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—
Chair

The Honourable Andrew Telegdi

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• (1120)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.)): I would like to call this meeting to order.

The citizenship and immigration committee travelled across the country for most of the month of April. We visited all the capitals, as well as Montreal, Vancouver, and Waterloo. One of the issues we heard a lot about related to the issue of war brides. As you will recall from the testimony, when we heard about it we were all pretty shocked. So to bring us up to date on this issue in terms of the government is Monsieur Jean.

[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Jean (Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Program Development, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am accompanied by Clark Goodman, our Director for Citizenship Programs. His expertise in citizenship issues is much more extensive than mine.

We have distributed a deck which describes the history of our citizenship legislation and the measures that were taken in that area. It should allow you to understand a little better the issue of war brides.

[English]

The Chair: Could you hold on one second? I want to make sure everybody has the deck.

Please proceed.

[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Jean: On page 2, you will find the history of Canadian citizenship. Until 1947, persons living in Canada were British subjects. On January 1, 1947, the first citizenship legislation came into force. That legislation defined who was a Canadian on January 1, 1947, who would be Canadian after that date, and who would stop being Canadian after that date.

Who was a Canadian on January 1, 1947? Most people born in Canada and living there. Most people born outside Canada and legally living here. Women who came here before January 1, 1947 who had married a Canadian man before that date, and particularly war brides as well as children of those men and children of war brides.

It was our first citizenship Act and all these people became Canadian citizens when it was implemented. Yet, it is important to understand that there was no process at the time to establish the

status of all those people. For that reason, someone who became a Canadian citizen on January 1, 1947 following the coming into force of the new legislation and who never had to produce a proof of citizenship to travel abroad or to obtain benefits might never have applied for proof of citizenship. This is what seems to be the problem concerning war brides.

Who became a Canadian after January 1, 1947? Persons born in Canada. Persons born in wedlock to a Canadian father outside Canada and who registered as a Canadian citizen within a period of two years. Persons born out of wedlock to a Canadian mother outside Canada and who registered as a Canadian citizen within two years and persons naturalized in Canada. At that time, the residency requirement for naturalization was five years but it was shorter for British subjects or spouses of Canadians. British subjects and spouses of Canadians were treated differently from all others.

On page 5, we are told that, at the time, citizenship could be lost. People who could lose their citizenship were those born outside Canada who moved away. They had to ask to retain their citizenship before the age of 25 or they would stop being Canadian. They had to demonstrate that they wanted to keep their Canadian citizenship. There were also those who took an oath of renunciation to another country when they were adults. It must be remembered that at the time, double citizenship was not recognized. You lost your citizenship if you renounced it to acquire the citizenship of another country. This also applied to children whose parents took out another citizenship for them. This is what Bill S-2 passed last week is changing.

Furthermore, up until 1967, those who lived away for 10 years after they naturalized also lost their citizenship. These were the provisions of the 1947 Citizenship Act.

[English]

After February 14, 1977 a new act came into force. It did not change very much from the past. It eliminated certain of the lost provisions, for example, it brought in dual citizenship. Only the second generation has to retain citizenship, so there are no longer rules that if you're going to be absent for so many years in the first generation, you have to do something to maintain citizenship. It provides for resumption of citizenship for those who had stopped being Canadians. That's an issue we discussed a fair amount in the last couple of years at committee.

After this new act in 1977, those who were Canadians before continued to be Canadians. There are new naturalization rules. The period to qualify is now three years rather than five, and there are no more specific rules for British subjects. The good-character requirement was changed to the definition of “clear prohibitions”, so we came up with clear prohibitions in terms of being admissible for citizenship.

Where do we seem to have some communication challenges? We have to take our share of the responsibility. If there are misconceptions out there on whether or not people are actually Canadians, it probably means that we need to do a better job in terms of informing them, and we certainly hope to be able to do better there.

Why are war brides being questioned about their Canadian citizenship? They automatically became citizens in 1947; however, many of them may never have applied for proof of citizenship. As I said before, they didn't have a need to travel. They didn't have a need to apply for specific benefits where they needed proof of citizenship. Some of them may never have had to face this question of where their proof of citizenship was.

Why are war brides having difficulty obtaining passports now? Since 1969 Passport Canada, the agency that issues passports, which is under the Department of Foreign Affairs, requires proof of Canadian citizenship—a Canadian birth certificate or certificate of Canadian citizenship—and these certificates have to be obtained before they can apply for a passport. Before that you didn't need a certificate. Until 1969, war brides who may have been in situations where they needed to travel may not have needed that proof of citizenship to apply for a passport. Post 1969 they needed that as well.

Could there be children of war brides living in Canada today without status? Some individuals may have spent most of their lives in Canada only to discover as adults that they are not citizens. That happens sometimes. We see cases. They are isolated cases, but I was presented with a case very recently, in the last couple of weeks, where two children of a soldier—a more recent soldier, not from World War II—received documents from the Canadian government by mistake and were allowed to come here on the assumption that they were Canadians 25 years ago when they had never really acquired citizenship. It was a mistake by the government. The people came here. They've been living like they were citizens for 25 years. Suddenly, when they applied for a passport and required proof of citizenship, they discovered that they did not qualify.

Yes, they're not citizens, but do we have a moral, legitimate obligation to look at this case and say for the last 25 years, these people have come here and lived as citizens? We do have provisions in the Citizenship Act that allow us to look at these specific cases and grant them citizenship under exceptional circumstances.

These individuals may have been eligible for citizenship for many years but either they or their parents did not take steps to apply. In these unusual cases, individuals, as I said, can be given citizenship through an order in council, through a process of exception. There's been a policy with instructions in place for years for these circumstances.

Given the challenge we seem to have around this information—the fact that war brides, for the most part, are citizens, were citizens in 1947 when the first Canadian Citizenship Act came into force—what have we done so far, and what are we going to do to try to correct the information about that?

First of all, we're going to try to make them as informed as we can on how they can obtain proof of citizenship. We are updating our website to include information specifically for war brides. We're going to try to have a bit of a link on our site that directs them to information that is specific for their needs. We will try to flag applications from possible war brides to facilitate appropriate processing in our processing centres, so when they receive requests for proof of citizenship they will be clearly identified and extra care will be taken because of the extra complexity of the cases.

• (1125)

We will make sure our call centres are equipped to respond to questions on citizenship from war brides. We will work with organizations representing war brides. In fact, last week we met with Madame Jarratt, who is testifying next, and we've made a commitment to her that we're going to do our best to give her both the information and the links to our website to make the information as easily available as possible for this group of people. She's also already—and we thank her for that—made some amendments to her website to reflect what is actually the situation for these war brides.

We're also going to continue to work with Passport Canada and Social Development Canada to identify and reduce hurdles to war brides proving citizenship in order to obtain benefits or passports. You know one issue we have; we've described it before. We have an inventory both on our citizenship grants and on our proof-of-citizenship business line in CIC. The government gave us extra credits a few weeks ago that are going to allow us to bring back the processing times for these specific activities around citizenship to what they used to be. On the proof side, right now it's taking more than six months. We'd like to bring it back to about four months. We also have put a process in place with the passport office for people who need to travel urgently. There is a process whereby proof of citizenship can be confirmed in a matter of days.

So we've done certain things to try to make it easier, and we're certainly committed to continuing to work with the committee and continuing to work with stakeholders, such as Madame Jarratt, to try to ease the communication of information and access to our services for this particular group of people.

Thank you.

• (1130)

The Chair: I have a matter of clarification. On page 8 you say, on misconceptions, that war brides automatically obtained citizenship in 1947. Their children also automatically obtained citizenship.

Mr. Daniel Jean: If the children were here with them, all as Canadian citizens, they obtained Canadian citizenship as well, yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

We're going to go to our questions. The first round of questioning is going to be seven minutes. That's back and forth. We're going to start with Mr. Mark.

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

Thank you for coming here and presenting with the information. It was actually shocking to the members of this committee when they were travelling out west and encountered this almost intolerable circumstance of people having lived here all their lives and not knowing they were Canadians.

I have a couple of questions. Do you know how many war brides are not deemed to be Canadians?

Mr. Daniel Jean: No, that would be very difficult.

Mr. Inky Mark: I understand from your last page that you are working with other organizations. Have you contacted Veterans Affairs Canada? Would it be possible for veterans' affairs to send a letter out to veterans who are still living, asking them for a response in terms of their spouses and their children, so we would have some collection of data to determine who's actually here in this country?

Mr. Daniel Jean: I think it's an excellent suggestion, Mr. Mark. We're going to write a letter to Veterans Affairs Canada, directing them to the specific link on our site.

Mr. Inky Mark: In closing, I appreciate the department's jumping to the pump on this issue. I know Canadians are as astounded as anyone to hear of these things happening at this point in time. Certainly it's the responsibility of all governments in the past that have kind of let these things happen.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madam Faille.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): I rather agree with Mr. Mark. It is important to reach those people.

In my riding, five people came to see me following the publication of a press report. As I live near Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, I have several veteran families in my riding. Our interest for that issue has been very well received.

My question deals with documentation. What documents are required? We know that these events date back many years. So we might expect that some people have lost their documents. What proof of citizenship are you going to accept?

[English]

Mr. Clark Goodman (Acting Director, Citizenship Division, Acting Registrar, Citizenship, Integration Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): The documents that would be acceptable in order to prove their claims of Canadian citizenship would be marriage certificates, for women who marry Canadian servicemen, and two pieces of identification. Depending on the case, there could also be additional documents.

It's very clearly laid out on our website and on the application form. They're very standard documents.

● (1135)

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: As it is the case for people who apply for citizenship, they must produce the usual documents, plus their marriage certificate.

[English]

Mr. Clark Goodman: Perhaps I could clarify that it's not a request or an application for citizenship. You're applying for proof of citizenship. I don't want to confuse the two. One is a grant and one is proof.

Thank you.

Mr. Daniel Jean: I can try to demystify proof versus a grant.

Two of my three children were born abroad, so they don't have Canadian birth certificates. They received documents attesting that they are Canadian citizens. When they apply for passports, that's what they have to use. They're still minors, so I'm still responsible for these documents. If I lose the documents, then I have to apply for proof of citizenship with our office in Sydney, and that's what I have to use.

In the same way, for those Canadians who are born here, your birth certificate is proof of citizenship. If you lose your birth certificate, then you have to apply for a renewed birth certificate from civil authorities.

Ms. Meili Faille: Okay.

The Chair: Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Jean and Mr. Goodman, for being here.

I have two quick questions.

What has really changed with the announcement in the last week? Has anything significantly changed in the way that the department is looking at war brides?

Mr. Daniel Jean: In terms of policy, nothing has changed because these people were Canadian citizens, as was anybody who was in Canada in 1947, when the first Citizenship Act came into effect.

I think the attention that the committee has brought to this matter, through consultations and the good work that Madam Jarratt and others have done, shows that we obviously have a communication challenge. Why is this communication challenge more important now than it was before? I suspect that some of it is probably not too far removed from the fact that when going to the United States, some people used to go with only a driver's licence. Now they want to have proof of citizenship. There are a lot of people who are applying for passports, even though they don't need passports to go to the United States.

The fact that the environment is an environment where more and more people need to have documents to attest to citizenship creates a bit of an uncertainty for this group of people who for many years didn't have any documents attesting to the fact that they were Canadian citizens.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Why wasn't the department able to respond to their questions and inquiries previous to this attention being focused on it? If there's no change in policy, then why were so many of them being turned down or having problems establishing Canadian citizenship?

Mr. Daniel Jean: There are two things.

On individual cases, we've been dealing with individual cases for a number of years. This is not an issue that has ever come to our attention as being a problem until recently. That's the first one.

I was discussing this with Madam Jarratt before the meeting. We met last week. She told us that there have been some cases where people who are actually Canadians, because they were citizens before 1947, were told that they're not Canadians. If that's the case, it's an issue and we want that to be reported to us.

It's also why, when we met with her last week, we agreed that we're going to try to flag these applications in Sydney, to make sure people understand that these applications take extra care because of their complexity. It's not whether you have a birth certificate or not.

We're going to take whatever measures we can to try to make sure things work better.

Mr. Bill Siksay: I know about Ms. Jarratt's excellent work on this issue, along with a lot of other folks we heard from. Ms. Jarratt talked a lot about the work that she has been doing in looking at passenger lists from ships that arrived in Canada at that period. Is that the kind of proof that's required? Do we have to establish when someone arrived? Is that part of the confirmation process when they apply for proof of citizenship?

Mr. Clark Goodman: The passenger lists that you're referring to could be useful in cases where we're trying to determine whether someone came to Canada prior to 1947, with the enactment of the previous legislation, or afterwards.

Mr. Bill Siksay: So will that be a requirement for people, and is it the kind of research the department could do, instead of putting it on the shoulders of individuals and folks like Ms. Jarratt?

• (1140)

Mr. Daniel Jean: I realize that it's not an issue that is there just for war brides. It's there for all people who became Canadian citizens in 1947 because, as most governments in most countries have done when they have done something like that, they did not start by issuing a document to each citizen saying that they were citizens.

So, yes, it imposed some responsibilities upon the citizens to come up with some evidence to show that they were here prior to 1947 and are citizens in the same way that when you need to apply for your passport, if you've lost your birth certificate, you have to apply with the provincial authorities to get a renewal of your birth certificate.

So I think, fundamentally, any person who is trying to acquire citizenship or needs proof of citizenship to acquire a passport has to take some responsibility. I think where your question is right and is a fair question is when it asks how much we can do to try to make it as easy a process as possible and make sure that the burden is not too heavy.

Mr. Bill Siksay: That is what I'm trying to get at, Mr. Jean. What are we doing or what can we do in that regard to facilitate this

process for these folks who do come forward at this point, given in fact their age, given in fact the confusion of the department on this issue for many years? What can we do around assisting them, rather than just leaving it all on their shoulders at this point?

Mr. Daniel Jean: I'm going to ask Clark to respond, but as far as confusion in the department, there has been no confusion in the department. The department has been quite clear that these people are citizens, have always been citizens. It's only when they need proof of their citizenship, when they've applied for proof of citizenship—

Mr. Bill Siksay: But it seems people have had different answers on that point.

Mr. Daniel Jean: And if there have been isolated cases where mistakes have been made, certainly the department wants to be made aware and wants to correct those mistakes.

Mr. Clark Goodman: The department's landing records that we hold go back a number of years, so I would suggest again that if these people are looking to prove their Canadian citizenship, go to our website. We have links on how you can determine when you landed in Canada, and those documents would also help you establish when you arrived in Canada. The important date here is always 01/01/47 versus before or after that.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Do the department's records go through that war period?

Mr. Clark Goodman: Our landing records go back to the twenties or the thirties, I believe.

Mr. Daniel Jean: Electronically, our landing records go back to 1973, if I'm not mistaken, and prior to that, through microfiche, they go back to the early twenties. So in many of these cases we may already have a record, and it may be easy for us. I mean, we have to go through the system, but we may be able to attest that they are citizens.

The Chair: Mr. Anderson.

Hon. David Anderson (Victoria, Lib.): Just to summarize, as I understand it this is essentially an issue of evidence and proof of citizenship. In fact, in principle, it is no different from what might come of any other person who was looking for a travel document or a government benefit such as a pension and had to provide some proof. That is the issue here. Am I right?

Mr. Daniel Jean: You're absolutely right.

Hon. David Anderson: So again, I'll quote an actual case that I had as a member of Parliament—or at least one I intervened in, if I was not then a member. A lady who had lived in Canada virtually all her life married a Canadian army officer who was British in origin but was born in India and had no proof, a birth certificate or anything of that nature. Really, the same problems she faced would be similar to the problems faced by these people—namely, proof of the—

Mr. Daniel Jean: That's right. If she was here before 1947, she is a Canadian like any other person who was in Canada at that time, and then it's the issue of when they get—

Hon. David Anderson: That was certainly my understanding at the time and the understanding of the department, but I would simply point out that in that particular instance proof was the issue, not the citizenship.

Given the fact that an overwhelming number of these spouses are in fact of British origin, and that there would be extremely few of these widows or wives who are not 75 years old or older, would it be racial profiling—and thus constrain you—to say that this is an extremely unlikely group to create terrorist activity if they went to the United States or some other country, and therefore we should be able to fast-track this particular group of people? Are you constrained by restrictions on such things as profiling?

• (1145)

Mr. Daniel Jean: No. As a matter of fact, at the end of my presentation I did say that we were going to try to flag this particular group of cases to make sure they are receiving the delicate attention they deserve. If they have urgent travel needs, we will do as we do for all proof-of-citizenship cases. When people have urgent travel needs, we try to accommodate them.

Hon. David Anderson: Switch then from the spouses to the offspring of Canadian servicemen and war brides. If the children of a war bride and a Canadian serviceman came to Canada subsequent to their birth overseas, does that automatically give them Canadian citizenship, regardless of the length of time they may have spent in Canada, or some other connection with Canada that is required under certain circumstances?

Mr. Clark Goodman: Just so I understand the question, because each of these cases is unique, if they were born in wedlock to a Canadian father and mother, they would derive their citizenship through their father. So yes, in fact they would not have to meet some kind of length-of-residence requirement to become citizens.

Hon. David Anderson: The situation, then, is different from the offspring of such a relationship who never came to Canada—remained in Europe—and are now 60 or more years old and would, at this stage, be ineligible to apply for Canadian citizenship.

Mr. Clark Goodman: That's correct.

Hon. David Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you.

Lui.

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

Thank you, Mr. Jean and Mr. Goodman.

You mentioned on page 10 that you'd be working with organizations representing war brides. Have you worked with them previously, or is this work that's going to be starting? Have we received any data from them as individuals who have had problems or are encountering some sort of delay in obtaining their citizenship or proof of citizenship?

Mr. Daniel Jean: As I said earlier in response to a question from Mr. Siksay, we certainly, over the years, have had to face some of these isolated cases, and we've dealt with them. Some of those may have come to us via the Department of Veterans Affairs or other groups. It's the first time in recent history that this issue has been brought up by external stakeholders. That's why we've certainly made it a point to sit down with some of these stakeholders and see how we can help to better provide and simplify access. It's a very complex issue, as you can see from the exchanges we're having answering these questions. How can we do a better job trying to

provide better information to these people via these stakeholders? How can these stakeholders give them access to our information tools, like our website? These are the things we're trying to do.

On the issue of how permanent the problem is, I think Madam Jarratt would be in a better position to talk about that. What we've seen over the years are isolated cases that have come to our attention.

Mr. Lui Temelkovski: There's been no organization that has come up with 10,000 names and said here are some people who are—

Mr. Daniel Jean: No.

Mr. Lui Temelkovski: Not yet. Would it be an advantage if members of Parliament advertised the website to potential war brides? We've got ten-percenters and householders we're sending out every week, most of us. We can speed up the process and make it available.

Mr. Daniel Jean: Absolutely. If you encounter people who are war brides and have questions about citizenship, directing them to our website or directing them to our call centre is a good thing to do.

Mr. Lui Temelkovski: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Clavet.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Clavet (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was not present when war brides appeared before the Committee. However, according to the background information we were given, several issues were raised, particularly in regards to Canadian war children.

As Mrs. Jarratt said, those children who in many cases are considered as illegitimate children do not have access to the military archives of Library and Archives Canada to find their family roots and their father. I can imagine the plight of those children whose life has already been difficult enough. How could we help them in those extreme situations? At the time, we were talking about “illegitimate” children. But what does that mean today in 2005? We ask ourselves the same question about governments; we don't know if they are legitimate or illegitimate. It doesn't mean anything anymore.

I think that we could at least allow those Canadian war children to access the military files of their fathers at Library and Archives Canada. Has it been considered? How can we still justify that kind of attitude nowadays?

• (1150)

Mr. Daniel Jean: As concerns citizenship requirements, we can certainly do everything in our power to make that information available and accessible. The situation of children who were not here in 1947 becomes much more difficult as you can see because of the nature of citizenship requirements back then.

So, I think it is our duty to give the best information possible, to make sure that in special cases people are able to access that information so that we can help them.

Your second question relates to a much wider issue which goes beyond my responsibilities. I might certainly try to draw it to the attention of the institutions concerned, but I cannot give you an answer.

Mr. Roger Clavet: In a book she wrote, and when she appeared earlier, Mrs. Lister said:

The correspondence war brides received from the Canadian Wives Bureau was headed, "Civilian repatriation section".

Following the same logic, she was asking how it was possible to repatriate civilians by signing them in as landed immigrants. This was a kind of recognition *de facto*. If that information was sent through the Canadian Wives Bureau and if they were considered as civilians, how could they become landed immigrants in the meantime? There was a contradiction in the language used.

I would like to know what you think about this.

Mr. Daniel Jean: I am no expert on military issues. However, from what you are telling me, "civilian repatriation" probably meant the repatriation of spouses and dependants of Canadian servicemen.

If those people came back to Canada before 1947, there was no Canadian citizenship at the time. If they were in this country in 1947, they all became Canadian citizens like every other person who had legal status in Canada at that time.

When those people arrived, they may have been granted landed immigrant status until they got the status of British subject. This situation was corrected by the first Citizenship Act of 1947.

Mr. Roger Clavet: We were talking about the children of war brides who are now without status. In special cases, the Governor-in-Council may intervene.

Do we know how often the Governor-in-Council has granted citizenship to some people in special cases? Is it commonly done or only in exceptional circumstances?

[English]

Mr. Clark Goodman: It is under exceptional cases that we would use a special grant before GIC for someone. Normally there are other ways to make them a citizen or to assist them in proving their citizenship, so it is infrequent.

Mr. Roger Clavet: How frequent is it?

Mr. Clark Goodman: I believe in the past year there have been perhaps five to ten cases.

[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Jean: Mr. Clavet, as we always like to give all the facts to the Committee, we might come back with a letter telling you how many times the special process has been used.

In the specific case you are referring to, it should be remembered that instructions have been in place to deal with that kind of cases, even before this matter has been raised publicly. We shall do our utmost to give the training and the information required to make sure that everyone will know about the existence of this special process in those particular cases.

Mr. Roger Clavet: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Fry.

• (1155)

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): I have no questions, thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Siksay.

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

I want to come back to page five of your brief, Mr. Jean. You talked about who could lose their citizenship, and you mentioned that those born outside Canada or who moved away had to retain their Canadian citizenship by request before age 25, when they stopped being a Canadian. Was that a feature of the 1947 immigration act, or was that something that came in later?

Mr. Daniel Jean: It was a feature of the 1947 act, and in the 1977 act it became just second generation in terms of retention.

Mr. Bill Siksay: We had testimony from the child of a war bride and a Canadian serviceman, who came to Canada in 1946 with his mother. The marriage broke down shortly thereafter, and she took him back to Britain with her. He has recently been trying to re-establish his Canadian citizenship. I think he was originally turned down and he's pursuing that process, but he was under the impression there were some regulations adopted in 1952 that affected his claim on Canadian citizenship. Was there something in 1952 that you're aware of that may have affected this situation?

Mr. Daniel Jean: As you know, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to discuss a specific case here, but if you were to give us the particulars of the case we would certainly be happy to look at it. Clark is a much better expert than I on citizenship issues. He tells me he doesn't recall any specific regulations in 1952, but we will examine that as well.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Just generally, though, someone who came in that circumstance and went back to Britain wouldn't have been guaranteed Canadian citizenship status. They would have had to reapply for that at some point before their 25th birthday.

Mr. Clark Goodman: They would have had to either file for a certificate of retention, or reside in Canada by their 24th birthday.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Doesn't it sort of fly in the face of the guarantee that a lot of these folks felt they had the same citizenship status as their fathers when they came to Canada—both the brides and the children—if that could essentially be stripped from them at some arbitrary point in their lives?

Mr. Daniel Jean: You're suggesting a lot of people lost citizenship for all kinds of different reasons at that time. The way you phrase your question, you're suggesting that citizenship should not be lost under any circumstances. That's not the way citizenship legislation has been structured over time.

Mr. Bill Siksay: I tend to agree that it should be very difficult for people to lose their citizenship.

Mr. Daniel Jean: The department would certainly agree with that.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Maybe I can ask an earlier question. When folks came to Canada, was there a particular process in place, a particular policy? Was it an order in council? Was there legislation that said war brides and the children of servicemen would have the status of their husbands in Canada? Where did that come from?

Mr. Daniel Jean: There are actually two issues. We're assuming these people came before 1947. So what kind of status did they get when they came here, at a time when there was no such thing as a citizenship act? Whatever it was, this is a bit rhetorical, because by 1947, if they were in Canada, they all became Canadian citizens.

But I suspect—and we can certainly advise you in writing as best as our archives can tell us—that these people were British subjects who came as permanent residents to a British Dominion situation. We can certainly look into it. But at the end of the day, I think it's rhetorical, because by 1947 everybody living in Canada who had legal status, including these people, became Canadians.

The Chair: Mr. Mark.

Mr. Inky Mark: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to say that one of the problems, as Mr. Anderson indicated, was evidence and documentation, but the other bigger problem is the departments themselves. I don't think they share a lot of information, and trying to get a department to give me the information they're supposed to have is another story.

In fact, I'll tell you a personal story. My brother, who landed in Canada in 1956, retired a couple of years ago, and he had one heck of a time getting old age pension. The problem was he had no evidence that he was a Canadian. He did not have a baptismal certificate or a birth certificate, and he had lost his landing papers.

I tried to help him retrieve his documentation through the citizenship department, to no avail. In fact, the only way to prove his citizenship was for me to vouch that he was actually my brother. Then they gave him his old age pension. He has worked and lived in Quebec most of his life, and he's still there. Through that experience, I think there's just a lack of coordination. It's difficult to get information.

For example, if I lost my papers when I landed in 1955, how would I go about getting them? I had no birth certificate. That's the first thing they say—you need a birth certificate. I have a baptismal certificate, but if I didn't have one what would I do?

• (1200)

Mr. Daniel Jean: I think you're raising a few very important points. First of all, the department certainly has a responsibility to do as well as it can to make its information available. I would say, as somebody who works in the bureaucracy, it must be available in a language that people understand, which we're not always good at doing, and we have to take good note of that and realize that.

The second thing is that we do 50,000 proofs of citizenship. That's roughly what we did last year. You're describing isolated cases, right? For the most part it's a fairly easy process. I can tell you it's a much easier process than acquiring birth certificates is in certain jurisdictions. For those people who are particular cases, like the ones you described, are we able to do a better job in what businesses sometimes refer to as exception handling? There are exceptions.

Is there a way to be able to give them a bit more care and assistance to try to go through their challenge? I think yes; we have to look into it. This is something that right now, certainly in CIC we are debating in the context of how we can improve services. What we find in CIC is we have a number of our business lines where our service is very good. Take visitor visas, temporary resident visas: there's no country worldwide that does better than Canada. But that doesn't matter. It doesn't matter that for three-quarters of a million people we give the service in 48 hours or less, because if you're the person for whom it's taking two months, you're the one who cares. And that's where we certainly accept the fact that we have to be prepared to try to do a better job.

So use generic information. Put it in a language that people understand. Give them fairly easy access to it. In one of the conversations I was having with Madame Jarratt earlier, we were saying that it doesn't matter if your website is very good and very well constructed; if you don't have direct links to the questions they want answered, there is too much information to go through.

Then for these isolated cases like the ones you described, which seem to require a lot more effort to get a proof of citizenship, is there a way for us to try to assist them a bit?

Those points are well taken.

Mr. Inky Mark: No, but the fact remains that the department has the information there, in terms of when people are landed, right?

Mr. Daniel Jean: Yes, we do.

Mr. Inky Mark: Why is it so difficult to give that information to the people requesting it, whether it's my brother or anybody else in this country?

Mr. Daniel Jean: In theory, when someone loses their proof of landing record, they apply for a replacement, and if we have that information it should not be a problem. I don't know why in this particular case it happens to be, but I can tell you that this is an ongoing activity that we have. We regularly, over the years, issue replacements to people who have lost their proof of record of landing, and that's normally not an issue if the record is there.

Mr. Inky Mark: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

In wrapping up, I would note that we had some 48,000 war brides and 22,000-plus children. We're dealing with a figure close to 70,000, and I'm not sure how many of those are a problem.

One of the people we talked to in Dartmouth was Mr. Martin. There was no question that he had all the identification. He had the picture of his father's passport. He was named on the passport. He had the picture of them landing, and he also had his father's medal. He's having one heck of a time trying to get Canadian citizenship. It's not a question of him not having the proof. He has the proof.

My concern is that as we really don't know how many people we're dealing with, and somehow we have to try to find that out. When we were in the Maritimes, Melynda Jarratt told us that she's been doing a lot of work on this, but really has received no help. It seems to me that the department, faced with this problem, would want to get hold of all the experts it possibly can.

Since then I read the book *Voices of the Left Behind: Project Roots and the Canadian War Children of World War Two*, and Ms. Jarratt wrote that book. It deals with children born either out of wedlock or having returned to England after they came to Canada. It seems to be a real problem. The whole issue on genealogy is an important one, particularly now that we're trying to look at that as predictors of health. We really have an obligation, particularly in the Year of the Veteran. Sixty years after, we're talking about the children, who are all in their sixties, and somehow we have to do what we can. I would urge you to examine the expertise that is out there, including Ms. Jarratt's, who has been doing research on this, and to utilize it to the full extent.

We, as a committee, should not have to go on a tour and find out about an issue that really caused us a great deal of problems when we heard about it. Nobody warned us about any of these issues. And there is a real feeling that we, as a committee, want to do the best we can with this file.

Monsieur Jean, thank you very much for being here. We look forward to further updates. I'm sure you're going to be here for the next half hour listening to Ms. Jarratt when she gives her testimony.

Thank you.

We'll suspend for a minute while we change witnesses.

• (1208)

(Pause)

• (1211)

The Chair: The next person we have with us is Ms. Melynda Jarratt. She's one of the experts on this issue. She's the author of a very informative book, *Voices of the Left Behind*, which deals with war brides and the children of Canadian soldiers.

Ms. Jarratt, could you talk to the committee? It was a pleasure meeting you when we were in the Maritimes, in Fredericton. The committee members who were not there will have the benefit of your input on this very important and pressing issue.

Ms. Melynda Jarratt (Historian, Canadian War Brides): Thank you very much.

It's my great pleasure to be here today. It was a surprise; I didn't expect to be called back. I'm glad I was, though, because it tells me that the temperature has gone up on this issue, and I'd say it's high time. It's only 60 years late.

First of all, I want to tell you a little story. This morning I got on the airplane and there was a fellow on the airplane I know you all know. In fact, I met him on Friday morning here in Ottawa, and I gave him a copy of my book. As it turns out, Senator Roméo Dallaire is one of the children we're talking about, the children of war brides. He came to this country on the *Empire Brent* on December 13, 1946. He landed in Halifax as a six-month-old child, a baby in arms, lived in Canada, and grew up in Quebec. In 1972,

when he had to apply for a passport, he was told that he was not a Canadian citizen. Senator Dallaire told me this morning, when I met him on the airplane again, to please make sure that I told you all his story. He said, "You can use my story, Melynda. Go ahead. Make sure that you tell everybody there that I'm going to be monitoring this issue and I want to know what happens." So Senator Dallaire is interested, and I think that when he gives an order we'd better pay attention to it.

I thought that was interesting. It just goes to show that the children of war brides are everywhere, where you least expect it. A little history lesson. Between 1942 and March 31, 1948, 43,454 war brides—about 94% British—and their 20,997 children were brought to this country in an immigrant wave paid for and sponsored by the Canadian government through an organization called the Canadian Wives Bureau. It was an adjunct of the Department of National Defence. It was formed in 1944 in response to the realization that the war was soon going to be over and that nearly 70,000 dependants—wives and their children born overseas—were going to have to be brought back.

The experience of World War I had struck fear in the hearts of the people in Immigration, and they knew this was going to be a problem. Immigration was involved at first. The file was handed over to DND through the wives bureau. Then, in January 1947, after the bulk of these women were brought over, Immigration took it back. So that's the situation.

Here we are sixty years later, and we have probably half the war brides still alive. I don't know the numbers. I would say a large number of those 20,997 children are alive. The oldest would have been born in September 1940, so they would be just around the corner from 65 years of age, ready to apply for old age pension, CPP, etc. The youngest would have been born as late as March 1948, because the transportation was allowed up until then. So between 65 and 59 or so, that's the age group. These children are calling me, and it's just little old me in Fredericton, New Brunswick. I am an expert on the Canadian war brides, and I have been doing this research for over 20 years. I know more about the Canadian war brides than anybody else in the country. I'm not afraid to say that. I have taken this on with a passion; I love this subject. I'm interested in it, and I will continue to be interested in it.

I did not want to inherit the crown of being the Immigration Act expert because I am certainly not and I'm not going to pretend I am. I'm not a Citizenship Act expert, but I know what I know. I know that Senator Roméo Dallaire was told in 1972 that he's not a Canadian citizen. I know that Jan Walker, who also came on the *Empire Brent*, who now lives in Wasaga Beach, Ontario, and who is the daughter of Brigitte Mary Simms, was told she's not a Canadian citizen.

●(1215)

I know that Ann Withrow, daughter of war bride Doris Lloyd, who came to this country on November 28, 1944, on the *Île de France*, was told she's not a Canadian citizen. I know that Michael and Gerry Thompson, the sons of Alice Lorna Thompson, a British war bride who came to this country in 1947 on the *Queen Mary*, were told they're not Canadian citizens. Ken Smith, the son of a war bride, Maree Smith, who came to this country on June 15, 1945, on the *SS Letitia*, is having a very difficult time, a very difficult time. I have all their correspondence with me.

Susan Bishop, the daughter of a war bride who came to this country in January 1945, was told she's not a citizen. Ken Ross, son of a war bride, came to this country in 1946, and also was told he's not a citizen. Richard Cooper, son of a war bride, came to this country in 1946, and also was told he's not a citizen.

You see, I'm writing these down. I wrote this on the airplane this morning.

Barry Morris, son of a war bride, who came to this country on August 12, 1946, on the *Queen Mary*, was also told he's not a citizen. Susan Leir, daughter of war bride Catherine Mary Spittle, who came to this country in September 1946 on the *Letitia*, was also told she's not a citizen. Carolyn Sidnell, daughter of war bride Kathleen Shepperd, arrived in the summer of 1946 on the *Queen Mary*...

These are just some of the people who have had the wherewithal to contact me to tell me their terrible stories, their nightmarish experiences with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration bureaucracy, which has sunken into a quagmire when it comes to the issue of war brides.

We talked about communications. Several times this has come up here with the testimony of Mr. Jean and Mr. Goodman, and I think this is very important, the issue of communicating the fact that war brides and their children are citizens. Communication is very important.

I have a friend who's a nurse. She told me yesterday that all the documentation in the hospital dealing with patients is at a grade four level. Well, if you go onto the website right now for CIC and try to find something about war brides, first of all, you have to know how to google properly, by putting things in quotes. It's not even a google. You have to put the words "war brides" in quotes in order to get the documents that you are seeking.

Last week I met with Patricia Birkett, registrar of citizenship, and she promised that there would be a link on the website. I know Mr. Jean and Mr. Goodman spoke about that. It's not there yet. I'm not saying that I expected it there this morning....

Well, yes, actually, I did expect it there this morning. It has been a week. I think that's long enough to put a link on a website. I know that as soon as I got back to Fredericton I put a link on my website. It's not that hard to do, and they're getting paid a lot more than I am. I'm getting paid nothing to do this.

Two—I'm just making these points here that grew out of the discussion—I see that a lot of the discussion is about January 1, 1947. On March 31, 1948, war brides and their children continued to arrive. What about those ladies and their children?

Three, on the moral obligation to grant citizenship, this links back here to a discussion a while ago where Mr. Jean said they're like everybody else. Well, I beg to differ. The war brides are not like everybody else. They are a very special group of citizens who were brought to this country at the behest of the Canadian government. Prime Minister Mackenzie King, on August 28, 1946, could not control himself in his praise for the war brides and this wonderful new citizenship that was coming to this country, and the little babies, the little rosy-cheeked babies, these children, these new wonderful additions to Canadian citizenship. He, the Prime Minister of our country, was glowing in his appraisal of the war brides.

I would say that they are indeed different. In fact, I know of no other immigrant group—recently, anyway—that had the honour of a commemorative envelope bestowed upon them, as was done on Sunday. In this country, Canada Post issued a commemorative envelope in honour of the Canadian war brides. I know, because I worked on it with them. It was done for a reason, because they are special. They are not asking to be treated any differently than anybody else, but they and their children don't want to be told when they inquire that they're not Canadian citizens.

●(1220)

This goes back to communication. Something is not connecting at Citizenship and Immigration Canada. All these people whose names I've given you have been told they're not citizens, and to say it's just an isolated case—I disagree. I beg to differ. This is not an isolated case; it's happening all the time, and it's been happening historically as well, but these women suffered in silence.

My next concern is point number four, children born out of wedlock, which links to the comments by Mr. Clavet and deals with issues of children who are looking for their fathers' information through the personnel records unit at the National Archives here in Ottawa. My book, *Voices of the Left Behind*, deals with this issue, but it is a serious problem.

The Privacy Act is always used as the reason these children can't get access to their fathers' military personnel records. It's a terrible blemish on Canada's participation in World War II. There are 30,000 of these so-called illegitimate—a word we don't use any more—children who grew up being called bastards, and they can't get the information about their fathers to determine, in fact, whether they have any rights. They can't even get in the door. The door is locked on them.

It is an issue somewhat separate from that of children of war brides. Children of war brides—their mothers and fathers were married.

Issue number five talked about why this is an issue now and why it wasn't an issue earlier. It's an issue now because of the 60th anniversary of the end of the war. The media is hungry for a good story.

It's also an issue because I happen to know the CP reporter in Fredericton. She phoned me up on Wednesday night—the night before the hearings in Fredericton—and said, “Melynda, you're appearing before a committee tomorrow morning. What's that all about?” I said, “What committee?” I didn't even know I was supposed to appear before this committee. It had not been communicated to me; I can understand it was an error, but it's like...fate intervened. I'm so glad the CP reporter, Chris Morris, called me and asked me about it. It's just a mistake; I don't mean to say that, Bill. Things happen. It's just that I'm very glad that she did call me, because otherwise we wouldn't be sitting here today, and things wouldn't have turned out as they have.

It was brought to our attention because of the work of a lot of different people. The lost Canadians have been talking about war brides for many years, and it's been brought to our attention because these children, who are now in their sixties, are fed up. They're not going to take it like their mothers did, suffering in silence, and with the Internet now, they can communicate and link up to people quickly, so it's an issue now.

It has always been an issue, as we know, because these 43,454 war brides.... What's proof of citizenship? Even I was confused. I was born in Bathurst, New Brunswick. What's my proof of citizenship? I know it's my birth certificate, but when you're not born in Canada, what is your proof of citizenship? It starts getting very confusing. Just tell them “It's simple, stupid. It's a certificate of citizenship.” It doesn't have to be made complicated. Why is it so complicated? Everything has to be complicated. Make it simple.

Have a war bride link on the website—two paragraphs of text—and there explain what you do. If you're of this, you go here. If you're here, go there.

Number six is the website, the different tools. Yes, MPs, please do what you can. According to my friend Kevin Ross, who is a war bride child, there are a number of places things could be done. For example, a poster could be put in the Legion—and circulars, all kinds of things, and the Legion magazine—that's pretty obvious.

At the National Archives—I mentioned access to files for war children.

Point number eight is the Governor in Council can grant citizenship. I'd like to know more about that. I'd like that information given to me so I can explain it to the people who are asking me.

• (1225)

Number nine is the proof of landing with the passenger lists. I do have access to that information. It's very difficult to get, to say the least, and as Mr. Inky Mark said, trying to get that information.... I'll put it in my own words: it's like extracting teeth. It's very difficult.

There are so many things that could be said, I could go on for hours. It's an interesting subject. I won't do it to you because I know you probably have other things to do today that are more important. Let's just put it this way: the war brides are pretty important and special people in Canadian history and they deserve to be treated with that tender loving care. Their children, who are now pushing 65, also feel the same way, because they've inherited that history and that symbolism of their parents.

I think that's what I'll say for today.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Jarratt.

We're going to be very quick in the questions because we're squeezed for time. If you can, keep it to about three minutes.

Mr. Mark.

Mr. Inky Mark: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being here. I think the country owes you a debt for your professional work on this topic.

You're correct, we are 60 years too late. Perhaps you're right that if it wasn't for the anniversary, we wouldn't be getting the press we're getting today. War brides are special. Many of us grew up with children of war brides, especially if you lived in a smaller community like the one I grew up in, and they made a tremendous contribution to this country. It is bewildering that we'd even be speaking about this topic 60 years after the war.

I have a couple of questions for you. What I need you to respond to is this. For most of us there's really a simple way of resolving this. Is it so difficult to resolve because of politics or because of bureaucracy?

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: I don't think it's politics; I think it's bureaucracy. I think the bureaucracy is incapable of handling what they call unique, isolated cases. They're not unique; there are a lot of them. I'm getting them. I can give you ten unique cases right now if someone wants to sink their teeth into them. They're interesting and complicated, yes, as people's lives are. It's a bureaucratic problem, I believe, but not one that's impossible to overcome.

Mr. Inky Mark: Should we take a simple approach, perhaps set some conditions, and maybe grandfather this group of individuals? Would that be the easiest way to resolve it, instead of going through, as you say, a process where the burden of proof is on you? It goes on and on and just doesn't get done.

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: Any child who came here as part of the war bride transport is identified in the passenger lists. I have them or I've seen them, and they're not impossible to get. Their mother was a war bride.

Listen, if someone wanted to say, hey, that lady is not a war bride, it's easy to find out if they're not. Every war bride was joyfully welcomed by every single newspaper across the country, and her name was printed. Forget the privacy acts back then. There was no such thing as a privacy act. Each woman's name, their destination, their husband's name, their children's names, and who was receiving them were all printed in the newspaper quite gleefully as wonderful news. This was post-war Canada and they were looking for some good news. This was good news, babies and women arriving, happy new citizens.

It's not hard to figure out and not hard to find; someone just has to do the work.

• (1230)

Mr. Inky Mark: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madam Faille.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: This issue was raised the last time. What is the financial situation of people asking for your services? The people who came to see me do not have much money and find that the amounts required are prohibitive. I would like to know, because I have such cases in my riding. As I said earlier, I live near Sainte-Anne Hospital for veterans which means that I have several veterans' families in my riding. After the publication of a press report, five people came to my office. How many are they? You said that there are a number of them. I would like to know what is their financial situation because they are getting older and from what we are told, it is possible that they didn't get what they were entitled to. I would like you to tell us about their situation.

[English]

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: Well, I can tell you right now that the average working person in this country makes less than \$25,000 a year, and not everybody has an RRSP and all this other stuff to protect them. If you're being asked to provide proof you are a citizen, that could entail trying to track down historical documents from England or Holland.

It costs you every time you try to get one of these documents, and we're talking about hundreds of dollars. Jan Walker has spent \$1,500. In fact, I have her receipts, which she kept in the hope someday someone would pay her back, as she was so mad. I know someone else here cannot afford \$200.... A lady who has cancer just wrote to me; Susan Bishop has been diagnosed with cancer and is very concerned about her citizenship because she wants to make sure all this is straightened out soon, for good reason. I don't have to say why.

You know, \$200 or \$300 is a lot of money for these people, so yes, the cost is prohibitive in many cases. I'd like to see the fee waived in cases of war brides and war bride children.

After all, they were brought here. It's a very different and unique situation. They weren't like other Canadians. It's unparalleled, unheard of. The phenomenon of the war brides has never been duplicated in Canadian immigration history that I know of, ever.

So yes, why not? Given the circumstances of most people's finances, if they cannot afford it, why not allow them to get it for free? Why not?

Rich people can afford it; they don't mind paying the \$75 and \$25 and \$55 and \$105. I know for me that would be prohibitive. I couldn't afford it.

The Chair: Mr. Siksay.

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

Thanks, Ms. Jarratt, for being here again and for being as clear and straightforward as you were the last time with us. It's very helpful for us.

I'll ask you the same question I asked Mr. Jean. With the government's announcement last week, what has actually changed? Has anything actually changed? It strikes me that if I were being very cynical, I'd say the only thing that seems to have changed is that you can now write "war bride" on the outside of your envelope and it

goes into a special pile in Sydney. It seems like everything else, every requirement, is exactly the same as it was before. Do you see any change as a result of the recent announcement?

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: I'd like to be able to say they'll be a little bit more humanitarian in their approach to these sometimes very complicated cases. Yes, they are complicated. None of these are easy, and there are a lot of them. There are a tremendous number of them.

That's one thing I'd like to see changed. I haven't actually seen evidence of it yet except in the case of Michael and Gerry Thompson, who apparently, as of Friday afternoon, due to the intervention of Mr. Telegdi and a number of other people, including me, and David Chaplin, who has been with me and assisting as much as he can from Ottawa....

David? Where'd he go? He left? He's going to be really insulted.

Anyway, David has been quite helpful in penetrating the bureaucracy and getting someone to pay attention to these very difficult cases.

I'll just relate to you what happened. Michael Thompson is the trustee of his brother Gerry, who is in receipt of Ontario disability benefits. In November he received a letter saying that it was time for a review of his file, and they noted that he was not Canadian-born and therefore needed to prove his Canadian citizenship. He had to get proof of Canadian citizenship, so Michael, being his trustee, went about doing that. He contacted CIC and within a month or so received a letter saying, "Thank you for your application. Expect to hear from us in ten months." That was in January.

Two weeks ago, ironically, on the same day that I appeared before the committee in Fredericton, on April 21—Has it only been two weeks?—he received a letter from Ontario disability telling him, "We have given you enough time. You have not produced a certificate. You're getting cut off on May 6." That's the reality. I can tell you right now that this gentleman, Mr. Gerry Thompson, had he not had the help of his brother, would be homeless on the streets. This is what it's resulting in. This is the very practical end result, and this is a fellow we don't want to see homeless. We don't want to see anybody made homeless because of a bureaucratic error.

It turns out he is indeed a citizen, and his paperwork has been completed, and he will be getting his certificate this week. So thank you. The humanitarian gestures are much appreciated. We need more of them.

In terms of what else has happened, we need to see the link on the CIC website. It's pretty obvious. Two words—not proof of citizenship, but "war bride" is what I want to see there: war bride. I won't be happy until I see that. And it needs to bring them to the information they need, which is maybe a two-paragrapher explaining what to do and who to contact, a real human being who can say "I understand your situation". Also provide me with that information so that I can disseminate it on my website, which is the central clearing house for any war-brides-related issues. That's the way it's happened. I didn't expect it to turn out that way, but over the years it has.

What has changed? They seem to say they're going to do something. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. I say the judge and jury on this issue are going to the 20,997 children and the I don't know how many war brides who are going to be faced with the bureaucracy when they make their applications. I'm encouraging them. We also have Senator Dallaire, who has made it abundantly clear that he wants this issue straightened out once and for all.

What has changed? We have some attention on it.

● (1235)

The Chair: We'll have to see if we can get Senator Dallaire in at some point to be a witness on this issue.

I want to thank you very much for coming forward.

I asked you last time to bring some of your books—

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: I'm sorry—

The Chair: —because it's an important thing that the committee members should have.

David?

Hon. David Anderson: I just would like to ask a question if I could, because you mentioned the evidentiary problem of getting proof and said that DND immigration landing records are easy to obtain, and they're all there, every name is listed. I think that's a paraphrase of what you said.

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: Yes.

Hon. David Anderson: You also talked about the newspaper accounts being readily available. Have you had any cases where this type of evidence that you've produced, this easily obtainable evidence, has been rejected by Citizenship and Immigration Canada?

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: No, I have not seen a case where we've been able to introduce this evidence. I have been told it wouldn't work, that it wasn't good enough.

Hon. David Anderson: You have no specific cases where they've rejected this issue?

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: No, they haven't rejected it because if you don't fit their pigeon hole, which is birth certificate or marriage certificate, the newspaper article from 1946 with Mummy holding the baby and everybody with big smiles and the name of the woman and where she's going is not good enough, apparently. I personally have not seen a case where it was rejected, because they know better than to try. It's pointless. But where the evidence is not readily available, I don't see why we can't use that. Who's doctoring the *Telegraph-Journal* from Saint John, New Brunswick, in 1946? I don't know if someone has nothing else to do.

Hon. David Anderson: Yes, but the dilemma we face is that of course government does have responsibility to treat all citizens fairly and equally, and while I appreciate you want to put a group of citizens, for the reasons you've given, in a special category, there are still issues with respect to fairness and equality of treatment.

I just wonder, then, if these records are so clear, the DND immigration records, landing records—let's exclude the newspaper, if you think that may be questionable—why these records have never been accepted or used by Immigration and Citizenship Canada. It

seems to me such a straightforward opportunity of evidence to obtain the documentation, be it a passport, be it a benefit required.

I just would like that confirmed, that those records are freely available, clear, and you have no example of them not being used by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

● (1240)

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: They are available; they're freely available through the National Archives. They're called the nominal rolls. Every passenger, every woman and child who came to Canada under the Canadian Wives Bureau's transportation between August 15, 1944, and January 17, 1947, is listed on a passenger list, what they called a nominal roll. It names her husband's name; his military registration number; the district he came from; the street she lived on in whatever country she came from; her destination, including the name of the person she was going to and the street they were going to live on; the child's name; the child's birth date; the wife's full name. I mean, everything is there.

It's their landing record. If nothing else will do, that would certainly seem to be to be pretty solid evidence that this woman came to this country with this little baby.

Hon. David Anderson: Again, I agree with you, and that's the point I'm trying to get to. That is, in regard to the list of applicants you've given who have been told that they were not citizens, in all the cases that you know of where they've been able to establish that they, at age 60, actually are the much older example of that tiny child whose name was on the list, have they still had trouble, or have they not had trouble?

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: When I say the passenger lists are readily available, I mean they're readily available to me—I know where to find them. But I'm just one little person in Fredericton on a microfilm reader going through those, two and three hours at a time when I can, after work on Thursday night or on Saturday afternoons. It's humanly impossible for me to provide all that information to people on an individual basis.

The Chair: I'm going to cut this off now, because I asked for three minutes. We're running over, and now you're up to almost five minutes. So we're going to wrap this up. I don't want to get into a session here.

I would like to thank you very much, Ms. Jarratt, for coming forward. Like I said, we're looking forward to your book. Thank you for some of the attention you helped focus on this issue, because it is important. Of course, we're going to be monitoring the department very carefully on this issue. I hope at some point in time they'll be calling you for your expertise on this matter, because I know the committee will.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Melynda Jarratt: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Now we're going to suspend for a few minutes.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Mr. Chair, I'm wondering if you could just flag for the committee that I hope at some point we will look further into the issue of the war children, the so-called illegitimate children of service people. If we could do some further work in the committee on that, I think it would be a very important thing for us to do.

The Chair: We definitely will. And I asked Ms. Jarratt to make this book available because it does have some real heart-wrenching stories about exactly those people you're talking about. I'm hoping we will be in a position to deal with this much more vigorously.

Thank you very much.

I'm going to suspend the committee, because we're going to go in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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