the responsibility as well, to look at some of the past and the present to see how we can in fact recognize and address some of these issues.

I think what we're really talking about is how to get a solution for two very important communities in our society. And just for your information, Minister, we had also talked earlier about the issue of Canadians of Italian origin—because many of them were Canadians born in Canada—who were greatly mistreated by the government of that period of time.

We recognize—at least, I certainly recognize, and I realize that you also recognize—that the issue is not about compensation. It comes to the whole issue of recognizing these historical events—I think “acknowledge and commemorate” are probably the better words that you have used—and how to go about educating Canadians about this historical event.

It is a real challenge in Canada. We are one of the few western countries and western democracies that does not have a national minister of education. Our education system is all done provincially. It varies from one province to another, so what could be in one text book might not be in another text book. It's a very difficult challenge.

We have certain resources at our disposal, of course, from the National Film Board to the CBC, and certain moneys that we also put into different community events. But I want to focus on the education component. Since you've highlighted that as something that needs to be done, how are you going to do this? Is there going to be special money set aside? Are there going to be some specific programs that you're going to be looking at? What exactly is your department going to be doing in terms of educating Canadians about their past, their history?

• (1235)

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** Thank you very much for that question.

In fact, we have initiated some discussion with the different communities as to how they can pursue those agendas. For example, the Ukrainian community is talking about establishing a university chair on Ukrainian issues in some of the universities. Some would like to develop a curriculum to be used in provincial schools, in the high schools and so on. Also, some are talking about developing a website to document all these issues, such that they will be available to the general population.

So there are many different ways of doing it. We're consulting with the communities to see how we can work together to make sure the resource materials will be available to the public.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Madam Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** To follow up on my colleague's comments, I want to ask the minister about a couple of places in his presentation where he mentioned that the government is looking at where “it is high time that the Canadian history that is taught to our school children includes the full story of the contribution of Ukrainian Canadians, Chinese Canadians”, and others. There is then a reference made to the \$25 million now being utilized, to use the acknowledgement, commemoration, and education programs to develop a program.

I guess my question is twofold. First, these two bills only deal with two communities. I had mentioned earlier that while I appreciate that, in fairness, of course, private members' bills are what they are, if the government is going to be supporting them, then maybe we need to acknowledge or amend the bills enough to acknowledge others, like the Italian Canadian community. And while I understand that there are probably other groups, I know it's important to the self-respect and dignity of people that it's not

enough to say “other Europeans”. People want to be acknowledged directly.

I know the minister knows that Italian Canadian members who were arrested and interned were in fact Canadian citizens and Canadian-born, and that the whole community at one point was declared enemy aliens under that process. I just wonder if there is a way to address that community if the government decides to support the bill.

The other question is whether your office has been involved in conversation with the Italian Canadian community. Do you know their position, and are they aware of this? What would be their position as to what kind of acknowledgement, commemoration, and education program or what have you that they would be looking for?

My third question is how far down we are with respect to education, and what format is it? Is it just schools? Is it electronic, radio, or interactive? There are all kinds of methods for children, I suppose, because when I grew up, the attitude toward Italian Canadians in a post-war environment was pretty dismal. Society was still of the opinion that we were traitors. The ones who had been here before us, during the war, were ashamed of who they were and therefore weren't identifying themselves to us. Those of us who came after were being treated like we were...I won't go into all the details, but it was a pretty miserable time. None of us ever learned about ourselves or about the contribution made to this country.

• (1240)

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** We have been discussing with the Italian community, the federation—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** The National Congress of Italian-Canadians, yes. I was the national president, by the way. I was pushing that file at the time when I was the president, and I was working with other communities.

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** Right.

So we're respecting the thoughts and opinions of the different communities in terms of what way they would like their history to be told and how they would like to develop the educational package. Personally, I think the website would be a good one, or developing some resource material for the educational institutes. I think those are the best ways to go. University chairs are another one, to make sure the studies on the contributions continue to exist.

So we're working very closely, primarily with the different communities, in doing that. At the same time, on the question about recognition, we're addressing acknowledgement of the wrongs with the other communities. What I would recommend is that maybe we can put through a proclamation in the House that deals with all the different communities together, in a collective bill. I think that would be the best way to do it, once and for all, in order to deal with all of this at the same time.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Schellenberger.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Thank you.

There are a couple of things I've observed as we've gone through here. What I'm stressing is that these two bills not get distracted. I know there are a lot of other things; I've listened again about the Italian community. With the name Schellenberger, I happen to have a little German background—and if people don't think there wasn't some baggage to handle there.... My ancestors came here from Alsace-Lorraine in 1859, and I'm about the fifth generation. But I do know that in the history of our family we changed our name partway through. On those things, we all recognize there have been some things....

My big thing is that we don't complicate these two bills at this particular time, that we make sure they can get through. Again, it's always great to have great ideas, and we're going to look after everyone. But let's look after a few to start with, and then we've started at least. I don't want to see us get off track on this particular thing, if there are amendments made that these are recognized events and that we can educate.

When I was in school, whether public or high school, we didn't take any Canadian history. I never knew of these events. As I've grown older, I have understood some of these events.

Let's not get sidetracked with all the great niceties we want to do. We have two bills in front of us right now. Let's make sure we get them through, and then we can go on from there. At least we've started.

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** I totally agree. For your information, we also have started discussions with the German federation. We'll also acknowledge and try to commemorate a lot of those things that were done.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Are there any further questions for the minister?

I'm seeing none.

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** May say a few words?

**The Chair:** You may, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Raymond Chan:** I want to alert the committee that for the past year we have reached out to six or seven communities that have filed claims with our department. By and large, most of them—actually every community—agreed to the approach taken by the government with the ACE program.

At the same time, there is still one group that has disagreed and insists on having personal compensation, and that is the CCNC, the Chinese Canadian National Council. I feel bad they disagree with us, and I appreciate and understand their perspective. But I think as a member of Parliament, where we're responsible for all the taxpayers in the country, I regret that I and the government cannot deliver what they're asking for.

Now there is a new group spawned from the CCNC organization called the Coalition of Head Taxpayers. I would like to alert the committee that they represent a certain section of the community. But at the same time, we have discussed the approach with the Chinese veterans in the Freemasons, which is an organization that represents most of the Head Taxpayers. We have spoken to the Chinese benevolent associations, the cultural centres across the country, and so on.

By and large, the general Chinese community agree with our approach. I want to alert you of that, and I'm sure they will be appearing before the committee.

● (1245)

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

I trust the committee members will have the amendments as quickly as possible, preferably by Monday. Hopefully we will be able to do clause-by-clause early the week after. I think the whole House will have a reason to celebrate.

The meeting is adjourned.







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