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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, April 21, 2005**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Andrew Telegdi**

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•(0830)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.)):** Good morning.

We are starting off our session by taking evidence relating to Canadian war brides.

We have with us, Ms. Jarratt. Please go ahead and give us about a five-minute presentation, and then we will go to questions and answers in case we need some clarification.

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt (Canadian War Brides):** My name is Melynda Jarratt.

I am going to make my presentation in English.

I am not a war bride, obviously, though I often get mistaken for a war bride, because I run a website, Canadian War Brides, which is the authoritative source of information on Canadian war brides. I came to this issue with a purely academic interest, while I was pursuing my master of arts in history at the University of New Brunswick. I had to choose a subject. I was interested in Canadian social history of World War II, and it landed in my lap as the result of a chance meeting.

So this is where I come to this, from a purely academic perspective. However, for almost the last 20 years I have continued to research and write about the Canadian war brides from a popular history perspective, and because of my background in IT, I ended up developing the website, which has become somewhat of a clearing house for any questions dealing with war bride issues.

I will just give you a little bit of a history lesson. During World War II, nearly 48,000 Canadian servicemen stationed overseas fell in love with and married women of British or European descent. These ladies, all 43,454 of them, along with their 20,917 children, came to Canada between 1942 and 1948 in a mass migration wave sponsored and paid for by the Canadian government. This is quite important: the Canadian government paid to bring these people here.

They were called servicemen's dependants, representing an extraordinary immigration phenomenon, never repeated in Canadian history, and certainly I doubt never to be repeated in the future. So 43,454 women, mainly British, mainly of the same generation, mostly from the same ethnic stock, and mainly speaking English, came to this country with their 21,000 children, all in one mass migrant wave, landing on these shores mainly between January 1946 and February 1947, when the bulk of them came here.

I have done, and continue to do, the research on this subject. In the course of my discussions with the war brides and the children I meet on the Internet, through the war bride listserv that I run, one subject keeps on coming up. The subject is: "I've applied for my passport, and guess what? They tell me I am not a citizen."

Children of war brides were brought to this country, and, believe me, there are a lot of them, almost 21,000, as I told you.

I received an e-mail yesterday out of the blue from a young lady—well, she's 62, but it depends on how you think of age—who wants to get married. I am assuming that this is her first marriage. She and her boyfriend are applying for their marriage certificate, and guess what? They can't prove she is a citizen, and they can't get married. So many cases of this have come to my attention over the last three years that I can't help but say there is a problem.

Now I know that you have met Eswyn Lyster, who appeared in Victoria, and who is a colleague of mine who has written extensively on Canadian war brides.

I am going to digress here, but I only found out last night that I was to appear here, because a Canadian Press reporter phoned me up and asked me about this. I had no idea I was appearing here today, so, unfortunately, I am not as prepared as I might have been had I known in advance that I was to appear here today. I did not receive any confirmation; I received nothing. Anyway, I am not going to complain about it, because I am glad to be here. I know enough about the subject that I can speak off the top of my head, as you can see. However, I feel that I would have provided you with a much more substantial report, with analysis, statistics, and footnotes that I could have used to buttress my argument that there has in fact been an historical mistake. There has been an error, an administrative error. It is 60 years old, and it is time to fix it. The error is rooted in the pre-1947 legislation.

●(0835)

I know you have been dealing with the lost Canadians. I have been dealing with them as well. We are all united in one group from shore to shore, from Pacific to Atlantic, across to England. I know you have a speaker coming who is making a written presentation from England who is one of these lost Canadians who has been disenfranchised who has lost his citizenship. He is actually the son of a war bride. I know there are numerous other people who are speaking on this issue of lost Canadians, Don Chapman being one of them. We are in the same area, but as Eswyn told me in an e-mail this morning, the pre-1947 legislation is what we are interested in. I've said it once, Joe Taylor, who appeared before you, the lost child of a Canadian war bride, said it to you a second time, and I'm saying it a third time.

I have just brought a few things with me here. I couldn't possibly bring to you my research because I'd have to bring two huge filing cabinets filled with every single sheet of paper that I've managed to photocopy off the reels in the last 20 years. Here is one reel I just happen to be working on right now. I'm trying to find the source. When did the change take place? When did these ladies suddenly change from being wonderful Canadian citizens that everybody was happy to see, including Prime Minister Mackenzie King, who spoke on the Queen Mary on August 28, 1946, when he came over here...? He spoke to these war brides. They were gathered all around him and he said, "Welcome, welcome. These are the best Canadian citizens that we could ever have." He was very happy to be welcoming these women and their children to Canada as Canadian citizens, not immigrants. He said citizens, not landed immigrants. He said citizens. It's in here somewhere.

However, there are probably 10,000 sheets of paper in here. I work full-time. I do this on the side because nobody is interested in Canadian women's history, quite frankly, and I had to find something else to do to pay my bills. So I do this on the side when I can. I've paid people to go do the research for me. I can't get any help from anybody to do this research. I have to do it myself.

I'm hoping the answer is in this reel. However, so far I haven't stumbled across it. I have seen references to the war brides being referred to as citizens. Then, all of a sudden, they become landed immigrants. We can't seem to make the connection.

I know this Steve fellow who is making the written presentation from England has also done voluminous research and he can't make the connection either, and neither can Eswyn. We have tried, believe you me. When did the change take place?

In speaking to Eswyn last night, one of the things she asked me to confirm...she wanted to make sure I asked the following question, and I'm going to ask it again: Why won't the Department of Citizenship and Immigration confirm the status, the citizenship status, of Canadian war brides? So have I to try to find out what is the status of Canadian war brides. We are doing the research, and in the bowels of the National Archives, with these old, crappy, terrible photocopies—you can imagine trying to read this. They are photocopies from 1946 on Gestetner machines. It's really difficult to read the text, but we try.

She has written, and what she's been told is that it is a secret. We can't tell you because of the Privacy Act. Come on. Let's get ridiculous here. What is secret about the citizenship of Canadian war brides? But what's more scary about this is that there are 21,000 children who were brought here to this country who are facing the same issue. The Canadian war brides may have worked this issue out in their own way over the years when they had to apply for a passport in 1952 or 1949, when they went back for a visit, or 1951, or 1964, or before 1977, in other words, and even after 1977 they have gone through this. It was a matter of access to information and being in the loop. If you were not in the loop and if you weren't told that you had to apply for a passport properly for your citizenship, you were left out of the loop and you did not apply.

We talk about a digital divide between the rich and the poor. This is definitely a divide on a class basis, I believe, of the women who travelled early, who could afford to travel and go to visit their relatives overseas prior to 1977, or even as recently as three months ago when I received an inquiry from a Canadian war bride who is 83 years old. She was trying to find her passport and was told, "Sorry, you are not a Canadian citizen".

●(0840)

Now, the ultimate irony of this whole thing is that in May, in three weeks, Canada Post is honouring the contribution of these wonderful Canadian citizens with a commemorative envelope in their honour, at a ceremony in Ottawa, which I'm attending because I worked on the project as the de facto expert on Canadian war brides. I worked on this project with Canada Post, as well as numerous other projects with various other organizations, including BBC and Cunard, etc.

Canada Post is honouring the contribution of these Canadian war brides with a commemorative envelope. I don't know how many other immigrant groups get a commemorative envelope in their honour on the 60th anniversary of their arrival. Yet, here I was, yesterday, trying to explain to a 62-year-old lady who wants to get married that, "Yeah, you're not a citizen".

Two weeks ago I met with a war bride by the name of Doris Lloyd, who told me last night that I was welcome to use her name. She said she'd love to give me her telephone number too and you could give her a call. Her daughter is also not a citizen, and her exact words were "It's ridiculous. My daughter has been here since she was eight months old." She arrived on the *Île de France* on November 28, 1944, with a group of about 20 war brides, in a secret convoy zigzagging across the Atlantic, avoiding submarines.

You can imagine the situation those ladies were put through. They were brought here by the Canadian government under those kinds of conditions, and now her daughter found out she's not a Canadian citizen when she applied for her passport.

Another twist on this is that this lady, the daughter, did receive a passport as recently as the 1960s and the 1970s. But it seems to me that since 9/11 there has been a clampdown on the proof of citizenship. The proof of citizenship is the landing records. The landing records are in this microfilm reel. I've looked at various landing records, but there are 44,000 landing records, and approximately 20,000 children. It's huge.

So like Doris said, her husband was good enough to fight for this country. He served in Italy, served in northwest Europe. She was brought over here as a war bride with her little baby. Now this baby is 62 years old and she is not a citizen, apparently.

And the same issue is affecting numerous other people. Jan Walker, the daughter of a Canadian serviceman and a war bride, came over to this country on the *Empire Brent* on December 13, 1946. She was brought here. Her mother had passed away giving birth to their little brother, so she and her little sister were brought over here. They were five years old and three years old. They were shipped across the Atlantic, sent to Regina, Saskatchewan and—bear with me here, this is an interesting story—when they arrived here in Canada, the father was nowhere to be found. The children were put into the care of the state and were given up for adoption.

Now, as it turns out, many years later, Jan's husband passed away in 1995 when Jan was about 50-some years old, and Jan had to apply for her husband's estate to get all that business straightened out. In the course of doing that she found out, "Guess what? You are not a citizen. You can't get your husband's... Yes, you paid your taxes. You have a social insurance number. You've worked here and lived here all your life, but you're not a citizen." It cost her \$1,500 to get her citizenship back.

There are just so many cases. They come out of the woodwork and they're coming out of the woodwork. I get phone calls all the time because my telephone number is on the website for the Canadian war brides. So they call me up in desperation, "What can I do?", and I say "Look, it's not an area of historical research that I've specialized in." I specialize in the V-1 rockets bombing, raining down on London, and the women escaping into the subways and hiding, and the romance, and all that stuff. You know, this is not a romantic story. This is quite a bureaucratic, administrative nightmare.

Okay. So I've explained to you my worries and my concerns about the pre-1947 status of these war brides. Who changed it? Who made the decision that they were no longer citizens and suddenly became landed immigrants? And how come they've never been told about what their rights are?

• (0845)

They need to know. They need to set the record straight. I think at the 60th anniversary of the arrival of the war brides in this country, the Canadian government could make a wonderful gesture and give a blanket amnesty to these people. It's easy to find out whether they came into this country. There are lists of passenger arrivals. I have access to them. I know where they are. They are not easy to get, but I can get them.

Last week I had a phone call on another case from a fellow in Plaster Rock, New Brunswick. His name is Richard Cooper. Richard

Cooper came to this country in 1944 with his mother, who has since passed away. He is now 62 years old and thinking about his old age pension. He started to make some inquiries, and guess what? He's not a Canadian citizen, so he isn't entitled to an old age pension. This is how it's panning out for these children, and there are 21,000 of them.

I have another issue on Canadian war children. Canadian war children are the children of Canadian servicemen. The children were born overseas during the war to mothers who, for the most part, were not married to these men. These children had absolutely no rights to the citizenship of their fathers because they were deemed illegitimate, which is a word we don't use any more because it is an anachronism. They were so-called illegitimate. They were known as Canadian bastards. They have lived terrible lives.

They are now trying to find their rightful place in Canadian society. They cannot get access to their fathers' military personnel records in the National Archives. It's all based on citizenship. Their mothers and fathers weren't married. Even if the father's name is on the birth certificate, which it is in many of these cases, the mothers and fathers were not married. Therefore, these children cannot access their fathers' military personnel records to get the files to prove that they are indeed the children of these servicemen. They are seeking their identity, which is inextricably linked to their genealogical past. It is opening up a huge can of worms.

I also work with an organization called Project Roots. It's an internationally known volunteer organization that is based out of the Netherlands. We run a website called [project-roots.com](http://project-roots.com). The website is also a central clearing house for the issues of these children who are looking for their fathers. They are being refused access to the information, and refused by virtue of the fact that citizenship was never confirmed.

I've written a book about this. It's called *Voices of the Left Behind*. It's being published by Dundurn Press in September. They have taken over. This book has also been translated into Dutch and was released two weeks ago in Holland. It's a big issue in Holland.

There are 30,000 Canadian war children. The most famous war child is Eric Clapton, whom I'm sure everybody knows. Eric Clapton's father was a soldier from Montreal. He searched and searched, but he couldn't get past the Privacy Act to find out who his father was. He knew his father's name, but he couldn't get information on where his father may have lived. By the time he did get the information, his father was dead.

We have two types of issues. One issue is on war brides and their children, who were brought to this country on war bride ships. We cannot determine their citizenship, and as a result, it's a problem for them today in terms of applications for OAP, CPP, and passports. The second group of children are the ones who were born out of wedlock and are now trying to make a connection to their Canadian identity. They are being refused because of the citizenship issue.

I rest my case.

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

I hope you can and will send us a brief. I know you don't have one today, and that's fine. You can send one to us. We are going to be on the road on this for a while, and it's going to take a while to resolve this problem, so we would very much appreciate the information you provide.

I'm glad you have a book. I think we are intrigued enough by all this that we want to read more. We understand that a lady in Victoria, a war bride, is going to be putting a book together.

We are going to go to questions and answers. We want to keep it short and snappy, and maybe that will create some new questions on the second round.

Helena, go ahead.

• (0850)

**Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Good morning.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Melynda, thank you for being here on short notice. You did quite well. It was very informative.

I'm sorry about that. I'm not sure what happened, but we are sorry about that.

I have mostly comments and some questions. Did you say that some of them had actually managed to get passports? How did they get the papers to do so?

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Prior to 1977, and certainly before 9/11, the rules and regulations were not as strict. I really don't know. This is the \$64,000 question. How did they get their hands on a passport before? Now they are being told they need to prove that they are citizens, that they landed here.

They don't know how to find that out. So they come to me because I have access to the passenger lists. It's a good question. How the heck did someone who is not considered a citizen today get a passport in previous years?

Doris Lloyd's daughter, Anne, had a passport. In the end, she said, "To hell with you, I am going to get myself a British passport". She had dual citizenship. She got a British passport and then was able to travel. So that solved her problem, but she does not consider herself British; she is Canadian. She has been here since she was eight months old. She grew up in Plaster Rock and lives in Saint John.

For Mr. Cooper, same issue. He had a passport in 1981 and went to visit relatives in England. Now he is finding out that because he is applying for OAP he is not a citizen. It is very strange.

I would love to do the research, but I can't.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Did the passports these people had expire?

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Yes.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** So they still have the old passports?

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Yes, and there would be a record of these passports. So why the change since 9/11? I believe the heightened fears and paranoia about security are what is feeding this frenzy about casting all of these war bride children as potential terrorists. I think it is hilarious, but it is very frustrating. These are the little, rosy-cheeked, peaches-and-cream children who were described so

beautifully in the press as wonderful additions to Canada. And here we are telling them, "Sorry, buddy, get in the line-up. You are not a citizen. You have been here for 60 years, but sorry. I know you came here on your mother's breast, but it's too bad now." This is true. These were babies that were brought here—two years old, one year old.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** You have found the lists and you know that it would be easy for us to find out who these people were.

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Yes, the passenger lists have been researched and the information is there. I am following a paper trail in the immigration files. I have photocopied every single file through the Department of Immigration from 1939 to 1943.

Immigration was responsible for bringing the war brides over until August 1944. Then the Canadian government realized, "Holy crap, we have 56,000 of these people coming over in the next year. It is not going to be simple."

Until 1944, because of the restrictions on travel, these women could not come to Canada because there was no space. Every space on a ship was a very treasured spot, usually taken by a VIP or a soldier who had been injured in battle. So when they would find ten spare places, they would put on a bunch of war brides. Between 1942 and 1944, only 1,000 war brides came to this country. But in August 1944, the Canadian Wives Bureau, which was an invention of the Department of National Defence, said, "Oh, my God, there are over 40,000 still to come and what are we going to do? We have get them over here in the next two years."

So then things changed. I see a change in the correspondence. Now they are no longer citizens; they are landed immigrants. The reason I'm seeing in the paper trail is that they were worried about medical issues like tuberculosis. Every one of them would have had to have been medically examined if they were a landed immigrant. If they were citizens, they could not be medically examined.

• (0855)

**The Chair:** Mr. Siksay.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Thanks, Ms. Jarratt, for your presentation. Your passion about this issue comes through loud and clear. It is helpful for us to know that this is an important issue.

You mentioned the Canadian Wives Bureau. Does the title of that organization not give away what status these people were considered to have had?

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Well, you'd think so. But we see servicemen's dependants being changed around. Privy Council OC 858 is just one of many orders in council that define what a dependant is. It changes all the time. It's constantly changing. It grows; the list gets huger and huger, if I can use that word.

In the beginning, it was just the wives of Canadian servicemen. Then it became the wives of firemen, because Canadian firemen were brought over to fight the fires that were occurring in London. So anybody who served Canada—it just gets bigger and bigger. It's mainly army, navy, and air force, obviously, with 80% army.

You'd think that the definition "serviceman's dependant" would automatically give them the citizenship of their husband, but that is the question. When did that suddenly change? When did they no longer inherit the citizenship of their husband? It was some time between 1944 and 1945; it's in these reels, but it's going to take me forever to find the answer.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** You mentioned that people often bump into this problem when they apply for passports, and that's certainly what we heard previously. But you also said there's concern about pensions. Have there been many specific cases around pension eligibility?

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** The only one I know of is Mr. Cooper from Plaster Rock. He is the one who has come forward.

The thing is, they don't know where to go. They get lost in the quagmire. Have you ever phoned Immigration? I ended up speaking to—I wrote her name down—Penelope, agent 4807, and I kept her e-mail, because I wanted to know there was a human being there. I even spoke to her, and I must say, Penelope was very nice. However, there's only so much Penelope can do for me. The next time I phone, is Hortense or Judith going to know what I was talking about? I don't want to go through this all over again.

Penelope seemed to be familiar with this war bride issue. She was familiar with it. She said she knew about it, and she told me where to go. She told me exactly what to do. She said there are two things you have to apply for. You have to apply for a search for Canadian citizenship, which apparently takes place in Sydney, Nova Scotia. There's this mysterious group of researchers and lawyers who are experts in immigration law in Sydney, Nova Scotia, and all they do is answer questions like about a person's citizenship. There is another thing you have to do. After you get the proof, then you apply for the actual citizenship card.

But what if you find out that you're not a citizen? It's all related to these passenger lists.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Temelkovski.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is a very intriguing challenge. You mentioned a number of things, which I'd like to go over.

The person who paid \$1,500 to gain their citizenship—

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** To prove that she was a citizen.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** When was this, and who did she pay it to?

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** I've got all the documentation. She was very mad about it.

In 1995 her husband died. There was a substantial estate. In order to go through the paperwork, she had to provide the social insurance number and so on. Then all of a sudden this thing came up: "Where's your citizenship? We know you were born in Britain, and we know

that your mother was a war bride"—that was obvious, everyone knew that—"so where's your proof of Canadian citizenship?" She was five years old. She didn't have anything.

As it turns out, after a search of the files, the documents could not be found. So they had to get an attestation from the people in Saskatchewan to prove that they had been lost and that in fact at one time they did exist.

I also did a tremendous amount of research on her behalf. Her story is in our book. Her name is Jan Walker and she lives in Wasaga Beach, Ontario. Jan's story is just one of many. She was fortunate enough that she had the money to pay for the citizenship card. How many poor people can afford this or are out of the loop and would never know that this is how you go about doing it?

Yes, she paid \$1,500. She wrote to me. Last night I talked to her and she said, "You tell them that it cost me \$1,500."

The phones were ringing at my place last night because—

• (0900)

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** That was to get her proof of citizenship?

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Yes, she had to pay a headhunter or some kind of an investigation company, because she couldn't cut through the bureaucracy quickly enough to get the business straightened out about her husband.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Okay. There are a couple of misnomers here. The old age security pension does not depend on citizenship. If you've been in Canada for ten years, you're going to get it, whether you're an alien or whatever you are, as long as you don't have a SIN number starting with a nine.

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Okay.

And I understand the detail on that is that this fellow did receive a passport in 1981. Richard Cooper had a passport in 1981. Now he can't get one. That's another issue.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** No, but that—

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** He can't get a passport. He also can't...his OAP will go back only to 1981, even though he's been here since he was like a year old. In other words, they can prove that he was a citizen only because he got a passport in 1981. For the forty years previous, they're saying there's no proof that he was actually a Canadian citizen, that he worked.

That's the problem.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** You see, there's a notice of assessment, and you get it once a year. It goes back to the first day you started working in Canada, whether you are alien or landed or a citizen. It tells you how much of a contribution you've made and so on and so forth.

I don't think tying the pension and the citizenship jibe so much.

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Perhaps not. It's not my area of expertise.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Also, if it's a private pension, as long as you're named a beneficiary on your husband's pension plan you will receive the pension. It doesn't depend on citizenship. It doesn't depend on being a landed immigrant. You could be in Timbuktu and it will get to you, as long as you claim it, and you claim it by showing your name, not any citizenship.

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Well, I wish Jan were here right now, because she would tell you the opposite. I'm not trying to disagree with you, but I am going to disagree with you because I have all her documentation. That's exactly what happened to her in 1995. And Mr. Cooper, who's not, you know, an intellectual, who's just an ordinary guy, has just been told that he has to prove where he was before 1981, and when he landed in this country. How the heck is he going to do that?

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Were these war brides all tagged war brides when they were coming over, or is it everybody who came from England during 1942 to 1948 who were—

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** A war bride is a specific person. She was married to a Canadian serviceman overseas during World War II and up to about 1947—there was a little window of opportunity; some of them were fiancées and didn't get married because he might have been sick, he might have been hurt in the war, whatever. March 31, 1948, was the last day you could qualify to come here as a Canadian war bride.

That would be the group. They had to be married to a Canadian serviceman overseas. Some did marry here in Canada as fiancées, came over as fiancées. They had a three-month window to get married here in Canada.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** One other very intriguing point you made was that Canada went and got some kids from over there because they were kids of servicemen. They paid their way here.

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Yes, the war brides and their children, nearly 65,000 of them, were transported to Canada between 1942 and 1948 at the expense of the Canadian government under the aegis of the Canadian Wives Bureau, which was an adjunct of the Department of National Defence.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** So they were identified through their spouses?

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Through their spouse, yes.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** The spouse said, this lady in London with three kids....

Now, when those two kids came over, you said the father had died, or they couldn't find him?

• (0905)

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** Yes, that was a particularly odd case.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** How is it that the father all of a sudden didn't want...had a change of heart maybe?

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** We don't know. That's a very complicated case. It's in the book. It's sad. It's a very sad, tragic case. Fortunately, they're not all like that. Most of the fathers were very happy, as most fathers are, to welcome their family to Canada.

But in that particular case the citizenship of the child was never determined, and it had to be—at age 50-some, after she'd worked her

whole life—when her husband died. That's when it came to a head, upon her husband's death.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Temelkovski. You were short and snappy, I will note.

I find this incredibly disturbing. I find it disturbing that the department—and I've been on this committee a long time—never came forward. I seem to be finding out all sorts of stuff. I never even thought about the illegitimate children, supposedly, of servicemen and that we had totally washed our hands of this.

I know we have a department that has spent tens of millions of dollars trying to strip citizenship fraudulently, and they have not seen fit to spend money in this area to at least let us know and try to rectify it.

As I am listening to your testimony, it is getting to be a real Gordian knot, because what happens now if you have a child who finds out—who came here as an eight-month-old—that they are not citizens? It is very likely that they could have had children when they were out of the country. So what happens to those children? And this thing is just going on and on.

One of the things that as a committee we have on our agenda that we are trying to deal with is when children come here and they fail to take out citizenship. They can be deported 20 years later for committing some offence, even though they grew up in Canada since they were babies. It truly does seem that we almost have to have some sort of a de facto citizenship if a child or an individual has spent so much time in a country. It seems to make sense, because to spend all these resources trying to figure out jigsaw puzzles for something as ridiculous as this....

I know as a committee we can commission research, and all we have to do is get approval from the liaison committee. I think this whole area is something that we should really investigate, because it really is unbelievable for people not to have identity.

I can tell you, I got into this citizenship business, not because I don't have citizenship, but because I thought the process of revoking citizenship was really unfair for people not born in this country. I must say, I am much more horrified about the permutations and the combinations of having all these Canadians being denied their identity.

I really want to thank you very much for making this presentation. Please send us a brief. We definitely are going to see what we can do to push this, and I really want to get the department in and find out if there is anything else that we should know about that we don't know about. This should be a priority for the department to get this resolved.

So I want to thank you very much, unless any of my colleagues want to come in on it. This is just horrific. I want to thank you for your expertise and your interest, and I think you are going to have a wonderful thesis.

**Ms. Melynda Jarratt:** It's already done. It has been done for five years. It's on my website, [canadianwarbrides.com](http://canadianwarbrides.com).

**The Chair:** Okay. Well, thank you very much.

We will take a break and we will reconvene in a few minutes.

• (0909) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (0916)

**The Chair:** We will reconvene.

We have people from the New Brunswick Multicultural Council.

Welcome. Please do a seven-minute presentation. You notice we're not keeping very strictly to the time, but we do like to get questions in.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Mr. Chair, they both have presentations to make this morning, so—

**Mr. George Maicher (Vice-President, New Brunswick Multicultural Council):** Mr. Chair, we come from similar but different organizations. I'm presenting for the Multicultural Association of Fredericton and Asma is presenting for the Multicultural Council of New Brunswick. The Multicultural Council of New Brunswick is the overarching organization.

I'm talking about updating Canada's citizenship laws, issues to be addressed, and you would have received a copy of my brief to you. I would like to preface that in order to restate what our organization stands for. We are interested in human rights as well as in immigration issues, and we have been very successful in integrating newcomers into Canadian society. We employ over 22 people in our organization to do that and we have over 100 volunteers to help us do that.

I would like to say that while we see the need for maintaining strong security within Canada and support much of what is discussed in the relevant minutes of proceedings, we have a problem concerning some of the sections of the proposed legislation.

One of the problems we see is citizenship annulment and statelessness. It deals with the issue when Canadians move outside the country and children are born outside the country as Canadian citizens, because they are born the children of Canadian citizens. If those children then stay outside the country and have children, they might become stateless. They have to make an election when they are 28 years old. If they didn't actually happen to be in Canada at that time, at age 28, then they become stateless. We feel that Canada's goal should not be to turn Canadian citizens into stateless persons.

We should give the benefit of Canadian citizenship to those people who have been rooted in Canada, who have their parents, or grandparents, or great-great-grandparents, who have become Canadian citizens. Those kinds of things can happen to people, for example, who work as missionaries overseas. Those people spend all their life overseas. Their children are born...and statelessness can happen to them. We don't want to see an increase in stateless persons in the world and in the problems it creates. It infringes on the rights of some Canadians to pass on their citizenship to their children.

Another big problem, another issue—and you have this in my brief—is the proposed legislation that the Solicitor General of Canada may refer to the Federal Court any person he believes may have obtained citizenship through fraud or false presentation, or any individual found to be a subject of prohibition. We are very concerned that there is no appeal process or judicial review of the court's eventual decision. More importantly, it appears that a Federal

Court judge, or even the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, can revoke citizenship of a naturalized Canadian without that person even being able to see the evidence against them. I don't think a prohibition like this is worthy of Canada. I think people have left their home countries to come to a society where the judicial process is open and public, and I think it's very important that it is open and public and that we do not see our fate being dealt with behind closed doors.

We have worked for 3,000 years—and this started in the Greek city states—to separate decision-making in a judicial way from decision-making in a political way. We in Canada, all of a sudden, feel we have to renege on that and make a judicial process political, where they give the power over people's lives to ministers of the Crown. I don't think we in Canada should be able to have a situation like that. I don't think we should allow that.

• (0920)

It's like something that was done in Nazi Germany, in Maoist China, in Stalinist Russia, or in Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. Something is brought forward against you, but you don't know what it is. It's a Kafkaesque process; you don't know what to defend yourself against, and then people say you're denied citizenship or citizenship is taken away from you.

If there is wrongdoing, the Canadian courts are able to deal with that wrongdoing. Bring people forward into a public court and have them dealt with. If they're wrong, put them in jail or fine them, but do not deal with them behind closed doors.

Another thing I would like to see is that you not allow two-tier Canadian citizenship. The guys who were born in Harvey or in Woodstock—the Macdonalds or the Turners, who have been here for 250 years—can do whatever they would like to do. Nobody will say, you know what? We're going to take your citizenship away from you and we're going to send you back to where your great-great-great-grandparents came from.

No. We say, we're dealing with you through the courts; you have done wrong.

But all of a sudden, when somebody comes from Jamaica, we say, well, at the time you were born in Canada your parents were still Jamaican; now you are an 18-year-old and you're really giving us a lot of trouble, so we're going to send you back to Jamaica. I don't think that is acceptable. If there's a problem with a person, deal with it in court. We should not allow people to be put through a system where they have no recourse to the law, where people are not allowed to defend themselves.

The proposed legislation as it currently stands states that any individual the cabinet fears has contravened the principles and values of democracy can have that citizenship revoked by cabinet. We do not disagree in principle with any legislation that will exclude hate-mongers and human rights abusers from obtaining Canadian citizenship. However, the only criterion the cabinet seems to be concerned about when evaluating a case is whether they believe the individual has demonstrated a serious disregard for the principles and values underlying a free and democratic society.

It is especially worrying that there are no definitions of these principles and values in the legislation. This stipulation in itself can be regarded as unworthy of a free society as it may stifle the expression of legitimate concerns by new immigrants. And I know exactly that there is self-censorship by immigrants right now, that immigrants don't want to speak out; they say soon, if they speak out, when they come to the border they won't be able to travel.

I think one of the noblest achievements we can have in our society is the ability to say what we want. I'm personally really offended by the fact that we in Canada have become really backwards in the way we allow people to express their opinion. People expressing their opinion means I'm going to piss you off; I'm going to say something you don't like. But that is what freedom of expression is.

As to freedom of expression in the past, we said, oh, there were Hardenberg and Richelieu and all the people in Europe—I'm going to finish pretty soon—but they didn't allow free expression of opinions. No, of course not, because it was saying something against them.

Anyway, I represent a multicultural association, and the people who deal with us did not come to Canada to see their fate established behind closed doors. They would like to have it done in a public and open forum.

Thanks very much.

• (0925)

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

The reason we don't have the reports is that one is done in English but the other report is done in French, and you have to have them done in both before we distribute them. They will be distributed once we get them translated.

**Mr. George Maicher:** I think mine, though, had actually been submitted a long time ago.

**The Chair:** All right, but no matter. I was just saying that to the committee members.

Madam Regragui.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Asma Regragui (First Vice-President, New Brunswick, New Brunswick Multicultural Council):** Thank you, honourable members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

I am here to speak to you today as the representative of New Brunswick Multicultural Council and also as a citizen. There is no need for me to give you an overview of the history of citizenship from the Code of Hammourabi to the Greek concept of *philia* or the 212 edict of Caracalla, there is no need for me to consider the French Revolution, or the Bill of Rights in Great Britain or the issues raised by marxism or what we today refer to as the welfare state.

You are all aware of the fact that citizenship contains first of all a legal notion, as well as in idea of political legitimacy and a social link. I intend to focus mainly on the commitment undertaken by the government in respect of citizenship.

It seems to be that there is not enough civic education. People often talk about citizenship and education for citizenship for new

arrivals but there is not enough emphasis given to it when we are talking about people who are born here. The concept of *jus sanguinis* is very important. Citizenship is not a privilege, it is a right that carries with it a great many responsibilities. It may well be the moment for the government to take a leadership role in citizenship education.

Not being a specialist in citizenship or a philosopher or sociologist, I am interested mainly in elementary education because citizenship is something that must begin at a very early age. It seems to me that it will be important for the government to encourage the provinces to have a multidisciplinary curriculum. It could be an introduction to philosophy because philosophy helps us to think and education should be provided in how to think and to debate while respecting each other's rights.

Citizenship, as Mr. Maicher has noted, is democracy. When it comes to freedom of expression, it is not nearly a matter of saying what one thinks but there are certain procedures, a procedural code that should be observed before people begin their discussions. It seems to me that recently Canada has seen growing and persistent individualism. It is not only a Canadian problem, it is a problem face by all countries of immigration. One of the reason we are talking about a new citizenship act today is that our societies are increasingly diversified.

Is that something that makes us afraid? That is the question, that is the issue we must face.

In European countries, that are certainly not seen as large immigration countries even though they do receive significant numbers of immigrants, in New Zealand, in United States, in Canada, what is the problem? What sort of country do we want? If we are a country of immigration, then we must remain open and we must help new arrivals to be integrated and to embrace the Charter of rights and freedoms. As I see it, that is essential.

The day when I became a Canadian, I embraced Canada for various reasons: freedom of speech, democratic values, human rights and the rule of law. Without all that, it is not possible to become Canadian. So I am sorry, but if somewhere I have a reservation about the Charter, than I cannot call myself a Canadian, I cannot speak out as a Canadian. That is very important.

Another fact, and something which is much more significant, is that we compartmentalize people. We have our little intellectual ghettos, our cultural and denominational ghettos. We are going to have to break out of them because becoming a Canadian means we put on another hat. At the same time the citizenship education will have to be provided to Canadians who were born here. Being a Canadian citizen, as I said, is a responsibility.

In Canada we have two different notions of society. On the one hand, there is what is referred to as the liberal democratic concept where, because our rights are protected, we do not become particularly involved in the political process. On the other hand, there is the republican concept which takes a deliberative approach. It seems to me that recently Canadians will only begin to deliberate when their rights and freedoms are at stake, when there are international conflicts or when certain moral issues arise such as marriage between persons of the same sex, for example.

• (0930)

First of all we must realize where we are heading.

Secondly, we must also realize that in two or three decades, most Canadians will be of different ethnic origins and visible minorities. Now is the time for us to begin thinking about all of this.

I'd also like to bring up another idea. Citizenship is also economic. We are going to have to get rid of the glass ceiling or the cement ceiling because there are already young Canadian university graduates who are unable to obtain an interview when they don't have a Canadian name.

Lastly, I'd like to talk about citizenship restrictions on children born in Canada. How many children are born in Canada to non-resident parents? According to the *Globe and Mail*, there were 12,400 of them last week. I wonder what kind of crime a child committed when he is born in Canada and his parents are not Canadian residents. It seems to me that when a woman takes a plane to come here, the airlines should see that she is pregnant. Normally, airlines do not authorize a pregnant woman to travel if she is over six months.

Then there are all those persons waiting for refugee status. What are we doing with these people? If we start to restrict the notion of jus soli, we will be opening the door to discrimination and it would be unworthy of our country.

As Mr. Maicher noted, the decision to withdraw someone's citizenship should be made by the courts. There's no question of giving this power to the department but the courts will have to make a commitment to uphold the rule of law. Otherwise, as Mr. Maicher said, we will have a double standard.

Lastly, I would like to say something on the wording of the oath of allegiance. We have enough poets and writers in Canada who should be able to come up with a beautiful and well-written text in both official languages. One could write it in English and the other in French, so there would be no need for translation. That would ensure a certain authenticity.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We're hoping that we'll find poetry from one of our delegations as we go across the country. If you can think of anything, we'd love to hear it; feel free to submit.

We are going to start off with a round of questions, and we're going to be snappy about it so that we can all get our questions in.

Mr. Jaffer.

• (0935)

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to both of you for your presentations this morning.

I'm going to start off with you, George, with a quick question. I know you mentioned your concerns with the issue of statelessness. Since we've been having these hearings, concerns have been

expressed that Canada did not sign on to the UN agreement on statelessness.

I don't know if you know about that, or if you have any issues there.

**Mr. George Maicher:** No, I don't.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:** Okay.

Statelessness is an issue of concern, it seems to me, and I'm glad you addressed it. No doubt we need to address it and see where we can be proactive in terms of ensuring that the people who are lost in the shuffle, so to speak, who are stateless, don't remain that way. We need to look at whatever we can do to help that, because obviously it's a concern.

I agree with you about your appeal process. We've been hearing that quite significantly in terms of someone's citizenship being challenged. It seems our appeal process needs to be put in place, because it's not working right now even though there is an ability to have it in the legislation. So I appreciate that.

[Translation]

Asma, I agree with you. My family and I arrived here as refugees. When I was growing up, my father always stressed that we had to take our freedom and our participation in democracy very seriously. They're very important things. We have to take part in democracy here in Canada. That is something that is missing from our education system. I think that we are going to have to change that in our education system for the sake of new Canadians. It is very important that citizenship not only be a privilege but a right. I agree on that.

You may perhaps have some ideas about how we can work with the provincial departments of Education to develop a system where citizenship has its place.

**Mrs. Asma Regragui:** In Quebec, on the south shore of Montreal, a pilot project was set up in an elementary school where there was a great deal of violence. Philosophy was included in the curriculum. When you and I talk about philosophy, we think of Plato, Socrates or Kant, but in the case of children, philosophy means discussing ideas while respecting each other. Since the introduction of this pilot project, there has been a great reduction in the violence because the children started thinking. In my opinion, as soon as four years old children are able to think, then we should begin their education.

There is also the contribution of history. I had the opportunity of teaching for a year in New Brunswick where, except for grade 7 and grade 8, history is not taught to our children. It seems to me that the teaching of history is very important.

There is also literature. Perhaps we do not have as many authors as Europe or our neighbours in the south but some of our authors are very talented. They deal precisely with this issue of belonging and identity.

Then of course there is the failure to deal with the problem of the first nations and the French fact. But if the matter is discussed and there are explanations about why there is this difference between the French fact and the English fact, children are able to understand the situation. After I arrived in New Brunswick, for a long time I heard that Acadians had not been persecuted because they were free to leave. That is wrong. Imagine, that is something that people said for generations.

So there should be a multidisciplinary curriculum including civic education. That does not mean picking up scraps of paper in the street. This is not what I mean by citizenship, I am talking about participating and being responsible for one's actions. When we talk to young people now, we realize that for them, citizenship is a right. It must be understood that this right carries responsibilities. That is how the issue should be broached.

[English]

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

Mr. Siksay, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you both for your presentations this morning.

Mr. Maicher, I just want to say that I agree with you completely about revocation and the terrible reality of two classes of Canadian citizenship that presents, and I think we really do need to address that in the Citizenship Act without any further delay. The evidentiary standard that applies in the revocation process of balance of probabilities versus beyond a reasonable doubt is also unacceptable.

So I think we just need to get away from that and recognize one class of Canadian citizenship and get on with it, and the sooner the better.

You talked about the self-censorship that immigrants impose on themselves given that circumstance. I wonder if you wanted to talk a little bit more about that and how that manifests itself.

● (0940)

**Mr. George Maicher:** I can certainly talk about that. It manifests itself in very strong ways. In the past, if I were somewhere sitting in an airport and there was somebody who was definitely of Middle Eastern background, I would approach him. I would talk to him. Now I wouldn't because I might be seen talking to him who is talking to him or to her who is talking to him, who is talking to him, and she is in the book somewhere, and all of a sudden the chain is followed and they say, hey, this guy.... We've got to check him out because somehow does he go to...? And people censor themselves by not talking to others.

People say, no, I'm not going to the mosque because at the mosque I might be seen just talking to somebody who might turn out to be somebody who is in the book of somebody, and they are looking somewhere for somebody. And I'm not giving money to any organization any more, even if I know the organization is beyond reproach, if that organization is dealing with issues in the Middle East, because it might turn out that some of that money is going somewhere I don't know, but since I have been giving money, then it falls back to me.

And people say, no, I don't want to talk about that. I don't want to give my opinion, and be careful. Don't say too much, you know. You don't want to get people upset, and you don't want to draw attention to yourself.

And you know what Canada is all about? A lot of the Canadians came to Canada in the past because really they had a big mouth in their home country and felt that it was better to come to Canada. And Canada accepted them with open arms in the past. Now it comes down to the fact that we are falling back on evidence from their home countries, and their home countries might have something against that person, that family. Maybe the father did something.

Again, we have self-censorship. We see self-censorship. And I don't think it is good to see self-censorship. You think maybe if you self-censor, people cannot express what they feel and then somehow it will be expressed differently, and I don't think that it's a terrible thing.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Thank you.

Madam Regragui, you mentioned the citizenship oath and the fact that you thought, or I think I understood you to say that, we didn't need a translation or an exact replica of it in either official language. I'm just wondering if you could talk a little bit more about that. It seems to me a little problematic if, in our official languages, people are taking an oath that maybe means something different in both of them.

We heard a little bit about that from one presenter who had a specific suggestion for us, but he pointed out—and this is maybe a minor example—that the word *people* and *peuple* mean different things in both languages. So there is a variation in how that's understood, particularly in Quebec, for instance.

So I wonder how you see that working out, if people are actually taking an oath that maybe means something different in both official languages.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Asma Regragui:** To get back to this notion of people...

[English]

I'll speak English now.

Quebec is a nation, whether we like it or not. It is a nation, but Quebec doesn't have citizenship; it is within Canada. So as long as Quebec is within Canada, I don't see Quebec citizenship; it will always be Canadian citizenship.

When I'm talking about writers and poets, it's just that whenever you translate something, it's not the same. I'm going to be a bit sexist here, but there was a writer who always said,

[Translation]

that a translation is like a woman: When she is beautiful, she is not faithful, and she is faithful, she is not beautiful.

[English]

It's very sexist, but it is the truth.

If you give the mandate to writers, or a group of writers and poets, they are going to be working together, and, as you know, nothing goes by the government if it is not proofread a million times, for commas and everything. So it's not impossible to do; we are a young country and we have a lot of potential.

I think it's fine that we put our mind to this.

● (0945)

**The Chair:** Mr. Temelkovski.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

George, you mentioned that the courts should be used, as opposed to having decisions made behind closed doors. I think we all agree on that, when it comes to checking on somebody's past, whether they told the right story or the entire story or half of the story, or which side of the story they told, when they were coming to the country.

Should there be any time limit to when we should be able to look back at their entry...or as long as it's done in the courts?

**Mr. George Maicher:** If there is fraud, it can be dealt with in the court. If there is crime, it can be dealt with in the court. I don't necessarily think there should be a time limit.

What I believe, though, is that Canada should stand by its decisions. If Canada is admitting somebody, we should have due diligence. If they say, "We admit you", they admit you, warts and all. If it turns out that you lied, okay, we will deal with you as a Canadian citizen, as we deal with any Canadian citizen who has lied under oath or with any Canadian citizen who has committed a crime—but we should do it openly and publicly. And don't do it as a political process, but do it as a criminal process if a criminal act has been committed.

For me, it's standing by your decision, so that if you have admitted somebody, stand by it. If you say you made a mistake...but Canada doesn't make a mistake in admitting people into Canada; they will say, "Now we will expel you". If you are a Canadian citizen and they take citizenship away from you, it means Canada has made a mistake. No, we didn't make a mistake; we wanted to let you in, and we're going to deal with you now as a Canadian citizen.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** What I hear you saying is that once somebody obtains their citizenship, all the work has to be done prior to receiving that citizenship.

**Mr. George Maicher:** Exactly.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** And after that, there should be no questions?

**Mr. George Maicher:** Of course there can be questions, but those questions should be dealt with in court. If some crime has been committed, deal with it in the courts.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** So we agree that if somebody committed a crime somewhere 50 years ago, and we find out now, we should deal with it in the courts.

**Mr. George Maicher:** Exactly. If there is no statute of limitations, deal with it in Canada. There has to be the whole process of evidence, counter-evidence, defence, and all those kinds of things. You may not think the person should be here, but they are here because Canada thought they were a good candidate to be a Canadian. Stand by that decision.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** And they have proven their good citizenship for 50 years.

**Mr. George Maicher:** But even if they haven't, we should deal with them in court. If Canadian people turn to crime, that's how they're dealt with.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** So we understand that granting citizenship is one thing, and then if they committed a crime somewhere else and this has been disclosed, we should deal with them in the courts.

There has been a question of their passing this on to their children. Some people think that if I came into Canada on false pretenses, then my children should not be able to be in Canada.

● (0950)

**Mr. George Maicher:** I could see that, but of course those children were born in Canada. If the children live the life that we expect them to live, they can live happily ever after. They can become politically engaged, say what they think. If they turn to crime, we put them in court. Deal with them in court—not behind closed doors where they won't even tell you what's wrong.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Temelkovski. We are going to try to work on getting you snappier.

He was referring to a proposal under C-63, which was going to extend the revocation process to apply to children. The reasoning was that but for the fraud of one of their parents, they would never have come here in the first place.

**Mr. George Maicher:** But how far are you going to go? To grandchildren and great-grandchildren?

**The Chair:** That's what got me shook up when I read it.

When I went to school in B.C., they used to give us a mark for citizenship. This disappeared in the 1960s. I remember I got an unsatisfactory in citizenship, and I was very upset when I found out why. It was because I was eating sunflower seeds in class. I had sunflowers in my compass set, and they gave me an unsatisfactory in citizenship. But there was quite an emphasis on citizenship in all the classes. That got lost, and I don't know why.

Lui, did you have that experience?

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** I had the experience of learning about citizenship, but not of getting an unsatisfactory mark.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, and we will send you our report when it is done.

Thank you for being good citizens and making your views known.

We will suspend for a couple of minutes.

● (0952)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

● (1002)

**The Chair:** We are going to reconvene.

Mr. Deka, could you go ahead and make your presentation?

**Mr. Kumud Deka (South Asian Student, Physics Department, University of New Brunswick):** Thank you very much.

I'm representing South Asian students from the University of New Brunswick. The University of New Brunswick has a fair amount of students, so I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to present some of our concerns relating to immigration and citizenship.

Our concern is related to rules on eligible applicants. Our present requirement to apply for immigration is a minimum of one year's residency in Canada. We believe this policy causes problems for some of our students because some students finish their degrees in less than two years, if they are master's students. If they stay in Canada for one year and they apply for immigration, they don't have enough time after that to stay in Canada and get their immigration... because immigration processing time takes about seven months to one year. After finishing their degrees they can stay only three months. If they don't get a job, they have to leave Canada.

The same policy doesn't allow post-doctoral research fellows to be eligible for the provincial nominee program, and the reason is because they don't have any permanent employment. They work as full-time research fellows; they have a good chance to get a job in Canada. So we believe they should be eligible to apply for the provincial nominee program.

The present policy also doesn't allow the spouse of a post-doctoral fellow to apply for a work permit; spouses of graduate students can apply for a work permit, but the spouses of post-doctoral fellows cannot. We believe they should also be eligible to apply for a work permit.

The next issue is the time the immigration process takes. Applicants should get some response from CIC within weeks of submission. They should not be notified within weeks whether their application is complete or they will need more documents to support their applications.

We feel the delay in the immigration process is due to background inquiries. It's one of the reasons. We recommend that duplication of the process should be abolished because we complete this process when we are in Canada.

Some South Asian students experience isolation due to lack of community support. This is generally more prominent in a foreign student who meets stiff changes in cultural and traditional values in society, especially in the further regions of Canada. We recommend that all of the established South Asian organizations should be funded and provided with resources so they can establish welcome centres or resource centres to adapt students to Canadian culture and traditions.

Proof of funds and medical fees also causes some problems for students. Present policy requests that an economic class immigrant must have a bank balance of about \$10,000 Canadian. Families of international students have already spent a lot of money on the education of the students before they come to Canada, and they pay double the fees because they have to pay the differential fees. Therefore, it's hard for them to ask for another \$10,000 from their families for the bank balance. We feel this policy causes problems for international students, and it should be waived or it should be taken out of the policy.

Also, current medical examinations for immigration are about \$300. We feel that medical examinations should also be waived, because before coming to Canada, when the students apply for their student visas, they complete thorough medical checkups in their own countries.

Students who face racial discrimination are discouraged from settling in Canada; if somebody has bad experiences, they don't want to stay in Canada.

There are several hundred foreign students currently at the University of New Brunswick. There are about five universities in New Brunswick.

• (1005)

We would like to request that the committee recommend that the administration of the universities or the institutions introduce a separate, explicit policy on racism.

The current Immigration Act requires that a new immigrant go outside Canada and re-enter to get their passport stamped, to get their immigration. This act causes financial hardship on students. Therefore, this policy should be changed, and they should be allowed to get visas at the local immigration office.

We also recommend that the landing fee of \$975 be waived for international students, to make it more affordable for them.

Canada does need more immigrants to meet the labour market demand, and we feel that international students who wish to apply here permanently should be encouraged. Therefore, it is important to simplify the immigration process and make it affordable for them.

We are pleased with the recent changes in immigration policy related to international students. We welcome the new policy on co-op programs, which will blend work experience and academic experience.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Siksay.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not usually first, so I'm a little surprised.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deka, for your presentation. You've raised some important issues, particularly around the financial hardships that students face.

You mentioned the right-of-landing fee. I've had great questions about the right-of-landing fee. I know the chair and I have had some discussion about whether that acts almost like a head tax and like the head tax used to act in Canada. Perhaps it's not quite as serious as the head tax was, but a lot of people do experience it in the same way, as a limitation on their ability to immigrate to Canada and as a significant setback to their ability to settle in Canada, because of the significant expense it represents. So I certainly would be in favour of eliminating that right-of-landing fee for all immigrants to Canada as a way of having a fairer policy and of assisting people in their settlement here in Canada.

You also mentioned racial discrimination and the need for explicit policies on campuses in New Brunswick. I'm surprised that doesn't exist, and I hope there is support for getting those policies.

I know the federal government recently put some money back into racism programming, which is a good thing. Unfortunately, like many things, we're still not back to where racism programming was in the federal government before the Liberals did their cuts in the 1990s. The Conservative government of Mr. Mulroney was actually doing more on that score than even is happening now, and I think we need to get back to that, because we've heard many times at the committee that it is still a significant issue across our country and it needs to be addressed. So I think that's an important suggestion, and I hope the universities will take you up on that suggestion as well.

We've had some interesting presentations here from, for instance, the City of Toronto and their diversity program, and some very clear suggestions about how to deal with racism in our country, and I think that has been very helpful.

I appreciate your concerns around having to leave Canada to get the visa. I wonder if you can just talk a little bit more about that process and how people experience it and what it might mean to some folks.

● (1010)

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** Yes. Thank you.

Whenever they get their documents, they go out of Canada. They take a car and go outside the border, and they re-enter after about a kilometre or two. I think this is a very unnecessary process, and it costs money, because the student has to hire a car or go outside the border, or they have to go to Buffalo, across the bridge, and they come back again. So it's an unnecessary process.

If they are made eligible to get their visa stamped in the local office, I think that would be great for the students.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** It's funny, I didn't realize that practice was still happening. It used to happen more often, I guess. When I was a constituency assistant many years ago, the immigration officials actually had a term for it. They called it "flag-poling," where people would go out, drive around the American flag, and come back in again and get landed. It always seemed like a really silly kind of process that could be done here in Canada. I appreciate your suggestion about that as well.

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** It looks great. It's kind of a new tradition when a person enters Canada. In the U.S., I think they have a policy that once you get citizenship, you change your dress. That is a symbolic thing that gives the person the spirituality or mentality that he's a new citizen of the country now. That's generally great.

But on the financial thing for the students, I think that should be abolished. If they get their citizenship after staying in Canada for two or three years, they can have a tradition, or something like that, because they earn money once they are eligible to work in Canada.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** You also mentioned the isolation that foreign students feel on campus and the need for welcome centres. Do the universities in New Brunswick not have welcome centres or international student centres? In British Columbia we do.

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** Basically, what happens is that the students who study don't get enough time to look for other students or pay attention to a new student.

It would be helpful if the community centres...right now in New Brunswick, in Fredericton, especially, they have a multicultural organization, but it consists of all people from outside Canada. The South Asian society or the South Asian countries have a common basic culture and traditions, so they are more similar. There are seniors who live here in Fredericton and they have a better understanding of what goes on with students when they leave their own country, their parents and everybody; they're more mature, and there are other factors. So they can get better support and better adaptability help to the students, showing them around the region, talking about Canada and how it works—the culture, traditions—and do other things. That is very helpful. The faster they learn about the culture, the faster they integrate into society. And it gives them a lot of confidence to go into the job market or into the mainstream.

● (1015)

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Right. But there is nothing on campus at the—

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** On campus there is, but it is more formal, rather than homey. It's not very homey. Students generally like the homey type, because they leave their home and their country and friends.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Right, okay. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Temelkovski.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** I'll be very brief, Mr. Chair.

I don't understand the stamping of the passport, that process.

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** If somebody is applying within Canada to get their immigration, to complete the process they have to go out of and re-enter the country.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** As a landed immigrant?

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** Yes.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Okay.

And there's another thing, very short, with the chair's approval.

You recommend that CIC send out a reply to every applicant within weeks.

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** Yes.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** What's the normal reply?

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** There are some cases where people have not heard what's going on in the immigration process for years, for a year or two. They don't hear anything and they don't know. They simply send their forms, and after that they don't hear anything. It's like an opaque process that goes on. So after a year or two they get a letter that they need to get some more recent documents, and again they try to send them. It takes about six months. Even if the address has changed, it takes about six months to redirect that letter to the concerned people. So it consumes a lot of time.

So if they hear within weeks whatever additional documents or additional supporting papers they need, they can get them done very fast. They can get the immigration faster than waiting for a year and then hearing after that.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Would just a reply saying we have received your papers be good enough, or are people concerned that maybe the papers didn't reach the office?

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** Yes, they get this...that their application has been received. They get this—

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Acknowledgment.

**Mr. Kumud Deka:** Yes, acknowledgement. But they don't know what's going on and what they will need.

I think if every month they could get an online report or some news telling them that they have to submit some papers again, so that they can get them done faster, it would help them.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Thank you.

• (1030)

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

Are there any further questions?

Okay. I would like to thank you for having appeared. We will be producing a report, and that report will be sent to you.

Thank you very much.

• (1018)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1030)

**The Chair:** We're going to reconvene.

Mr. Cole.

**Mr. Hollis Cole (President, Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of New Brunswick):** Good morning.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. My name is Hollis Cole, and I am a professional engineer. I am speaking on behalf of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of New Brunswick.

The association, or APEGNB, was established in 1920. It regulates and governs the practice of engineering and geoscience in the province of New Brunswick in accordance with the Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act, the 1999 version. APEGNB has more than 4,500 members, and it is a member of the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers, or CCPE. CCPE was established in 1936 and represents some 160,000 engineers across the country. Our association is also a member of the Canadian Council of Professional Geoscientists.

I'll give you a bit of a background on who I am. I am a volunteer with the association. I was president of this association in 1997-98, and I was also president of the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers in 2002-03. Currently, in my day job, I am president of the ADI Group, which is a local consulting design and build firm here in New Brunswick. We have some hundred or so professionals on our staff.

With me is Andrew McLeod, executive director of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of New Brunswick. If you have any questions, he will answer all of them.

I am pleased to be invited to appear before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration to talk about how our profession is working together to help facilitate the integration of foreign-trained engineers into the profession. For our association, in our profession there are really two principal objectives in this regard. One is to ensure that the foreign-trained engineers obtain their professional engineering licence, or PEng licence, more quickly and efficiently, and the other is to do that without lowering the admissions standards or compromising public safety.

I will give a bit of background on how our profession works. By an act of the provincial legislature, APEGNB is charged with regulating the practice of engineering and geoscience. It is charged with governing the two professions, it is charged with establishing and maintaining standards of knowledge and skill among its members, and it is charged with establishing and maintaining standards of professional ethics among its members.

Why do we do that? We do that so that the public interest may be served and protected.

What does the legislation mean? What it really means is that unless you are a member, you are not permitted to practice engineering or geoscience in, or for application in, New Brunswick. You have no right to use the title of PEng, or engineer, unless you are a member. This is no different, really, from the lawyer in the legal profession.

What are our two principal registration requirements? The first one is an appropriate education and the second one is appropriate experience.

With respect to the evaluation of education, Canadian engineering programs at various universities and institutions are accredited by our national body, CCPE, on behalf of our association and the other provincial or territorial licensing bodies. These accredited programs meet our standards, which we establish. A confirmed graduate of an accredited program automatically has the initial education requirements for registration. So as long as the individual has passed a program and it's confirmed by the university, they are eligible for registration on their education experience.

The actual work experience requirement, which now is four years in Canada, has to be verified for the applicant by members of the association, who we ask to attest to knowledge of the applicant's work.

Now, you can say, or you may think, that these two steps could be deemed relatively easy for an individual who has achieved their education and experience in Canada. Well, some say it's not easy, but we say it's relatively easy to become licensed.

•(1035)

For someone outside our system, we need a different verification process for both the education and the experience components. If there is recognition of another system—i.e, the end result of that system is deemed to be equivalent to the Canadian standards by our association or the others across the country—the verification process can also be what we say is relatively easy.

But it's not easy in many cases, as you've probably heard. Setting aside many of the issues that face an international engineering graduate, or IEG, really the crux of the matter is how you assess—and I think my written presentation used the word “access”, but it's really “assess”—a different educational and experiential regime that has not been deemed equivalent to our Canadian standards. When you add possible language and cultural differences or barriers, both the associations and the international engineering graduate could have a real and serious problem.

Certainly you understand that Canada has long been an immigrant-receiving nation. Our profession in this country has been licensing international engineering graduates for many years. Yet over the past several years there have been an increasing number of stories and reports from individuals that IEGs are unable to obtain an engineering licence or related employment in Canada. Is there substance to these stories? Perhaps in some cases, perhaps not in others.

Remember that you cannot work in the country without obtaining a licence; you can't call yourself an engineer. It's difficult to obtain engineering employment without a licence. Really, this is no different from other professions, in our opinion.

Regardless of whether there's substance or not, our association here and the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers and its other members, our sister associations, take these issues very seriously. Our national organization, CCPE, has historically had a role in the immigrant selection process. It started back in 1981 with an MOU with the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, through which we provided advice to CIC and potential immigrants through an assessment process. With the new regulations that have come into effect, we're not really in that process any more.

But in 2002, with support from the former department of HRDC and CIC, we launched a project. This project actually started when I was president of the CCPE. It was called “From Consideration to Integration”—we shortened it to FC2I—and there were three phases. It was born, as I said, from the recognition and our understanding that international engineering graduates face challenges to obtaining licensure and employment in the engineering field in Canada and that there were improvements needed in the immigration and settlement process so that their skills could be better integrated into our economy.

The project was broken down into three phases, two of which have been completed. Phase one work basically focused on understanding the experience of the international engineering graduate, looking at our different procedures across the country, talking to employers. In phase two, the steering committee we had formed, which had a number of people on it from different backgrounds, not just engineers, analyzed information and deter-

mined where the process of integration needs improvement and tried to build consensus around possible solutions.

Hopefully, in phase three the licensing bodies and the CCPE will work with partners to implement the recommendations that came out of phase two. These recommendations were unanimously approved by the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers' board in 2004.

•(1040)

The issues faced by IEGs range from language and cultural barriers to licensing and employment challenges. Our recommendations, in the report I speak of, were far-reaching. We had a number of round tables with different organizations. The result of the sessions was acknowledgement that the biggest challenge to implementing recommendations is really a lack of financial and human resources. We found that the best way to overcome the challenge is to partner with others and build upon work that's already been done.

We noted that employer involvement was important and that there is need for more coordination among programs. And there is a need to really look at the central role language plays in an international engineering graduate's ability to find and keep work and to become licensed.

Among our association and the others, I must say none of us has really indicated a desire to take a lead role at the national level. That's what we see our national body doing. I think we still are—and certainly our association here is—committed to the initiative and is willing to work with partners on implementing our recommendations.

I will speak a little bit about some of the phase two recommendations. There were really four areas of focus: research and information; culture and language; licensing; and employment.

We see that there needs to be an implementation of internal approval mechanisms at the regulatory body level—our level—that will indicate to employers that an applicant has met all of the licence requirements except the one year of Canadian experience. All of our associations say you have to have at least one year's experience in this country to understand the way work is done and our local laws, etc., before you can have your full licence. We think there is a way to accommodate this and indicate to employers that they can have confidence that the international engineering graduate can become licensed.

Another recommendation was that we want to see what elements of the process can be done overseas to speed up the process after a graduate comes to this country.

We see there is a need to develop and set a language standard to ensure that IEGs have the appropriate level of English or French proficiency, not only to work but to navigate through the process.

An important element is that we see a need to establish an accurate and current database of recognized engineering degrees and their institutions that we can use in a consistent manner. I must say, for a small association, which we are, it can be very difficult to look at somebody's degree from a foreign university and look at their experience and evaluate whether it really can be called a Canadian equivalent. We also think we should look at some alternate systems to evaluate applicants' professional competency.

Another recommendation was we should determine and implement the elements of the licensing process that can actually be done prior to immigration.

I think you'll all agree that our profession has been instrumental in the development of growth in Canada. We have worked with and will continue to work with the Government of Canada on this issue. We want to establish new and more efficient ways to evaluate international engineering graduates through licensure, and we believe that with the project we had, the FC2I, and agreements to link the educational assessments of prospective immigrants for licensure, we are overcoming obstacles and working towards simplifying the process. There is still work to be done.

We trust you can see that we are committed to facilitating the integration. We admit we clearly have a way to go. We do not believe there is a wholesale change needed to our system. Other systems have problems, and I think I mentioned one in my submission—certainly the U.S. It's not only a problem for what we call IEGs; it's a problem, I must say, for Canadians.

●(1045)

In the U.S. system, you have to write an eight-hour fundamentals exam, and you also have to write an eight-hour exam on the principles of practice. I can tell you, personally, I've been out of university for more than 30 years. To write a fundamentals exam is not an easy task.

We have the will and the commitment to improve our system, and we are willing and ready to integrate more IEGs, international engineering graduates, into our profession. We need assistance. We need to be involved with the government process.

We ask that, in its final report, your committee recommend the inclusion of the engineering profession in the immigration selection process. We feel that we can provide the conduit, the link, from the profession to the IEGs. We have the information on how their education and experience is evaluated and how it is linked to the licensure process, and we can provide them with it. This will allow them to gain knowledge of our process and to be better prepared when they actually do come to this country. It may also allow them to make better, informed, decisions, so they don't feel disappointed when they actually do come.

We want to ensure that qualified new Canadians are licensed to practise and are given every chance to integrate successfully into the engineering field in Canada. I think, like the Government of Canada, our profession is convinced that innovative and well-coordinated approaches to settlement and recognition of credentials will enhance the value of skilled immigrants and will ultimately be reflected in an improved standard of living in this country.

Thank you very much.

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

Now we're going to go to questions, a five-minute round for questions and answers.

Mr. Jaffer.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Cole, for your presentation and your brief. I think it goes into great detail. That'll help us as we get going on our report here in the next couple of weeks.

I wanted to clarify a couple of things. One in particular I think is the suggestion you make at the end of your report that it would make it easier for potential immigrants who want to come to this country, and have been trained, have international credentials, if we changed the process so that when they actually begin, let's say, from a foreign mission or embassy abroad, they would know exactly what they're facing in whatever given profession, whether it's engineering, medicine, or whatnot. I think doing so would help the process very much. You suggest that we try to include this in the process.

How do you see this working? Would it be just simply some sort of program at the embassy where we'd have our immigration officers better equipped to try to work with them through the process, or do you have any ideas on how we can establish this in the immigration process?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** Certainly having the officers equipped with the information on the process, and information on where they can get more information, would be a help. I think we did this in the past, and probably we're still doing it to a certain extent, but I think we can do more there.

We have the information. When there are applications in the foreign offices, what we really need is more information on the background of an individual's degree and experience. Sometimes it's a quite difficult and lengthy process to find that. So assisting us in doing this is something that I think would go a long way towards making this process better.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:** One of your suggestions here in the area of recommendations that you've included is to implement an interim approval mechanism at the regulatory body level that will indicate to employers that the applicant has met all requirements for licensure except the one year of Canadian experience. Now, on that issue of one year of Canadian experience, we've heard some different things from different people. When people come here with those international credentials, they may have all their information in place, but to get that one year of Canadian experience is often a big challenge for them.

I'm wondering if you can give us some of your thoughts on that and how we can battle it. Is there something the federal government could do to create the incentives so that these people can be considered and can get that experience, whether it's a tax incentive, a grant, or whatnot? What do you see? Or is this a myth? Are they actually getting absorbed once they prove they have those credentials?

●(1050)

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** I think if you look at the big picture, it's not only IEGs who have that issue. For graduates of our own university, employers are looking for people with certain skills and background.

We register what we call members in training as they come out of university. I think that is of benefit to them with employers. We're saying that if we could indicate in some way to employers that these people will become licensed as soon as they have one year, and that is the only thing holding them up, there will be more participation by employers in hiring people.

It still won't get around the fact that some employers are looking for an individual with the stamp in his hand, so that he can start stamping drawings, but that is something our association can do. Certainly we will always take assistance on trying to make that work with employers, but it's one of the things we have seen that we could do more easily. We can say that this individual can get a licence as soon as you show he has that year of experience.

There's no question that we haven't done as much as we could have there.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:** Do I have any more time left?

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:** When we had hearings in Edmonton, an engineer came before the committee. He was a designated engineer and actually had two degrees in the area. His concern was that because there is also a demand for engineers, especially in northern Alberta, for instance, people coming into the country might often be technicians, but they haven't had their credentials verified. Because there is such a demand, they are often hired because employers need people, and they may in fact be passing off credentials that are not necessarily verified.

Is this a bigger problem that we should be concerned about, or is this only an odd case that was raised? To your knowledge, is there something you can tell us that we should be concerned with when trying to deliberate this?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** I would say that it's not a particular problem in New Brunswick. I would guess that it may be more of a problem in Alberta.

Certainly something our association is concerned with is when you need to have a licence or be a member in order to practise engineering. There is no doubt that some employers will ignore that requirement. I don't know what the right word is. I say "ignore", but maybe that is not the right word. They use the story that possibly the individuals are not practising engineering, but in reality they are.

It is a concern. Our whole concern with the licensing process is on how you establish the actual credentials. There are stories of people driving taxis who say they are engineers. Maybe they are, but we probably haven't been able to really verify it. Maybe they are technicians, as you say, and they don't have the equivalent Canadian experience.

We are concerned with that issue. It is our job to look over that process to see that it doesn't happen, but I am sure it does in certain cases.

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

Mr. Siksay.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Cole, for your presentation this morning.

I have a couple of questions for you.

We have heard before from the CCPE about the project "From Consideration to Integration". Some great work has been done there to help in understanding the situation of international engineering graduates.

I notice it's a three-phase process. The first two are done; we are into the third phase with the recommendations, but it sounds as if it has stalled.

You mentioned the need for financial and human resources. You mentioned that there is interest from provincial and territorial bodies, but nobody is willing to take the lead role in getting it going at the national level, getting it going further, and implementing these recommendations.

Can you talk a little more about what is actually needed? What kinds of resources are needed in terms of finances and human resources? What is the stumbling block now that the research is done and we've come up with recommendations to actually get that in place?

• (1055)

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** I know an application has been made for funding, but I don't know the status of it.

The individual associations do not have the capability to do it on a national level. We know our national body does, but they can't work alone. It is not only a funding issue. They need a lot more input, and we've seen that. We have to be partners with a number of people, certainly with the government. Employers have to be involved. It needs quite a bit of coordination around a lot of people.

As to whether it has stalled, I really wouldn't say that. I don't think it has started as of yet, but we need some resources to bring it through. It's not only money; it's people. Other people need to be committed to it with us. We will take the lead, but I don't believe we can do it by ourselves.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Could you tell me about the system of accreditation and licensing now in place? When did it emerge? Is it a recent phenomenon? Do you have any sense of the history of the system?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** I can't tell you the exact year, but CCPE has what we call the CEAB, the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board, which I believe came into being in the early 1950s. So we have been accrediting programs at the various institutions in this country for somewhere around 50 years. It has quite a history. We think it works very well. We have some 35 institutions that offer degrees in accredited programs. They all rate in the top 100 in North America, and I think that is a pretty good system.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Did that system arrive out of concerns for public safety or the public interest? Why, back in the 1950s, did we go to this system of accreditation and licensing? Were there some engineering disasters that led to it, or were there people causing problems in the industry because their education was not up to it?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** We simply felt there was a need on the part of the association, at the provincial or territorial level, to have a better means of evaluating the education of our applicants. We wanted a standard we could apply nationwide.

New Brunswick can license a graduate of UBC from an accredited program, just as we can license somebody from UNB.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Do you know why Canada developed a system in which professional qualifications were considered separately from academic ones? In many other countries this is combined.

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** I know we believe this to be a simple and effective way to evaluate education. Universities agree with it. It took a while for this to happen. You don't have to have an accredited program, but they all do now. We have always had a requirement that you had to have experience, and this has always had to be verified. In our system, an individual who applies needs four references, three from members.

We not only have the accreditation board, we have CEQB, the qualifications board, which sets national standards for professional practice. In the U.S. they have a totally different system. Their state boards are appointed by the governor, essentially. Here we are self-regulating. We have much more coordination across the country. I think we have a better accreditation system. From what I have seen in visiting U.S. organizations, their exams have numerous problems that ours don't. We have a very good system. It is recognized across the country and around the world.

•(1100)

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Rahim Jaffer):** Thanks, Mr. Siksay.

We will go to Mr. Temelkovski now.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Mr. Cole, can an engineer from one province move to another and work without any extra licensing?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** Yes, very easily. There are a few minor eccentricities among associations, but I can become licensed easily in any province in this country, including Quebec. I don't speak French, but I can get a licence to practice there on a short-term basis, for up to three years. If I want to stay longer, I have to be able to function in the French language. But that is not a difficulty, really. We can certainly transfer across provincial borders.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Good.

You mentioned there's a shortage of engineers in Canada.

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** Our profession is one that has a very low unemployment rate. It historically has and still does.

There are certainly regional problems. You know, you may hear in New Brunswick that there are graduates who say they can't get a job. Well, maybe they can't get a job in their field in New Brunswick, but if they are willing to move they can get jobs. There is no question in my mind.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** So the need for engineers is forecast for the future as the baby boomers retire, I guess. Is that the plan?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** Absolutely. There is currently a need for engineers, and there will be a greater need, in my opinion.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Have the engineering schools addressed this issue to increase enrolment or status for engineers, or do we have to rely on foreign-trained engineers?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** I think, regardless, we are going to rely to a certain extent on foreign-trained engineers. There is no question. There are just not enough people being born in this country who are interested in engineering.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Were the leaky condos in B.C. a result of compromising standards, or were they caused by foreign-trained engineers or people who passed themselves off as engineers?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** I'm not fully informed of that situation. I have heard a lot of second-hand comments.

I'd like to say that it's not really an engineering problem. It could have been avoided reasonably easily, and I'm not implying for one second that it's anything to do with foreign-trained engineers. I don't believe it was really an engineering problem at all. It was a construction issue. Somebody wanted to use a different way of doing things that didn't get adequately reviewed.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Thank you.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Rahim Jaffer):** Thank you, Mr. Temelkovski.

We will now go to Ms. Guergis.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank Mr. Cole and Mr. McLeod for being here. As this committee has heard many times, we do know that the federal government needs to play a greater role in the process of recognizing international credentials. Hence, we are travelling the country.

We have heard some bad news stories and some good news stories, and from what I understand from your presentation and from other witnesses, progress has been made in engineering and in your profession. You guys have actually made a significant effort, even just as an example. So I congratulate you on that. Why do you think your profession is leading the charge?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** Perhaps it's our nature of looking to the future and trying to make sure things are progressing. We like to be innovative, and we like to see things done, or how things could be done, in a better fashion. We're known as builders of infrastructure or whatever, who take new ideas and apply them. We see that there is definitely a need for international engineering graduates in this country. If we want to improve our national economy, we are going to have to bring those people in and get them into our system and make them productive, whatever it takes.

As I said, I was president of the CCPE when we started this FC2I. It was not a hard task, but really it wasn't all that easy either. We had to get agreement among our 12 territorial bodies and provincial bodies at that time and have agreement that this was something we should do. We had a meeting in Halifax with federal officials and we showed them we would do it. That's how we got our first funding.

•(1105)

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** It says here—and you've said so in your presentation—that until quite recently the CCPE had a role in the immigration selection process.

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** That's right. We were doing quite a number, actually. I think it was up to over 30,000 in any one year for the evaluation of credentials of those who wanted to apply to immigrate to Canada. We were looking at their credentials and giving advice on whether they could be accepted into our licensing process and on how difficult it would be, but that has gone away.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Can you elaborate a little bit more on the reasons?

**Mr. Hollis Cole:** Well, I'm not really sure.

The whole process has changed. From my understanding, certain professions were targeted. I don't know whether or not that's the right word, but I think that was the reality of it, and engineering was one of them. I don't believe it really has changed; it's just basically education, not any specific education now.

When they took away the need for assessing credentials, we were somewhat out of the picture, and we think we really should be there. We're the people who can do it. We're the licensing bodies.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Rahim Jaffer):** Thank you, Ms. Guergis.

I want to say thanks to our witnesses today. I'd just like to make a comment, that it's nice to see that your association, your colleagues, both nationally and provincially, have been very active during the course of our hearings. The feedback is appreciated, and the work the association is doing to try to deal with the accreditation issue is appreciated. Hopefully, we can continue to work together to continue to improve on this current situation.

You will be getting a copy of our report once the committee reports, hopefully in a couple of weeks.

Colleagues, we'll adjourn for about five minutes for the new witnesses to get set up.

Thank you.

• (1108) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1112)

**The Chair:** I would like to reconvene.

Mr. Okana, if you could make your presentation and keep it to seven minutes, that would be good. Then we can go with questions back and forth. You can start any time you want.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Cyprien (Syp) Okana (Member, Board of Directors, Multicultural Association of the Greater Moncton area, New Brunswick Multicultural Council):** Welcome to Canada.

Mr. Chairman, my name is Cyprien Okana. I have a master's degree in business administration from the University of Moncton, I am the president of Okana-Solutions Marketing and a member of the New Brunswick Multicultural Council.

This initiative should have begun in Asia, it should have begun in South America, in Africa, to give you a general idea of immigration.

Canada is a country of immigration. Canada's constant openness to immigration is a long tradition. We have only to think of the coming of the Irish during the 19th century famine. Then there was the arrival of the Chinese, the boat people, the Lebanese, the Hong

Kong investors, the Yugoslavs, who arrived quite recently. So for Canada, immigration is not a contemporary phenomenon, unfortunately.

In the 1960s, about 70% of our immigrants came from the so-called traditional countries. Now the trend is reversed: 70% of our immigrants come from so-called non-traditional countries, namely from Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe as well. But it is not easy to receive people from elsewhere. When it comes to full acceptance and benign tolerance, good intentions are not enough. There is a clash of different values. Both desired and feared, immigration makes our world into a reality that must be renegotiated for the peace of today and the life of tomorrow.

The issue of the failure to attach value to Canadian academic credentials held by foreigners and the lack of value of non-Canadian academic credentials or foreign experience, this is something that goes beyond the simple fact of accessibility of employment or professions. It is the result of a combination of factors, namely the refusal of that which is intercultural on the part of a non-yielding core of our intelligentsia as well as economic factors. I refer to the refusal of what is intercultural because even if the immigrant or the foreigner does have Canadian academic credentials, even if he obtains an equivalence, his fate is in the hands of the employer.

I know what I am talking about, ladies and gentlemen. You can verify all of this. I have the New Brunswick diploma, a master's in business administration. Here is my experience, the letters and answers from employers. You are familiar with the situation in New Brunswick. The weak economy, the high unemployment rates and the low levels of education all reinforce the phenomenon of withdrawal into one's group identity.

According to recent data published [...] by Statistics Canada, employers today attached less value to foreign experience. At the beginning of the 1960s, every year of foreign experience resulted in an increase of 1.5% in revenue whereas this statistic has dropped to 0.3% at the end of the millennium.

As a result, ladies and gentlemen, this situation has an impact on the health of immigrants, on their family and their economic situation.

The chronic underuse of immigrants' skills amounts to an annual cost of \$2 billion to the Canadian economy.

Statistic Canada figures indicate that immigrants admitted to Canada, even though they are often more qualified than Canadian-born workers and the immigrants of preceding cohorts, are less successful economically. For example, the wages of newly arrived immigrant men, that amounted to approximately 89% of the wages of Canadian-born workers in 1980, dropped to 77% in 2000.

The percentage of unemployed immigrants is also increasing. In 1981, the unemployment rate of immigrants was below that of Canadian-born workers (7.1% as compared to 7.9%). Twenty years later, unemployment among new arrivals is significantly in excess of that among Canadians (12.7% as opposed to 7.4%). This problem, previously considered transitional, seems to have become chronic.

That is what Ms. Bouchard has to say.

•(1115)

The solution I proposed, ladies and gentlemen, is the creation of a national immigration secretariat. It would be made up of members of Parliament, researchers, representatives of immigrants from various ethnic groups, representatives multicultural organizations, representatives of professional associations and many others.

Its mandate would be first and foremost to ensure the professional immigration of immigrants and Canadian citizens of foreign origin with Canadian credentials, particularly in the public service. You must have the report "Making room for the change in the federal public service" submitted in 2000, I believe.

It would also serve as a source of information for immigrants, both before and after their arrival. Thus, before coming to Canada, an immigrant would be able to find out what must be done in order to occupy a particular job. If it is necessary to take additional courses to qualify in Canada, then the immigrant could even opt for distance training.

It would create training programs in various professional areas, allowing immigrants, once they arrive in Canada, to upgrade or make up for any gaps in their skills profile. Such initiatives could be similar to the new bridging programs set up by the government of Ontario.

It would then provide subsidized internship and mentoring programs allowing new arrivals to acquire Canadian experience.

Lastly, it would provide different occupational job market studies.

Briefly then, ladies and gentlemen, I think it is also important to reflect on what happens to the foreign students we keep or Canadians of foreign origin, for example, physicians and engineers, whom we have brought to this country and who are now driving taxis or delivering pizzas. If immigration is seeing from a utilitarian point of view, that is motivated by the drop in the birth rate, then programs will have to be developed to encourage and facilitate the accomplishment of such tasks. At the present time, certain countries regret the utilitarian approach to immigration. If immigration is presented as a plan or vision for society, we will have to start sharing some of what we have achieved.

We are all convinced, Mr. Chairman, that the labour market is increasingly competitive. It often requires workers to have university training as well as professional experience. Through the development of tools that will allow for the better recognition of the credentials of immigrants acquired abroad or here in Canada, not only we will be promoting their integration but we will also be encouraging economic vitality. The big challenge is determining whether Canada really wants immigrants.

Thank, Mr. Chairman.

•(1120)

[English]

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

Now we're going into questions and answers.

Helena.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Okana—it sounds like "Canada"—thank you very much for being here. We appreciate it.

You started off by talking about what we're discussing today, that international credentials should have started in other countries. I want to give you an opportunity to elaborate a little bit more on that.

I'm sorry, I missed what your profession was. I know you showed us all of your files.

**Mr. Cyprien (Syp) Okana:** I am consulting in marketing and I am self-employed.

This is my file. Sometimes I have taken this file and said that I needed to find one other job. This is the letter I sent to the employers, and this is the response I have sometimes received. This is like my Bible for the job. As I said, if someone with a Canadian diploma has this...but what will the case be for someone who doesn't have any Canadian diploma? It will maybe....

•(1125)

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Okay.

You recommended a secretariat as a solution, and it's a very interesting suggestion. It has been recommended to us that an agency be set up or established to be fully responsible for employment of immigrants. I would think from your recommendation that you would probably support that. Some of the information you've given us and your suggestions and recommendations today will be helpful in that process, if it's something we decide to adopt, but personally, I think it's a good idea.

So can we go back to the other countries and your suggestion that it should have started there? Your recommendation at the beginning of your talk was very good—it was excellent—on how this should have started in other countries. Are you maybe suggesting identifying people before they come to Canada and working with them there?

**Mr. Cyprien (Syp) Okana:** My intervention was that this committee should maybe start in Asia or Africa just to know—

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Oh, the committee?

**Mr. Cyprien (Syp) Okana:** Yes, to know how immigration works in those countries. If you have a big portrait of immigration, you will be able to understand the situation that immigrants face here in Canada—but here you will maybe receive at least the gist, or a small piece of our recommendations.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** All right. Thank you.

**Mr. Cyprien (Syp) Okana:** You're welcome.

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

Mr. Siksay.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Merci, Mr. Okana, for your presentation.

The idea of a secretariat is an interesting one. Some people have called it a clearing house for information on professional credentials in Canada. There is a private member's motion before the House, put forward by a Liberal member of Parliament, that originally suggested a secretariat be established. At the last minute, it was amended to take out the secretariat recommendation, which was a real disappointment to a lot of us who wanted to support that idea in a motion in the House of Commons. Hopefully, the committee might consider that as well.

It seems important to have a specific group of people working on this issue. We keep hearing that this department has an interest in it and that department has an interest, that this government has an interest and that provincial government, and this professional association—and yet it seems like everybody is doing it on the corner of their desks and nobody has the task fully in front of them. I think a secretariat would go some way to addressing that idea. While it's hard to recommend another bureaucracy, and we don't want it to become a bureaucracy, there are clearly people falling through the cracks because they don't get the right information. That's one of the problems, anyway, and I think a secretariat would go some way in helping that.

I wanted to ask you about what we hear other people say, that family class immigration is very important, and very important to people's happiness in Canada. At the same time, we are hearing from professional immigrants who are very unhappy in Canada, because their work and their life calling isn't recognized here in Canada.

Have we switched our immigration programs so that there is too much emphasis on professional degrees and education and not enough emphasis on the family class? Should we try to re-address that? When we give people lots of points for having an education or a professional degree and then don't let them work in Canada, are we misleading them with our point system? So do we need to reset the balance of immigration to favour families more, and less the education and those kinds of requirements, and do we need to change the point system?

If you want to answer in French, that would be fine too.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Cyprien (Syp) Okana:** Perhaps I should quote from a study of the Conference Board of Canada that recognizes that visible minorities do have problems. I will read the passage. First of all mention is made of the "Significant contribution of visible minorities to the growth of Canada's GDP" they then it goes on to say:

Their contribution would have been even greater if it had not been for the wage gap in relation to other Canadians. The gap between their average wage and the Canadian average was 11% in 1991. In 2000, it had risen to 14.5%.

That is to some extent the present difficulty of visible minorities. As I said, at the beginning, 70% of the people coming here are from poor parts of the world. Obviously in these poor regions, the percentage of visible minorities is also high. That poses a big problem.

Personally, as I said, I think that we must educate the intelligentsia, the Canadian intellectual class. It is clear that there is no university in the world that can award a degree in medicine to someone who never went to school. There is no university in the world that will give an engineering degree to someone who never

went to university. This intelligentsia has got together to defend its own interests when faced with people coming from elsewhere. The bigger challenge for Canada is to take an objective look at the situation and through this secretariat, to require all the parties to face up to their responsibilities in order to right the situation. Let's not forget there are other countries looking for university graduates or intellectuals, as Canada is now doing through immigration.

If we do not make some efforts at opening up to these people who are knocking at our door or these people who, after obtaining Canadian qualifications, agree to stay here, I think that in the future we will be faced with an intellectual and resource deficit. These people are not coming empty handed. They have a lot of knowledge.

● (1130)

[*English*]

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

Mr. Temelkovski.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sorry I missed your presentation, but I will read the transcripts with much interest.

I want to follow up with Bill's question in terms of credentials from other countries. You mentioned that the intelligentsia of Canada would understand that a doctorate diploma from anywhere is received upon finishing that study, and so on, but even in Canada we have engineers who finish from one school or doctors who finish in another school. We rate the universities, even in Canada, and they're not all rated the same way, so foreign credentials must be reviewed here before somebody is given a doctorate or an engineering certificate to practise as an engineer. It's not because we don't believe they finished it or didn't study; it's because the level of understanding...it's even conceivable that engineers on the west coast would be practising a different kind of engineering from that on the east coast, let alone other parts of the country.

Do you agree with that?

● (1135)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Cyprien (Syp) Okana:** If I understand correctly, you are telling me that you understand professionals who refuse accreditation, or at least wait before accepting it. It is true, to a certain extent, one can understand them. However, what I am suggesting is that people should recognize that is an engineering diploma, whether it was obtained in India, Pakistan, Canada, France, or Belgium, has the same outcome.

Perhaps the approach is different in other areas. Perhaps some adaptations must be made. The study of African soil, for example, maybe different from this study of Canadian or Indian soil. In such a case, as I have proposed, through the secretariat, we could inform the candidate so as not to have any expectations when he arrives here.

Nonetheless, there must be some openness on the part of engineers or the corporations in question, to prevent an impression of a hold-up. Rather, these people should get the impression that those seating across from them recognize their worth and are willing to work with them to overcome difficulties. In some cases, this is not the impression given. For example, some doctors say that the Canadian success rate for doctors on certain exams is quite low. It is almost as though there were two standards. That is my point of view.

[English]

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** Thank you.

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

Mr. Jaffer.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:** Thank you for your presentation. I heard a lot of suggestions. I believe that there are very clear and relevant suggestions relative to this committee's study.

I only want to ask you one question. You say that it is very important to set up incentives so that employers hire people with international education in order to give them an opportunity to gain Canadian experience. You have pointed out problems in finding employers who will give you the chance to work here. In light of your experience, do you have any suggestions? What kinds of incentives could we develop to encourage Canadian employers to give those who have an international education a chance?

**Mr. Cyprien (Syp) Okana:** Thank you.

I would suggest that the federal government serves as an example. In the report entitled "Making room for change in the federal public service", a great many proposals were made to change the image of the Canadian public service in order for it to be better adapted to the Canadian reality.

When I meet employers or people who work in human resources, I often think that they should go for a walk down main street, it happens to be the main street in Moncton, because there are not one single black person at the reception desk.

What is your reaction as women when you see that there is a woman in the Supreme Court of Canada. Women often tell me that they are proud. It is almost the same thing as far as I am concerned. If I see a black person sitting at the reception desk of a bank, a credit union or an office, then it makes me think that if this person has been successful, I can also be successful. But the present situation does not lend itself to this. On the contrary, there seems to be a certain barrier, a lack of understanding.

Although you might not thinking this way but, if people come here, to some extent it is because the federal government has extended an invitation. When Mr. Chrétien said that Canada was a great country, it was a direct invitation to people abroad hearing that Canada was a great place to live. When McDonald's advertises, people want to eat there. Politicians or others, through different kinds of research, do the same thing. People come because there is an invitation. They should be welcomed.

The main challenge is to educate, to inform and perhaps to shake up certain traditions within the public service. Whenever I think

about it, it seems clear to me that it is the individual who is at the root of these difficulties.

You probably remember the Royal Commission on inquiry on bilingualism and biculturalism. What did they discover? That Quebecers, with the same academic credentials as others, did not have access to jobs. At the University of Moncton in New Brunswick in 1962, students demonstrated for recognition. But today, why are all these people who demanded the same things not applying this to others? Why are they not helping? Why do they not understand the situation in which immigrants find themselves?

In short, the federal or provincial governments should be playing a leadership role. Immigration is now becoming an important issue. In the province committees are being set up to find ways of attracting immigrants. All of this is accomplished with budgetary envelopes. There will come a time when a policy of openness must be imposed. We will have to decide that this money will allow for the creation of x numbers of jobs for immigrants or for Canadian of foreign origin. That will mean some accountability at the end of the year for the money spent by the federal government in the provinces or the regions.

If this type of measure is not taken, we will find ourselves back in the same situation a year from now.

• (1140)

[English]

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

I'm just wondering about one thing. You were saying that we have only one woman on the Supreme Court. In terms of the makeup of the Supreme Court, did you say there was just one female?

• (1145)

[Translation]

**Mr. Cyprien (Syp) Okana:** I was drawing a parallel. As a black person, if I see that the prime minister's body guard is a black man, for example, this will give me a certain amount of confidence and hope. In the same way, if women see that there is a woman in the Supreme Court, they will also feel hope and a certain pride.

The present situation is not really like that. We are just left here to stagnate, even if we do have the necessary experience and education. On the other hand, if there were incentives in the public service, for example, I think that would encourage immigrants and minorities to persevere.

[English]

**The Chair:** Okay. Just to correct that for the record, we have four women on the Supreme Court, and the chief justice is a woman, and it took a while to make that happen.

I think you are quite correct when you say the makeup of the country is not reflected in the bureaucracy, in the civil service, particularly at the higher echelons. This is something that we have been pushing, and it hasn't been happening fast enough. I think it's something we're going to keep pushing. Members of this committee made those comments when we had officials in front of us, saying, you know, you either seem to have a French Canadian background or an English Canadian background. It's something we're concerned about.

I would like to thank you for making your presentation. We will be sending you a copy of our report. Unfortunately, we do have a jurisdictional problem that we really have to work out, because it is unacceptable to have brain waste going on in this country to the extent that it is happening. But one of the challenges we face is of course that the provinces have jurisdiction over the trade associations. So we have to work with the provinces, and we also have to work through them with the trade associations to make sure that if

we are going to attract the best and the brightest, which is what we say we're trying to do, they don't have a problem integrating into the economy.

Again, thank you very much for your presentation.

With that, we will adjourn until our hearings this afternoon.

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