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Chair

Mr. David Tilson

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● (0900)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC)): Ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

We're going to start the meeting. This is the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, meeting number 29, on Thursday, October 22, 2009. The orders of the day are pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), and we are considering a study of foreign credential recognition.

Before we start the meeting, as some of you—hopefully all of you—may know, we are meeting with a delegation of the Inspector General of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees at 12 o'clock in room 112-North. This is an informal meeting. However, there is one thing that needs to be dealt with, and that is sandwiches, so I have a hospitality expenses motion:

That the Clerk of the Committee make the necessary arrangements for a light lunch at the informal meeting at 12 p.m. on Thursday, October 22 with the delegation of the Inspector General of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

Ms. Mendes is moving that.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): There is a proposal for an amendment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Right. You want fruit, I suppose.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Did he ask for the meeting, or did we?

The Chair: He asked for the meeting.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I see. I'm of the impression that when someone asks to go for lunch or invites you out, that's pretty standard—

The Chair: You're a good Conservative, Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: —and that the person who is asking is the one paying.

The Chair: We have to keep moving here.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: If I could make a comment, I understood they wanted to meet with us at 1 and for some reason we proposed the 12 o'clock meeting.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Yes, so the minister should pay.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: That sounds like a smart chairman, in my opinion.

The Chair: Okay, if you don't want lunch, don't vote for it.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The motion is carried.

We have important matters to deal with, ladies and gentlemen.

We have three witnesses. I'm sorry to have to put you through that, but it had to happen.

We have three guests today: Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac, who is the executive director of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council; Ms. Amy Casipullai, of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants; and Mr. Timothy Owen, of World Education Services.

I want to thank you for coming to help with the topic the committee is going to deal with. As I indicated, you have up to 10 minutes each to make preliminary comments, after which members of the committee may have some questions for you.

We'll start with Mr. Owen.

Thank you, sir.

● (0905)

Mr. Timothy Owen (Director, World Education Services): Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.

My name is Timothy Owen. I'm the director of World Education Services, which is involved in credential evaluation work in the province of Ontario and across Canada. I'll mention a few words about it a bit later on.

I wanted to speak to you about some of the challenges and issues—a few of them, anyway—facing people who come to Canada with education credentials earned abroad. I also want to recognize some of the important steps that have been taken by governments and institutions over the past ten years to try to address these challenges. I'd like to speak to you today about maybe four or five.

First is improving consistency in the recognition of international qualifications by licensing bodies and academic institutions. Second is the academic and labour mobility of immigrants through the portability of the credentials they've earned and could use across the country as they move from province to province. Third is access by immigrants to appropriate information on the process of getting their credentials recognized and to services. Fourth is recognition of international credentials held by temporary foreign workers and international students. This is a growing number of people. Finally, of course, is the need for greater collaboration among all the parties involved in these many processes.

I think we know most of the numbers, and we don't need to go over them. Seventy percent of working-age immigrants to Canada have some post-secondary education. All of our labour market growth is going to come from immigration in the next few years.

It's also important to know that skilled immigrants are twice as likely as Canadians to be underemployed. That is, of the people who are working in a job that requires less than a post-secondary education but who hold more than post-secondary education credentials, twice as many, by percentage, are immigrants.

I think we're also aware of the economic and social costs of unemployment and underemployment for these individuals. We are aware of the complexity—the maze, you might say—they have to navigate to have their credentials assessed and recognized for licensure and appropriate employment. We also recognize the growing international competition Canada faces for skilled labour.

We are probably less likely to be aware of the cost to governments and taxpayers of paying for individuals to go to educational institutions in Canada to gain credentials they already have. And we may not be aware of the inconsistencies immigrants face when having their credentials assessed by academic institutions.

It is estimated that about 40% of skilled immigrants go back to school once they arrive in Canada. That would represent about 40,000 people a year. If each of them took only one course, the cost to them would be over \$40 million. The cost to the taxpayer would probably be about \$20 million. That is just to take one course that they may have already earned during their education before coming to Canada.

WES is an international not-for-profit organization. We've been involved in the business of assessing foreign credentials for about 34 years. We're the Province of Ontario's recognized evaluation service. Along with recognized services in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Quebec, we are members of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada. Last year, the members of this alliance probably assessed the credentials of about 30,000 people who came to Canada, and sent those credentials either to employers at academic institutions or to licensing bodies.

Last year, from our office in Toronto, we provided services to about 9,000 people and compared their credentials to those of Canadians.

About 10% of our applications come from overseas, and while this number increased dramatically, by almost 50%, in the previous year, we still believe it's too low a number considering the movement of people to Canada. We believe that many more should be able to start the process of having their credentials assessed before they come to Canada.

I last spoke to this committee in the spring of 2005. Since then there has been much progress, both at the federal and provincial levels. HRSDC's foreign credential recognition program has funded a great number of programs since that time. It's provided leadership and incentives for many groups to become interested and involved in credential recognition issues. It's provided a vehicle for the federal government to influence, shape, and inform research and action. One of the grants they made assisted the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services and others that evaluate credentials to come

together to begin to collaborate and develop consistent and portable assessments of credentials within a pan-Canadian framework. We hope to continue this work with our colleagues and with the government.

Ontario and Manitoba have passed fair access legislation, which sets standards for access to regulated professions by internationally educated applicants. Other provinces are considering similar legislation. CIC's Foreign Credentials Referral Office has worked to provide information to newcomers through their information portal, and it has collaborated with others that provide information on foreign credential recognition.

● (0910)

Through them and through HRSDC, the Canadian immigrant integration project has offered pre-departure services to immigrants coming from three major source countries, and I believe this is going to be expanded to many more countries in the future. Part of what they do, in collaboration with us and others, is to have a preliminary assessment of credentials before people come to Canada.

The federal government has also facilitated the development of mutual recognition agreements among Canadian regulatory bodies, which has important implications for internationally educated applicants who want to move across Canada. The government is also currently developing a pan-Canadian framework for qualifications recognition.

Not part of this process but another interesting development during this time has been the establishment of the Canadian experience class, which allows people who have come to Canada as international students or temporary workers to apply for and stay in Canada as permanent residents.

So while most of the work involving the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials lies within provincial jurisdiction, there is clearly a lot the federal government can do and has done and should continue to do.

From our perspective, the real challenge isn't to develop greater capacity to determine Canadian equivalence of international credentials, which we and others have been doing in a consistent and reliable way for many years, but rather how the results of these assessments are recognized by licensing bodies, academic institutions, and employers. If the work of provincially mandated evaluated services were more broadly understood, promoted, and used, many of the issues we are addressing today could be resolved more quickly. We don't need to develop the means to evaluate foreign credentials; we just need to better understand and harmonize the processes and resources we have.

One example we're working on right now is with a group of regulators in Ontario to standardize the type of academic documents that are required to be submitted for assessment and to develop protocols for sharing these documents once they've been verified. To us, this is the first step towards portability. If someone has gone to the trouble and expense to have their documents sent in an official manner from their school overseas to an evaluation service in Canada or to a licensing body, they shouldn't need to do this again when they move from one province to another or if they want to use their credentials for another purpose. At the moment, they do have to do that. Further, it would be better if they were told before leaving their home country exactly what documents they need to have sent and if they were encouraged to begin that process at that point.

But it's not just permanent residents who face the challenge of foreign credential recognition. We shouldn't ignore the importance of this process for international students who are coming to study in Canada. About 178,000 international students are in Canada at any one time, and about 80,000 new international students arrive each year. The Canadian experience class allows many of them to remain in Canada as skilled workers, which is a good thing, and there's increasing global demand not just for international students but for processes to help them stay in countries that they come to as students.

One of the factors that may help them choose which country to study in is the extent to which their previous study will be recognized and accepted when they apply to come to Canada or when they apply to an institution. Will they receive recognition for their previous degrees and obtain admission with advanced standing, and if they stay on in Canada after they graduate, will the Canadian government consider their previous study as well as their Canadian study when they are assessed for immigration? They're being assessed for skilled immigration, but it's only the Canadian study that is assessed at this point.

The Canadian experience class also allows those who have come to Canada as temporary workers to apply to remain as skilled workers. But when they apply, it's not the skills of the worker that are assessed but the skills of the job they are currently in. As many of these individuals come as temporary workers and are more highly qualified than the skills demand, when it's only the skills of the job that are being assessed and not the skills of the individual, we're missing out on many qualified individuals.

In both cases, the government considers their applications as skilled immigrants, but they don't actually assess the qualifications these people have brought with them to Canada, only the skills of the job they've been in or the qualifications they've earned in Canada. I think we should change that.

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds left, sir.

Mr. Timothy Owen: We would have said maybe five years ago that the biggest problem that immigrants faced in having their credentials assessed was lack of information. I think since that time there has been more information put on federal, provincial, municipal, and organizational websites than we could imagine. The problem now is not having more information but trying to make that information accessible, searchable, and usable.

Lastly, we're finding that immigrants do get work in the labour force. They're less employed than Canadians, but the big issue for them is underemployment. They're working in jobs that are not appropriate to their qualifications.

● (0915)

The Chair: Sir, we're pressed for time. Maybe your comments will surface in questions.

We'll move on to Ms. Casipullai. You have up to 10 minutes, please. Thank you for coming.

Ms. Amy Casipullai (Coordinator, Policy and Public Education, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCA-SI)): Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the standing committee, for this opportunity to appear before you. I do policy and public education at the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, OCASI. We're the umbrella organization for the immigrant and refugee-serving sector in Ontario, and we're the largest of our kind, given that most immigrants come to Ontario.

OCASI was founded in 1978, so we've been around for about 31 years. We're a registered charity. Our members are located across the province in centres large and small, large urban centres and smaller communities. So what I bring to you is informed by the experience of our member agencies and their clients, both in the credentials recognition process and also in the labour market integration process in the communities in which they live. They don't all look the same, obviously.

I'm not going to repeat everything that Tim has said so wonderfully, which gives me a bit more time, I think. I want to focus on three key areas in my presentation. There is the process itself, the cost, and, most importantly for OCASI, the labour market integration piece.

First, about the process, as Tim has said, a lot of work has been done, both by the federal government and various provincial governments, in making the process more accessible, transparent, and effective in addressing the realities of immigrants and refugees. OCASI feels a significant gap is a shortage of practicum opportunities, whatever you might call them, in the different fields. So in many fields, such as the medical profession, when someone has to do a placement to go to the end of the process, there is a limit to the number of available opportunities. It's quite ridiculous in Ontario, which has a shortage of general medical practitioners and yet not enough spaces for internationally trained doctors to qualify.

The other problem that is part of this is that the practicum opportunities don't often pay enough for most people to pursue them. So what we've heard from our member agencies is that many clients are making a decision not to do that. They simply cannot afford it, because this comes on top of paying fees, paying for tests, and also because the majority of their clients are underemployed and overrepresented in low-paid contingent types of work in the labour market. So it makes it very difficult for them to access any opportunity they can follow to complete the process of credential recognition.

OCASI recommends that the federal government—because we think it is the federal government that can play a strong role in this—invest in creating more practicum opportunities across all the fields that require this type of placement to complete credentials recognition. This could be done either through incentives to the regulatory bodies or through direct investments through employers in internships or placement opportunities, all of which should be paid at the market rate rather than at a lower rate, which would really not make a difference.

The second piece I'd like to look at is the cost of the entire process. Perhaps Tim's experience is different, but what we hear from our member agencies is that for most of their clients, the cost is enormously prohibitive and puts it out of their reach.

OCASI is a steering committee member of the Colour of Poverty campaign. The campaign has looked at who is poor in Canada, and our findings, based on census data and other studies from Stats Canada, show that members of racialized communities, including recent immigrants, are overrepresented among the poor and working poor in Canada. So we have found a strong intersection between race and poverty. The majority of immigrants who have arrived in Canada in the last 10 years are racialized, and we have seen the intersection of race and poverty reproduced in that population as well, and women are overrepresented in both groups. What this means is that—

• (0920)

The Chair: A point of order, Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Just a clarification, Amy, and I don't mean to interrupt your presentation. You used the word “racialized”.

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Right.

The Chair: Maybe you could speak to the Chair, Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Through you, Chair, I was just wondering—and I'm sorry for not respecting the work you're doing here. I just wondered, through you, if I could find out from Amy the meaning of the word “racialized”.

The Chair: Maybe it could wait for your two minutes.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I would like it to be clear in terms of the presentation before I ask the questions.

The Chair: Carry on.

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Thank you.

I can actually provide a clarification. The Colour of Poverty campaign uses this definition, that race is a social construct; it uses “racialized” in that context. What it would mean is someone who is not white, regardless of their country of origin and country of birth. Because of the way migration patterns have emerged in the last 25 years or so, country of birth is not a predictor of race. I hope that clears it up.

We found a strong intersection between race and poverty. What this means is that the cost of the actual process is prohibitive for many immigrants. Most are among the working poor, even though they work more than 35 hours a week just to meet basic living costs, and many cannot afford the fees, as I said before, to complete an assessment or write a test, and they don't have the resources to complete a practicum.

Our second recommendation is that together with subsidized placement opportunities, the federal government invest in a grant rather than a loan program for those of low-income background who seek to have credentials recognized.

The third piece is labour market integration. OCASI believes that any analysis of the foreign credentials recognition challenge must look at labour market integration, because after all, immigrants pursue credentials recognition for a purpose, primarily to work. This is the single largest gap that we have found in any government investment in this process, whether it is at the federal or provincial level. Most initiatives we have found are good. They are welcome, they are important and they are a good start, but most of them have focused on improving the immigrant, building a better immigrant, so to speak, and they have paid little or no attention to dismantling labour market barriers, to actually using the now-recognized credentials to get and retain a job in one's field.

For example, the federal government recently introduced *The Employer's Roadmap*. It is an amazing tool. It's a useful first step in addressing this challenge because it gives employers the information they need to hire an internationally trained worker. But this alone is not sufficient to facilitate labour market integration. It doesn't address, it cannot address, systemic barriers such as racism and xenophobia, which is a very real phenomenon that many immigrants encounter in the labour market. While the information the road map provides to employers is useful, it assumes that most employers are willing to hire internationally trained workers, which is why they are seeking that information. We feel this assumption is dangerous.

What we recommend is that the federal government should invest in tax subsidies or other financial incentives for employers to actually take that step, to hire internationally trained workers. We also urge the federal government to look at its own hiring practices to comply more effectively with federal employment equity legislation. We know that federally regulated private sector employers such as financial institutions are doing far better than the federal government in practising employment equity, particularly in hiring members of racialized communities, including recent immigrants. The federal government needs to do better in this area.

One suggestion we have in that area is to look at contract compliance; that is, if the government subcontracts to a third party, a requirement would be written into the contract so that the third-party contractor would also follow employment equity.

Finally, we strongly urge you to look at the data collection piece, because right now we actually don't have a good picture of what immigrants' experience is in labour market integration and in pursuing credentials recognition. What we would like to see is disaggregated data, that is data disaggregated by race and gender, which gives us a better picture of where the gaps are and who is affected, because we know that these initiatives don't impact on everyone in the same way. They're actually quite different.

We would like you to take a look at collecting that kind of data, which is critically important and which can actually work very well with the work that Statistics Canada has already undertaken in this area.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. McIsaac. Thank you for coming.

● (0925)

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac (Executive Director, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council): Thank you, and good morning, honourable Chair and members.

My name is Elizabeth McIsaac. I am the executive director of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council—for short, TRIEC, which is much simpler.

TRIEC is a multi-stakeholder council bringing together employers, community organizations, colleges and universities, occupational regulatory bodies, credential assessment service providers, and all three orders of government: federal, provincial, and municipal/regional. We do so in order to seek practical solutions to connect skilled immigrants with appropriate employment—a very singular mission.

At TRIEC, our understanding of foreign credential recognition is cast broadly. In an effort to maximize our reach and impact, we have focused on those highly skilled immigrants who are seeking employment in non-regulated occupations. These represent the majority of immigrants who are coming to Canada. They are sales managers, financial analysts, software developers, project managers, marketing managers, HR professionals, and so on.

Whether and how their credentials, experience, and qualifications are recognized is ultimately up to the employer. Our work with regard to foreign credential recognition has been focused largely on reaching out to employers to build their capacity to effectively recognize immigrant skills, experience, and qualifications.

For many employers, concerns around hiring skilled immigrants include not understanding their experience, not being familiar with their credentials, and questioning their communication skills. Often, the requirement for “Canadian work experience”, of which you hear all the time, is in fact a proxy for not knowing how to interpret the immigrant's qualifications. This lack of familiarity and the perception of risk that goes along with it lead to widespread non-recognition of immigrant qualifications by employers.

This has been our focus since TRIEC was established in 2003. We think it is important to recognize that some programs, initiatives, and practices have met with success and that future directions should build on this success. The remainder of my comments this morning will therefore focus on opportunities that I think the federal government should consider in order to facilitate immigrant attachment to the labour market and to mitigate the impact of the current economic climate on skilled immigrants and ensure that immigrants and employers alike are ready for the recovery.

First, internships or work experience programs more generally have been very successful employment interventions, because they

involve employers directly. Internships can provide immigrants with their first job in Canada as well as with professional references, both of which reassure risk-averse employers. On average, more than 80% of participants find full-time work in their field upon completion of a work experience program. This is a highly successful outcome, both for the individual and for the economy. However, the demand for internships from immigrants far exceeds the number of participating employers and positions.

There are also employers in communities across the country who would welcome an internship program but who lack the capacity to establish one. There is need for a national internship program. It could leverage the participation of employers across the country through a variety of instruments, including paid internships, wage subsidies, and tax credits.

These incentives may be particularly important to encourage the participation of small and medium-sized businesses, which we know create 80% of the new jobs in Canada. It would also send an important message to Canadian employers if the federal government were the lead employer in this initiative. It would be very important to see the federal government as the leader in providing internships to immigrants. There has been a pilot in the last year with CIC and HRSDC in this regard. I think the success of that pilot should be expanded.

Second, mentoring programs have been successful because they connect skilled immigrants with a mentor who is an established colleague in their occupation. The mentor shares professional networks and helps them to navigate the job search. The “mentee”, or skilled immigrant job-seeker, gains a greater understanding of the occupational context and of expectations in Canada.

In 2004, TRIEC launched something called The Mentoring Partnership. Almost 80% of surveyed participants in this program have found employment, and of those, 80% were in their field. To date, more than 4,000 immigrants have been matched through this program. While many smaller-scale mentoring programs are currently offered across the country, they have difficulty finding high-quality mentors and they lack marketing resources.

As well, while mentoring programs are extremely cost-efficient, these initiatives are not well-funded. Creating a national mentoring program would allow for enhanced program quality and coordination, would increase employer participation, and would provide reliable and sustained funding. Again, it would be important to see the federal government as a lead employer in such an initiative.

● (0930)

Third, bridging programs are successful. They bring together key stakeholders, employers, occupational regulatory bodies, and educational institutions to work together to assess immigrants' skills and competencies, to deliver training, and to provide mentoring or workplace experience. The objective of these programs is to fill any gaps that may exist in the knowledge or skills, while avoiding duplication in an immigrant's education and training.

To date, there have been very successful examples of bridge training in various sectors: in health care, engineering, information technology, financial services, education, and so on. Most bridging programs have been funded by provincial ministries, and while the outcomes of bridging programs have been very promising, they are only accessible to a limited number of participants and are not self-sustaining.

There may be an opportunity for the federal government to create a sustainable investment stream for a coordinated bridge training program across the provinces, as well as a loans program to enable participation in these programs. In Ontario, the Maytree Foundation launched a loans fund program for immigrants who are doing training. It has been incredibly successful. The repayment rate is over 90%. I think it's time that we look at replicating and taking it to scale.

Finally, I believe we need a national strategy for employers in Canada, so that we are better able to recruit, retain, and promote skilled immigrants. Employers are key stakeholders in this issue, as it is they who ultimately recognize or reject the credentials and skills of immigrants. A national strategy could do three things: one, develop awareness among employers; two, create and disseminate tools that support employers in working with immigrants; and three, connect employers to the programs and supports that will build our capacity.

First, there is still a need to increase employer awareness of the value of immigrant skills and of how including this talent pool can make Canada more productive and competitive in the global marketplace. As the Canadian economy looks forward to recovery, the time is right to work with employers to understand this opportunity and to support their ability to take advantage of it. With support from CIC and the FCR, TRIEC has been successful in running awareness campaigns in the Toronto region to engage employers. We also have run an employer awards program to shine the light on those employers who have demonstrated innovation in leadership and to build momentum around the employer community.

Second, employers need tools and resources to support their change. There exists a wide array of assessment tools for language, academic credentials, and occupational competencies, and there are HR practices that employers need to know about and trust. I think there is an opportunity for the federal government, through the FCRO, to convene sector councils, other sector-specific employer associations, and regulatory bodies to participate in the development, recognition, and promotion of sector-specific language and occupational competency assessment tools.

And third, while labour market programs for immigrants have been developed and been invested in, there has not yet been a parallel investment in programs targeted directly at employers. There is a strong and growing demand from employers for support in recruiting, assessing, and retaining skilled immigrants. A first step in this direction would be to create a single point of entry for employers.

Many employers are hesitant to consider government programs because of the red tape and the complexity. This is even more the case among the small and medium-sized community. As a result, most SMEs—small and medium-sized enterprises—are not aware of

programs that could help them. The programs need to be more accessible. It would be helpful to create and invest in an integrated suite of programs and supports for employers to build their capacity to recruit, assess, and retain skilled immigrants.

Together, the above three elements could form a national strategy for employers that would enhance labour market development, contribute to the productivity and competitiveness of Canadian business, and build success for immigrants.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We now have some questions from the members of the committee.

We will start with Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Good morning to all three, and thank you for coming.

Mrs. Casipullai, I've noticed some comments you made, concerning which I share your frustration, about racialized xenophobia.

Things haven't changed from previous generations when immigrants were coming in. Maybe the immigrants coming in a generation ago were Caucasian, but we were probably flagged; we were probably not, let's say, welcomed. There were negative reactions towards the Italians and negative remarks, and towards the Greeks the same thing.

So although I understand the frustration, I also want you to be aware that this committee and these members don't appreciate where you're coming from. Unfortunately, or fortunately, the recent immigrants who are coming to this country are visible minorities, and maybe the frustration levels are a little higher. When I was growing up, if you didn't speak English you were called the "Greek monkey". My colleague across the way, Mr. Calandra, is Italian. They were called wops—"without papers"—because when they were coming in they didn't have paperwork. So we have all felt the same frustration. Maybe now the frustration is a little higher.

Having said that, though, and I'm sure you appreciate where I'm coming from, can you tell me, Mr. Owen, what credential evaluations you do? Engineers have their own, medical doctors have their own, pharmacists have their own. What credential evaluations does your organization do, sir?

• (0935)

Mr. Timothy Owen: We would evaluate any academic document that's presented to us. We do evaluate documents that are engineering degrees or pharmacy degrees. These may not be presented to the licensing bodies, because the bodies have their own processes. Many engineers, for example, can work as engineers without being licensed; they just have to work under the supervision of a licensed engineer. So the employers may want to know if the qualifications the person has are equivalent to a Canadian qualification. But we would evaluate any academic qualification. We work with about half of the regulatory bodies in Ontario specifically, but any academic qualification could be evaluated by us.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, I'll share my time with my colleague, Ms. Mendes.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all for your presentations.

I have a question for you, Mr. Owen, following some of the comments you made. In your opinion, what qualifications and skills brought to Canada by new immigrants are not given proper recognition in the labour market?

Mr. Timothy Owen: Which specific qualifications?

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Yes. Could you give us examples?

Mr. Timothy Owen: Well, I suppose there are a number of different ways I could answer that question. When considering the qualifications of people who come here to work and want to present their qualifications, many of the employers have never heard of the institution the person has come from, so they dismiss the qualification out of hand. They are familiar with Canadian institutions and know the names of Queen's and Western and the University of Alberta, but they haven't heard of the University of Mumbai. So the assumption is that it's not worth the same. They don't understand, perhaps, that there are ways to equate and compare qualifications.

There are people who apply to licensing bodies, and because of the difficulty or length of a process, it may be that their qualification isn't fully recognized. There may be gaps in the education they need to fill.

Similarly, in going to university, they may not get recognition for the education they have received. So they'll go back to start in year one, instead of going into year two or three of their program.

So there are many different ways in which their qualifications might not be recognized.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: What about their skills? You did mention both.

Mr. Timothy Owen: What we're doing is looking at their formal qualifications, which are often seen as a proxy for skills. But there isn't a formal or consistent process for recognizing and comparing the competencies people bring with them to the competencies expected in the Canadian workplace. That's not a field that is very well developed.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Okay, and that's something that is of concern to me. A lot of new immigrants bring not only language knowledge—which is often not recognized or given credit—but also the skills they have developed in having been business people in their countries, or innovators, or whatever. But these are not formally recognized in any field of work.

Are these some of the things you are...?

Mr. Timothy Owen: We don't do that kind of assessment. What we would encourage employers to do is to hire somebody and keep them on probation; that's an assessment of their competencies, like anybody else's.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: I think it was Ms. McIsaac who mentioned the tax credits for employers who hire new immigrants or newly skilled foreign students who have been admitted to Canada.

Can you elaborate on that a bit, please?

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: This is an idea that has been tossed around for a couple of years as an incentive, particularly to small and medium-sized business. This has come out of our experience with an internship program in Toronto called Career Bridge. It's a four- to twelve-month program. The employers pay for it, and it's \$10,000 for four months. So they're actually paying the stipend that goes to the individual, plus a program fee to the organization.

The program has been very successful with the big banks, the insurance companies, the large corporations, because they have the ability to allocate these resources in a central HR budget. They may not even distribute them to particular business lines.

Where the program is having trouble being picked up is with small and medium-sized business, which may not be able to do that kind of forecasting or allocate that kind of investment. So we thought that if there were some kinds of incentives to drive them toward that opportunity.... I think Amy also mentioned these in her presentation.

We haven't costed this out. We don't know what it would actually come to, but I think it's worth investigation. I think it's worth having the government research the cost benefit of that, because what we do know from the successful outcome is that over 80% of the interns will be hired full time at the end of their internships, meaning their long-term trajectory in Canada will include their making a larger contribution. They'll be paying taxes sooner and will be productive. In that sense, the program will pay for itself. But we don't have the hard numbers at this time.

● (0940)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mendes and Ms. McIsaac.

Monsieur St-Cyr.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Thank you very much.

Thank you for joining us. I want you to know that I am deeply concerned about the whole issue of foreign credential recognition. I, myself, am a member of the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec. I have attended a number of general assemblies and been critical of the fact that they are not moving fast enough to my taste on this issue.

We all recognize, of course, that certain qualifications are required to work as an engineer in Quebec. Relations with the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, or the BAPE, can vary from one location to the next. However, the fact remains that the laws of physics are the same everywhere in the world, and if you are capable of building a bridge over the Tigris River, then you can build one over the St. Lawrence or any other river.

It has been said that this matter comes under provincial, in this case Quebec, jurisdiction. I'm not convinced by the federal government's actions. I think this money would be better invested in each province to help them develop their own programs. I believe Mr. Owen alluded to the lack of uniformity. An immigrant who arrives in this country cannot easily move from province to province. Even people who have studied here in Canada experience the same problem. A person who graduated with an engineering degree in Manitoba must be accredited before working as an engineer in Quebec. Therefore, a national framework or standardization process would be difficult to implement, given that provincial practices differ.

Don't you think the federal government should focus on informing people properly about the different provincial programs and directly encourage the provinces to assume this responsibility?

[English]

The Chair: Your question is directed to whom? Anybody?

Mr. Timothy Owen: Maybe I could start.

It's correct in terms of the jurisdictional issue. I think one of the points I made was the success—at least I think it's a success—the federal government has had in encouraging the different provincially licensed bodies to come together with mutual recognition agreements, so there can be greater portability of employment across Canada—which I think is a good thing. You can respect jurisdictions and still encourage mobility between those jurisdictions, and I think there's a role the federal government can play in that type of work encouraging mobility.

I think the mutual recognition agreements' success has actually encouraged regulators to be able to understand that a credential that's earned in another jurisdiction can be compared with one in their own, and that same shift in mindset has assisted them in recognizing foreign credentials.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Thank you. I will now turn the floor over to my colleague, Ms. Beaudoin.

● (0945)

[English]

The Chair: Welcome to the committee, Madame Beaudin.

[Translation]

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for coming here to testify today. I have listened to all of you and you have all stressed the importance of getting the cooperation of employers. I'm curious to know what you think about the idea of bringing in, perhaps in Quebec, an anonymous curriculum vitae that would focus first and foremost on people's qualifications rather than on their personal information.

What is your opinion of this prospective tool for employers?

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: May I respond?

I'd like to start with that one, because we have seen that in a smaller scale with the Royal Bank of Canada. Currently the chair of

our council is Gord Nixon from RBC. A number of years ago, the Royal Bank experimented and removed the place of education from their application form. You would just put down "Bachelor of Commerce" or "MBA". You didn't say where you got it or what the institution was. What they found was that more applicants made it further along the process. When a hiring decision was going to be made, then they would go into verifying their credentials and qualifications. You would move further along the stream because the lens of judging where that degree came from had been removed.

I think there is absolutely opportunity for that. Inherently, when people are reviewing résumés or are participating in that screening and hiring process, they apply what is familiar to them in their decision-making. The more you are able to change how that works, the better. I don't know that it necessarily....

I think there are two ways you can do that. You can look at a centralized CV system or what have you. Alternatively, a lot of the work we have been doing has been focused on retraining and on creating an immigration lens for HR professionals. We are working with the HR professional associations so that the next generation of HR professionals will be looking at this issue very differently. Although great strides were made 30 years ago in putting a lens for women in the workplace into the HR practice, and then one for racialized communities or visible minorities in the workplace, we don't yet have that level of practice in the HR profession. I think that's where we would see the very thing you're talking about.

I would like to add one more comment, which goes back to your colleague's point around whether this should be federal or provincial. I think you're speaking very much to those professions that are regulated. Even many engineers don't need to get a P.Eng. to practise. They can be employed as engineers without the full complement of tasks or responsibilities. The vast majority, close to 70% to 80%, of skilled immigrants coming into this country are non-regulated, so I think it's a bit of both: I think we look at federal solutions as well as provincial. There is jurisdiction for those regulated pieces, but many people are not part of that jurisdictional tension.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Beaudin.

Before we go to Ms. Chow, I have a brief question on the CV business. Aren't you afraid of that getting into that phrase about all men and women being created equal, but some men and women are more equal than others?

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: How so?

The Chair: I'm just asking the question. If you start creating categories of people, don't we get into that, whether it's education or colour of skin or nationality?

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: I'm not sure I'm creating categories of people. I think what we're doing is taking away the category and looking just at the skills. We're paring it down to the essential skills that you're looking for when you're doing the screen, unless I was misunderstanding—

The Chair: That was my reaction to what you were saying, but maybe I've misinterpreted what you were saying.

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: No, I think the intention is to take that away, so that the person screening the résumé or candidate is focused on the essential skills for the position.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McIsaac.

Go ahead, Ms. Chow.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Thank you.

Quite a few years ago, the Conference Board of Canada said that we are losing \$5 billion in lost earnings because of immigrants not practising what they have been trained for. In February 2007, on the behalf of the New Democrats, I put out a paper that talked about the importance of getting information. Subsequently we had the www.credentials.gc.ca website, so we now have lots of information for immigrants or potential immigrants.

We also talked about the need for internship, mentorship, and bridging programs there. In that area, there is a bit of an increase, such as the pilot projects, but there is certainly not a dramatic, comprehensive program. Perhaps you can talk a bit more about the loan funds versus straight grants versus tax incentives, because there are different ways of getting into it. Some of it could be targeted to the immigrants, others to the employers. The incentives would be for the employers, and there are different types of tools.

In your mind and in your practice, what tools would work best? Are there different tools for different programs—bridging programs, mentorship programs, internship programs, loan funds, grants? How do they work? In terms of best practices, can you give a few examples?

• (0950)

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: Sure. I'll start and then I'll pass it over.

With respect to the loans fund, I should begin by mentioning that TRIEC was started as a project of the Maytree Foundation, so there's a relationship between the two organizations. About five years ago we started the loan program, recognizing that immigrants were not able to get credit to borrow money for tuition to get training, to sit for licensing exams they had to pay for, or to receive income support while they were not working. So they created a loan fund for loans up to \$5,000.

It was an incredibly unattractive interest rate—prime plus 6%. To my mind, it was a bad product. But people still took it because they weren't able to get credit elsewhere. It shows the vacuum in the availability of credit. Credit was necessary to allow them to get the qualifications or training required to move on and become employed.

The repayment of those loans has been phenomenal. I think that speaks to the viability of the program. I know they're in discussions right now with the Royal Bank of Canada, to look at their interest in coming on board. I think it should also be taken up by the federal government. This department, Citizenship and Immigration, had a

wonderful experience with the transportation loan made available to immigrants years ago. The repayment rate was 90%. This allows individuals to take the training they need. It also prevents the creation of paid-for streams of programming that other Canadians can't access. So you're not creating free programs for one group and not the others. We have training and education programs that Canadians pay for and get loans for, and this would provide an equal opportunity for others.

This type of thing makes sense in enabling tuition. We have to consider income supports. The Canada student loans program provides income support for education and training, and so should this type of loan program.

In answer to your question, I think that's different. I think that's allowing people to enhance their skills and get Canadian credentials. It's different if you're trying to entice or encourage employers to step into this field. I think you need to encourage them with things like tax credits, possibly wage subsidies. It has to be made easy.

Ms. Olivia Chow: It has to be simple and straightforward, not 80 pages.

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: We've consulted to death with employers and small and medium-sized enterprises. Every time we've done a focus group, all they say is, "I don't want to do paperwork". Their hands go up when they think about getting involved in a government program. It needs to be a quick return for them. I don't know that a tax credit would work, because they wouldn't see the benefit of it for another 12 months. We need to figure out the right mechanism to get them involved.

Ms. Olivia Chow: What about an agency, a middle person who would assist some of the small businesses? They're quite successful, but because they're so small, they just don't have the capacity to do all this paperwork. You also have to be fairly careful that you don't put out programs the Auditor General might later take to task for lacking the proper controls. Is it possible that there could be a middle person to assist, an agency?

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: I think there could be. I think that could help. This is an area of experimentation. We need to try a few different things to see what works. For the last five years we have been trying to do a number of different things with small employers. A couple have worked; many have not. We need to keep trying. We haven't found the silver bullet, and there may not be one. We may need to have a number of different products that will suit different industries and different-sized employers in different ways.

• (0955)

Ms. Olivia Chow: Amy, could you give us something on the grants?

Ms. Amy Casipullai: Yes, I'll make a pitch for that. I agree with Elizabeth on the success of the loans program. The challenge, though, is that we only see people who are in a position to access loans. We don't know anything about the experience of people who cannot take advantage of this possibility.

A grant program could be tied to a means test, so that only those who absolutely needed it would be able to access it. I think without that we'd be leaving out a lot of people, particularly women, who would not have as much access to a loans program. It's only the federal government that can do it. It's particularly important now, as we are coming out of a recession and Ontario has been particularly hard hit. If it could be tried even as a pilot, just to see how it would work, that would be useful.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dykstra.

Okay, Mr. Owen, but be very brief.

Mr. Timothy Owen: Elizabeth mentioned the need for income support. I think that's a part that is often missed. Most of the people we're trying to attract already work maybe one or two jobs. They can't afford to go back to school to be retrained because they can't afford not to work. Without an income support program, many people would be left out.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Dykstra.

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

It was an interesting presentation. I'm intrigued by the level of detail you're speaking to in terms of what all three of you think the federal government needs to do. If I take a look back over the last, I guess, close to four years.... Just recently we announced \$50 million over the next two years for the provinces and territories to work and address these barriers in terms of a pan-Canadian framework, including a recognition of foreign qualifications.

Amy, you mentioned the Canadian Experience program, which is very helpful to students.

From a temporary worker perspective, I also think about the opportunities that they are engaged with, to stay in the country and work here. We've gone from 120,000 to 200,000 on a yearly basis, to the point of literally setting records in terms of those numbers. Also, with respect to how many folks have had the opportunity to come to this country as landed immigrants or to be educated here, the numbers we're seeing now year after year are higher than we've seen in decades.

I think a little bit about the detail that you spoke to, Elizabeth. I think of C-50, section 6, which we passed in 2007. That really does change our immigration policy with respect to landed immigrants and the opportunities folks have from a very early stage to understand, if they're going to apply to come to this country, what we need in terms of the 38 categories that we announced last November for this year. That has actually allowed us to expedite the opportunities for individuals who want to come to this country who are having to wait six, seven, or eight years to get into Canada. The way it's set up now will expedite that to 12 to 18 months. The minister was just here a couple of weeks ago saying that we've

actually been able to get our numbers down and we're moving in the right direction.

Ms. Chow reminded me of *The Employee's Roadmap*.

All of these are a step in the right direction, and I think the investments we've made in English as a second language and in English language training.... I guess what made me think of all of these programs that we've worked on since 2006 is—as I started this point, and I do have a couple of questions—the fact that you're really into significant detail in terms of where we need to be. So it suggests to me that from an overall perspective.... Part of the reason why we wanted to do this study was to ask where are the areas that we need to emphasize, where are the areas that we need to focus on. I come away from it, just from our first panel, with an understanding that we have made some significant steps in the right direction, and that really where we need to go is, perhaps as you suggest, in some of the levels of detail.

I did want to ask you, Elizabeth.... We have gathered the provinces together to work towards the recognition of foreign credentials, and I wondered if you could comment a little bit more on the whole aspect of a national approach to this issue versus an individual provincial and individual territorial approach to it?

• (1000)

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: I think there needs to be a national vision of where it's headed. As Tim and another one of your colleagues rightly pointed out, with some of the regulated professions, there is a necessary provincial lead role because of the jurisdictional issues. But I think we set immigration policy federally. This is about building a nation. It's about economic building. So I think the way in which we engage employers as a shared partner in this vision—because this is about economic contribution—is that they need to be sharing that vision and they need to be part of it. I think right now they're an afterthought, and I don't think they feel they're part of crafting the direction that it's headed in.

So I think that's why on the one hand they need to understand—and I think Amy spoke to this as well—what their role in this is and what they have to gain from it, that value proposition needs to be understood by them. But they need to be partners with you, I think, in setting the course for this. I don't think they should be deciding who comes into Canada. I think that remains a government role, but especially for the skilled category, the economic class, as to who is coming in, that is a direct and obvious economic program. Let's make that work so that people do connect to the labour market effectively. In order to do that, I think you need to have the national strategy. I'm not sure what that would look like in absolute detail—I'm sorry I didn't come ready with that—but I think those elements that I spoke to need to be part of it.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Okay.

Very quickly, because I want to give my colleague, Mr. Calandra, an opportunity to ask a question or two, one of the things that we included and I mentioned at the outset was the investment we've made in terms of pre-landing knowledge of credentials, making investments in countries like India, China, the Philippines. We are trying to assist individuals so that rather than coming here and having to work through those issues, they'll be able to do that pre-landing.

I wonder if you were aware of this and if you could comment on whether or not you think this is the correct and right thing to do.

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: I think you'll hear better from the people who are actually running the program at the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, but what I know of the program is that it has had very early successes, good successes. More information before people come is incredibly important. I think a lot of people who are coming are still confused. There's a multitude of portals out there. I think we need to do better on occupation-specific information. I think what has started through the FCRO, with the overseas offices, is going in the right direction, and we probably need to do a lot more of that because it is helping.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Thank you. I appreciate that.

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): That's okay. I'll be really quick.

I have a question on the Foreign Credentials Referral Office that was set up. Do you have any thoughts on that? Is it helping to meet a need? Is it a good idea, going in the right direction?

Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac: I think it's going in absolutely the right direction. I think the work that it's doing overseas, as I just mentioned, is absolutely necessary. I also think the office is well-positioned to take on some of this national direction-setting. I think they could perhaps host a national mentoring program or internship program, channel it through them. I think they're perfectly positioned to do some of that coordination across provinces or perhaps to launch a loan fund so that those things have a central place to sit. I think it has to be effectively linked with the objectives of HRSDC. I know there's still an FCRO over at HRSDC, and I'm not sure how those connect, but I think they do. It's labour market and immigration, and I think we need to make sure those stay together.

The Chair: Mr. Owen, Ms. Casipullai, Ms. McIsaac, all three of you have given excellent presentations and have been very helpful to the committee. I thank you for coming.

We will suspend for one minute.

- _____ (Pause) _____
-
- (1005)

The Chair: We'll start with the second panel.

We have before us Ms. Wendy Swedlove. Welcome, and thank you for coming. She is with the Alliance of Sector Councils.

You may begin.

Ms. Wendy Swedlove (Chair, Working Group on Immigration and Foreign Credential Recognition, Alliance of Sector

Councils): Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the invitation to appear today. My name is Wendy Swedlove. My day job is president of the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council, but I'm here representing the Alliance of Sector Councils, which brings together a network of more than 30 sector councils.

I chair the immigration and FCR working group of the Alliance of Sector Councils. This group brings together councils that are working in this arena, to discuss issues related to FCR and integration of new immigrants and to share their best practices.

First I'd like to provide a little background on sector councils. I know there is not as much awareness as we would like out there about sector councils.

Each council unites representatives from business, labour, education, and government. A council's mandate is to identify solutions to labour market issues and to assist their sector in implementing solutions to those issues. Those solutions can range from the development of occupational standards, education and training resources, certification, credentialling programs, bridging programs, and career promotion, all the way to the successful integration of recent immigrants into that sector's workforce.

For sector councils, foreign credential recognition is key to effective integration. Probably 80% of employed workers in our sectors are from non-regulated occupations, and a significant proportion of those workers are in lower-skill occupations. For sector councils, FCR includes competency recognition. Competency comes not only from education and credentials but also from experience and informal training on the job and how it is that we recognize that.

Increasingly, employers in our organizations are concerned with what an individual can do. Tourism employers, for example, are also concerned with language capability, essential skills, and it's often articulated by employers as a need for Canadian work experience. That was spoken about in the last group, and I agree entirely with the speaker on that one.

Until a year ago, skill and labour shortages were a major problem for business. As the economy recovers, these shortages will reappear. In some sectors and in some parts of Canada, they have persisted even in this economic climate. Immigration is one solution to those shortages.

Several sector councils have worked with their employers in the immigration system to fill labour supply gaps. The temporary foreign worker program and the provincial nominee program have worked very effectively, and the pilot project for low-skill occupations helped a lot. The new Canadian economic class will also assist employers to retain temporary foreign workers but mostly still in higher-skill occupations.

Employers of individuals at the C and D levels would very much appreciate being able to bring in workers permanently when the labour supply and demand gaps warrant. For some sectors, such as retail and tourism, this could be very important in the future.

In an effort to help industry facilitate the integration of newcomers, councils have worked with the foreign credentials referral office at CIC and the FCR program at HRSDC in a number of ways. Resources have been developed for foreign workers considering coming to Canada, to identify opportunities and skill requirements.

The occupational standards developed by councils can help with communicating skill requirements. Credential recognition, as it exists in Canada right now, does not deal with the large number of individuals who can work without an academic credential. Council certification programs recognize those competencies as they have been identified in occupational standards.

Some initiatives that councils have undertaken involved the preparation of individuals and assessment of their skills in their home countries prior to coming to Canada. Several councils have certification programs and access to those programs online so that a Canadian credential can be acquired abroad, giving the potential immigrant an advantage when looking for a job in Canada. The environment and tourism councils both have well-developed programs in this area.

Resources have been developed to help employers connect with immigrant-serving agencies to find workers. Labour market information produced by councils also helps employers when requesting labour market opinions.

Resources have also been developed for employers to help newcomers adjust to their workplaces. The IT sector council has a comprehensive program connecting potential foreign workers to employers in Canada. There are resources and a mentoring program for employers and a bridging program facilitating integration.

●(1010)

The Construction Sector Council is piloting a program matching employment opportunities in the construction industry and landed immigrant skills in British Columbia. To date this has involved 500 immigrants.

Councils have produced guides for employers wishing to avail themselves of the temporary foreign worker program. Tourism and trucking are examples here.

The Alliance of Sector Councils has worked with FCRO to produce *The Employer's Roadmap*, and that's been mentioned several times already. The alliance will be holding workshops for employers across Canada on the importance of effective integration of immigrants to the Canadian workplace. Sector councils will all participate by inviting their employer communities to these workshops.

The alliance has also developed an online resource for newcomers and for immigrant parents in Canada so that those parents will have a better idea of career opportunities for their children.

In conclusion, we believe that sector councils can be effective partners in facilitating selection, preparation, and integration of new immigrants into the Canadian workplace. We've been working with both FCRO and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada as a bridge to the employer community. There is much still to be done, and we look forward to expanding these initiatives.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Swedlove.

Monsieur Beaudin, you are next.

Mr. Yves Beaudin (National Coordinator, Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada): My presentation will be made in French.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, members of the standing committee, I want to thank you for inviting us here to share our views with you.

For some time now, the provinces and territories, along with many partners, have been taking a hard look at the issue of foreign credential recognition. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program has contributed a great deal to moving this important file forward and we wish to commend the department for its excellent spirit of cooperation over the past several years.

CICIC has also benefited from this program. We invite you to take a look at the report on *Pan-Canadian Quality Standards in International Credential Evaluation* which we handed out to you at the beginning of our presentation. The report highlights the urgent need for all organizations responsible for assessing academic credentials to agree on pan-Canadian quality standards in international credential evaluation.

In the mid-1990s, Canada ratified and signed two conventions on credential recognition, one of which is commonly referred to as the Lisbon Convention. Further to ratification, CICIC and its partners created the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada composed of credential assessment services with provincial and territorial mandates. The Alliance developed General Guiding Principles for Good Practice in the assessment of foreign credentials along with a quality assurance framework. We invite you to read about the framework's objectives in the document handed out at the start of the presentation.

In addition, other services recognized by CICIC for the quality of their comparative assessments have undertaken to comply with the General Guiding Principles for Good Practice and with the Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications adopted as part of the Lisbon Convention.

Foreign credential recognition is a process involving an in-depth review of documents provided by foreign-trained workers.

We know that there are some 800 degree mills worldwide. We also know that it is relatively easy to obtain almost-perfect foreign diplomas and transcripts from recognized institutions without ever setting foot in these institutions.

Therefore, in our view, it is important that foreign qualifications be systematically assessed to validate their authenticity and to compare them with pan-Canadian quality standards. Such assessments can be performed by educational institutions, regulated associations, trades authorities and services mandated by provinces and territories, by members of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada and by other services recognized by CICIC.

• (1015)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Beaudin, could I ask you to slow down for the translator? You're doing a great job, but I think she's having trouble.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Beaudin: The Declaration filed by Canada at the time the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications was ratified sets out the responsibilities of stakeholders.

To our knowledge, immigration officers stationed abroad are not trained to assess international credentials. Hopefully, changes will be made to the selection process to bring the assessment of foreign schooling levels in line with international criteria, or at least, to entrust the process to trained credential evaluators, prior to immigration officers reviewing an immigration application. We believe that education points awarded during the selection process should not be based on the number of years of schooling. A better approach would be to base them on the level of the credentials produced, ideally following an assessment of such credentials by recognized Canadian services. Foreign credentials can be compared by international analysts trained here in Canada with Canadian credentials.

As a country, we have an obligation to new immigrants. It is important that each immigrant obtain a comparative assessment of his or her credentials. We are, however, concerned with current initiatives that would allow these individuals to obtain certificates that is not recognized by competent authorities. In the long run, this could prove detrimental to the integration of new immigrants.

We would also like to commend the authorities at the Foreign Credentials Referral Office. This office seems to grasp the importance of performing fair and credible comparative evaluations of foreign credentials. In recent meetings, we have offered the Office our full cooperation.

CICIC's main objective is to work with its partners to develop tools to facilitate the assessment of assessing foreign credentials. The Centre works closely with a well-established international network of some 53 countries, as well as with all of Canada's provinces and territories, several federal departments, national associations and a number of sectoral councils. We promote the tools available to carry out fair and equitable comparative evaluations.

Access to quality assessments is, in our view, the collective responsibility of the federal government and of the provinces.

We have four recommendations to make to the committee. Firstly, we would like to see immigration authorities attach greater importance to the provisions of the Lisbon Convention, or treaty, to its recommendations and to its Codes of Good Practice.

Secondly, immigration officers working abroad need to obtain information on foreign credentials from Canadian sources, not from foreign countries, when awarding education points to prospective immigrants, to minimize the risk of divergent assessments.

Thirdly, the Immigration Act should be amended to change the method of calculating education points to a basis derived from the level of schooling, rather than the number of years of schooling, and to require a comparative evaluation...

• (1020)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Beaudin. I'm sorry, we're really pressed for time. It will have to come out in questions.

I apologize for not properly introducing Monsieur Beaudin. He is the national coordinator of the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

Next, we have two witnesses from the Alberta International Medical Graduates Association: Shahnaz Sadiq and Tasnim Waqar.

Did I pronounce that correctly?

A voice: Yes.

The Chair: The two of you have up to 10 minutes, although hopefully it will be less because our colleagues want to ask some questions of you.

Ms. Shahnaz Sadiq (President, Alberta International Medical Graduates Association): Thank you very much.

As you know, I am from IMGA. It is a non-profit organization that was begun in the year 2000.

There are more than 600 IMGs currently in Alberta who have acquired their medical degree from various parts of the world. Canada is not fully conversant with the educational curriculum, standard of training, and registration procedures of each country from where these IMGs have qualified. This lack of knowledge about the foreign universities causes extraordinary delays in the evaluation of the degrees and training of the IMGs. On the other hand, IMGs who have immigrated to Canada are not familiar with the Canadian health care system and they invariably become highly frustrated at the very slow pace of their integration.

IMGA has become a bridge between the IMGs and the Canadian health care system. It primarily represents the interests of IMGs, but it also can assist the licensing bodies in streamlining the evaluation procedure and thus expedite the integration of IMGs. This is possible because we understand the needs and requirements of the Canadian health care system, and we also know the requirement of each individual foreign medical graduate.

The important areas that need assessment are language abilities of the candidates, undergraduate medical standards of the foreign country, and the standards of post-graduate training.

We have some challenges, and I will make some recommendations.

Number one, the assessment of the qualifications of the IMGs is the most critical and time-consuming part of registration. Based on current statistics, countries from where the majority of the IMGs are immigrating to Canada should be identified. Teams of experts from Canada should visit these countries and thoroughly review the post-graduate process and standards, the course manuals of foreign universities for equivalency to those of Canadian universities, should ensure that their own countries accredit the foreign medical schools, and study the regulatory bodies and their controls and restrictions in these countries. The committee might consider a federal grant for such a study. English or French language abilities of the candidates may be assessed by appropriate examination, such as TOEFL.

Number two, better coordination of regulatory bodies is required. After successful completion of the Medical Council of Canada examinations, candidates apply to CaRMS, and other provincial examinations, such as OSCE, for entry into the IMGA residency program.

There's a need to have better coordination of these regulatory bodies at the provincial and federal levels. For instance, 121 residency positions remained unfilled after the second iteration for the residency-1 match, while hundreds of LMCC qualified IMGs were still waiting. Family medicine alone had 81 positions that were unfilled, while 2.5 million Canadians do not have a family physician. In the 2008-09 matches to the IMGA residency program, seven positions were unfilled, although funds were available for these positions. Alberta alone has a shortage of 1,300 physicians. I think it's a great loss.

Number three, the shortage of preceptors is an important issue. Monetary and other incentives can attract the recruitment of more family physicians as preceptors. Primary care can be utilized for physician support. The federal government may be able to play a positive role in this regard, such as a task given to those family physicians who act as preceptors.

Number four, community practices can be utilized as a source of supervised training for IMGs in urban and rural areas.

Number five, standardized assessment procedures should be in place that recognize previous clinical experiences all over Canada.

Number six, skills-based bridging courses, or bridging courses that are formally recognized, can fill in the gaps to facilitate smooth integration of IMGs. Courses for ethics and patient autonomy are primary issues in the Canadian health care system. Sensitive issues, such as death and dying, are part of the Canadian medical education that IMGs need to learn. The federal government can initiate funds for such courses at selected locations all over Canada.

Number seven is the need for self-directed learning for IMGs with mentors from community hospitals and post-secondary institutes. A mentorship program initiated as a pilot project in Alberta needs to be supported for the future, as this could be a starting point for all IMGs to get Canadian health care experience and subsequently provide structured training to IMGs.

Number eight, the Calgary clinical assistance program and international medical graduate preceptorship program in Alberta have been successful in providing services in hospitals, under supervision, for IMGs for the past few years.

● (1025)

These IMGs undergo regular evaluations, comparable to those of Canadian graduates. However, most of these programs end in two years, leaving participants without any plan for the future. These experiences should lead to accreditation and licensure of participants.

Number nine, IMGs with less than three years out of practice should be considered for a supervised licence without undergoing further training. Others may apply for residency programs. The fast-track project is currently funded by CIC, and research is expected to be completed by March 2010.

My last recommendation is that IMGs with more than three years out of independent practice but who have been working under supervision for more than five years can be assessed and could become valuable members of multi-disciplinary teams in the specialty and family clinics.

These complex issues can be resolved by our federal and provincial political leaders with the help of experts from provincial licensing boards, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, and the Royal College of Physicians of Canada.

I represent AIMGA, which hopes to play a positive role for IMGs as well as the Canadian health care system.

I thank the Honourable Mr. Devinder Shory for bringing this issue to such a high forum. I want to thank the committee for giving us an opportunity to apprise you of the challenges being faced by the IMGs and discuss some possible solutions. We are all very proud to be Canadians, and it is very moving for the IMGs to know that this House is at least aware of our suffering.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Sadiq.

We have one further witness who somehow was left off the list, and we apologize for that. Her name is Christiane Gagnon, and she is vice-president of l'Office des professions du Québec.

Welcome to the committee. You have, hopefully, not more than 10 minutes. We are really short of time here.

[Translation]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Vice-Chair, Office des professions du Québec): *Merci.*

My presentation will also be in French.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today about Quebec's system for foreign credential recognition.

I will be talking primarily about the current recognition tools used, as well as the recent initiatives taken by the Office des professions in the area of credential recognition.

I want to begin by saying a few words about the Office des professions du Québec. This board was established pursuant to framework legislation, namely the Professional Code. Its main mission is to protect the public and the system comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Justice, who is responsible for the application of professional acts. The Office is comprised of a five-member board, with three of the members representing the public, an Interprofessional Council made up of 45 professional orders and 335,000 members of professional orders. The Office's role is to adapt the system to today's needs, to monitor mechanisms, including credential recognition, and to adapt laws and regulations. There are over 23 professional laws and over 600 regulations governing this sector.

Professional orders have long been interested in credential recognition mechanisms. Initially, a degree entitled a person to receive a license. Training sanctioned by a diploma gave a person the right to practise a profession. Provision for this is made in government regulations. From the outset, however, it was generally acknowledged that there were others ways for a person to be qualified. The credentials of a person from outside Quebec could be recognized and that person could be granted a license.

In 1994, each of Quebec's 45 professional orders was required to adopt regulations concerning diploma or training equivalency, so that an internationally trained person, or someone who trained in Quebec but did not received a degree, could be licensed.

The world, however, is changing. Thirty-six years later, we talk about labour mobility and requirements. We want to attract immigrants more and more of them come knocking on our doors. We need to adapt and to improve our procedures. But at the same time, we continue to demand of professionals a certain level of competence. It is important for us to continue to rigorously assess credentials, recognizing as best we can the qualifications of internationally trained workers. So then, the pressure is on to adapt professional system mechanisms that were invented in a different era.

The Professional Code was again amended in 2006. New types of licenses were created. A person may now be issued a license to practice if he holds a license issued in another province. This right forms the basis of the agreement on labour mobility in Canada. Restricted licenses may also be issued to persons who have received specialized training in the field of education, for example, or research. Temporary licenses may also be issued to students of a particular profession.

In 2007, to counter anticipated labour shortages, the Quebec government launched a labour mobility strategy that identified five major priorities, two of which concern us at this time.

First of all, the France-Quebec agreement on foreign credential recognition which was signed exactly one year ago is an international first. The agreement provides for a special, fast-track process that orders can use to recognize the credentials of workers trained outside Quebec. This is a new concept: competence is evaluated on the basis of equivalency of types of training and fields of practice, and if substantial differences are noted, provision will be made for compensation measures.

Another priority for Quebec is the fast-tracking of professional qualification recognition. I have the honour of chairing a committee looking into this matter which brings together representatives from several departments, namely Education, Immigration and Health and Employment.

● (1030)

One area that we are most interested in is how to recognize experience over and above professional training.

Regarding the time limit for processing recognition applications, there is no denying that the process is a lengthy one. Professional orders have often been accused by the media of being the parties mainly responsible for delays. Significant improvements are being made to the process and all of Quebec's professional orders are mindful of the importance of improving the quality of procedures. However, we cannot forget the stakeholders other than the professional orders who are involved in this recognition process. Obviously, as mentioned earlier, there is the Department of Immigration which has a responsibility to properly inform applicants at the outset of the lengthy process involved in having their professional credentials recognized here in Canada.

I have to say that Quebec's Department of Immigration and Cultural Communities has posted on its website up to date information that professional orders and the department consult extensively to ensure that foreign candidates are well informed. As well, the candidate himself has a responsibility to ensure that his file is up to date and that all supporting documentation is provided. Most orders have told us that once they have a candidate's complete file, it takes less than one year, and often only a few weeks, to recognize professional equivalency.

Educational institutions are another very important player in this process. When a person's credentials are not recognized, or are only partially recognized, some skill upgrading may be needed to acquire the missing qualifications. Unfortunately, access to booster training is, to put it mildly, relatively difficult at this time, whether at the university or college level.

The Office is currently working with all government partners and authorities representing educational institutions to implement solutions to this problems

And finally, the last partner to play a role in the smooth integration of new immigrants is the labour force. Simply having a license is not a surefire guarantee of a job. Some work still needs to be done in this area.

In conclusion, Quebec's professional system must be mindful of both fast-tracking the professional recognition process and protecting the public at the same time. Fast-tracking credential recognition must never come at the expense of the required quality and competence. The professional system has been grappling with this challenge for several years and I must stress here that a number of stakeholders are involved in this process.

So then, let me assure you that Quebec is working hard to fast-track the professional qualification recognition process. We keep a watchful eye on steps being taken elsewhere in the world and we look to these initiatives for inspiration to continue modernizing the professional system and innovating in the field of professional qualification recognition.

Thank you for your attention.

● (1035)

[English]

The Chair: Each caucus will have five minutes.

Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of you for coming from right across Canada.

The foreign credentials portal of the government and the foreign credentials recognition are important things that government after government is trying to do better than the one before. However, having set up a portal, this government said it was going to be the last thing, and everything was going to be hunky-dory and everything was going to work. I wonder how many of you have visited that portal.

You have visited the portal? Are you satisfied with what it has on it?

Ms. Wendy Swedlove: I don't think anyone can ever be satisfied. Nothing is ever good enough, but we are making some great progress. I think that we in the world of sector councils like the links, because no one portal can ever offer all the information, but if you have effective links to the places where....

I will use tourism as an example. If a potential immigrant finds the government's portal, the government isn't going to give that immigrant chapter and verse on the tourism industry in Canada, but if it has an effective link to a tourism site, and particularly one about employment in the tourism industry, and that potential immigrant is interested in working in tourism, they can then...it's the going between sites and having each site really effective.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I want to thank you for talking about links and sites. I'm an industrial engineer from the University of Toronto, and let me pretend that I'm a new immigrant. I will go to the links and try to find work. You're talking about tourism and all that stuff, but the prospective immigrant coming to Canada wants to find work. If I enter my postal code I get people in my area who are providing assistance. When I call them at the end of the day and tell them I'm an engineer looking for work, they will tell me they are sorry and I have the wrong information.

Having navigated that foreign credentials portal on which we have spent millions of dollars, I found it to be useless. It's absolutely not satisfying, and I have yet to find one prospective immigrant who's looking for work. You're all here telling us you want us to help these people find work. Point to the links and all that stuff, but at the end of the day, if I can't find work it's useless.

I have yet to find one person who says the foreign credentials portal has helped them find work. If you in your association with people have found one person or a number of people who say they

have travelled the portal and were able to find work, I'd like to meet them.

I'll share my time with Mrs. Mendes.

● (1040)

The Chair: You've given her about two minutes.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Thank you.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions are for Mr. Beaudin.

I'd like you to talk about your fifth recommendation. You did not have time to get to it during your presentation, but I find it rather interesting and I'd like to hear more about it.

Mr. Yves Beaudin: We believe it is extremely important that comparative evaluations be done at almost every level, as part of the responsibility that falls to the provinces and territories.

We think it is extremely risky to have national associations grant certification. When persons subsequently try to have their qualifications recognized by professional orders mandated by law, they will encounter serious problems. Moreover, if we want to treat our immigrants fairly, we have a duty to show them some respect and to help them seek professional qualification recognition from the provinces and territories.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

I'm sorry, Ms. Mendes.

You have the floor, Mr. St-Cyr.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you all for coming here.

I am especially happy to have listened to Mr. Beaudin and Ms. Gagnon make their presentations in French. The last time we had so many witnesses speak French, we were in Montreal. It is always enjoyable when this happens.

Ms. Gagnon, you described quite clearly the characteristics of Quebec's professional system. You spoke at length about title recognition and stressed the recognition of qualifications. The process generally involves assessing the extent to which foreign credentials are equivalent to local credentials and qualifications.

However, people or critics often ask us why we don't simply administer exams. Instead of comparing one university degree to another acquired elsewhere, why not simply ask the applicant to prove his or competence by passing a test?

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: That's a good question.

Examinations are an important consideration. The problem with them is that some people have already been evaluated, either in France, Alberta or somewhere else. They arrive here and are told that they must once again undergo testing. We are trying to get away from having the same people be tested again on the same subjects.

For immigrants, it is no secret that the examination process is extremely difficult. It implies an analysis process that is not necessarily understood in every country and involves many irritants or negatives.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Thank you very much. I think your answer is fair and gives a clear picture of the situation.

As an engineer, I am one of the 300,000 professionals whose activities are monitored by the Office des professions du Québec. I always say that if I had been required to take an engineering exam at the end of my degree, I would probably not have remembered everything I learned during my first semester.

I have a more general question for all of the witnesses.

We have heard a great deal about titles. It is well known that in many fields, including engineering, a person does not need to have a title to practise his profession. However, discrimination still remains a big problem in the hiring process. The *Journal de Montréal* investigated this problem. The same curriculum vitae was sent out, but in one instance, the candidate's family name was Tremblay, while in the other case, the family name was Mohamed. And guess what? Mr. Tremblay was called to more interviews than Mr. Mohamed.

The Bloc Québécois has recommended that, for starters, federally regulated industries adopt the concept of an anonymous curriculum vitae. Human resources officers would delete personal information such as the name and age of the applicant, and any other information that would identify the person's origin, and leave only information pertaining to training and qualifications.

• (1045)

The Chair: You have a minute left, sir.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Do you think that a tool like this would facilitate the integration of these persons?

[English]

The Chair: Anybody can reply.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Beaudin: It's certainly an idea that is worth exploring. If the concept were properly used, it would prevent a lot of racism, if I can use the expression. Basically, as long as foreign diplomas are validated to ensure that...

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Chow.

[English]

Ms. Olivia Chow: Ms. Sadiq, thank you for coming here on behalf of a lot of the medical graduates in Alberta. I'm particularly interested in your analysis of how there's really a big need for doctors, yet there is not enough practicum or internship.

Would federal investment funds through the Government of Alberta be the kind of incentive that would produce more internships in hospitals? Is this an area that is needed? Can you expand on that recommendation?

Ms. Shahnaz Sadiq: You have asked a very good question. It has been a burning issue recently.

We had 66 residency positions allocated to the Alberta IMG residency program. That was reduced to 40 this year. So some people who already have their LMCC certification—the certificate you get from the Medical Council of Canada after meeting all the requirements—cannot get residency positions. It is like a bottleneck. All of these people are trying to get through the neck, but only a few of them get through it.

I think that's a big step. If we had a federal grant, these issues could be dealt with and the number of residency positions could be increased. That certainly would be helpful.

The other point I would like to make is that not everybody needs a two-year program of training for family medicine. It could be customized according to the capabilities of pre-assessed candidates. With all the vigorous exams they have to go through and the language exams they have to take every two years to stay in the system, it costs a lot of money and there is a lot of frustration.

If those things were dealt with, it would certainly be helpful.

Ms. Olivia Chow: What would be the best forum in which to deal with it? Is it some kind of federal or provincial forum? Each province has a different number of residents in different hospitals, etc. In what way do you think the federal government could take a leadership role, aside from having incentive grants in the ministry of health to expand residency, for example? How do you see that happening?

• (1050)

Ms. Shahnaz Sadiq: It basically boils down to having more preceptors. The residents have to be attached to a preceptor. If those preceptors are not available to take residents with them for the training, that reflects the shortage of preceptors. That's also a burning issue. The more preceptors there are, the more residents can be accommodated.

Every program has preceptors. They are the medical physicians who give the training on an ongoing basis. The residency goes two months here and two months in all the various disciplines, but they are attached to a preceptor. Maybe two or three residents are attached to one preceptor.

If they can't take more than one or two residents and 30 residents are a burden, and if there are not many preceptors, that reflects how the residency positions are going to be given. If there aren't any preceptors, there are not going to be more residency positions. That boils down to, again, having increased incentives to recruit community physicians as preceptors so that there will be more preceptors to take more residents.

All this obviously needs funding, and I think that's where they have to play a role.

Ms. Olivia Chow: That is where the federal government can come in, right?

Ms. Shahnaz Sadiq: Yes.

Ms. Olivia Chow: So there could be a program where the federal government, specifically in the medical field, since we need doctors and nurses, can take a leadership role and work with the provinces to find family physicians or different hospitals to increase the residency, and also work with the colleges to examine the whole notion of whether we in fact need the two years, depending on where the doctor is coming from.

I've heard of doctors whose degree is from Pakistan but they have practised in England or the U.S. for quite a few years, yet coming to Canada they are still required to take all that kind of training.

The Chair: We're out of time, Ms. Chow, so could you come to a question?

Do you have a brief comment?

Ms. Shahnaz Sadiq: I really appreciate that there is a common awareness of these issues. I think that needs to be dealt with efficiently by the federal government playing that role.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Wong.

Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions are directed to Ms. Swedlove. First of all, thank you very much for coming, and especially for looking at non-regulated occupations. Your organization also provides workshops for industries on how they can recognize foreign credentials, because we have to remember that after the recognition of credentials, these people still need to be hired. The hiring bodies are important.

These people can be sitting there looking for jobs, but if the industries are not ready to take them in, they still cannot find jobs. This has been brought up by our other panellists as well.

Can you talk more about the challenges that industries face in this regard, matching the skills of these foreign-trained professionals, especially in non-regulated occupations? Also, how do you suggest the industries overcome those challenges?

Ms. Wendy Swedlove: That's a role that some sector councils have taken on quite heavily. Those with huge shortages who have availed themselves of the temporary foreign workers program have worked with their employer community to understand the challenges that are faced by a temporary foreign worker from another country. They first help those employers to identify and bring those folks over, but they also help them to integrate effectively into their workplaces. Many sector councils have developed tools for employers to help them understand the nature of diversity in their workplace and figure out how to deal with it and effectively integrate those foreign workers into their individual businesses. That's the biggest challenge.

From a tourism perspective, many of the very small employers in the tourism industry think you need to have Canadian work experience to be effectively employed in their workplace. We've developed a tool that suggests that what they're more worried about are communication skills, an ability to work with computers, an ability to interact with a Canadian, and an ability to speak the language being spoken in that workplace. Those are largely essential skills and language skills, and we have processes in this country that can test both of these kinds of skills very quickly and very

effectively. If we can allay the fears of those employers by working with the new immigrants in order to demonstrate that they have the skills, if a council can provide that service to both the immigrant and the employer, then I think we can facilitate the integration there. Many councils are doing that. Of course, there's lots more to be done.

• (1055)

Mrs. Alice Wong: Thank you very much.

You also mentioned in your presentation that you have been working with the foreign credentials office to provide a roadmap for foreign credential recognition in different sectors. Can you expand on that part?

Ms. Wendy Swedlove: The road map has been mentioned by several of the folks who have come here. It is a document that helps employers understand the immigration system and how to integrate a new immigrant effectively. The Alliance of Sector Councils is taking that road map on the road, if you like. Sector councils are bringing their employer community to those workshops in order to raise awareness of the value of new immigrants to their workplaces, help them understand the system that brings them here, and help them understand how to integrate them effectively.

Mrs. Alice Wong: I'll pass to my colleague.

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

This is a matter of great importance to me because it applies to my constituents.

A lot of people don't know it, but in southern Ontario a lot of communities, including Oakville, have a shortage of doctors. There was a doctor from Pakistan who came to Oakville last year. It was in our community paper. He was delivering pizzas while studying for some very tough exams put up by the Canadian Medical Association—and they should be tough; no one is suggesting they should lower the standards. However, it's a difficult situation, and he was in a difficult situation. My understanding is that he's moved on and is practising medicine.

Mr. Beaudin, since most professionals are provincially regulated, can you talk about what your member provinces are doing to determine whether foreign credentials are equivalent, and in areas where they're not equivalent, what are your members doing to get foreign-trained professionals up to Canadian standards?

For example, it occurred to me that I don't know why this doctor from Pakistan in Oakville couldn't get a student loan to help pay his bills so that he didn't have to deliver pizzas in the meantime.

The Chair: Go ahead, Monsieur Beaudin.

Mr. Yves Beaudin: I know of a similar case in Gatineau. He worked in a restaurant for several months, if not years.

I'll have to give you an answer similar to what Tim Owen told you this morning.

The work we do within the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials is evaluation of academic credentials. However, in each province the regulated professions all have legislation authorizing them to protect their members, or work with their members, and license them, so in every province that responsibility belongs to the profession. Thanks to the agreement on internal trade, we can be mobile from one province to the other. It's really a responsibility of the profession itself.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Young, thank you.

I think that concludes our time this morning. I want to thank all of you for coming. You're all very good at what you do and I appreciate your contribution to the committee.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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