



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CANADA

**SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION:  
A SENSE OF BELONGING**

**“FEELING AT HOME”**

**REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Joe Fontana, M.P.  
Chair**

**June 2003**

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# STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

has the honour to present its

## **FIFTH REPORT**

In accordance with its permanent mandate under Standing Order 108(2), your committee has conducted a study “Canada’s Settlement and Integration Programs” and reports its findings and recommendations.





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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The Committee could not have completed its study “Canada’s Settlement and Integration Programs” without the cooperation and support of numerous people. The Chairman and members of the Committee extend their thanks to all the witnesses who shared with them their insight and their knowledge on this subject.

Our task could not be completed without the valuable work of the Research Officer of the Parliamentary Research Branch, Benjamin Dolin. The Committee also wishes to acknowledge the Clerk, Bill Farrell, and Lucie Poulin for the administration and support throughout the course of this study.

The members of the Committee also wish to express their appreciation to the staff of the Committees Directorate, the Translation Bureau of Public Works and Government Services Canada, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration staff and the support services of the House of Commons who have provided logistic and administrative support to elaborate this report.

Finally, the Chairman wishes to thank the members of the Committee for the hours they dedicated to study this question and to prepare this report.



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# SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

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## INTRODUCTION

In the course of the 37th Parliament, we have seen significant changes in Canada's immigration program. In 2001, the new *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) was passed after review and amendment by our committee. The following year, we undertook a detailed study of the new *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*. The Committee also studied visa processing overseas in 2002 and, more recently, the workings of the Provincial Nominee Program. From the drafting of the laws and regulations to the selection of immigrants, we now turn to an examination of how well our settlement and integration programs are achieving their goals.

### A. Overview

The delivery of settlement services to newcomers involves both the federal and provincial governments. While the federal government has assumed a lead role, section 8 of the IRPA permits the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to enter into agreements with the provinces. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has agreements with three provinces — Quebec, British Columbia and Manitoba — with respect to settlement programs and services.

CIC does not provide services directly to newcomers. Rather, the Department contracts with, and provides funding to, immigrant-serving organizations and other community-based agencies, often referred to as service provider organizations (SPOs). There are three main funding programs: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) and the Host Program.<sup>1</sup> As its name would suggest, the LINC program funds basic language instruction in one of Canada's official languages to adult immigrants as soon as possible after their arrival. ISAP funds organizations that provide programming designed to help immigrants access services and to integrate into their community. These programs include: reception and orientation services; translation and interpretation services; paraprofessional counselling; referral to mainstream services; and, employment-related activities such as job-finding clubs. ISAP also funds research projects, seminars and conferences related to settlement and integration activities, and provides training for settlement workers. The Host Program matches newcomers with established Canadians to help in the acclimatization process. Recent immigrants learn about their community and local services, and are given an opportunity to practice their language skills. Organizations may receive funding to recruit, train, match and monitor Canadians who volunteer to serve as hosts.

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on these funding programs may be found at the CIC Web site: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer/menu-programs.html>.

Another program that deserves mention is the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), which provides financial assistance to certain immigrants. Newcomers who find themselves in need may be eligible for temporary accommodation as well as funds to cover their basic necessities.

According to the *2003-2004 Report on Plans and Priorities*, CIC expects to spend approximately \$396 million for settlement, adaptation and integration assistance in the current fiscal year. Of this, approximately \$164 million will go to the government of Quebec under the Canada-Quebec Accord, while \$30 million will go to ISAP, \$2.8 million to the Host Program, \$100 million to LINC and \$47 million to RAP. A further \$45 million will be transferred to British Columbia and Manitoba pursuant to their settlement agreements with CIC. Funding for settlement agencies may also come from other federal and provincial departments. For example, Human Resources Development Canada may fund job skills programs for newcomers, as may provincial ministries with specific areas of concern.

## **B. The Importance of Settlement Services**

The provision of settlement services is an important investment. While not all immigrants require assistance upon arrival, many benefit from language and employment training, as well as other services. Canadians in turn benefit from the full participation of newcomers in our society. Settlement services lead to successful citizenship, the ultimate step in the immigration process.

## **C. The Study**

In the course of this study, the Committee travelled to all provincial capitals, plus Montreal and Vancouver, and heard oral presentations from 70 witnesses. Most witnesses were directly involved in the provision of settlement services to newcomers and their input was thoughtful and illuminating. The Committee also notes the work done by the British Columbia Coalition for Immigrant Integration (BCCII), an umbrella organization representing over 70 agencies involved with settlement and integration services in British Columbia. In May 2002, the BCCII published an overview of what it considers to be the strengths and weaknesses of the various settlement programs across Canada.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear to the Committee that, while Canada's immigrant settlement programs are fundamentally sound, there are problems. Witnesses appearing before the Committee consistently reiterated similar concerns. We have been able to identify what we consider to be the most significant issues and we make the following comments and recommendations.

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<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.amssa.org/bccii/reportcard\\_h.htm](http://www.amssa.org/bccii/reportcard_h.htm).

## **ISSUES**

It is evident to the Committee that there is a general consensus among stakeholders on the main barriers to successful integration. While witnesses often focused their comments on specific programs or concerns, certain key areas that need to be addressed were regularly reiterated. For example, the importance of language training, access to employment and the building of welcoming communities were discussed in respect of the delivery of different programs and services. The problems relating to the recognition of foreign credentials and experience were also mentioned on numerous occasions. Several witnesses also made reference to the discrimination some newcomers encounter. The Committee has attempted to address these issues in a thorough manner. We will also tackle the overarching administrative questions of program funding and federal-provincial coordination. Better overall coordination in the delivery of settlement services is clearly needed and more resources must be devoted to the effort.

### **A. Pre-Arrival Orientation and Counselling**

Services designed to assist in the integration process begin at Canada's missions abroad where counselling and orientation materials are provided to help prospective immigrants prepare to settle in Canada. Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) sessions were introduced in 1998 and are offered at a number of missions to immigrants and refugees who have been selected for permanent residence in Canada. Due to limited resources, priority is given first to refugees, then to independent immigrants and finally to members of the family class. COA modules of varying lengths — either one, three or five days — include an introduction to Canada and information on topics such as: the “settling-in period”; employment; rights and responsibilities; climate; finding a place to live; living in a multicultural society; the cost of living; and, education.

Concerns were expressed about the availability of pre-arrival programs and their content. Some settlement agencies indicated that many of their clients arrive with “serious gaps” in the information they have been given about Canada. For example, many do not appear to understand our country's size and think that a bus ride from St. John's to Vancouver will take a couple of hours. Similarly, settlement workers often have little information about the newcomers before they arrive at their door. It would greatly facilitate their program planning if they had some sort of forewarning of the needs they are to be called upon to address.

The Committee believes that a program that would facilitate the flow of information between settlement workers in Canada and overseas visa officers should be pursued. Some witnesses suggested that arrangements could be made for visits of settlement agencies by visa officers and visits of visa posts by settlement workers. This might assist both groups with their respective tasks.

## **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should expand and enhance the Canadian Orientation Abroad Program and make it available to all classes of immigrants.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should develop a program that would facilitate the exchange of information between visa officers overseas and settlement workers in Canada. The program should ensure that visa officers are aware of the settlement challenges in particular regions of the country and should provide information that will assist settlement agencies in planning for their future clients' needs.**

Some SPOs already provide pre-arrival counselling. For example, those involved in recruiting from particular communities abroad for their province's provincial nominee program may provide connections with employment and business resources or arrange exploratory visits. Other settlement organizations in Canada may not actively offer counselling to prospective immigrants, but are able and willing to provide information to those who are destined to their community. There is also clearly a role for the provinces to play in this regard, particularly those provinces that are actively recruiting immigrants through the Provincial Nominee Program.

## **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**Visa officers and provincial representatives overseas should provide information to successful applicants for permanent residence so that the newcomers can contact settlement agencies and other organizations that assist immigrants in the regions in which they intend to settle. Provinces who do not have representatives overseas should be encouraged to promote themselves in this manner.**

### **B. Program Delivery in Canada — Federal and/or Provincial?**

Canada and Quebec have had formal immigration agreements since 1971 and the most comprehensive federal-provincial agreement is with Quebec. Under the 1991 Canada-Québec Accord, the province became wholly responsible for settlement and integration services within its jurisdiction, and it receives federal funding for this purpose



according to a formula established in the Accord. Reception and integration services in Quebec are required to be equivalent to the services provided by the federal government in other parts of the country.

In the mid-1990s, the federal government conducted a major review of its role in respect of settlement. The Settlement Renewal Initiative resulted in a new outlook on how services to newcomers should be delivered. In particular, it was determined that responsibility for the administration of federal settlement funds should be transferred to the provinces. By pursuing agreements with the provinces, it was anticipated that administrative overlap would be reduced and better coordination of settlement services with other local services would result.

Agreements on settlement were signed with British Columbia and Manitoba but the initiative has since stalled. British Columbia signed a five-year agreement in 1998, thereby assuming full responsibility for designing and delivering settlement programs for newcomers. Manitoba also assumed primary responsibility for settlement services following a 1998 agreement with the federal government. The province is responsible for orientation and settlement counselling, adult language training and labour-market access services, as well as assisting other organizations in providing services that are accessible to newcomers and support their integration.

The federal government still maintains an important role in settlement in these provinces. Apart from providing funding, CIC:

- remains involved in the delivery of income support and immediate essential services for refugees resettled from abroad;
- is responsible for “Welcome to Canada” services at major ports of entry; and,
- undertakes research and evaluation relating to the settlement and integration of newcomers.

The overarching issue regarding the administration of settlement services was raised throughout the Committee’s hearings. Concerns regarding specific settlement programs are discussed later in this report, but the consensus appeared to be consistent with the goals of the Settlement Renewal Initiative: the provinces should play a greater role in the delivery of these services and the federal government should be responsible for coordination and quality control. It is apparent that as the provinces begin to take on more responsibility for settlement, clear national standards are more important than ever. It was also made abundantly clear to the Committee that program standards vary significantly across the country. The British Columbia Coalition for Immigrant Integration, in its nationwide survey, concluded that some regions are doing well in delivering language and settlement services, but most were given a low score or failing grade.

Witnesses also indicated that there is a need for a better coordination strategy vis-à-vis the various federal and provincial departments involved in the delivery of settlement services. A lack of coordination has, according to some witnesses, led to gaps in services as CIC, Human Resources Development Canada, Heritage Canada, Industry Canada, and a variety of provincial ministries are all involved in the funding of settlement services.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**To address gaps in service, Citizenship and Immigration Canada should develop a better coordination strategy for the various federal and provincial departments involved in the provision of settlement services. Provinces without a settlement agreement with the federal government should be encouraged to pursue such an arrangement.**

#### **C. Program Funding and Administration**

Almost all witnesses argued that the total amount of settlement funding currently being provided by the government is inadequate. The Committee was informed that while the number of immigrant arrivals has increased over the last five years, funding for settlement programs has remained static. We believe that adequate resources should be in place to meet the higher immigration levels. How can Canada expect to reap the benefits of increased immigration if it does not invest in increased settlement funding?

It is also noteworthy that immigrants contribute financially through the payment of application processing fees and right of landing fees before they even arrive in the country. As noted by several witnesses, in the fiscal year 2000-2001, immigrants paid processing fees of \$297.3 million and right of landing fees of \$166.9 million, for a total of \$464.2 million. During this period, the amount spent by the Government of Canada on settlement and integration was \$336.4 million. The Committee also notes that settlement spending as a percentage of CIC's total spending has been decreasing, going from 46% in 1997-1998 to 41% in 2000-2001. According to the Department's most recent report on plans and priorities, in 2003-2004 "promoting the integration of newcomers" will account for approximately 37% of net planned spending.

When the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration appeared before our committee in May 2003, he indicated that immigration settlement costs approximately \$3,000 per individual. With 225,000 to 245,000 newcomers expected this year, the government's planned settlement spending is not even close to meeting this funding level.

The Committee heard evidence regarding the problems that many newcomers face as a result of the funding shortfall. For example, concerns were expressed about the RAP transportation loan program, which is creating an increasingly large financial burden

for many refugee families. With increased settlement funding, this program could be changed into a grant program. As discussed later in this report, other programs also require significantly enhanced resources.

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**Overall funding for settlement programs should be augmented to reflect the increase in immigrant arrivals with a benchmark of \$3,000 per newcomer being dedicated to settlement services.**

Many witnesses also expressed concern about the way CIC allocates funds. It is our understanding that there is an ongoing review of the national funding formula and the Committee agrees that alterations are necessary.

Much of the funding for settlement is provided based on the number of immigrants destined to each province as a percentage of total immigrants to Canada. SPOs addressing this issue noted that this formula can result in a decrease in funding even when more immigrants are coming to a province. For example, although British Columbia continues to receive more immigrants every year, because the overall percentage of newcomers destined to the province has been decreasing, less federal money is being transferred to the province. The province thus receives less money for more people.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should participate in discussions with service provider organizations and the provinces to ascertain the most appropriate funding models for settlement services. In reviewing national funding formulae, Citizenship and Immigration Canada should consider a per capita model that would ensure that basic settlement services are available in all regions.**

SPOs from smaller provinces suggested that the current funding model was designed using an “economies of scale” approach. This may be suitable for the larger provinces, but it does not appear to take into account the situation of regions of lower immigration. As such, the core operating costs of agencies serving smaller immigrant and refugee communities may not be covered. In Prince Edward Island, for example, the Committee was informed that the lone settlement worker for the entire province is funded only for part-time status, even with funding from both the RAP and ISAP. We understand that P.E.I. and perhaps other provinces are examining the Department’s funding model. The Committee is hopeful that CIC will be receptive to their recommendations. In any event, it is clear that if we hope to encourage immigration to all areas of Canada, the settlement resources must be there. The current funding model raises a “chicken and the egg” scenario; regions of low immigration receive limited settlement funding and, as a result, there are few settlement services to assist in drawing and maintaining immigrants.

The current funding formula also makes it virtually impossible for settlement agencies in these regions to do any long-term planning. Core operating costs are often not covered and in some cases programs are facing elimination. The Committee believes that multi-year funding arrangements must be used to provide some stability in this sector. Some service providers in areas of high immigration also indicated that, apart from spending a lot of time addressing the various accountability mechanisms of the different funders, they were constantly required to submit new funding proposals to finance ongoing and successful programs. The desire was strongly expressed that there be stable multi-year funding available for all agencies that have a proven track record.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

**The funding of settlement services should be flexible enough to account for the needs of regions of low immigration and should ensure that the core operating costs for settlement agencies are addressed.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should work towards multi-year funding agreements that provide stability to service providers and allow them to engage in long-term planning.**

Some witnesses in British Columbia expressed reservations about the current process for transferring settlement funds from the federal government to the province. While they were supportive of the federal-provincial arrangement in principle, they felt that there should be greater accounting requirements for the province. The Committee heard that 48% of the funds allocated for settlement services actually go into provincial general revenues. To ensure that these funds are actually spent on newcomer integration, in the words of one witness, “Strings need to be attached.”

#### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada must ensure that funds transferred to the provinces for settlement purposes are spent on specified settlement programs and that reporting requirements are in place to ensure that funds are not diverted to other provincial programs.**

Another concern that the Committee heard frequently was that the Department often engages in micromanaging the programs of service providers. “Contribution agreements” set out what services will be covered and any variation from the line-by-line authorizations leads to significant administrative difficulties. One witness told the Committee about a situation where the lack of a receipt for a one-dollar parking-meter

expense took hours of staff time, both at the settlement agency and at CIC, to resolve. Another spoke of the difficulty of getting funding for one of the new settlement services most in demand: assistance with application forms for the new Permanent Resident Card. It was suggested that while maintaining the current funding programs — which most witnesses agreed are basically sound — the Department should consider contracting for results. Rather than scrutinize every line-item expense, the final outcomes should be monitored with a view to allowing some flexibility on the part of the service providers to address the particular needs of their clientele.

## **RECOMMENDATION 10**

**As a pilot project, Citizenship and Immigration Canada should contract with selected established settlement agencies to provide settlement and integration services, specifying the final outcomes and allowing the agencies significant flexibility in determining how to best serve their clientele. The results should be monitored to determine if there is an improvement in end results with less ongoing CIC administrative oversight, while maintaining overall financial accountability.**

### **D. Program Eligibility**

According to CIC, newcomers are most likely to need settlement assistance within the first year of their arrival. The services may be available for up to three years if necessary. However, SPO witnesses indicated that many of their clients are only eligible for settlement services for one year after arriving in Canada. The witnesses agreed that while many newcomers do not require integration assistance after this period, a large number do require services for an extended time. The Committee believes that there should be greater flexibility in setting eligibility periods. While many newcomers will require little or no settlement assistance, many will require more far-reaching help. One program that clearly illustrates the differing needs of immigrants is the “Pebbles in the Sand Program” in Calgary. This internationally recognized program for immigrant women with little or no education has had remarkable success. Seventy per cent of the program’s participants have gone on to employment or further education despite the fact that the majority possessed 0-3 years of formal schooling. This program illustrates that strict temporal limits for program eligibility may be arbitrary and unwise when some immigrants require no integration assistance while others have not even been taught how to learn.

## **RECOMMENDATION 11**

**There should be greater flexibility in determining the length of time individuals are eligible for particular settlement services, with the determination of eligibility being primarily guided by the client needs assessment done by the service provider organization.**

Who is eligible for services was also raised as an important issue. Some groups, such as refugee claimants and domestic workers in the Live-In Caregiver Program, are generally not eligible for federally funded settlement programs and services. The Committee believes that these restrictions should be revised.

With respect to refugee claimants who are awaiting a decision on their claim, non-eligibility is problematic. Given the current backlogs at the Immigration and Refugee Board, it can often take a year or more for a refugee claim to be heard. In the interim, claimants are generally not permitted to access settlement services; only in British Columbia can refugee claimants receive federally funded language training. With an overall acceptance rate of slightly more than 50%, it is worrisome that so many people who will eventually be granted permanent residence in Canada are not provided with greater settlement services during their first year or two in the country. As well, many who are not recognized as Convention refugees may remain legally in Canada through other means.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 12**

**The Committee recommends that refugee claimants be eligible for settlement services that will enable them to better support themselves while awaiting determination of their claims.**

The Committee was also informed that domestic workers who come to Canada under the Live-In Caregiver Program are not eligible for settlement services. We believe that this is indeed short-sighted as most of the live-in caregivers go on to obtain permanent resident status through the program. The Committee also believes that allowing access to these services could help to address the problems of isolation and abuse faced by some caregivers.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 13**

**The Committee recommends that live-in caregivers be eligible for settlement services.**

#### **E. Language Training**

The Committee heard of significant variations in the levels of language instruction available across the country. Federally funded language training at an advanced level is available only in Manitoba. In the Atlantic Provinces, intermediate classes are limited, and in B.C. language instruction is only offered at a basic level. The Committee believes that advanced level language instruction should be supported throughout Canada.

## **RECOMMENDATION 14**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should ensure that higher levels of language instruction for newcomers are available throughout the country and should work towards implementing national standards.**

The Committee also heard evidence that language training specifically geared towards securing employment is lacking. LINC provides funding for general language skills but some witnesses suggested that it needs to be extended to language training for the workplace. Because finding employment is clearly one of the most fundamental aspects of successful settlement and integration, we agree that language training should specifically target this goal.

## **RECOMMENDATION 15**

**The Committee recommends that LINC funding be provided for language training programs that are specifically geared towards finding employment.**

### **F. Employment: Recognition of Foreign Credentials and Experience**

Lack of recognition for foreign credentials and experience has long been identified as a significant barrier to successful establishment. Indeed, the Committee has discussed this issue in previous reports, including our study of overseas visa processing *Competing for Immigrants* in June 2002 and our study of the new *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* in March 2002, entitled *Building A Nation*. As well, the issue came to the fore in our consideration of Bill C-11, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, at which time the following was included in section 3 as an objective of the Act with respect to immigration:

(j) to work in cooperation with the provinces to secure better recognition of the foreign credentials of permanent residents and their more rapid integration into society.

In the course of our cross-country hearings in February 2003, many witnesses again made reference to the problems faced by skilled workers who arrive in Canada expecting to work in their profession or trade only to find that licensing requirements preclude them from doing so. Those witnesses specifically involved in employment counselling identified this as their primary concern. One witness representing a long-established SPO stated her group's conclusion that, as a result of accreditation barriers, education is *not* an advantage and does not seem to pay off for recent immigrants. If this is indeed the case, the entire skilled worker selection process, with its

emphasis on advanced education, would appear to be misguided. One witness even suggested that Canadian policy is immoral in that we recruit highly educated immigrants and then prevent them from working in their areas of expertise.

It is important that information regarding licensing requirements be provided to prospective immigrants before they move to Canada and the Committee understands that a general declaration form is provided to ensure that they are aware of the issue. Those accepted for permanent residence may be required to sign the IMM 1455 which confirms that they understand that provincial licensing requirements may preclude them from working in their current field.

While it is obviously of value to provide such information, the Committee believes that it would clearly be preferable to supplement this notice system with a program in Canada that facilitates the recognition of foreign credentials and experience. In a recent study, the Conference Board of Canada indicated that over 500,000 Canadians would earn an additional \$4.1 to \$5.9 billion annually if their experience and credentials were recognized in the workplace. The most significant reason for “unrecognized learning” was identified as unrecognized foreign credentials. We also note the findings of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development in its June 2002 report *Promoting Equality in the Federal Jurisdiction: Review of the Employment Equity Act*. In respect of foreign credential recognition, that committee clearly emphasized the need for a coordinated national approach to this problem.

As we noted in our June 2002 report, the government of Australia has established offices that coordinate the assessment of foreign credentials for their federal, state and territorial governments, as well as the various independent professional bodies. The Committee recommends that the federal government in Canada establish a similar office. The current underutilization of human resources is at odds with the country’s immigration goals and, in particular, the goals of our skilled worker and provincial nominee programs. Equally important, the impact on the individuals affected — the PhD who ends up driving a taxi, for example — is profound. This can become a significant mental health issue for newcomers.

Some witnesses made specific suggestions regarding government incentives for employers who might not otherwise consider hiring foreign-trained professionals and trades people. The Committee believes that this idea merits further consideration and possibilities such as internship programs or tax breaks should be explored. As well, incentives directed at the workers themselves, such as loans for training upgrades, should be examined.

The Committee also wishes to draw attention to the costs involved in the accreditation process. While we realize that little can be done in some areas where the financial burden of educational upgrading or similar expenditures are placed on the person seeking accreditation, the Committee believes that a central coordinating office would be a good first step in assessing the objective need for some bodies’ accreditation



requirements. It would at least help to identify what costs or barriers to licensing exist in the various professional or trade bodies in any particular field. Some witnesses suggested that many requirements are arbitrary and irrelevant, and that systemic racism may be at play. The Committee believes that a national coordinating office would help to identify whether particular licensing bodies are using criteria that do not objectively relate to their mandate to protect the public consumer.

Finally, the Committee notes that following the national Conference on Immigration in Winnipeg in October 2002, it was agreed that the federal, provincial and territorial governments would work to enhance and develop partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors to break down the barriers to the recognition of foreign credentials. It is essential that this process proceed as expeditiously as possible so that we can turn “brain waste” into “brain gain.”

#### **RECOMMENDATION 16**

**The federal-provincial-territorial working group established to address the recognition of foreign credentials should move as quickly as possible in this endeavour.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 17**

**The Committee recommends that Citizenship and Immigration Canada immediately establish an office to facilitate professional and trade assessments and accreditation for immigrants.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 18**

**The Government of Canada should provide greater support and assistance to foreign-trained workers through loan and internship programs, as well as other means.**

### **G. Health Issues**

Adjusting to a new country can be difficult for anyone, but it can be particularly challenging for some. Most witnesses that addressed this issue made specific reference to refugees suffering post-traumatic stress disorder and the mental health difficulties they encounter. It was suggested that while provincial health resources are generally available, more could be done to ensure that they are accessed by those in need.

The Interim Federal Health Program provides emergency and essential health care coverage to claimants and certain categories of refugees who lack financial resources, pending their access to provincial health care coverage. The Committee believes that funding for mental health problems must be available through this program. As well, it is important that settlement services are provided in a manner that is sensitive to the particular needs of those who have suffered persecution, torture and other ill-treatment.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 19**

**Settlement programming and client needs assessments should be sensitive to mental health issues and, in particular, the needs of refugees and other newcomers with stress-related disorders.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 20**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada must ensure that the Interim Federal Health Program addresses the mental health needs of those fleeing persecution or who are otherwise forced to leave their home country.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 21**

**Funding should be provided to train local mental health professionals in the treatment of mental health issues that arise from the immigration and refugee experience, including post-traumatic stress disorder. Cultural sensitivity should be included as a component of this training.**

### **H. Racism and Discrimination**

While Canadian society has made great strides over the past 50 years, racism and xenophobia are still evident in our society and have a significant impact on new Canadians. Of particular concern has been the treatment by a small number of Canadians of refugees and refugee claimants, particularly after the events of September 11, 2001. The Committee's discussion of this issue in our December 2001 report *Hands Across the Border* bears repeating in this context:

The Committee feels compelled to emphasize that Canada's commitment to providing protection to those seeking asylum must continue. Irresponsible and misinformed attacks on Canada's refugee system were not uncommon before September 11th but have now noticeably increased. There have been isolated examples of undesirable people entering Canada through the refugee claims system but it is clear to the Committee that almost all refugee claimants, including

those whose claims are ultimately rejected, do not pose any danger to Canadians. Of course, increased security screening for all people entering our country is prudent. It must be kept in mind, however, that refugee claimants make up a miniscule fraction of the people entering Canada every year; less than one-tenth of 1%.

The Committee, particularly in the context of our border security work, has also noted the issue of racial profiling and we believe that greater public education is needed to combat some of the myths and stereotypes that are being propagated.

## **RECOMMENDATION 22**

**To combat racism and xenophobia, and to promote inclusiveness and a sense of belonging, the federal government should launch a public education campaign to provide information about immigrants and refugees and their economic, social and cultural contributions to Canada. The federal government should also monitor hate crimes and prosecutions in Canada and report the findings to Parliament.**

### **I. The Geographic Distribution of Immigrants**

Even in regions where unemployment has historically been seen as the most significant challenge, witnesses suggested that responding to labour shortages is now the main problem. Immigrants create jobs and fill gaps in the labour market, producing what some witnesses referred to as a “brain gain.” Successful immigrants in regions of low immigration also serve as a magnet for others from their former home countries. While immigration may not be the entire answer, most witnesses the Committee heard from clearly felt that it is an important part of the long-term solution to Canada’s demographic requirements.

As discussed earlier in this report, settlement resources in regions of low immigration must come first if we expect newcomers to settle and stay in these areas. Funding based solely on the number of immigrants who are already in a particular province is not appropriate and we have recommended that there be a minimum threshold of core financial support for settlement agencies.

The Committee believes that local community support is also necessary. Welcoming neighbours will encourage newcomers to stay in areas of low immigration and will foster a sense of belonging that will enhance the likelihood of successful establishment. Partnerships should be fostered between community members, the Department and SPOs with the objective of facilitating a positive settlement experience.

## **RECOMMENDATION 23**

**The Government of Canada should examine further incentives to encourage immigrants to settle in areas of low immigration, such as:**

- **Waiving or refunding the Right of Landing Fee for immigrants who settle in these regions;<sup>3</sup>**
- **The use of tax credits; and,**
- **Loan programs.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 24**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should facilitate the active involvement of members of the local community in the settlement and integration process.**

Witnesses appearing before the Committee also addressed the issue of Francophone settlement outside of Quebec and the development of these communities. There is clearly a lack of settlement facilities serving Francophones in most of Canada. In Alberta, for example, the Committee was somewhat surprised by the number of presentations made by Francophone immigrants to that province who decried the lack of French language resources. This committee amended section 3 of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* to add the following as an objective of Canada's immigration strategy: (b.1) to support and assist the development of minority official languages communities in Canada. This objective must be more actively pursued.

## **RECOMMENDATION 25**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should provide greater resources specifically designed to ensure that settlement services are available in the French language in areas that have been identified as having an immigrant Francophone minority.**

### **J. Immigrant Children**

Immigrant children may face unique settlement problems. Beyond the "regular" difficulties that most children face, such as peer pressure, the tribulations of the teen years and academic concerns, many immigrant youth must also adjust to a new culture

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<sup>3</sup> The New Democratic Party supports the elimination of the Right of Landing Fee for all immigrants.

and language. Although it is commonly believed that children can acclimatize to a new environment better than adults, witnesses appearing before the Committee indicated that more needs to be done to foster the development of young newcomers and that programs specifically geared to their needs should be augmented. This should be done by working with the immigrant family as a whole. The Committee supports the development of programs that will address the needs of families with children.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 26**

**The Committee recommends that Citizenship and Immigration Canada encourage settlement agencies to develop or augment programs directed at immigrant children and their families, and provide the necessary funding to do so.**

#### **K. The Overall Process**

The Committee believes that the current funding vehicles of ISAP, RAP and LINC are fundamentally sound. As our preceding comments and recommendations illustrate, adjustment of the funding process is required to ensure that our settlement system continues to develop and improve. However, the Committee believes that there needs to be greater continuity in the process — from needs assessment, to language training, to job training, and finally to full integration in Canadian society. Facilitating and coordinating a more uniform and integrated process in each province is a task ideally suited to CIC and is something the Department should pursue.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 27**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should work with service providers to develop settlement models that address the needs of newcomers from the initial assessment stage to full integration in Canadian society and the acquisition of citizenship.**

#### **L. Settlement Workers**

Working conditions in the settlement sector are not on par with other social service sectors. Some witnesses referred to the situation as the exploitation of the voluntary sector. Others simply noted that settlement agencies have a difficult time recruiting and retaining employees, many of whom work full-time hours but are only paid on a part-time basis. The Committee is keenly aware that for the government to directly provide the same services that SPOs currently provide would cost considerably more than is now being spent.

## **RECOMMENDATION 28**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should conduct a review of salary and compensation packages in the settlement sector to ensure competitiveness with comparable positions in the labour market.**

## **CONCLUSION**

The provision of quality, easily accessible and well coordinated settlement services is an investment in our future. The framework exists for the continued development and expansion of these programs in Canada and we believe that LINC, ISAP, RAP and the Host Program are fundamentally sound. Unfortunately, they are inadequately funded and this lack of resources must be addressed.

The Committee was very impressed by the members of the hard-working and devoted settlement services community who took the time to express their concerns. Clearly the basic tools exist to attract, support and retain immigrants; the programs need only be properly funded and fostered in all regions of Canada.

## **LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should expand and enhance the Canadian Orientation Abroad Program and make it available to all classes of immigrants.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should develop a program that would facilitate the exchange of information between visa officers overseas and settlement workers in Canada. The program should ensure that visa officers are aware of the settlement challenges in particular regions of the country and should provide information that will assist settlement agencies in planning for their future clients' needs.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**Visa officers and provincial representatives overseas should provide information to successful applicants for permanent residence so that the newcomers can contact settlement agencies and other organizations that assist immigrants in the regions in which they intend to settle. Provinces who do not have representatives overseas should be encouraged to promote themselves in this manner.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**To address gaps in service, Citizenship and Immigration Canada should develop a better coordination strategy for the various federal and provincial departments involved in the provision of settlement services. Provinces without a settlement agreement with the federal government should be encouraged to pursue such an arrangement.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**Overall funding for settlement programs should be augmented to reflect the increase in immigrant arrivals with a benchmark of \$3,000 per newcomer being dedicated to settlement services.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should participate in discussions with service provider organizations and the provinces to ascertain the most appropriate funding models for settlement services. In reviewing national funding formulae, Citizenship and Immigration Canada should consider a per capita model that would ensure that basic settlement services are available in all regions.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 7**

**The funding of settlement services should be flexible enough to account for the needs of regions of low immigration and should ensure that the core operating costs for settlement agencies are addressed.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 8**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should work towards multi-year funding agreements that provide stability to service providers and allow them to engage in long-term planning.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada must ensure that funds transferred to the provinces for settlement purposes are spent on specified settlement programs and that reporting requirements are in place to ensure that funds are not diverted to other provincial programs.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 10**

**As a pilot project, Citizenship and Immigration Canada should contract with selected established settlement agencies to provide settlement and integration services, specifying the final outcomes and allowing the agencies significant flexibility in determining how to best serve their clientele. The results should be monitored to determine if there is an improvement in end results with less ongoing CIC administrative oversight, while maintaining overall financial accountability.**



#### **RECOMMENDATION 11**

**There should be greater flexibility in determining the length of time individuals are eligible for particular settlement services, with the determination of eligibility being primarily guided by the client needs assessment done by the service provider organization.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 12**

**The Committee recommends that refugee claimants be eligible for settlement services that will enable them to better support themselves while awaiting determination of their claims.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 13**

**The Committee recommends that live-in caregivers be eligible for settlement services.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 14**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should ensure that higher levels of language instruction for newcomers are available throughout the country and should work towards implementing national standards.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 15**

**The Committee recommends that LINC funding be provided for language training programs that are specifically geared towards finding employment.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 16**

**The federal-provincial-territorial working group established to address the recognition of foreign credentials should move as quickly as possible in this endeavour.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 17**

**The Committee recommends that Citizenship and Immigration Canada immediately establish an office to facilitate professional and trade assessments and accreditation for immigrants.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 18**

**The Government of Canada should provide greater support and assistance to foreign-trained workers through loan and internship programs, as well as other means.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 19**

**Settlement programming and client needs assessments should be sensitive to mental health issues and, in particular, the needs of refugees and other newcomers with stress-related disorders.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 20**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada must ensure that the Interim Federal Health Program addresses the mental health needs of those fleeing persecution or who are otherwise forced to leave their home country.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 21**

**Funding should be provided to train local mental health professionals in the treatment of mental health issues that arise from the immigration and refugee experience, including post-traumatic stress disorder. Cultural sensitivity should be included as a component of this training.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 22**

**To combat racism and xenophobia, and to promote inclusiveness and a sense of belonging, the federal government should launch a public education campaign to provide information about immigrants and refugees and their economic, social and cultural contributions to Canada. The federal government should also monitor hate crimes and prosecutions in Canada and report the findings to Parliament.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 23**

**The Government of Canada should examine further incentives to encourage immigrants to settle in areas of low immigration, such as:**

- **Waiving or refunding the Right of Landing Fee for immigrants who settle in these regions;**
- **The use of tax credits; and,**
- **Loan programs.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 24**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should facilitate the active involvement of members of the local community in the settlement and integration process.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 25**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should provide greater resources specifically designed to ensure that settlement services are available in the French language in areas that have been identified as having an immigrant Francophone minority.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 26**

**The Committee recommends that Citizenship and Immigration Canada encourage settlement agencies to develop or augment programs directed at immigrant children and their families, and provide the necessary funding to do so.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 27**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should work with service providers to develop settlement models that address the needs of newcomers from the initial assessment stage to full integration in Canadian society and the acquisition of citizenship.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 28**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada should conduct a review of salary and compensation packages in the settlement sector to ensure competitiveness with comparable positions in the labour market.**

# APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Associations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<b>Brunswick Street United Church</b>	10/02/2003	20
Gus Pendleton		
Lorna Pendleton		
<b>Halifax Regional School Board, Adult ESL Program</b>		
Judy MacIntyre		
<b>Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association</b>		
Anna Gregus		
Claudette Legault		
Mira Musanovic		
<b>North End Community Health Centre</b>		
Paul O'Hara		
<b>Campaign for Stable Funding of Adult ESL Classes</b>		21
Norman Beach		
Prasanna Hetiarachchi		
<b>Chinese Canadian National Council</b>		
Gloria Fung		
Colleen Hua		
<b>Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants</b>		
Debbie Douglas		
Morteza Jafarpour		
<b>Maytree Foundation</b>	11/02/2003	22
Elizabeth McIsaac		
<b>Atlantic Institute of Market Studies</b>		23
Brian Crowley		
<b>Canadian Federation of Students</b>		24
Theresa Sabourin		
<b>Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre</b>		
Gerry Mills		
<b>Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women</b>		
Linda Carvery		
Stella Lord		

<b>Associations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth</b> Barbara Miller	11/02/2003	24
<b>Employment Projects of Winnipeg Inc.</b> Magaly Diaz Jason Fuerst		25
<b>International Centre — Citizenship Council of Manitoba</b> Fatima Soares		
<b>Manitoba Refugee Sponsors</b> Tom Denton		
<b>North End Sponsorship Team</b> Howard Engel Jim Mair		
<b>As Individual</b> Bob Gabuna		
<b>Employment Projects of Winnipeg Inc.</b> Magaly Diaz Jason Fuerst	12/02/2003	26
<b>Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council</b> Martin Dolin Carlos Vialard		
<b>Needs Centre for War-Affected Families</b> Meryle Lewis Margaret von Lau Dale Wilson Jim Wolf		
<b>Success Skills Centre</b> Monika Feist Tayeb Méridji		
<b>University of Manitoba</b> Vedanand		
<b>Association for New Canadians</b> Lois Berrigan	12/02/2003	27
<b>Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador</b> Lloydetta Quaicoe		

<b>Associations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Newfoundland &amp; Labrador Health in Pluralistic Societies</b> Purnima Sen	12/02/2003	27
<b>Refugee Immigrants Advisory Council</b> Donna Jeffrey		
<b>Holland College</b> Joy MacDonald	13/02/2003	30
<b>PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada</b> Kevin Arsenault Joe Byrne Zeke Eaton		32
<b>As Individual</b> Joy Ikede		
<b>“Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de l’Alberta Society”</b> Luketa M’pindou	14/02/2003	35
<b>Alberta Association of Immigrant-Serving Agencies</b> Ana Maria Fantino Dulari Prithipaul		
<b>Council of India Societies of Edmonton</b> Naresh Bhardwaj Naresh Sharma Ashok Sharma		
<b>Multicultural Association of Fredericton</b> Ashraf Ghanem		36
<b>University of New Brunswick</b> Peter Donahue Kay Nandlall		
<b>YMCA-YWCA</b> Angela Odei		
<b>Inter-Cultural Association of Victoria</b> Jean McRae	17/02/2003	37
<b>“Carrefour d’intégration des immigrants de l’Estrie”</b> Louise Carrier-Corriveau	18/02/2003	42
<b>“Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes”</b> Rivka Augenfeld Stephan Reichhold		

<b>Associations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Affiliation of Multicultural Societies &amp; Service Agencies of BC</b> Chris Friesen	18/02/2003	43
<b>British Columbia Settlement and Integration Workers' Association</b> Lauren Johnson Layne Kriwoken		
<b>National Alliance of Philippine Women in Canada (NAPWC)</b> Luningning Alcuitas-Imperial		
<b>Canadian Bar Association</b> Phil Rankin	19/02/2003	46
<b>Lexbase</b> Richard Kurland		
<b>MOSAIC</b> Eyob Naizghi		
<b>Success</b> Lilian To Kenneth Tung		



## APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS

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Affiliation of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies of BC

“Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de l'Alberta Society”

Association for New Canadians

Atlantic Institute of Market Studies

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA)

Campaign for Stable Funding of Adult ESL Classes

Canadian Bar Association

Canadian Council for Refugees

Canadian Federation of Students

City of Toronto Working Group on Immigration and Refugee Issues

Bob Gabuna

Government of Nova Scotia

Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre

Holland College

International Centre — Citizenship Council of Manitoba

Manitoba Refugee Sponsors

Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association

MOSAIC

Multicultural Association of Fredericton

Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador

Needs Centre for War-Affected Families

Newfoundland & Labrador Health in Pluralistic Societies

North End Community Health Centre

North End Sponsorship Team

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada

Province of Nova Scotia

Refugee Immigrants Advisory Council

Success

University of Manitoba

University of New Brunswick

YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth

YMCA-YWCA

## **REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, your committee requests the government to table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (*Issues Nos. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 32, 35, 36, 37, 42, 43, 46, 57, 60, 63, and 64 which includes this report*) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Fontana, M.P.  
*Chairman*



# MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday, June 3, 2003  
(Meeting No. 64)

The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration met *in camera* at 11:04 a.m. this day, in Room 307, West Block, the Chair, Joe Fontana, presiding.

*Members of the Committee present:* Diane Ablonczy, Sarkis Assadourian, John Bryden, Yvon Charbonneau, Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral, Libby Davies, Joe Fontana, Sophia Leung, John O'Reilly, Massimo Pacetti, David Price, Lynne Yelich.

*Other member present:* Andrew Telegdi.

*In attendance: From the Library of Parliament:* Benjamin Dolin; Law and Government Division.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), consideration of Settlement and Integration Programs (see *Minutes of Proceedings, Monday, February 10, 2003, Meeting No. 20*).

The Committee resumed its study on a draft report.

It was agreed, — That the draft report, as amended, be concurred in and that the Chairman be instructed to present it to the House.

It was agreed, — That the Chair, in conjunction with the clerk and researchers, make such editorial changes as may be necessary without changing the substance of the report.

It was agreed, — That pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee request the government to table a comprehensive response to the report.

At 11:54 a.m., the Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair.

Jean-François Pagé  
*Committee Clerk*