Oral Questions

that numbers above what we consider to be new quotas cannot be allowed in through her department?

For example, this same document states:

Globally, increased immigrant output at the expense of other priorities can no/no longer be seen as an appropriate response to excessive demand..it would result in a significant over filling of the annual level thus rendering the levels exercise, and its consultation process, a less meaningful endeavour."

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, if this document does not describe a new quota mechanism, why does the directive also say that for Canada, this means that the number of eligible immigrants far exceeds the number the government plans to admit?

So I ask the minister why she does not simply provide the additional resources to process all the eligible immigrants efficiently and equally. Why not, Madam Minister?

[*English*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, the processing of the backlog will continue and it is in the interest of all claimants that it should do so.

[*Translation*]

We are trying to provide our claimants with the services to which they are entitled and all the applications for sponsorship, family reunification and the various components of our immigration level will be treated with the services, compassion and humanitarianism that characterize us as a government and as a country.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the same minister and it concerns the other backlog in her department, namely, the refugee backlog.

It has now been 10 days since the Federal Court ruled that the minister's refugee backlog clearing system is illegal for the 125,000 refugee claimants and to date there has been no response from the minister or the government.

In light of the ruling, whereby claimants have been waiting for three, four and five years, the system is costing hundreds of millions of dollars, can the minister inform the House what action the government will take in view of this ruling so that this large, onerous cloud of indecision and uncertainty may finally, once and for all, be lifted?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, the judgement referred to in no way affects the legality of the system. We have implemented a process to clear up the backlog and we will see it through. We are trying as much as possible to speed up the process by always keeping in mind humanitarian considerations, which guide and, I would even say, characterize our department. So I repeat, the judgement does not call the legality of the system into question. On the contrary, what we are trying to do with these new measures is to guarantee our protection to those who ask for it.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the minister has read the decision. Today, if she is categorically saying that the legality of the system is not being called into question, then clearly not only has the government not given us a solution, they have not even read the decision from the Federal Court.

My supplementary question is to the same minister. She is aware that a number of claimants have been denied status or have been deported under the system that has been ruled on as illegal by the court.

In light of the court's ruling, what does the minister plan to do about those who have been denied or deported? Will they get a second opportunity and a second fair hearing, something that they were denied the first time around?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): My colleague in Immigration is reviewing the judgement and we will make the decisions required to speed up the process of clearing the backlog. It is in the interest of all Canadians that we in the government and the department take rational, well-considered measures, which is what we are working on.